Summer 2024

“[T]he Observance of Trifles": Mapping Imperial Assemblages in Nineteenth-Century British Serialized Crime Fiction

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“[T]HE OBSERVANCE OF TRIFLES”: MAPPING IMPERIAL ASSEMBLAGES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH SERIALIZED CRIME FICTION

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ENGLISH

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
August 2024

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ABSTRACT

"[T]HE OBSERVANCE OF TRIFLES": MAPPING IMPERIAL ASSEMBLAGES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH SERIALIZED CRIME FICTION

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Old Dominion University, 2024
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This project investigates representations of the ecological and Imperialist relationships in a selection of serialized crime fiction texts: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, and Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes adventures (appearing in *The Strand Magazine: An Illustrated Monthly* beginning in 1891). I examine serialized crime fiction published in the nineteenth century as a map of the ecological and Imperialist relationships established through the nineteenth-century British publishing industry. Serialized crime fiction was both popular and profitable, representing not only commercial success but one that tapped into the reading populace's imagination. Readers craved serialized stories from Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Wilkie Collins, and Arthur Conan Doyle where installments tantalized the next issue even before the presses had begun to print. Research, like the seminal work of Hughes and Lund, has expounded upon the effects of reading and literacy on the middle class. Taking that research into account, this study identifies and expounds on the effect of non-human matter (flora, fauna, waste, metals) on the methods of production, which in turn affect the narratives that appear in the periodicals.

Each chapter maps three essential assemblages of the nineteenth-century publishing industry (paper, metal, and waste) and establishes the relational qualities that comprise them. Close readings of each of the serialized crime fiction texts— combined with explications of the three essential assemblage relationships — demonstrate where these relationships are present. I

focus on the method of publication in addition to the stories themselves because the mode of delivery mimics the ecological and Imperialist assemblages at work during the time. The nineteenth-century British publishing industry, which produced these periodicals, was an assemblage of local and far-flung materials and smaller assemblages: rags, fibers, ink, stationers, waste, pollution, paper mills, miners, importers and exporters, enslavement in the American South, to name just a few. I focus on just three elements of this assemblage (paper, metal, and waste) and use cartographic terms to map out the relationships that make them up, constitute them, and reconstitute them. Others have established how anxieties of empire and Imperialism appear in crime stories, most notably visible in Sherlock Holmes stories, in terms of straight plot and characters. I build off those analyses when I look beneath the overt characters and plots to unearth the interstitial moments of ecological and Imperial relationships in less overt textual moments, including the narrative structure.

Finally, an Esri StoryMap (https://arcg.is/0ann4f0) animates the dynamic relationships to further demonstrate the way these relationships are embedded in the text and further conversations about how literary analysis may be visualized and experienced. Employing the language of assemblage theory and new materialism, the study's purpose is to demonstrate how a rhizomatic mapping framework is well-suited to explain the fragmented and volatile nineteenth-century British publishing industry and to analyze serialized crime fiction of the day. One of the broad primary interests of this study, therefore, is to accurately account for the environmental and Imperial factors that comprise the assemblages which press upon and affect the literature created. The project ends with an application of rhizomatic mapping to generative AI tool creation, indicating where this research will go in the future.

for Joanne, David, Brian, and Sabrina

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A fair accounting of all the people, places, objects, animals – human and non-human materials – that have made this dissertation possible would be twice as long as the dissertation itself. I am so grateful for the perseverance and encouragement of my dissertation chair, Dr. Marc Ouellette, who treated me as a colleague long before I felt worthy of the designation. His mentoring and willingness to support my seemingly chaotic ideas with pure patience gave me the creative space to grow as a scholar, a professional, and as a person. Sincere thanks go to Dr. Julia Romberger who enthusiastically encouraged me and supported the creation of my first ArcGIS model. Our discussions formed the heart of this project, and I treasure my notes from that summer session. I am grateful to Dr. Tom Chapman, who offered guidance and support throughout the development of this project.

I am indebted to Dr. Rajani Sudan, whose course "Sex and the City in the Eighteenth Century" at Southern Methodist University in 2004 first lit the spark that would become this dissertation. I remember, fondly, classes with Dr. Beth Newman, Dr. Bonnie Wheeler, and Dr. Susanne Bost – I am so grateful for their kind and generous teaching. Dr. Laura Bucholz, Dr. Manuela Morano and Dr. Ed Jacobs' courses were profoundly important to my educational development, but specifically to my understanding of nineteenth-century serial publications.

My gratitude extends to Dutchess Community College for supporting my doctoral studies, as well as to my friends and colleagues here and elsewhere for their friendship and support. Thank you, sincerely, for your ability to listen to the words "assemblage," "map," and "serialization," repeatedly (in alphabetical order): Esther Brandon, Court Brown, Dr. Eileen Curley, Emily Darrow, Lance Eaton, Dr. Moira Fitzgibbons, Bonnie Gallagher, Dr. Ruth

Holmes, Cammie Jones, Melanie Klein, Allison Papini, Dr. Michael Piero, Deb Smith, Eric Tomik, and Erin Wright. Special editorial thanks to Henry Ricci!

My tremendous appreciation extends to two luminous scion societies of the Baker Street Irregulars, The Hudson Valley Sciontists, under the stewardship of Lou and Candy Lewis, and The Priory Scholars of New York City. Headmaster and Debate Master Nick Martorelli of The Priory Scholars continues to give me space to talk through my salty ideas about Arthur Conan Doyle; I am filled with gratitude for him, Economics Master Christopher Zordan, Archivist Tamar Zeffren, and Headmistress Emerita Judith Freeman for their generosity and camaraderie.

Gastronomical thanks to Ashling Kelly and Linda Aydlett for literally feeding me during my comprehensive exams, which served as the foundational sketches of this dissertation. Your care and enthusiasm for my long dissertation process has been heart-warming and sustaining.

I want to acknowledge my late grandparents, Daniel J. Haar, Sr. (Shoo) and Darlene Higgins Haar, who both instilled a great love of reading and storytelling in me from before I could read and write myself.

Nothing would have been possible without the unending love and support of my parents, David and Joanne, who have not only suffered through each other's dissertations, but now mine as well! Thank you for supporting me in every possible way.

This project would not have existed without the dedication of my love, Brian Kelly. Thank you for the near decade's worth of discussions that led me to this point, for your unbelievable patience with my frustrations, and your sincere joy at every new discovery.

Finally, a special note of remembrance and gratitude for Sabrina, for getting me through the hardest parts of everything.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO IMPERIALIST RELATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH SERIALIZED CRIME FICTION

> "Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather's case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics."
>
> —Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," p. 71.

In April 2021, the director of Jane Austen's House, Lizzie Dunford, noted that the museum would acknowledge and incorporate facts about Austen as they related to her family's connection to the Transatlantic Slave Trade; Austen's father was a trustee of a sugar plantation on the Caribbean Island of Antigua. As Jenny Gross wrote for *The New York Times*, Dunford told *The Daily Telegraph* that "updated displays would also explore the broader context of the time in which Austen lived, when her family members would have *consumed products of the slave trade such as tea, cotton and sugar*" (emphasis added). The British tabloid argued, defensively, that it was not right to judge Jane Austen in such a way. The museum posted this defense on the website: "We would like to offer reassurance that we will not, and have never had any intention to, interrogate Jane Austen, her characters or her readers for drinking tea" ("A Statement"). The webpage containing the statement has been disabled, but a web archive is available.

One can be sympathetic to the concerns of Austen fans who do not want their beloved author, who did not personally enslave other humans, to be linked even obliquely to human enslavement. Austen does not directly write about the enslavement of Caribbean people, nor does she write about race and whiteness overtly. One could quibble that these details are merely

trifles, unrelated to the conversations about Austen and her work. It is disingenuous, however, to assert that Austen and the fruitful products of her pen were not directly impacted by her family's involvement in enslavement and personal enrichment courtesy of others' labors. Whether or not Austen agreed with her family's business practices, or her nation's Imperial pursuits, her life and work was necessarily part of a much larger assemblage of sugar, human trafficking, marriage laws in England, the clothes she wore on her body, and the paper and ink she used to craft *Emma.*

Therefore, rather than avoiding the link between Austen, her characters, her readers, and tea, I would like to engage in a rhizomatic mapping effort which fruitfully interrogates the human and nonhuman elements that assemble around all literature– assemblages that include authors as an active (if not always aware) participant. Using rhizomatic mapping techniques on *Emma* or *Pride and Prejudice,* for example, do not carelessly indict the author and her characters as being purposefully enabling the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Trying to isolate Austen from the reality of her material world is a fruitless effort at best, deliberately ignorant at worst. The author is but one contributor in the network of vibrant materials, human and nonhuman, which synthesize to produce a manuscript. The matter that is Jane Austen, for example, in this Imperialist assemblage, matters. Indeed, these trifles are quite important.

This project, titled "'[T]he Observance of Trifles': Mapping Imperial Assemblages in Nineteenth-Century British Serialized Crime Fiction," posits that creative output, achieved through technological means acquired through oppressive systems, is necessarily imbued with the characteristics of the oppressive systems. In this project, I use serialized crime fiction as a rich artifact, which I explicate to demonstrate the way it embodies relational characteristics that were forged in Imperialist pursuits that created the nineteenth-century British publishing

industry. One purpose of this study is to demonstrate how a rhizomatic mapping framework is well-suited to explain the fragmented and volatile nineteenth-century British publishing industry by using the framework to analyze serialized crime fiction of the day. That is, I trace the movement of materials gathered to produce the periodical literature to demonstrate the decentralized power structure of the industry; rather than being seated solely in Britain, with white male British authors, I recognize the inherent affective power of disparate matter like coal and esparto grass. This rhizomatic mapping enables me to describe and locate the extant relational characteristics between such matter in several examples of nineteenth-century serialized crime fiction, itself a unique locus of order and disorder. Ultimately, I have created a digital Esri StoryMap (https://arcg.is/0ann4f0) to aid the reader in navigating these relational characteristics, while demonstrating that applying the rhizomatic mapping framework to contemporary texts, such as generative AI, elicits similar findings.

This study draws together the fields of new materialism and literary studies to build upon current materialist literary criticism (such as Jonathan Senchyne's work on paper and print studies). Instead of looking strictly at the presence of certain material objects represented in the text (for example, identifying the way metal objects are described and used in a text), I focus on examples in the text where the extant relational characteristics mapped by assemblage of metal are present. These textual examples of relational characteristics are important to critical literary conversations because they demonstrate a link between the external environment and the internal literary environment.

My overarching argument is that acknowledging the presence of visible and invisible networks of influence — which affect the fiction produced through those networks — is necessary to provide a comprehensive and just reading of the text. This approach engages and

builds upon Victorian[1] periodical scholarship that analyzes serialized crime fiction as reflective of colonizing anxieties, but its main purpose is to show that Victorian periodical studies would benefit from analyzing serialized crime fiction from a new materialist/assemblage theory approach.

Employing a series of close readings of Imperialist relational characteristics in several serialized crime fiction texts, I demonstrate how these relational characteristics — particularly those relating to paper, metal, poison, and waste — are critical sites of ontological, narrative, and cultural inquiry. This approach goes beyond New Historicist readings by focusing not on the author and the author's known reality, but on the pervasive relations that emerge wittingly or unwittingly in the text due to the network of circumstances of which the author is just one part. Put another way: if I believe that matter is always energized and makes meaning through actively *being*, then I believe that relations generated between assemblages of matter resonate throughout their networks. Using the language of assemblage theory and new materialism, I point to the instances where the relationships are visible in the text. This visibility and the framework to uncover it give literary studies a more comprehensive approach to textual analysis. Conversely, new materialists may see literature — specifically, serialized crime fiction, per this study — as an object of study able to materialize the abstractions inherent in discussions of collapsing hierarchies and assemblages.

[1] Terming an epoch with a monarch's name is in direct opposition to my efforts to decentralize and democratize literary analysis. In reference to the field of study, however, I will use the term "Victorian" to refer to scholarship that uses the term and to scholarship that upholds a more hierarchical framework of authorial/monarchical control. Kate Flint's "Why 'Victorian'?" Response in *Victorian Studies* and Lyn Pykett's article "The changing faces and spaces of Victorian studies" offer two nuanced positions on this debate; the V21 Collective's manifesto, and specifically, Sebastian Lecourt's blog post, "Victorian Studies and the Transnational Present" argue for a more radical turn for the field, to theory and away from historicism and information collection.

This project uses a rhizomatic mapping approach to study serialized crime fiction in order to reveal Imperialist relational characteristics. This framework affords readers and scholars new methods to understand how the fruits of oppressive and destructive ideologies can be embedded in the text through relational characteristics. An assemblage of assemblage theory demonstrates how the central figure (author/detective) in a network is not in control of their environment. Employing a rhizomatic mapping framework demands an ethical and empathetic stakeholder analysis that foregrounds non-human matter. I draw primarily from Jane Bennett's theory of vibrant matter and Karen Barad's work on meaningful matter to construct a rhizomatic framework that is useful to literary analysis. The rhizomatic framework I use exposes the relational characteristics between matter that appear in the texts I have chosen to closely read, and those relational characteristics communicate Imperialist ideologies as well as other cancerous outcomes. I explore the depictions of relational characteristics of metal, paper, and waste in a selection of nineteenth-century serialized crime fiction texts: *Lady Audley's Secret* (chapter four), *The Moonstone* (chapter five), and Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* tales (chapter six).

While these Imperialist relational characteristics manifest in nineteenth-century serialized fiction at large, I focus on examples of serialized crime fiction because of crime fiction's anxiety contradiction. That is, crime fiction demonstrates an attempt to arrest disorder and to make sense of the insensible by introducing a taxonomic approach to a chaotic, lawless world. However, the detective is also an agent of chaos and a master destabilizer. Victorian taxonomy as an ideology — exposed in the grand exhibitions and zoos, for example — tries to isolate and name, to draw borders around matter and say, "this is discrete, can be known and classified, and is fixed." Naturally, this is a failure that also ignores the natural breaks and fissures and eruptions all

around us. The detective is, on one hand, the figure trying to "put everything right," to uncover the truth. However, the detective often, rhetorically, explains connections and does not draw as many boundaries as he dismantles them to reveal the way a network of actions (a crime) is organized based on desires. In this way, serialized detective fiction embodies the ecological and Imperialistic relationships forged through the nineteenth-century British publishing industry.

This project, then, answers the question of how and where the negative energy from oppressive systems went, creatively, given that it had to go somewhere. Freud writes of repression and sublimation as ways people cope with trauma, but that trauma will manifest outwardly eventually, and manifesting in consumable art make sense. Recall the law of conservation of energy: energy is neither created nor destroyed, it is only converted from one form to another. The energies likely affecting the literature that I wanted to understand were coming not just from human-human activities, but to a much greater extent human-nonhuman activities, which made me want to find a theory that could help account for the effect they had on literature.

The genre, in this case detective/mystery fiction, is generated from the specific environment in which it was created. My research and close reading approach is a way of seeing the world around us in a more empathetic manner; to perceive more than just the artificial supremacy of the human experience. It may seem fruitless to continually attempt to perceive the length and breadth of connected matter that results in the production of cultural touchstones (that seem, plot-wise, very wrapped up in the most human of foibles), yet crime and detective stories, like the popular serialized texts I have chosen to examine through this project, feature characters who spend their time identifying the moving pieces in a mystery and explaining how and why something occurred. Rather than trying to "make sense," and "put things in order," I am

interested in revealing the integral chaos, eruptions, fissures, and failures in the interconnected mattering world.

While I embrace elements of assemblage theory to drive my rhizomatic mapping approach, I also engage scholarship from literary studies and game studies throughout this project; my goal is to furnish a more comprehensive framework to understand nineteenth-century serialized crime by employing a rhizomatic approach. My approach offers a way to reconsider the effect non-human/human systems have on the creative output of a given time. In the subsequent chapters, I use this critical approach to elucidate why serialized crime literature cannot be detangled from the assemblages which ultimately constitute it.

In each chapter, I map out this entanglement using my interpretation of the chosen assemblages (metal, paper, and waste); successive chapters adopt and apply the previous assemblages used. Metallic qualities such as malleability and transformative, paper-like qualities of laterality and spread, and waste-like qualities of expansiveness and infiltration map onto their counterpart elements of plot points, character behavior, and setting throughout the texts. This study builds towards the final chapter's consideration of how these analysis strategies may be applied to twenty-first century serial crime fiction. Through assemblage-driven close readings, I challenge the completeness of an analysis that does not contend with ever-present human and non-human assemblages.

Ultimately, I remediate my literary analysis as a data visualization project in an Esri StoryMap. Mapping is an essential strategy for analyzing assemblages and is an opportunity to make my relational analysis experiential for the reader. The StoryMap represents the descriptions of place and action in the serial crime fiction texts I take up and depicts the visceral movement of Imperialist relations through literary elements.

This project is necessarily limited in scope: I have narrowed my sample to only a handful of examples of serialized crime fiction. Future samples will include a more diverse population to perceive changes in results that could be connected to said diversity. My data sample reflects the fact that most archived data build a picture of a white, British, patriarchal network; using texts with two white male authors and one white female author aids me in using the study as a proof-of-concept demonstration. Further, this project does not contest other analytical literary frameworks as being useful; rather, it makes the case that a complete reading is incomplete without the framework laid out in this project, that of a rhizomatic mapping effort to represent multiple pressure points.

I situate this project at the busy intersection of new materialism, periodical studies, and literary studies. I borrow greedily from cultural studies, postcolonial studies, book history, and game studies to further elucidate my rhizomatic approach. Lightly inspired by the V21 Collective's manifesto, this study offers a new approach to literary criticism that is mindful of an unavoidable interconnectedness via a theoretical framework — a position I argue is the only tenable one in 2024 (and beyond).

That interconnectedness is not equal for all, however. In Judith Butler's 2022 NeMLA keynote address, titled "Intertwined [sic] and Proximate: A Pandemic Phenomenology," they argued against conceiving of the "world" in a singular sense; rather, they suggest, "Perhaps it's more apt to say that there are many and overlapping worlds for so many, of the major resources of the world are not equitably shared and there remain those who have only a small or vanished share of the world." Nineteenth-century serialized crime literature certainly highlights the inequities of which Butler speaks. Further, those who benefit from an unequal share of the major resources of the world pretend to be innocent at our own peril, and while I am clear that arguing

for the presence of Imperial relational characteristics in serial crime fiction will not, in turn, immediately engender radical, action-based empathy in readers, I am confident this study will further the conversation of how we perceive literature as a potential magnifier of inequity. Patrick Brantlinger argues for considering literature as composed of "language as discourse [which] inevitably both shapes and expresses social relationships"; I would amend that statement to include the relationships between human and nonhuman matter (*Rule of Darkness* 10).

Finally, while I envision creating a full-scale GIS map that charts the movement of people and goods throughout the nineteenth-century British publishing industry, this project will be limited to a smaller-scale Esri StoryMap (https://arcg.is/0ann4f0) that visually represents the movement of material closely associated with the texts I take up. The dynamic properties of an Esri StoryMap allow the reader to move through environments that emphasize relationships (poisonous, timely, fragile, exploitative, uncontrolled, and wasteful) as they explore the extant relational connections. While digital maps and video game cartography often position the player/user from an aerial point of view, scholars such as Souvik Mukherjee, Sybille Lammes, Toups et. al., and Sally Bushell make a strong case for video game cartography as locations of border crossing (or obliteration) and a reclamation of a subaltern viewpoint by eliminating the aerial point of view and placing the player/user horizontally in the world. Lammes writes that the player-participant can "interact and transform landscapes during touring" (93). This level of interaction, moving through a map of the temple in India where the Moonstone is stolen, or a map of the flourishing Audley Court, where Lady Audley keeps her volatile secrets, put the viewer in the body of the detective who does "transform landscapes" through their perception of relationships between disparate objects and actions. The StoryMap product represents the fullest realization possible of my argument: that nineteenth-century crime fiction satisfyingly upends its

seemingly expressed goal, that of embodying an Imperialist ideology, precisely because of the flow of "darkness[2]" back into the text.

[2] In *Rule of Darkness*, Patrick Brantlinger details his theory of "myth of the Dark Continent," which is the uncontested "public widely shared a view of Africa which demanded imperialization on moral, religious, and scientific grounds" (174). I argue, most explicitly in chapter IV that such perceived "darkness" is a projection from nineteenth-century British people that is revisited upon them, which becomes evident in contemporary literature (particularly in serialized crime fiction).

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE RELATING TO ASSEMBLAGE THEORY

> "It may seem irreverent to use these tools in a study of public opinion and to suggest that the changing character of the British Empire during the present century has been in part a result of the pulp and paper industry and its influence on public opinion, but I have felt it wise to proceed with instruments with which I am familiar and which have proven useful"
> — Harold A. Innis, *Empire and Communications*, p. 25.

The nineteenth-century British publishing industry was a network of ecological relationships; that is, the publishing industry is a diverse collection of contributors[3], with moving parts across the globe. A synthesis of assemblage theory, based primarily on ecological and feminist interpretations of Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's work, accounts for all of those moving parts. The British publishing industry of the nineteenth century can be characterized by its tendril-like lines of resource acquisition, reaching across to the former colonies in the southern United States as well as to North Africa and beyond. In other words, the nineteenth-century British publishing industry is an assemblage of contributors, and each contributor is an assemblage themselves, all in constant motion and all in a constant state of relationship-making. Assemblage theory is useful in forming my analytical framework because in assemblage theory, relationships are more important than, and disintegrate, binaries and hard borders. For example, slavery in the southern United States was a contributor to the nineteenth-century British publishing industry, in a way that goes beyond simply the linear transport of raw materials across

[3] Scholars use different terms for the contributors, or components, of assemblages. For example, Bruno Latour uses the term "actants," while Manuel DeLanda uses the term "nodes." I use "contributors" to reemphasize the relationships between them.

the Atlantic that was interrupted by the U.S. Civil War. The nineteenth-century British publishing industry was forever working in concert with British Imperialism and colonization actions, the manifest desires for the State, for power, for money, for territory. These desires drive, ceaselessly, the chaotic machines of the nineteenth-century British publishing industry, an industry characterized early on by failures and bankruptcies that were not one-offs, but rather key parts to the assemblage story. The failures and that chaos of the publishing industry assemblage include failures to account for the power of natural resources, like coal; assemblage theory foregrounds nonhuman contributors like grass, coal, tar, and pollution, which permits a more eco-conscious reading. Ultimately, a synthesized assemblage theory, applied to the nineteenth-century British publishing industry, produces an ecological relationship map, which can be further mapped in the representative relationships appearing in examples of serial crime fiction.

An examination of these trade systems, as a key aspect of the creative product, leads to another question about the power dynamics of creation. The nineteenth century British serial publications could be approached and deconstructed by looking at the power dynamic as a top-down or even bottom-up transmission or impact function – an arboristic, or tree-like, hierarchical approach. Rather than examining a single-direction impact from author to reader, or publisher to author, one can more effectively and sufficiently analyze the serial publications and the industry that produced them by adopting a rhizomatic approach, where one can consider the interconnected communities created between and among the author, the editor/publisher, the printer, and the reader, including the acquisition of raw materials to create this "cheap, healthful literature" in the first place (Newnes 3). One can also privilege less widely considered contributors to this powerful communication system. As stakeholders are identified, there must

be a re-evaluation of how a system of influence is functioning. In a very narrow outlook, Andrew King and John Plunkett argue, however, that the group termed "the people" were neither producers nor the determiners of what texts would become popular – such a designation had to come from the dominant class and necessarily came with the division between "insider" and "outsider" (165). In contrast, Lee Erickson acknowledges and analyzes the how public's consumption of literature created financially and physically widespread popular publications, the way public taste privileged certain works by placing spending power behind more abstract notions of popularity and *en vogue*, as well as how authors responded to market pressures, largely driven by spending habits (10). N. N. Feltes goes even further, describing what he calls the commodity-text, "produced in the new capitalist mode of production, produced in struggle by the new 'professional' author within the new structures of control over the publishing process […] so also readers are made by what makes the book" (8); Feltes is distributing the power rather than leaving it centralized with the author.

My conception of rhizomatic mapping of diverse contributors to the nineteenth-century British publishing industry, starts with Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's description of assemblages in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, which is rooted in the original term they use, *agencement*. "Assemblage" is the common English translation of the French term *agencemen*t, but John Phillips parses out the important difference between assemblage and *agencement*, where *agencement* refers to an "arrangement" which is in a state of being fitted (108). J-D Dewsbury, Professor in Human Geography, notes "[*agencement*] operates not as a static term but as a process of putting together, of arranging and organizing" (150). The difference between "assemblage" and "arrangement" is important because "arrangement"

foregrounds connections and relationships, not just the collecting and blending of objects what assemblage may connotate.

Indeed, instead of blurring the arrangements of relationships within an assemblage like the nineteenth-century book publishing industry, assemblage theory exposes the assemblage nature of every element and contributor. The nineteenth-century book publishing industry is an assemblage, but contributors such as the steam-powered printing press and the ink used in those presses are also each assemblages (or, as Deleuze and Guattari often refer them, machines[4]). Deleuze and Guattari argue that "[e]verything is a machine," and everything is a production (*Anti-Oedipus* 2) – including the publishing industry and the printing press, but this notion can be extended to the book-machine or magazine-machine printed through those press-machines, as well as the human-machine holding the text, beginning to read, the chair-machine they sit upon, and the land holding fossil fuels-machine below the home-machine where they sit.

This broad definition of things-as-machines, including nonhuman or elemental things, disintegrates the binary between "nature" and "industry," and "human" and "nonhuman." While Deleuze and Guattari allow that "[i]t is probable that at a certain level nature and industry are two separate and distinct things," (*Anti-Oedipus* 3), they ultimately argue that there is "no such thing as relatively independent spheres or circuits: production is immediately consumption and a recording process," and consumption and the recording process are productions themselves (*Anti-Oedipus* 4). Philosopher and professor of architecture Manuel DeLanda notes that the discrete parts of the assemblage (human and non-human) can each be treated as assemblages in their own right, as comprised of heterogeneous components, and that ultimately, "at all times we

[4] Deleuze and Guattari use several terms (translated) for the assemblage phenomenon, including "assemblage," "machine," and "production." I predominantly use "assemblages," but use "-machine" to reinforce how components of assemblages are also in perpetual action, and that they can be plugged into other machines, and can be plugged into themselves.

are dealing with assemblages of assemblages" (Introduction). He argues that assemblages have "fully contingent historical identity" (DeLanda ch.1) and are more than just humans or human collectives: "They are composed of heterogeneous material bodies, including tools and machines, food and water, buildings and furniture" (DeLanda ch. 2). DeLanda urges us to see assemblages as being composed of smaller assemblages, and that assemblages of all sizes are endowed with immanence, a divine nature of material that can vary and change. This is important because, by adopting a broader definition of what can be considered an assemblage, my project elevates assemblages of metal, paper, and waste – that may seem like trifles –to the same level of scrutiny typically applied to assemblages like author-editor working relationships. By creating equity for nonhuman objects under analysis, the framework I employ gives equal weight to the ecological impact of the publishing industry and illuminates the eco-based instability and chaos that is as important to the literature produced as the editor's demands for word changes. By seeing assemblages as being composed of other assemblages, I promote a greener reading by recognizing that a "man-made" thing is composed of nonhuman assemblages. Their nonhuman contributors become equally important to assess.

The nineteenth-century British publishing industry is full of immanent material, and this self-sufficient, churning energy is made up of many assemblages in constant motion. The publishing industry is forever working in concert with other assemblages, full of immanent materials of their own. For example, British Imperialism is an assemblage, and colonialism is an assemblage, as is mining for coal and antimony in Wallsend, England, or importing esparto grass from Northern Africa. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize assemblages as machines and emphasize that the assemblage-machines are always plugging into another assemblage, always being set in

motion by another assemblage[5]. My project interrogates assemblages like the desire-machine for immortality, which is plugged into the colonialism-machine, where cotton is also an assemblage. These machines inform the literary machine, which produces the text. Critically, any one assemblage cannot be fully explicated and mapped until the other assemblages are explicated as well.

Examining what the people of nineteenth-century Britain were primed to notice can help explain what they are aware of and what might be impacting them unconsciously. Literary and media studies scholars and historians interpret the dramatic changes and fluctuations in the nineteenth-century publishing industry more abstractly, observing that the Victorians had a powerful relationship with time, borne from the evolution of sciences like archeology and geology as well as technological advances, especially an expanding rail system throughout Britain and, of primary concern to this project, machines like the steam-powered printing press. People's relationship to time and the earth dramatically changed, as well as interpersonal relationships and one's sense of self.

Marshall McLuhan explains how the awareness of time is ordered by mechanization, particularly mechanical clocks, which the people living in London in the nineteenth century would have been intimately aware of. In *Understanding Media,* he writes of time as being

[5] This expansive idea conflicts with another theory that is often useful when used in concert with assemblage theory: Actor Network Theory (ANT), developed by Bruno Latour and Michel Callon. ANT holds that everything is connected through networks, and there is nothing outside of networks. Latour confirms that a network-privileging position eradicates the notion of a macro or global scale that works outside of individual networks ("On Actor-Network Theory" 371): "[l]iterally, a network has no outside" ("On Actor-Network Theory" 372). This proclamation recalls Jacques Derrida's assertion, "'*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte"*: "There is no outside-text." However, this statement is often misinterpreted to suggest that there is nothing outside of the text; however, in his essay, "We Do It All The Time: Michael Wood on Empson's Intentions" for *London Review of Books,* Michael Wood argues for a different interpretation: the sentence means that the unnumbered pages count as part of the book, because they are precisely considered "unnumbered pages" instead of "random blank sheets," and thus are bound to the numbered, text-laden pages we call "text" (Wood). From an assemblage theory point of view, Wood's interpretation liberates the analyst to widen the scope of what is part of the network or part of a larger assemblage within which the network under consideration exists.

"measured not by the uniqueness of private experience but by abstract uniform units gradually pervades all sense life, much as does the technology of writing and printing" (199). This "sense life," the expansive range of senses that extend far beyond the traditional five, is changed by an awareness of mechanized, calibrated time. McLuhan explains, "The effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance" (31). Technology changes the human sensory experience; matter changes the human sensory experience. McLuhan writes, "For the 'message' of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs" (20). This is to say, for example, that the critical impact of the steam-powered printing press was not a sudden influx of specific books or periodicals into the reading public. The critical impact of the steam-powered printing press was the change in the human expectation of a level of speed at which information was shared, and an expectation of how widely the information could be and should be shared.

The technology of the automated clock, for example, tethered people (or plugged them into) other machines, and for nineteenth-century British people, one of the most influencing machines was the growing rail system. Richard Altick, commenting on the Victorian experience, writes, "Now the shadow creeping across a sundial was replaced by the minute hand of a pocket watch as its owner anxiously compared it with a railway timetable" (*Victorian People* 97). A thriving and expanding railway system, connecting London to English coasts and all the way up to Glasgow, meant bodies and goods could be moved more quickly, but that also generated expectations and anxieties about being late, which meant that humans had to be plugged into the watch machines they carried with them. McLuhan also uses the railway system to further make his point regarding the influence of technology on human affairs, and his use of the railway

speaks directly to the momentous changes in nineteenth-century Britain. He writes, "The railway did not introduce movement or transportation or wheel or road into human society, but it accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions, creating totally new kinds of cities and new kinds of work and leisure" (20). The railways changed expectations of how fast and how far one could *expect* to move, and with expectation comes anxiety. The boundaries of cities and work are woven into time: if a train can accelerate the time it takes for a human to travel from a home at the outskirts of the city into the metropolis, cities can grow. If the train can expand the boundaries of a periodical's circulation, humans will expect nothing less.

This new sense of minute-by-minute mechanized time was occurring at the same time the disciplines of archeology and geology were peeling back the crust of the earth to reveal new conceptions of time and space. In their critical study, *The Victorian Serial*, Linda Hughes and Michael Lund note, "This enlarged sense of time [in the Victorian era] was conceived partly as an expanding sequence, partly as an accumulation of layers, a point given force by archaeologists' excavations and geologists' stratigraphic columns" (5). These disciplines of study (archeology and geology) function as machines into which desires, like the elevation of science as an ideal, the craving to know more, to be connected with a fantasy past, and to categorize, can be plugged. Time became inseparable from fossil fuels and resources sourced from outside of London and outside of England, thus both vertically (in terms of mining) as well as from colonies and other trade partners (horizontally across the globe in ships powered by steam produced by fire and coal).

The importation and exportation industry, as it surrounded and plugged into the nineteenth-century British publishing industry, is the initial focus of my project. Richard Maxwell and Toby Miller argue that literary criticism (or, as they write, "[e]ngagements with the

literary qualities of texts") is obligated to include an analysis of the totality of circumstance surrounding the object prior to and after production, including their nature of products of labor (179). One searing example of the global political and ecological impact of the nineteenth-century British publishing industry comes in the form of paper creation: in the early half of the nineteenth century, the British publishing industry was dependent on the cotton, harvested and shipped from their former colonies, the United States, to be used in English textile mills to produce rags – which then could be turned into paper. Of course, by the middle of the 1800s, England's former colonies were embroiled in a civil war over the continued enslavement of the people who picked the cotton to send to England for publishing. As Erickson notes, "the Northern blockade of Southern ports effectively halted the export of cotton to textile mills, in England, the price of paper rose, thus encouraging the development of new processes for making paper first from esparto grass and then from wood pulp" (170-171). In chapters four, five, and six, I describe and analyze these importation assemblages in more detail, bringing assemblage theory together with ecocriticism and the politicization of natural resources, particularly when recalling the environmental and spatial awareness in nineteenth-century Britain.

Another important machine, into which the nineteenth-century British publishing industry is plugged, is the machine of invention and patenting – the manufacturing industry which took metals, animal skins, paper, and ink to create steam-powered printing presses (and waste, in the form of smoke, for example, as the presses ran). German inventor, Friedrich Koenig, is generally credited with inventing and producing the steam-driven cylinder machine: in *Printing Presses: History & Development from the 15th Century to Modern Times,* James Moran describes Koenig's cylinder machine thus: "it carried a single cylinder, not a pair, and of quite different structure to the heavy pressing roller. It was hollow, and acting as platen and tympan [a pad],

impressed the paper on the inked forme in a rapid, sharp motion and not with a long crushing effect" (104). Koenig's invention was overlooked by many, but in a visionary move, John Walter II, owner of *The Times*, realized that the cylinder machine could revolutionize his production. Moran notes, "Walter accordingly ordered two steam-driven, double machines for *The Times*, to be ready in twelve months, with the proviso that none were to be sold during the lifetime of the patent within ten miles of the City of London" (107). In chapter four, I explore, in greater detail, not only the steam-powered printing press but also the specific effect of Koenig's machines on *The Times* and the workers displaced by them, including descriptions of the machines in action, such as comparing "rapid, sharp motion" as an evolution from "a long crushing effect."

Deleuze and Guattari also write specifically about what they call the "literary machine" in *A Thousand Plateaus*: "[W]hen one writes, the only question is which other machine the literary machine can be plugged into, must be plugged into in order to work" (4). The book is "a little machine," and requires being plugged into a machine that reflects the authors' desires; Deleuze and Guattari write that German author Heinrich von Kleist's work should be read while keeping in mind Kleist's engagement with, and desire for, what they call a "mad war machine," which for them is akin to anarchy (*A Thousand Plateaus* 4). With respect to Franz Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari identify the desire for "a most extraordinary bureaucratic machine" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 4). That is, Deleuze and Guattari argue that Kafka's work has been misread and misunderstood as internal introspections; they see Kafka's work as only coming to life after recognizing (and plugging the work into, to carry the metaphor) Kafka's critical engagement with the machines of State and laws (*Anti-Oedipus* 198). One can understand literature only when one can see, not just the social and political contextual environment, but the literature as being connected, inextricably to the human and nonhuman systems that influenced it and are

being influenced *by* it. These connections and interactions must be contended with for a full picture of the impact of the work.

Assemblages plugging in and out of each other are not spontaneously born; assemblages are driven by the machine of desire. Desire is the great and all-encompassing driver, as Deleuze and Guattari explain in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*; they describe how desire drives, but not in the internal way Freud describes. Rather than labeling every instinct as a libidinal desire for Mother and fear of castration, Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire is omnipresent in the form of production. They write, "Production as process overtakes all idealistic categories and constitutes a cycle whose relationship to desire is that of an immanent principle" (*Anti-Oedipus* 5). The process of production is more than an ideology; it is desire manifested into action, forever acting. Feminist scholar Karen Barad expounds on perpetual motion in "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," where they put the emphasis not on existing to make meaning, but that meaning is produced through action and acting (815). Barad focuses on what they call "apparatuses" being performative – that assemblages act rather than passively exist. Their explanation of acting and especially becoming as critical elements of assemblages fuels my project's approach to the nineteenth-century British publishing industry as an action in constant motion, moving with other actions in constant motion, rather than a discrete object with clear limits, borders, and fixed hierarchies.

Unruly, undulating desire drives the nineteenth-century British publishing industry into that perpetual motion: desire for consumables, desire for replication, desire for power; Chapter four will examine these desiring machines with more detail. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari further demonstrate that desire is concurrent with production: rather than desire being a

fantasy, evidence of lacking an object, Deleuze and Guattari argue, "It is, rather, the subject that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject […] Desire is a machine, and the object of desire is another machine connected to it" (*Anti-Oedipus* 26). The desire for money and power is reproductive, just as libidinal desire is, they argue, and desire is a machine that drives further productions. In the case of Kafka, desire drives him to produce a book-machine that will plug into other machines, such as the reader and their machinic desiring processes (war-anarchy machines, for example, if the reader is plugged into resisting the State's insistence on socio-political hierarchy). Riches or power, for example, are not definite objects to be acquired, and so the desire for them cannot be quenched. The machine cannot achieve "fulfillment," because that would halt its action and it would no longer "be." Consumption is, for the moment, not the point. Desire is not static or fixed, so it cannot be made whole. Kafka's effort to produce his book, as he is plugged into the bureaucracy machine, does not fulfill his desire with the material book-machine.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explicitly link assemblage with passion and desire: "Assemblages are passional, they are compositions of desire. Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but assembling, assembled, desire" (399). Everything, including desire, is a process and an action, including, for example, the reader who picks the book-machine up – the reader (an assemblage themselves) reads, with neurons firing. The reader-machine is changed through the thought processes and the chemicals flowing; then, the reader-machine is plugged into other machines, beyond the book, and the reader-machine affects those machines.

Those assemblage-machines of the nineteenth-century British publishing industry are also filled with fluctuation and chaos, as failures and bankruptcies were a regular occurrence,

particularly during the crises of 1826-30 and 1865-66 (Weedon 158). These short-circuits in the smooth functioning of the publishing house assembly-machines were a common occurrence and, to some extent, priced in as part of the gig; more directly, bankruptcies were not one-offs, but rather key parts to the assemblage story. The desire, driving the assembly-machines, did not decrease in the wake of a financial loss or a stalled venture: Deleuze and Guattari describe the process of desire (and of assemblages) as neither linear nor horizontal; rather it is in action all the time, always extending, interfering, overlapping, and moving. For example, the notion of a book-machine as inert, or as an object with fixed meanings and boundaries, that has one true reading, is mistaken. A text's value does not depend on the absence of error (for example, a "good" novel must avoid plot holes, or must not have too much sentimentality). As Deleuze and Guattari describe, "In desiring-machines everything functions at the same time, but amid hiatuses and ruptures […] stalling and short circuits, distances and fragmentations, within a sum that never succeeds in bringing its various parts together so as to form a whole" (*Anti-Oedipus* 42). Each fit and start is itself a process to be accounted for, and the goal of the observer is to resist creating a neat narrative that tries to account for every continuous moving part. Any urge to omit the "short circuits" or "ruptures" from the description of the machine to cobble together a cohesive narrative is to misread the machine's ongoing state of action.

Thus, rhizomatic mapping is an effective way of treating ideology and human-nonhuman elements as an assemblage. This action is derived from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, where they describe rhizomes in contrast to an "arborescent model," which offers a hierarchical framework that appeals to homogeneity and hegemony. Deleuze and Guattari write, "A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (7). They further explain,

"The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers. When rats swarm over each other. The rhizome includes the best and the worst: potato and couchgrass, or the weed" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 5**).** Rhizomatic thinking, and subsequent mapping, encourages the mapper to account for the elements that do not seem congruous and to privilege them.

In "The Rhizome and The Pack: Liminal Literacy Formations with Political Teeth," George Kamberelis employs Deleuze and Guattari's work to assess literacy formation in social justice movements. He writes, "Rhizomes are networks. Rhizomes cut across borders. Rhizomes build links between pre-existing gaps and between nodes that are separated by categories and orders of segmented thinking, acting, and being" (164). Deleuze and Guattari lay out this strategy: "The rhizome is altogether different, a map and not a tracing. Make a map, not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 12).

Deleuze and Guattari point out that most useful aspect of rhizomes and the way they lend themselves to mapping: "[T]he rhizome […] has multiple entryways; in this sense, the burrow is an animal rhizome, and sometimes maintains a clear distinction between the line of flight as passageway and storage or living […] A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back 'to the same'" (12). Kamberelis echoes this sentiment: "The map is oriented to experimentation and adoption. Maps have multiple entryways. Unlike tracings, maps are based on rhizomatic or essentially unpredictable articulations of material reality" (165). In their analysis of student literacy performances, Kevin M. Leander and Deborah Wells Rowe write that "rhizoanalysis," "shifts from concerns about meaning […] to questions of production:

What effects (and affective intensities) are being produced through the relations of these images" (434). They suggest that "Rhizoanalysis transforms our focus on the interaction as a stable 'text' to be 'read' and interprets it as a constantly moving configuration that is ripe with potential for diverge" (Leander and Rowe 435).

Geographers employ assemblage theory to help explain systems ostensibly driven by humans, but which cannot be fully accounted for without a theory that embraces chaos, power shifts, and continuous movement. Political geographer Martin Müller and feminist geographer Carolin Schurr offer an example of how assemblage theory (in concert with more recently developed ANT aspects) is useful in explicating a system such as the global market for assisted reproduction. In "Assemblage Thinking and Actor-Network Theory: Conjunctions, Disjunctions, Cross-Fertilisations," Müller and Schurr describe how important "network fluidity" (a concept they attribute to Annemarie Mol and John Law, who move ANT closer to assemblage theory) in the context of assisted reproduction. Müller and Schurr write, "'My Baby' [the global company orchestrating assisted reproduction] achieves constancy by shifting its boundaries and internal structures incrementally: when new branches open, structures, contents and business strategies are not transported immutably but are transformed and translated through mediators such as country managers […] or new Facebook campaigns" (223). A second critical feature, which assemblage theory helps explain, is the high rate of failure in IVF (Müller and Schurr note that only 20-50 per cent of attempts result in a live birth): "Failure is thus the default option, underscoring that the assisted reproduction assemblage is a fragile arrangement always at the brink of falling apart" (223). This fragility, with an outsized chance of failure, brings with it an emotional tension – certainly recognizable with IVF, but also within the nineteenth-century British publishing industry. Inspired by Leander and Rowe's application of rhizoanalysis of

diverse literacy skills, Kamberelis' application on social justice movements, and Müller and Schurr's application of assemblage theory to failing systems, I am using this project to demonstrate the fruitfulness of using rhizomatic mapping to understand nineteenth century serialized crime literature.

The failures and that chaos of the publishing industry assemblage include failures to account for the power of natural resources, such as coal, both then and now; assemblage theory is useful, then, because it foregrounds nonhuman contributors like grass, coal, tar, and pollution, permitting a more eco-conscious reading. More recent work on assemblages furthers the decentering of the human agents, which is important to an analysis of the nineteenth-century British publishing industry because the nonhuman contributors (such as metals, carbons, fibers, and poisons) are vital to the propulsion of the industry assemblage. Theorists differ in where to position the human, human interests, and human language in assemblage theories, as humans try to make sense of their surroundings by keeping themselves at the center of the relationships identified and understood. Barad argues that one cannot distinguish between the (human) observer and the observed, arguing that "phenomena are the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting 'components'" (815). Human and nonhuman assemblages function together, incessantly, and inseparably. But these relations between human and nonhuman assemblages are not waiting to be brought to life by human language. Elizabeth Grosz writes, "What things are, now, how they connect with each other, what relations exist between them may be beyond our capacities for knowing at any moment in history: this in no way lessens what there is" (Introduction). That is to say, all matter matters at the same time in the same space. Humans do not need to proactively think about how materials matter and bring them into being

discursively: materials are already in action, engaging, concurrently in action with or without humans talking about it.

Treating the nineteenth-century British publishing industry as an assemblage produces a case study of the industry that accounts for greater diversity in contributors; that is, assemblage theory affords incorporating esparto grass and smoke as contributors to the ever-moving machine. The diversity, on which my project focuses, includes elemental, fibrous, and fossil fuel-based contributors. The growth of geology as a field in the nineteenth century, contemporary media studies work using geology, and the work of geologists themselves, inform my strategy to map out the way contributors like metal and paper are acting and *becoming*. I focus on the term "becoming," the term Barad employs in "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," because the term demands assemblages be seen as anything but fixed and static, neat, and definable. This focus – on the inevitability of nonhuman contributors like metal, paper, and waste, and on unceasing action that characterizes their presence in assemblages – also leads my project closer to the kind of eco-awareness advocated by Jane Bennett in *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, which is important because nonhuman matter is essential to the literature and culture of the nineteenth century, and the ever-evolving ecological contributors often signal the presence of fissures or breaks that are not anomalies but critical parts of the assessment of all assemblages.

Barad also pushes back on absolutes and binaries, however, arguing that their concept, "agential realism," avoids turning relationships into things that are apart or pre-exist the relationship. They aim to avoid "[t]he geometries of absolute exteriority or interiority, and the theorization of the human as either pure cause or pure effect," making certain that the humans do not perceive themselves as disconnected (or individualized) from the active participation in

"knowing and becoming" (Barad 812). There is no such thing as "interior," because there is no such thing as "exterior," if all matter is concurrently in being and becoming. Humans make the mistake of assuming, narcissistically, that their selves are spiritually unique, essentially separate from other material (which, in this case, is not "other" at all, in an existence where all matter is intra-connected). Grosz writes that her goal in *Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism*, is to enable humans to "understand matter as always more than itself, as containing possibility" (Introduction). My project adapts this mindset of recognizing the possibilities within matter and applies it to the nineteenth-century British publishing industry. For example, in chapter five, I focus on the geopolitics behind the acquisition of cotton and esparto grass as a critical prelude to the forthcoming literary analysis. A literary analysis of *The Moonstone* is insufficient if colonialism, for example, is treated only as an ideology. Colonialism must be treated as an assemblage composed of other assemblages making meaning through matter.

Here lies the conundrum: I cannot get out of my own way, rhetorically, as a human observer. Given that humans only have human language to represent this agential intra-acting, Jane Bennett offers some practical advice. In *Vibrant Matter*, she argues that "[w]e need to cultivate a bit of anthropomorphism – the idea that human agency has some echoes in nonhuman nature – to counter the narcissism of humans in charge of the world" (Bennett xvi). Bennett's theory development and model for theory application, in *Vibrant Matter*, is at the heart of my use of rhizomatic analysis in large part because Bennett challenges herself and others to engage in more political, effective action through case studies. The nineteenth-century British publishing industry works well as a case study because it fits the characteristics previously described: it is an assemblage comprised of many assemblages; as an assemblage, it is in constant motion and it resists boundaries; it is comprised of human and non-human components; and it is chaotic.

Bennett's work on what she calls "vibrant matter" is a critical synthesis of these various strands. The importance lies in Bennett's demonstration of how to "read" assemblages as active events with meaningful relationships between contributors. Bennett explains that she chooses "assemblage," as Deleuze and Guattari use the term, to represent "the kind of relation obtaining between the parts of a volatile but somehow functioning whole" (23), thus accounting for chaos and the ebbs and flows of power when analyzing an event like the North American blackouts in 2003 as "vibrant matter" (21-36). She renders a seemingly hierarchical system – a power grid, designed and manipulated by humans "in charge" of distributing and collecting money from other humans for electric energy – as a process in action, "affective bodies" (Bennett 24) with agency that is "something distributed along a continuum, extrude[ing] from multiple sites or many loci" (Bennett 28). Bennett perceives power within contributors like electricity, but she is also able to distinguish the effects of reactive power, legislation, values, beliefs, and wood, as having agency and varying degrees of power in themselves. This is the same approach taken in chapter five with respect to the nineteenth-century British publishing industry to show the geopolitics and intra-connections of papermaking.

To sum up, using a rhizomatic mapping framework reveals how the nineteenth-century British publishing industry is a map of ecological relationships, of interacting assemblages. These assemblages (including the mining activity in Wallsend to esparto grass imports from North Africa and typesetters in London) are constantly in motion, and are continuously plugged into other assemblage-machines, including other industries like textile and mining, as well as the Imperialism and colonization machines. After first using this theoretical framework to name and describe the relationships found in these many moving assemblages, my project moves into application, where ecological relationships (characterized as poisonous, fragile, timely,

exploitative, and uncontrollable), can be further charted as they appear in examples of serialized fiction. Examining these texts affords me the opportunity to demonstrate a greener reading of literature considered to be of dubious quality.

CHAPTER III

A REVIEW OF THE PROJECT'S METHODOLOGY

"Thus spoke the grid."
—Jane Bennet, *Vibrant Matter*, p. 36.

In "The Adventure of The Abbey Grange," Sherlock Holmes delivers this withering criticism of Dr. John Watson's writing:

> "Your fatal habit of looking at everything from the point of view of a story instead of as a scientific exercise has ruined what might have been an instructive and even classical series of demonstrations. You slur over work of the utmost finesse and delicacy in order to dwell upon sensational details which may excite, but cannot possibly instruct, the reader." (Doyle Abbey Grange 244)

Poor Watson bristles at the criticism; perhaps his intention was to thrill rather than educate. My objectives with this project include sharing a particular way of approaching literature that can be replicated in perpetuity. Thus, to avoid such similar criticism, let me offer the reader a road map to execute similar analyses to mine. Rather than "dwell[ing] upon sensational details which may excite, but cannot possibly instruct, the reader," here are a series of steps and choices that will serve as a guide to not only understanding the following chapters but permit a replication of my analyses.

Rhizomatic literary analysis ultimately identifies patterns and themes within the literature, and the reader may choose to lean into one pattern or theme over another to write a cohesive and coherent analysis of the literature at hand. That does not indicate the presence of a singular reading, and the reader will want to note moments where the analysis could have departed from the chosen theme, indicating consistently that the work is made up of many

avenues ripe for exploration. The most important strategy, then, is to clearly point out the relationships between the details one has identified as important, explicitly explaining the threads of thought (from the point of view of the reader-now-writer, how one element or detail inspired the hunt for and explication of the next element or detail) and the explicitly describing the qualities of the relationships uncovered.

The process begins with data collection from within text and from outside of the text – for example, a passage in the text may hint at technology that was available to the people of the time, and the reader, reading rhizomatically, may pause and take up a line of inquiry into that technology, examining the process by which the technology was brought to fruition, the legal and political circumstances of the time that may have impacted the process, and the social environment into which this technology emerged. This interdisciplinary approach is critical if one understands that the assemblage artifact of study is necessarily interdisciplinary and helps the reader to more fully analyze the multi-discipline threads that emerge through the dissection of the assemblage(s). Put another way, the power of this analytical approach is that it endeavors to account for as many factors within and especially outside of traditional literary theories, and the reader can only begin to identify and usefully describe the different factors and the emerging relationships if they are driven to investigate other disciplinary realms, such as history, architecture, botany, biology, metallurgy, and such, depending on the different threads the reader initially perceives. An interdisciplinary approach is the best way to untangle the seemingly Gordian Knot, as many assemblages present themselves. This research leads the reader to disciplines far outside of the literary scope and that is by design – if one takes the position, suggested thematically by the structure of a rhizome, that elements human and nonhuman are connected, not one on top of the other but in overlapping, undergirding, and threading ways, then

surely the reader will be compelled to step outside of their nominal discipline and engage with many other bodies of work. This engagement with many other bodies of work offers opportunities for the reader to more accurately describe and more precisely analyze the relationships uncovered between the human and nonhuman elements. As the reader steps out of their main discipline and into other fields and their attending theories, the reader will have the opportunity to perceive even more elements and learn about even more ways to describe the perceived relationships. In this way, the reader is embodying the ethos of rhizomatic researching, as they allow themselves to read into other fields and other bodies of theoretical knowledge that may not be routinely associated with literary studies. The reader allows the inquiry to follow a more lateral path, through one discipline into another that may not seem overtly related, staying committed to the threads of inquiry that started their journey rather than adhering to a rigid, canonically approved disciplinary field with established boundaries.

Thus, the reader is looking for patterns and themes with no preset categories of analysis for those specific patterns and themes. Rather, the reader is looking for relationships between a wide-ranging group of human and nonhuman materials and analyzing said matter. In the preface to *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Jane Bennett argues, "A guiding question: How would political responses to public problems change were we to take seriously the vitality of (nonhuman) bodies? By 'vitality' I mean the capacity of things: edibles, commodities, storms, metals-not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own" (viii). For this type of research, the guiding question would read: "How would reader responses to literature change were we to take seriously the vitality of non-human bodies?" Bennett's explanation of the word "vitality" is critical, as well, to the change to preconceived notions about what, if any, influence

nonhuman matter could possibly have on literature. Vitality in this analytic context means that the material has qualities about it that are discernable and describable, and that the reader can learn more about how other materials (human and nonhuman) interact with the material at hand. Vitality – the state of being strong and active, of having energy – is slightly different than "agency," which refers to "ability or capacity to act or exert power; active working or operation; action, activity" ("Agency"). Agency suggests evaluations of efficacy, where vitality is more purely descriptive under analysis. Matter analysis for the purpose of literary analysis should be more descriptive and more concerned with identifying relationships and points of tension, as opposed to evaluating the efficacy of the power exerted.

Matter, in this case, refers to material that is human and nonhuman, fictive and non-fictive, including textual characters, plot points, fictional settings, the raw materials used to make objects in the texts, objects that existed contemporaneously with the fictive world, as well as the people, places, flora, fauna, and inanimate "things" that existed during that time that may have influenced any aspect of the author or fiction product. The scope described is immense and is meant to reflect the open-ended positioning of the reader, not the research demands. As the reader is identifying the relationships between materials and choosing which relationships and patterns to foreground, the reader will begin to develop a more complete picture of each material node that is part of the relationship being explored. Zeroing in on a select few relationships or patterns to trace will necessarily limit the number of material nodes the reader is going to explore more fully.

Material node exploration includes learning more about the history and physical makeup of the material. Often, the visible material nodes that are most easily perceived (as being in relationship with other nodes) need to be deconstructed to see what nodes comprise them. That

is, the reader looks to see if the material is composed of many other materials or components. The reader is looking for descriptions of compositions and qualities of the materials and components: in the case of nonhuman matter (fictive or not), that includes investigating chemical makeups, historical usage, and development history. The reader is ultimately looking for information related to the material nodes that echo or contradict the relationship that the reader has been perceiving during the surface-level analysis. When describing findings, the reader should acknowledge points where the analysis of the material nodes began to diverge or disengage from the relationship they have chosen to explore.

The process for selecting artifacts for analysis starts when the reader considers four variables: is the reader interested in a particular era of time? Is the reader interested in a particular ideological phenomenon? Is the reader interested in a particular technological process that produces a cultural product? Is the reader interested in a particular text or genre of writing? Selecting artifacts can begin with the answer to any of these questions, but the choice of artifacts will be impacted by answers to all these questions. If, for example, one is interested in nineteenth-century British serialized literature, and the idea that Imperialist ideology was buoyed by periodicals, then one has answered three of the questions above (time, text/genre, and ideology). The reader will then consider what technological processes produced the cultural product (steam-powered printing press) and begin to disassemble the assemblages.

The reader could begin, however, with technology and look with curiosity for a different genre of text – in the example above, the reader could be drawn to temperance periodicals, or comedic periodicals such as Fun and Punch. The reader would then be obliged to learn more about the genres, commit to a period, and consider what ideology is being produced through the text being created via the first-chosen technology. Any of the four questions offers an entry point

for the reader to then research answers to the other three. The reader also does not have to use the largest and most central technological object as the focal piece (such as the steam-powered printing press) – one could look at any number of technologies that feed into the printing press, such as the paper mills and paper creators. The reader should treat the concept of "technology" broadly and choose a process that they feel is rich with assemblages.

These four questions can also serve as guardrails for determining where the analysis should conclude. As suggested above, a rhizomatic analysis will have many different threads and tendrils that one could take, and thus, working to narrow one's answers to the four questions posed will help keep the focus of the analysis tight, keep the number of artifacts manageable, and give the reader the ability to describe the boundaries they observed. If one sets the following boundaries (nineteenth-century British serialized crime fiction, steam-powered printing press, Imperialism), then no matter how much one is tempted to follow a thread of psychoanalytic theory as one of the analysis threads, one must curtail that stream (though they should note that it is viable for future study). Similarly, one must avoid going beyond the nineteenth century, no matter how alluring a serialized crime fiction story from the 1920s appears (again, note this in the analysis to describe a potential tendril of inquiry). Depending on the scale of the intended analysis, the answers to the four questions may need to be narrowed even after the inquiry has begun, in order to afford the kind of depth of assemblage-disassembling and thread-following that must occur to achieve the "rhizomatic" part of this analysis.

The seeds of this project were planted in 2005, while taking Rajani Sudan's course, "Sex in the City in the Eighteenth Century" at Southern Methodist University; Sudan's description of her search for the origins of col-tan and the relationship between that mineral and a gift she wanted to give to a loved one has stayed with me ever since. In her book, *The Alchemy of*

Empire, Sudan offers a model for looking at many marginalized stakeholders within systems; she pulls together the theoretical framework that attempts to account for all these moving pieces, when she writes, "[c]onnections between trauma, trade, and global position may be read through the intersection of material geography and the psychosocial formation of nation" (154). Her work focuses on the eighteenth century, and geographically on the relationship between India and the British Empire, but Sudan performs the type of system-focused deconstruction of contemporaneous literary texts that could be similarly performed on nineteenth-century serial publications.

As a keen admirer of Arthur Conan Doyle's 56 short stories and four novels which feature Sherlock Holmes, I found myself interested in the publishing industry against which Doyle so famously resisted. I knew of Doyle's disappointment with his success as a writer of crime fiction, and how the market pressures felt by George Newnes, publisher of *The Strand Magazine,* influenced Newnes' desire to produce "cheap, healthful literature" (Newnes 3). Laura Buchholz suggested a primer list of titles for me to read to understand more clearly the industry at the time, including books by John Feather, Richard Altick, Linda K. Hughes, and Michael Lund. From that initial list, I began to collect books such as Alexis Weedon's *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market* and N. N. Feltes' *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels*.

This project would have been impossible without access to ProQuest's *The British Periodicals* database and the *British Library Newspapers* database, access which I earn as a current Old Dominion University student who pays tuition in a timely manner. Before I could begin any literary analyses, I had to start with educating myself as to the human and non-human materials in question which operated through these many assemblages. ProQuest's *The British*

Periodicals database is divided into four collections; as of 2023, Old Dominion University has purchased access to two, British Periodicals Collection I and II. British Periodicals Collection I features the UMI microfilm collection Early British Periodicals, "the equivalent of 5,238 printed volumes containing approximately 3.1 million pages" ("About British Periodicals"). British Periodicals Collection II features scans from more than 300 journals, "amounting to almost 3 million pages" ("About British Periodicals"). Many choices were made along the way, including what journals and papers to archive over the centuries, to present decisions about what papers would be scanned, who would be hired or volunteered to scan them, and where these scans would be housed. In a future iteration of this dissertation project, I would like to engage in more detective work to parse out more of the ProQuest *The British Periodicals* collection, as these choices involve labor, environmental, and ethical elements that impacted my work, overtly and inadvertently.

My primary method of data collection for this project was to search through these two databases for primary sources and documents. First, I wanted to have scans of the serialized literature I was analyzing as it appeared in the serialized publications. Changes, large and small, were often made to literature that had once been serialized but later collected into single bound novels or published (legally or otherwise) in other publications – I was aware of discrepancies in Doyle's Sherlock Holmes thanks to Leslie Klinger's *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* volumes, where he notes differences between editions.

Both *The British Periodicals* database and the *British Library Newspapers* turned up primary sources that helped me gain greater understanding of the assemblages I was investigating, yet I must also credit sites like YouTube and general internet searching to find government documents like "Opium Poppy Cultivation and Heroin Processing in Southeast

Asia," published by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in September 1992. These searches represented the most aggressive rhizomatic mapping activities and were the most time-consuming elements of my analysis. As a student of literature, I was routinely stumped by the historical and industrial questions my analysis presented – for example, I lost approximately a week trying to confirm how people historically harvested opium. I needed to confirm what sort of tools were used, what they were made of, what the cuts on the bulb looked like, to learn what other questions I should be asking about the relationship between the metal sickle-shaped knife and the character Ezra Jennings. Of course, sometimes my rabbit-hole searches yielded merely interesting facts, but often, they changed the direction of my investigation. Part of my method, therefore, was dependent on my ability to take my time and follow a lead as far as possible. I recognize the luxury of that position; taking as much time as I have also put me in a position to see how this rhizomatic mapping framework could directly apply to generative AI. My research into generative AI did not begin until February 2023, and so my protracted research period made it possible to see how this dissertation project had present-day applications.

I attempted to simultaneously explicate the texts I had chosen and continued following the threads of materials and matter present in the world these texts were being created. Therefore, I was closely reading the texts while bearing in mind the machines into which the book-machines should be plugged, as Deleuze and Guattari would suggest, which bore evidence of chaotic textual relationships that reflected the Imperial context into which they were born. Finding and evaluating these relationships takes the literary analysis past a tidy, contained reading; a rhizomatic mapping framework liberates textual messiness, affording an "excavate, embed, relate" heuristic of identifying and describing relationships between, that mirror and potentially enhance our understanding of the assemblage that ultimately created the work. The

analyst avoids a reading based on prescriptive methods by embedding themselves as both the affected and the effecter with an eye towards all contributors, and then identifies and describes relationships between the contributors within assemblages. Finally, the representative relationships in *The Moonstone, Lady Audley's Secret,* and several Sherlock Holmes stories were turned into digital map experiences via Esri StoryMaps, affording the reader to move through environments that emphasize the relationships (poisonous, timely, fragile, exploitative, uncontrolled, and wasteful).

This methodology for analyzing the nineteenth-century British publishing industry assemblage, and its resulting products (serial fiction), is also inspired by media theorist Marshall McLuhan's concept of mechanization. In *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* he writes, "In terms of the ways in which the machine altered our relations to one another and to ourselves, it mattered not in the least whether it turned out cornflakes or Cadillacs" (19). In other words, if analysts are trying to understand the impact industrialization has on people, their focus should be on the machines at work, and the way machines inspire and change people's relationships. Too often, analysts jump right to the product (cornflakes or Cadillacs) and assess how those products impact consumers. My project takes up that call – to focus first on the relationships created by the nineteenth-century British publishing industry assemblage-machine, and the way it altered one's relationship to oneself, and relationships with other humans. Indeed, my project goes further than considering only the humans in the assemblage, to take up relationships between all contributors (elements, pollution, train tracks, for example). I focus specifically on the contributors of metal, paper, and waste, and treat them as ever acting, ever destabilizing assemblages, in order to treat the ecological elements as important as the human elements. The methodology described below – which outlines an immanent, inclusive reading

and analysis – is designed to also analyze production industries, and in a future project, could be used to analyze other production industries, most immediately the industry developing around generative AI.

Creating a multidimensional assemblage portrait of the nineteenth-century British publishing industry means bringing together history and facts about, for example, the use of steam to power presses and the chemical makeup of the ink used. The nineteenth century in Britain was a time of Imperial, social, technological, and scientific growth, with momentous developments in technology and an awareness of geology, and the publishing industry was also experiencing an ascendency. In *Victorian People*, Richard Altick notes, "From a sleepy, unimportant trade whose practices differed little from those prevailing in Shakespeare's time [the publishing industry] had grown into a bustling business, as inventive, competitive, and specialized as any other branch of Victorian commerce" (*Victorian People* 65). Altick's descriptive language – "unimportant" transformed into "bustling" – echoes the energy of Karen Barad's notion of "becoming." "Becoming" is not how I interpret Altick imagining busy print shops with gears cranking and booksellers hawking their wares (i.e., the humans). Rather, in my vision, "becoming" looks like ecological contributors from across the globe plugging into the publishing assemblage, everything in motion. Choosing to focus on serialization and serialized literature affords me the opportunity to focus on a format that is the most dynamic of the fiction-publishing formats, constantly in motion, with raw material sources and production houses always in flux. Serial publishing was not a new format – examples can be found in the late seventeenth century (Feather 125); however, when publishers Chapman and Hall entreated Charles Dickens to write copy for a series of comic illustrations in 1836, the serial printing

format flourished. *The Pickwick Papers* eventually became the first best-seller since Walter Scott's death (Feather 125).

My close reading of the steam-powered printing press, and the many assemblages into which it is connected and comprised of, is loosely inspired by Bruno Latour's idea of "thick descriptions." Latour argues that too often, contemporary theorists want to consider objects in their sum, in the abstract to see systems as equal parts. Rather, theorists must also be willing to see the discrete pieces that comprise the system, "the parts themselves go their own ways and follow, so to speak, their own directions" ("Can We Get Our Materialism Back" 139). To illustrate his point, Latour describes how the shuttle *Challenger* was, after the disaster, so much more than an abstract image, but rather a collection of on-the-ground engineers, the legal team from NASA, the metal and materials that made up the shuttle structure, and (one can imagine) the parts of bodies sent flying into the air. Latour calls this a "thick description" ("Can We Get Our Materialism Back" 142). Thick descriptions can also be found in Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. For Gilroy, the slave ship, transporting black people across the Atlantic in what he calls "the first of the novel chronotopes[6]," provides an opportunity to engage with modes of production, nationalisms, the narratives of the subaltern, and the movement of black bodies, among other ideas (17). My analytical strategy is further informed by Bennet's incisive analysis of the North American blackout of 2003. She writes, "The electrical grid, by blacking out, lit up quite a lot: the shabby condition of the public-utilities infrastructure […] the […] accelerating consumption of energy by North Americans, and the

[6] Mikhail Bakhtin describes the chronotope in this way: "In the literary artistic chronotope, special and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, because artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (84). Thus, the ship laden with enslaved people is slow time and thick space, separating families, moving battered, fleshy bodies in pursuit of fragile power, slotting those bodies into place to prop up Imperial ideologies.

element of unpredictability marking assemblages composed of intersecting and resonating elements" (Bennett 36). I believed, immediately, that one could use the principles she espoused, along with literary criticism practices and historical research, to "black out" the traditional values of author-centric literary critique and illuminate the "intersecting and resonating elements" moving in and out of the nineteenth-century publishing industry. Bennet suggests, "Thus spoke the grid. One might even say that it exhibited a communicative interest" (Bennett 36). The trade in trauma of the nineteenth century also wanted to speak out and show itself, and I have endeavored to listen closely.

The final part of my project is to create an experience that fulfills the mission set forth by Bennett in *Vibrant Matters*, which is to enable a more aware and empathetic response to a world of human-nonhuman assemblages. Bennett talks about being naïve and having an open-ended comportment (xv) – a posture of radical empathy can be most effectively achieved by putting oneself right there, in the relationships**.** Scholars like Souvik Mukherjee, for example, argue persuasively that video games which employ cartographic aspects more fully immerse players within games that explore colonial conditions. Mukherjee notes that "cartography has always been a key element in the colonial construction of space" (507), and while noting Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's argument that the subaltern cannot articulate itself, Mukherjee presents video games as a space where players can challenge the structures that create marginalized, "voiceless" communities (505). In other words, as the player, I cannot become the subaltern, and the subaltern cannot articulate itself through the game (the subaltern would no longer be subaltern in that case). What I can do, as a player navigating a game that seems to reinforce colonial principles, is to subvert traditional gameplay, to resist those colonizing impulses and modify my gameplay, even if I cannot change the game.

CHAPTER IV

POISONS AND PATHOLOGY IN *LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET*

> "The society which reads and encourages such literature is a 'whited sepluchre' which, if it be not speedily cleaned by the joint effort of pure men and women, will breed a pestilence so foul as to poison the very life-blood of our nation."
> —Vincent E. H. Murray, "Ouida's Novels," p. 935.

On September 20th, 1879, the *British Medical Journal* published a letter from a 19-year-old student at the University of Edinburgh Medical School, entitled "Gelseminum as a Poison." The student notes in his letter that, due to "a persistent neuralgia" [nerve pain], he has been consuming "the tincture of gelseminum to a considerable extent" ("Letters, Notes, And Answers To Correspondents" 483). As a student of medicine, however, he is committed to the scientific process and to testing potential pharmacological interventions that may help fellow nerve pain sufferers. After having "several times overstepped the maximum doses of the text-books without suffering any ill effects," he endeavors to properly test the physical effects of escalating exposure to the plant tincture, using himself as the test case. Over the course of a week, he describes taking an increased dose of tincture, and records his symptoms, noting that on Wednesday, he "became seized with an extreme giddiness and weakness of the limbs, which, however, quickly passed off." He only ceased his experimentation when his vision falters, he experiences a headache, diarrhea, a weak pulse, and "great depression." The young man offers four conclusions at the end of his letter, including "The system may learn to tolerate gelseminum, as it may opium, if it be gradually inured to it" (483).

This enterprising student, so entranced by the dual nature of gelseminum as a pain reliever and a debilitating poison, was none other than Arthur Conan Doyle. One can imagine

they see the sketches of Doyle's future serial crime fiction writing — either from the point of view of the villainous poisoner or the hero, Sherlock Holmes, prepared to do anything to solve the case. Doyle treats his body as an experimental landscape, a neutral ground, upon which he meticulously maps out the effects of gelseminum, a plant native to the Americas, China, and South Asia (notably, North America and South Asia were sites of British colonial efforts) (Ornduff 12-13). Doyle's seeming lack of fear of taking a poisonous tincture into his body — a poisonous tincture derived from a plant acquired from these contested locations — suggests an attitude based on his status as a young, otherwise healthy, athletic, educated white Protestant male in this late nineteenth century environment.

Doyle's noble pursuit of knowledge and his seemingly selfless act of jeopardizing his health to unlock the secret benefits of a known poison, stands in contrast to the portrayal of weak-willed readers who would unknowingly corrupt themselves intaking volumes and volumes of ignoble, inherently poisonous, sick sensational literature, such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon's serialized novel, *Lady Audley's Secret.* Contemporaneous criticism pointed to the harmful and degraded nature of sensational fiction, leading one to believe that such literature (and the women who wrote and read the genre), were to blame for general social and political instability in nineteenth-century Britain. Those elements are, however, *red herrings* – a term that appears for the first time, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, in *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, where William Cobbett describes "dragging a red-herring, tied to a string, four or five miles over hedges and ditches [...] till we got to a point, whence we were pretty sure the hunters would not return to the spot where they had thrown off" ("Summary of Politics" 232). Cobbett compares the "editors and proprietors of the London daily press" to the hounds' gullibility when it comes to sussing out accurate stories regarding the Napoleonic wars. I use the term "red herring," then,

mindful of the reference to the London daily press, who may have been swift to assign blame in the wrong places as they professed their fealty to accuracy. In the case of sensational serial fiction, critics who assign blame to its readership, and the female characters contained within, for immorality and degradation are aiming at the wrong sources.

These red herrings divert attention from the more acute source of poison coursing through communities and landscapes in the years leading up to and through the many printings of *Lady Audley's Secret*'s chapters: namely, the continued expansion of British Imperialism and the raw material insecurity within Britain's borders. As Patrick Brantlinger argues, "[M]any early Victorians took a keen interest in emigration, the 'opening up' of Africa, the Eastern Question, and even the China trade" (*Rule of Darkness* 4). In terms of literary analysis, we are more accustomed to perceiving the influence of Imperialism through characters who represent some aspect of colonization – one immediately thinks of Bertha Mason, the prototypical representation of foreign illness and disease. One can also think about Jane Fairfax, as depicted in *Emma*, discussing slavery from the position of governesses (Sudan 139). We can perceive a greater and deeper interconnectedness if we look to the materials – and include the human characters as part of the materials – that make up a networking system of actions and relationships that powerfully affect each other in ways visible and invisible. That is the inflection brought to the fore by approaching texts from a rhizomatic position described in chapter one – we are able to see everyone and everything as simply "*all materials*" which are engaged in dynamic relationships.

Returning to the body of Arthur Conan Doyle: Doyle, when he was a young, white, Protestant man of education, perhaps perceived himself as being naturally robust and relatively pure, and so he imagined himself willingly inviting the toxin into himself in a safe, controlled

manner. In his letter to *British Medical Journal*, Doyle does not speculate on the source of his "persistent neuralgia," which could have been caused by any number of maladies, including infection, pressure on the nerves from a tumor or injury, Multiple Sclerosis, or diabetes. Rather than investigate the internal cause, Doyle engages a known external toxin to introduce into the assemblage of physical and mental issues already at work (his body). Doyle was engaging in an arboristic analytical approach, working through the hierarchy of body, mind, and symptom. He was not looking critically at seemingly disparate elements that may be interacting to create cause-and-effect relationships.

A rhizomatic analytical approach reveals the disparate elements, and through applying such a framework, the dynamic relationship between what we are told makes us ill and imperiled and what actually does make people ill and imperiled is crystalized in *Lady Audley's Secret.* The plot pins the blame for disruptions to the landed gentry's life on Lucy's madness; the critics pinned the blame for social and moral decay on sensational literature, and Lucy's story brims with social and moral decay, as she abandons her child, commits bigamy, and attempts to commit murder twice. The narrative and the genre, however, are red herrings, in this case, if one is looking to pin blame for British degradation. The culprit, in fact, is the lackluster male detective (Robert Audley), who is evidence of the overarching malignancy infecting Britian, through his futile attempts to put things back in order, his grasping at vestiges of supremacy in the face of a changing world. Regarding the contemporaneous criticism, I argue that the expressed anxiety over the women sneaking into the aristocracy is well secondary to the anxiety that the "natural," "God-given" resources of England are in danger of collapse. That fear, though expressed symbolically in *Lady Audley's Secret*, is far more important than social games. The assemblage of the serialized crime fiction – specifically the printing presses and materials used to

produce the pages, facilitates the intermingling and blurring of "good" and "ill;" using a rhizomatic approach to map out the material history and literary evidence contained with *Lady Audley's Secret* reveals the substantial British threat: aimless white men. An arboristic analysis keeps the reader on the straight and narrow and prevents the reader from following diversions that lead to insufficient assessments. Thus, using a rhizomatic approach to illuminate the disparate elements at play is the correct approach to achieve a more comprehensive reading.

By mapping out how metals can be understood as assemblages, these metallic assemblages help the reader elucidate how sensationalism, as a genre, was imagined to be a poison. Close readings of the text illuminate how *Lady Audley's Secret* appears to suggest that the great poisonous threat is a social-climbing, ambitious woman, and how the text ultimately undermines that reading. Ultimately, the text exposes the amateur male detective as the real poisonous threat, with his general ineptness and his ambition. This conclusion demonstrates that while one is busy mapping out how the most important threats are external, one may be critically missing that the most important threats are internal and endemic. Using a rhizomatic analytic approach to "blackout" the textual red herrings in *Lady Audley's Secret* makes it easier for the reader to see what could, at first blush, be considered a trifle – the hapless Robert Audley. And yet, in examining such trifles, it becomes clear that Robert Audley is the greatest threat that must be neutralized if England wishes to prosper. Braddon cannot commit to that radical of a premise, so the text ends unevenly and unsatisfyingly.

Metal is one of the three assemblages I am taking up (the others being paper and waste), and in total, these assemblages represent three critical parts of the steam engine printing press assemblage, the machine that embodies the driving force and fallout of Imperialism. Metal is an impactful techne, globally driving innovation and capitalism, yet I am predominantly interested

in the role metal (and fossil fuels) play in the generation and sustainment of the publishing and Imperialism industries.

Metal, physically, is strong, malleable, and conductive. Jane Bennett asserts, "[M]etal is always metallurgical, always an alloy of the endeavors of the many bodies, always something worked on by geological, biological, and often human agencies. And human metalworks are themselves emergent effects of the vital materiality they work" (60). It is a part of all human bodies. It must be dug up, from the ground, to amass quantities significant enough for innovation and visible progress. In layman's terms, metal can be described as two atoms being metallically bonded together. "Metallically bonded" is defined as "in which the valence electrons are not localized as in covalent bonds but are capable of interacting with an indefinite number of the metal nuclei, which are arranged in a lattice formation" ("Metallic Bond, N."). The metallic bond produces many of the properties of metal that are most lucrative for literary analysis, including its strength, malleability, and conductivity. Of particular note to my analysis is iron's universality (as the most plentiful metal and a critical part of human physiology), and its relative ductility and chemical instability. Iron is susceptible to the elements and runs the risk of deterioration – it is engaged in a power struggle between external forces that compromise its integrity. Metal is acting and being acted upon – malleable, soft until bonded, and even then, difficult to handle but able to be manipulated.

Bennett writes that metal is an "endeavor of many bodies," which aptly describes the material's assemblage nature. Indeed, the primary metal in the printing assemblage, iron, is part of the assemblage of the Earth and the human body. In the abstract of their review of the history of iron, from the Big Bang onward, Sheftel et. al. writes, "Since life's addiction to iron transcends the oxygenation of the Earth's atmosphere, living things must be protected from the

potentially dangerous mix […]The human being possesses grams of this potentially toxic transition metal, which is shuttling through his oxygen-rich humor" (161). Humans take in iron through diet to supplement the iron found in blood which is lost and regenerated. Iron is at once necessary for mammalian life and a threat to that very life: "Though binding to Tf overcomes the toxicity and (in)solubility constraints that elemental iron poses to the organism [...] the cell [must] release iron from its tightly bound association with [transferrin] [...] [and] the metal must also be delivered to its site of use without generating harmful free radicals" (Sheftel et.al. 163). The notion of iron being transported and interacting with different elements that may or may not cause toxicity will be echoed in the history of iron smelting in Britain.

Iron is also an endeavor of many bodies – an assemblage – and it was integral to the Imperial development of Great Britain. In their book, *Baltic Iron in the Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century,* Chris Evans and Göran Rydén demonstrate the interconnectedness of Swedish and British ironwork development in previously uncharted ways, and in doing so, map out many useful trade routes that establish the importance of iron in the British Imperial system and psyche. Indeed, as they persuasively argue, "The nails and bolts into which it was hammered fastened the new urban fabric of Georgian Britain in place and held tolerably rigid the creaking sailing ships that carried ever greater volumes of commodities across the oceans" (Evans and Rydén vii). Evans and Rydén go on to note, "Iron—and its alloy steel—was there in the precision instruments of Enlightenment science, just as it was in the shackles that restrained enslaved Africans as they made their way to the plantations of the New World" (Evans and Rydén vii). Metal made trade possible – and that trade was about territorialism and aggression, the active matter of the ideology of Imperialism.

Evans and Rydén employ aspects of Immanuel Wallerstein's global commodity chain (GCC) to undertake their analysis of the role of iron; GCC identifies the contributors to a production chain that ends with a commodity. Evans and Rydén note that GCC is useful for perceiving the widest scope of a networked production chain, but that it is critical "for highlighting issues of 'territoriality' and 'governance.' Global commodity chains [...] traverse national frontiers and thereby pose questions about why certain functions are spatially distributed in the way that they are "(Evans and Rydén 18). Evans and Rydén zero in on the way "[...] the concentration of authority—for decision-making and profit extraction are powers that are spread unevenly, often very unevenly" (18). Ultimately, they declare GCC's main utility as being "an organising metaphor; it allows us to explore the multiple transactions and physical transmutations that *inter alia* took metallic matter from Bergslagen ore pits to the rice fields of the Carolinas" (Evans and Rydén 19). Evans and Rydén's method of applying GCC informs my application of elements of assemblage theory in the form of rhizomatic analysis, as I continue to chart human and non-human relationships that bring matter into action with each other to express meaning. For this project, the commodity I am interested in *reading* for evidence of those meaningful relationships is serialized crime fiction, though other contemporary creative artifacts will be covered in chapter six.

Evans and Rydén trace the history of Britain's tortured relationship to iron back to the eighteenth century, noting that after the Treaty of Utrecht, Britain had multiple sources of need for iron, including military action against France and growing colonial markets. Britain was not, however, prepared to meet that ample need: there was simply not enough charcoal available to process iron. British charcoal is made from wood extracted during woodland management, or as Evans and Rydén put it, "Despite the careful husbanding of coppice woods, the industry had hit a

production ceiling through which it could not break" (34). As the demand increased and the charcoal could not be scrounged, Britain was compelled to look to Sweden to supply the necessary iron to feed its growing colonies and fight its wars.

Mapping the fraught relationship between wood and metal – that is, how wood is seen as more representative or national identity, as opposed to iron's dubious origination – is essential for the analysis of *Lady Audley's Secret*. On Feb 16, 1861, the *London Review* published a piece titled "Iron Walls and Iron Roads," which captures an aspect of the anxiety surrounding metal's place and importance in the construction of English identity. The uncredited article, in summary, argues that iron is suspect, first as evidence of England's might being in question, and then because of its inherent fragility (of metal in general) which calls into question England's reliance upon it. Full of trepidation and anxiety, the author of "Iron Walls and Roads" ultimately worries that the superior iron is from foreign nations, and that England could reverse its fortunes by committing itself to producing a more superior iron product that rises to the level of England's innate greatness.

A few choice passages connect the fears of modernity with materials such as wood and metal. The author begins the article by invoking wood's historical importance to England: "The wooden walls of old England, with all their glorious associations, are threatened. The time is, probably, not far distant, when the Teutonic Vulcan will extend his dominions over the sea, and embrace the ocean in his iron chain" ("Iron Wall and Iron Roads" 167). The "Teutonic Vulcan" refers to Germany; Kindleberger explains that though Britain was world leader in manufacturing at the Great Exhibition of 1851, Krupp, the legacy Germanic manufacturing firm, exhibited technologically advanced cannons at the 1855 Paris Exhibition, while another German craftsman, August Borsig, won a prize for locomotives (Kindleberger 482).

The author continues his lament, writing, “An iron net-work is over our island; its meshes are yearly spreading; and, like the lion in the fable, we groan in our net, but with little prospect of being liberated there-from” (“Iron Walls and Iron Roads” 167). The iron net-work refers to now-prevalent use of iron throughout Britain, not only in the form of railroads and trains, but also in the form of the “iron-cased ships” such as the *Warrior* and the *Black Prince* – vessels which should be celebrated as evidence of Imperial majesty but which were observed, instead, to “slumber upon their shadows; their thunders are dormant; their power and their resistance are problems to be solved” (“Iron Walls and Iron Roads” 167). Indeed, both ships were made obsolete soon after deployment, as naval technologies advanced rapidly.

The writer offers a tempered assessment of the risk embodied in this “iron net-work”: “Let us hope that our iron walls will maintain that supremacy which our wooden walls have secured. […] We believe these will not fail us, though we screen them with shields of iron” (“Iron Walls and Iron Roads” 167). Historical victories came from the natural wood grown in England, and the presence of iron now, meant to fortify, conversely reveals a latent worry that the might of England may not be so supreme.

These descriptions of metal as assemblages demonstrate anxiety over the instability – the potential fragility – of a mined material, forged together by humans, as opposed to the great and noble native British wood, ripe for the taking from the native soil. In “Iron Walls and Iron Roads,” the writer expresses distrust over the “improvements” made to ships that were once solely crafted from British oak. One “improvement” was the use of coal to refine iron, and here one can think of the way bodies must endeavor to move the parts necessary that must be extracted from below the surface of the Earth: namely, iron ore and, even deeper still, coal. Mining is going to go sideways and then down deep into the earth. Britain had an abundance of

iron ore – it is a generally available resource around the world – but it had too little charcoal (wood) to complete the refining process that draws out the iron and eliminates the impurities. Thus, British iron (what there was of it) was of a poor quality compared to iron from Sweden. Britain's solution to this alarming issue was to push forward with advancements in coal-based smelting, where coal would be heated into a product called coke, and the coke then used in place of the charcoal. One site of this great triumph was Coalbrookdale, a village in the Ironbridge Gorge in Shropshire, England, where Abraham Darby first smelted iron ore using "coking coal."

An important part of a rhizomatic reading is taking time to zero in on the individual nodes, or points of interests that are themselves assemblages, and tease out how they matter (as matter). For example, Wallsend, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, was home to some of the largest and most fruitful collieries in England. As noted by Ken Hutchinson, in his book *Wallsend at Work: People and Industries Through the Years*, the population in 1801 had doubled by 1861, transforming "a collection of small rural villages into a centre for new industries based on the extended shores of the River Tyne" (23). Hutchinson describes the horrific conditions under which the precious resource was extracted: "[A]ll were expected to work for twelve hours a day for six days a week in the pitch black. Miners, including children, descended the mine holding onto ropes and chairs that were also used to lift the coal back out in baskets or 'corves'" (25). Families were housed in cramped quarters, and evictions based on injury (and evictions of families after the miner's death) were common. Anxiety and distress colored the miners as the black soot covered their bodies, and as the black plumes of smoke curled into the air, signaling progress.

The nature of mining work – dark, dangerous, subterranean, suffocating, humiliating – contrasts with the appreciation for coal as a transformative material. Coal for stuffing into

steamships, heading out to hunt Confederate ships meant strength and might. Coal for generating energy to power steam printing presses meant a reimagining of the relationship between labor and work. Coal even permits a closer walk with God, specifically in references to Wallsend in essays like "Fireside Musings," published in *The Sunday At Home: A Family Magazine for Sabbath Reading* in 1866. This meditation on the comfort of a fireside, the perfect place to muse and ponder God's teachings, includes this passage: "Hark, how that gust rose and came up the street, and clutched and shook the window and swayed the drawn red curtains, and fled with a long, shrill cry. Such an endeavor on the part of the besiegers demands another log upon the fire, with half a scoop of Wallsend to back it" (22). The affordance of "Wallsend" here is a brace against outside invaders, here a strong gust that shakes the window and cries out. This description compares favorably to an article from *The Examiner*, in 1866, presenting an exchange between W. Stanley Jevons, author of *The Coal Question; an Inquiry concerning the Progress of the Nation, and the Probable Exhaustion of our Coal Mines* and the editors, regarding misrepresentations in a previous review. Jevons seeks to clarify his several points, particularly *The Examiner'*s assertion that Jevons was arguing Britain could import coal. Jevons took umbrage at the misreading of his words, which *The Examiner* had represented as "All we can gather from him [Jevons] on the subject is, that when we get to that depth (2,500 feet) a complete supply of foreign coal will come in from Pennsylvania and elsewhere. The possibility and probability of such foreign supply is one of the most sensible things in the Professor's book" ("The Literary Examiner" 408). Jevons corrects the record, quoting his own writing, and *The Examiner* admits error: Britain would be in no financial position to import foreign coal, and exporting balances their trading. Britain must remain reliant on their own supply, no matter the

cost: of mining deeper and deeper into the earth, or of soliciting higher fees for better coal in Wallsend, as Jevons notes, or of ignoring physical safety.

As I discuss in chapter two, Müller and Schurr argue that rhizomatic analysis helps us account for tensions as well as harmony. Other "improvements" that were also anxiety-provoking include the evolution of printing and the subsequent expansion of literacy. As one might generally associate iron and metal with the Industrial Revolution, I must consider iron and its relationship to power and conquest. Reflecting on power, Michel Foucault argues that power being enacted on the human body is a "strategy," comprised not of static measures but of "dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings" that should be regarded as "a network of relations, constantly in tension," set in "perpetual battle" (26). The same descriptions apply to the actions and doings of metal – it is malleable not because it is weak, but because it is in a constant state of acting and reacting to a "perpetual battle." The idea of tension, of an unceasing push and pull, is relevant because of the environment in which I located these qualities – an anxiety-ridden nineteenth-century England. For example, metal in the abstract promises progress in the form of railways and machinery but can also be used to shore up a structure that may have been weakened. It appears strong but can be vulnerable to elements like water. We pull the metal out of the ground to fashion it into visions of strength and progress, but we are ultimately revealing our own weaknesses as we use it to reinforce our defenses.

Returning to the prevailing technology that makes the sensational literature possible, printing presses in the eighteenth century were made from wood: "The old wooden press not merely survived well in the era of the metal version, but for reasons of price, prejudice and ease of transport [...] wood continued to be a basic element in manufacture" (Moran 40). For example, that "perpetual battle" can certainly have some dire consequences. The primary metal used in

early printing presses for type was lead, a deadly substance. Lead is a toxic heavy metal found in mineral deposits in the earth's crust – the first layer to be broken on the way down to coal. Famously, Benjamin Franklin describes lead poisoning during his work at London print shops: in a letter to Benjamin Vaughan in 1786, Franklin describes the following: "In 1724, being in London […] I there found a Practice I had never seen before, of drying a Case of Types, (which are wet in Distribution) by placing it sloping before the Fire [...] But an old Workman observing it, advis'd me not to do so, telling me I might lose the Use of my Hands by it […]" (274). Franklin explains that a fellow workman later reveals that he: "[...] ascrib'd it to Particles of the Metal swallow'd with their Food by slovenly Workmen, who went to their Meals after handling the Metal, without well-washing their Fingers, so that some of the metalline Particles were taken off by their Bread and eaten with it" (274). Compositors handled type a great deal, especially considering that prior to the invention of the Linotype, all the letters were separate. Type was made sharper and stronger when lead was alloyed with antimony, another even more dangerous substance. The standard type metal for the Linotype is tin, antimony and lead ("Printing Metals" 1–2; 32–33). The best results are obtained with a casting temperature in excess of 600 degrees Fahrenheit, resulting in molten metal enveloped in noxious fumes ("Printing Metals" 18–20). The arrangement of substances, weak and deadly and cast at hellish temperatures, had to be manipulated quickly and with precision by people who often took few precautions (from lack of knowledge or from lack of resources and the need to *never slow the presses*). This frantic pace is also, to an extent, the sort of veiled "acting for the sake of acting" that characterizes capitalism. Technology sets the pace, and the humans react by having to perform at the pace set. That is, "the ends justify and supersede the means," where the ends are the preservation of power (which

is a constant struggle behind the veil of capitalism), and the means are the performance of bodies in constant motion in service of that appearance of static power.

Oak presses were also seemingly improved by the introduction of metal. The first major technological improvement upon the wooden hand press appears early in the nineteenth century, courtesy of the iron hand press invented by Charles Stanhope, 3rd Earl Stanhope (Moran 49). The all-metal press debuted in 1803 and featured a series of compound levers which increased the downward pressure available. At first, steam printing was used primarily for printing newspapers, but eventually became part of book production (Feather 89). Lee Erickson notes that, as paper costs rose during the Napoleonic Wars, inventors developed the "fledgling technologies of stereotyping and mechanical papermaking that would eventually reduce the costs of printing substantially" (Erickson 27). Metal was changing the world around nineteenth-century Britons, enabling people to move faster, to create things quickly, move goods and ideas around faster, and to give the impression of fortification.

Most importantly, the speed made possible by an assemblage of iron and coal would empower an assemblage of mass literacy: one sees a quick dispersion of all varieties and qualities of knowledge and information. The dawn of the Industrial Revolution, and the invention of the steam printing press, are key moments in this cataclysmic transformation, though many scholars would put the true dawn of this transformation earlier in the eighteenth century. Thinking rhizomatically, I map the spread, here, of the way metal presses threatened hegemony in a way that critics likened to poison and disease, and I will conclude this section with an explanation of how serialized sensation fiction was the most dangerous, the most poisonous, literary genre of all.

In the introduction to the second edition of *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* Marshall McLuhan writes, “Each new technology creates an environment that is itself regarded as corrupt and degrading. Yet the new one turns its predecessor into an art form” (viii-ix). Taken as a whole, as part of an evolving industry, the steam engine printing press was an object to be both celebrated and reviled. Altick argues “But no newly invented machine, however ingenious or impressive, was a good in itself; what mattered was its product” (*Victorian People* 109-110). Yes, the machine is neither good nor bad, but I reject Altick’s premise. The machine does have meaning even before it produces material; as McLuhan notes, the content of the medium is always another medium (19). Recalling Barad, the machine is already a thing-in-progress, meaning-making just by virtue of being (and conversely, its being is a state of meaning-making). The machine itself is critical to understanding the product produced. The meaning is in the action, not in the being. The steam engine printing press is perceived as the “object,” a whole unto itself, and passively playing this incredible, almost mythological role in the expansion of literacy, the making of the middle class, and the shoring up of national identity. However, the machine is an assemblage made of so many assemblages, pushing and pulling through to a product that can be read. The political and financial machines into which this machinic assemblage was plugged reinforced the volatility of its creation.

The machine’s reception attests to the churning political and financial machines: printers and publishers marveled, while workers threatened violence. In Samuel Smiles’ account, John Walter, editor of *The Times,* prints a notice in the first steam-printed edition, which describes the process thus: “A system of machinery almost organic has been devised and arranged, which, while it relieves the human frame of its most laborious' efforts in printing, far exceeds all human powers in rapidity and dispatch” (Moran 108). The workers responded to the induction of the

new steam engine printing press by threatening "destruction to [Walter] and his traps" (Smiles 169). This is key because this passage demonstrates the "psychic and social effects of media," as McLuhan describes it, of machine medium. McLuhan argues that people are often unaware of the "psychic and social effects of media," ignoring what he calls "the nature of the medium" – "that any technology could do anything but *add* itself on to what we already are" (23). That is, the slogan "guns don't kill people, people kill people" is a canard, and McLuhan calls anyone who believes as such a "technological idiot" (31). Identifying and focusing on the content of the medium is a distraction; rather, analysts should attend to the impact the medium has on the people in its sphere.

Notably, the announcement declares the machine "a system," acknowledging that the press is made up of many parts and is quite large, as well as that it is "almost organic," perhaps a balm to the nerves of those laborers who see the rise of machinery as a threat. The announcement reckons with the human intervention still required: a human "devised and arranged," even though the human is rhetorically absent from the sentence. This almost organic system *acts* for the benefit of the human frame (perhaps less organic than the machine in this telling). McLuhan argues that "it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action," be it labor or play (20). Thus, the machine does not eliminate jobs – it "relieves" men from difficult labor, and "exceeds" their capacity, specifically here in terms of speed (a repeated theme in this project). The technology enables a situation in which production, and labor, are scaled up beyond the scope of human capacity, producing a new reckoning of time for humans for different labor and different activities, time that once was accorded strictly to labor for production.

The announcement goes on to insist that the public appreciate how removed from the process men are (and yet, it inevitably demonstrates how humans are still very much involved), by detailing the process steps – identifying the relationship between material and worker, and between material and material; the final blow to seeing this assemblage as balanced is, however, the final sentence in the process description: "[L]ittle more remains for man to do than to attend upon and to watch this unconscious agent in its operations" (Moran 108). The unconscious agent supplants humans and yet represents incredible human achievement. The machine should protect humans from the deadlier elements; however, it is seen as hurting people.

Thus, the printed announcement – an assemblage itself – reveals how contemporaries were already conceiving of the relationship between contributors, human and nonhuman as well as nonhuman and nonhuman. My project is not concerned, however, with looking for evidence of people turning into machines, or the specific use of technology in nineteenth-century serial fictions like *The Moonstone* and *Lady Audley's Secret*. The ecological relationships are visible in serialized fiction and inadvertently reveal the disruptive power of unacknowledged actors like metal, paper, and waste. If the assumption of one correct reading (perceiving the text from the aerial point of view, seeing the author as the sole conductor of words, where only human social and psychic influence the author's writing, and perceiving human and nonhuman categories as discrete binaries in a hierarchy), is peeled away, ecological relationships are illuminated, characterized by (and deriving their power from) instability and constant "doings," in the way Karen Barad describes.

In the ecological relationships between contributors, the whole of the industry can be perceived in the one machine: a crisis of speed, ecological and physical violence (even simply in the creation of steam from coal mined from the earth), a repulsion to errors, processing materials

by trying to cover up contributors, representing people rather than embodying them (seen in the genres of realism versus sensationalism). These analyses cannot stop just at the surface: below the machine, the burning coal heats the water to create the steam to power the press; prior to that, the act of harvesting the coal, perhaps by mining deep in the ground in Northumberland or East Midlands, shapes the communities who toil and the shapes the land on which they toil. In *The Sky of Our Manufacture: The London Fog in British Fiction from Dickens to Woolf*, Jesse Oak Taylor notes that the term "fossil fuels" is a misnomer, suggesting those materials are inert, and the process to obtain them is passive. They are powerful because they were once alive. Fossil fuels are also enveloped in violence to the land both in acquiring them and to using them to power "modernity" (139-140). This example encapsulates the ideological thrust of this project: humans mistake, to their detriment, the fixedness or stability of the power structures to which they cling. Not only is stability a myth, a façade, a projection, but there is also a failure to recognize "stability" as a cover for chaos prevents us from accessing the real sources of power – the beings and doings of less-than-stable contributors like fossil fuels, and our violent and destructive responses to them (ruining the land and going to war over oil, for example).

At first, according to Richard Altick, evangelical and Utilitarian congregations perceived the advent of mass printing as a positive: "[t]he two movements, the one religious, the other not only secular but in its pure state anti-Christian, were jointly responsible for the early nineteenth century's veneration of the printing press" (*The English Common Reader*129). In *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*, Graham Law writes, "This was that the spread of literacy was necessary to extend the appreciation of true Christian principles, including the divine sanction underlying social rank, and thus to bolster the existing social arrangements" (9) Indeed, as Altick argues poetically in *Victorian People and Ideas,* "To the Victorians, the printing press driven by

a steam engine was, indeed, the most pregnant emblem of their achievement and aspirations. Gutenberg was virtually a cultural hero, and his invention, it was thought, was the most potent instrument of social improvement ever conceived" (64). The printing press is a "pregnant emblem," but the fullness is not only of positive qualities. The bones of the printing press machine, when pulled apart and examined, also comprise of negative and necrotizing elements.

Critically, the quicker spread of reading material was not universally celebrated, for such a cataclysm will have its supporters and detractors. Even authors had trepidations, given "[...] the ultimate unknowability of the common reader, and especially in the aggregate—the mass readership that arose with capitalism, urbanization, industrialization, and the progress of education" (Brantlinger, *Reading Lesson* 17). Regardless of the reader, the evangelical movement was desirous of spreading the Gospel, and the Utilitarians were committed to the spread of "useful knowledge," which entailed a veneration of "good, solid employable facts of mechanics and chemistry, metallurgy and hydraulics" (Altick, *The English Common Reader* 131). It is hardly a surprise that metallurgy would be among the list of "good, solid employable facts" – science that one can hang one's hat on, like the science that also determines the superiority of white Protestant men, perhaps. Chemistry and metallurgy could be represented as stable, fact-based fields, as opposed to more elusive social movements whose doctrines might be spread as counter to the most important factual agreement: British supremacy. In *Disease, Desire, and the Body in Victorian Women's Popular Novels,* Pamela K. Gilbert writes that "there is a strong sense of critical surveillance, a need to categorize, to name and contain" in the discourse surrounding the popular fiction of the time (36). In his book, *Rule of Darkness,* Brantlinger spells it out thusly:

> [T]he merger in the social sciences of racist and evolutionary doctrines had combined, and the public widely shared a view of Africa which demanded imperialization on moral, religious, and scientific grounds. It is this view I call the myth of the Dark Continent; by mythology I mean [...] discourse that treats its subject as universally understood, scientifically established, and therefore no longer open to criticism by a political or theoretical opposition." (174)

The push towards taxonomy and science in the nineteenth century in Britain (as evidenced by the focus on geology, archaeology, and well-appointed grand exhibitions, as a few examples) was an attempt to both justify and distract from the seemingly inexorable march of British Imperialism and its reciprocal social and moral rot.

The Utilitarians believed that once a man was presented useful knowledge, he would naturally accept the theories of Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham, among others, and roundly reject "dangerous heresies – socialism, republicanism, Cobbettism, Chartism" (Altick, *The English Common Reader* 131). Altick expresses the concern that white Protestant men and women had that if more people, especially of lower classes and of dubious faiths were reading (and subsequently reading what their compatriots were writing), challenges to the assumed social and cultural hierarchy may be generated. Altick asserts, "The old religious and utilitarian prejudices against reading for entertainment still persisted; it should do so only for serious purposes" (Altick, *The English Common Reader* 231). Rosalind Crone argues that, rather than regarding "the Victorians" as having instituted a series of reforms and urban rehabilitation for Londoners, the people living within London were experiencing a chaotic and unstable environment on many levels: "[f]ears of potential disorder and popular unrest fanned by events in France and by a perceived rising crime rate led to an official drive to create a more orderly

society" (15). Gilbert articulates the more salient fear: "The growth of the popular literary market, the advent of inexpensive printing and the spread of literacy in the nineteenth century accomplished a revolutionary feat: it gave several previously mute parts of the social body voice and an arena in which to be heard" (45). Brantlinger suggests, "Empire and industry were linked by economic expansion and the competition for cheap labor, new resources, and new markets. Empire and the emergence of the masses were linked by the same forces, together with the population explosion, which seemed to be producing new, mostly internal 'barbarian' hordes [...]" (*Bread and Circuses* 140). A dangerous literacy would spread – one that did not respect a top-down distribution of facts, assumptions, and beliefs. Rather, if print becomes more ubiquitous, spreading laterally through a proliferation of printers and sellers, a perpetual battle may be ignited, with many moving metal, paper, and waste parts. In fact, these hulking metal presses threatened hegemony in a way that critics likened to poison and disease, and serialized sensation fiction was the most dangerous, the most poisonous, literary genre of all.

Indeed, if the masses reading was bad news, it was only exacerbated by the genre of work they were reading. As Altick notes, "The 'fiction question' which had agitated the mechanics' institute libraries now was inherited, still generating heat, by their successors, at a time when cheap papers were diligently encouraging the masses' taste for light reading" (*The English Common Reader* 231). The public's taste for ``light reading" was intense, though the light reading was often quite dark and violent, highlighting the typically unheralded voices of the socially (and morally) lower classes. Crone illustrates the hunger readers had for violence in the media they consumed. Altick notes that "a thriving trade was developing in serial fiction adapted to the humble taste and pocketbook. In the 1820s, for instance, reprints of sensational or (less frequently) salacious fiction could be bought in numbers, priced at from 2d. To 6d., under such

titles as *The French Novelist*, *The Story Teller*, and *Legends or Terror*; and *Tales of the Wonderful and the Wild*" (Altick, *The English Common Reader* 289). Gilbert argues, "The equally promiscuous exchange of intellectual and cultural material in literature, especially the movement of periodical literatures across a mixed-class audience, provokes a similar anxiety regarding the contagion of ideas, dangerous infections in the body politic" (3). This agitation and anxiety regarding not just *what* is being read, but how *quickly* it was being consumed, manifests as an abject fear of contamination.

Here, let me pause to identify the struggle for voice and the voice's attendant power. Brantlinger argues, "The apparent intimacy between authors and readers stemmed partly from the practice of serial publication, partly from the moral "selectness" of Mundie's, partly from the pattern of reading aloud within family circles, and partly from the rhetoric of direct address [...] "dear reader," "gentle reader," and "as the intelligent reader will observe" (*Reading Lesson* 13). Furthermore, Gilbert writes, "The popular literary industry diffused the power to speak for the culture downward and outward to a limited, but significant degree, allowing the vast range of the middle classes and semi-marginal voices such as the middle-class woman and, to some extent, the foreign or religiously radical to be heard" (45). This diffusion is essential to my argument regarding the threat and opportunity posed by serialized crime fiction in particular, but the threat and opportunity can be expressed in two ways. First, we can consider the degradation of a patriarchal hierarchy in terms of knowledge acquisition to be a boon. As Deborah Wynne notes, "In the 1860s an unprecedented range of new magazines appeared on the market featuring novels by authors who designed their fiction with the middle-class family audience in mind" (1). Law writes, "For, by the mid-1860s, there was also a wide variety of cheap weekly magazines combining instalment fiction with other instructive and entertainment features, aimed at a broad

family audience ranging from the solid middle classes down to the servants and skilled artisans of the 'respectable' working class" (25). Gilbert notes that even foreign voices might slip through into this rhizomatic tendrilled diffusion: "Imperial ambition coupled with nineteenth-century capitalism, however, created a trans-class and transcultural 'circulation' which threatened to break down the barriers of secure distinctions between upper and lower classes, British and foreign, colonizer and colonized" (2). It is understandable to imagine how the upper classes would see this circulation as a poison coming from the outside into their pure environment. The real threat, however, is not from the outside; it is from within. Indeed, Gilbert argues that "[i]n the literary marketplace, the carnivalesque popular cultural forms [...] cannot be separated in content from the circulating library novels of the middle classes, although the packaging remains ostentatiously distinct" (17). Popular literature may look different, but it is fully embedded with preferable literature, sneaking past the guardrails of culture commentators, infiltrating the borders of polite society.

The serial printing format offered a flexible, attractive vehicle for fiction – for publishers, authors, and the reading public. Altick notes, "[Magazine serialization] had the advantage of offering the reader, at no increase in price, not only a segment of a novel but a variety of other features" (*Victorian People* 65). John Sutherland writes, "[E]very major [publishing] house eventually acquired its own journal and used it as a vehicle for top quality fiction. […] [A]fter the […] considerable expense of founding them, [journals] earned revenue for the publisher, displayed his wares and enabled him to test the market to see how a novel 'pulled' with the public" (38). The incredible success of *Pickwick Papers*, argues John Feather, "tended to obscure the originality of the exercise, and the extent to which Chapman and Hall exploited newly available technologies and distribution mechanisms" (125-126). The exploitation extended

beyond the new technologies, however, and into exploitation of the people, raw materials, and nonhuman resources.

The serial printing format was innovative and experimental in technological and distribution advancements, but also in terms of artistry. For example, Sutherland describes the way in which fiction was written for serial distribution in the nineteenth century, which entailed taking a published novel and break it down into shilling parts; in contrast, Chapman and Hall flipped the conceptual process, envisioning first the shilling parts to later be bound into volumes. As Sutherland notes, "The reader had the fiction, as the phrase went, 'warm from the brain' and usually before any critical judgement could be imposed on it, giving the work a singular freshness" (21). This "freshness" for a multitude of readers depended on the mechanization of the publishing industry, of course. It takes a specific system of labor to deliver shilling parts on a certain schedule, as opposed to having the entire work crafted as a whole and retroactively parsed out to the public. Technology created an expectation among readers of scale, pace, and pattern.

One can consider the material conditions within each serial publication that may lead to a different kind of reading. Wynne explains, "Editors were sensitive to the possible connections which could be made between […] the various texts which made up each issue [...] This supplemented and intensified the experience of reading, something which is denied to those who do not engage in the 'lateral' reading offered by the periodical press" (21). Brake further notes that "the regularity and public nature of these issue days [such as *Magazine Day*] created numerous and large communities of readers, all of whom were reading the same publications at roughly the same time all over the country" (88). These many impacts of serialized crime fiction coalesces into a kind of ideology: As Bill Bell writes in "Fiction in the Marketplace," "Literary

form in such instances is seen no longer as a mere consequence of market and technological forces, but, perhaps more crucially, as itself an articulation of the values of the age" (125). Bell further argues, "Only when the work is freed from its status, on the one hand, as merely mechanical product and, on the other, as inspirational product of the writer genius, can we begin to see the complexity of its moment of production" (133). Wynne argues, "[T]he process of serialization itself also worked to heighten the impact and influence of a genre which has in recent years been identified as a powerfully subversive force within Victorian literary culture" (3). Serialization's "subversive force" becomes apparent as one maps out the many contributing matters that must interact in order to produce the fiction.

Sensational fiction, often with shades of violence and criminality, demonstrated a "confluence of social mediations" that was mired in images and associations with disease, contagion, poison, and overall degradation, which we can rhizomatically map here. The sensation genre, to which *Lady Audley's Secret* belongs, was castigated in its time for being "'the foulest filth of all literary matter'" (qtd. in Altick, *English Common Reader* 292). Meegan Kennedy notes, "Despite the complex cluster of meanings loosed by this circulation of sensation between author, character, and reader, Victorian critics focused primarily on its deleterious effects on the body; the genre was frequently associated with physical, mental, and moral 'poison' and 'disease'" (486). Sensation is specifically about sense, feeling, and embodiment, something to be taken into oneself, to be physically experienced. Sensation invites the reader to feel their way through the story, to embody these feelings in a way that might make the reader more sympathetic to the extreme actions of the characters. The text is experienced in a palpable way, perhaps drawing tears to one's eyes as one takes the meaning of the words into one's mind and body. As Gilbert writes, "Metaphors of ingression and ingestion rebounded upon the

aggressor, emphasizing the reciprocity of the boundary transgression implied. The reader who devours the text is in some sense inhabited by that text" (18-19). Just as the reader can learn from and be taken with the ideas and characters of a text, so too have the physical materials rub off on the reader, and so to be changed by the reader: for example, as the reader is holding the fragile periodical, that tenuously woven-together paper that might tear and the ink that might smudge. The reader's hands may be left with small cuts from the paper and ink on their fingertips and clothes, just as much as they are impacted by the words themselves. Furthermore, as we continue to chart where the paper comes from (as I do in chapter five), we learn how Imperial ideology fuels the ill-laden enterprise. In the context of *Lady Audley's Secret*, however, the most significant threats remain internal.

In his essay, "Sensation Novels," which appears in the *Quarterly Review* in April 1863, Henry Mansel argues that sensation fiction generates an excitement which "cannot be continually produced without becoming morbid" – that is, diseased – and that these stories are part of a greater "morbid phenomena of literature [which contains] indications of a wide-spread corruption, of which [sensation fictions] are in part both the effect and the cause; called into existence to supply the cravings of a *diseased appetite*, and contributing themselves to *foster the disease,* and to *stimulate the want* which they supply"(482-483; emphasis added). Gilbert asserts, "Fiction, like contagion, might become the vehicle by which important physical boundaries were breached: distinctions between subject and object, upper and lower bodily strata, upper and lower class, masculine and feminine, food and filth, mother and whore" (36). Gilbert rightly notes that fiction's most egregious insult to Imperialism is its ability to break down binaries. Sensation fiction enters the assemblage of literary genres and mass literacy, itself diseased, and then infects its readers, creating within them self-perpetuating desiring machines that necessitate

the continuous production of diseased sensation fiction, which will continue to spread unchecked.

Indeed, sensation fiction is characterized by fluidity – of feelings both emotional and physical. To achieve this feat, sensation fiction plays with time and the familiar. Mansel argues that “a tale which aims at electrifying the nerves of the reader is never thoroughly effective unless the scene be laid in our own days and among the people we are in the habit of meeting” (488-489). Wynne suggests, “The discourse [between sensational literature and the middle class] [...] was useful to both serial novelists and journalists as a way of articulating the problems of modernity and in order to appreciate its cultural impact, the sensation novel needs to be read as an important signifier of social change during the mid-Victorian period” (2). An effective way to bring the reader into a state of physical feeling was to give them a recognizable version of reality. The characters’ actions, thoughts, and feelings could then be extreme or extraordinary. Louise Lee argues, however, that the unique contribution of sensation fiction is that it “appears to proffer, or reimagine, is something far from familiar, and perhaps even revolutionary, a new kind of power relationship – a knowledge economy – where being the master, or, as is more often the case, the mistress of a situation is based on the ability to read the seemingly chaotic and disparate signifiers of the fast-moving modern world" (134). Perhaps the ideal bridge to a more radical position (on religion, politics, even Imperialism) is through the familiar, through feelings and sensations that are “real” though they are generated by “fiction.” Indeed, Wynne puts forth that “[...] these writers succeeded in raising readers’ awareness of the fragility of the domestic ideal, highlighting the dangers which could assail family life in a modern urbanized, increasingly anonymous, society [...] which led some Victorian critics to attack the genre because it appeared to promote ‘sympathy with crime’” (10) The plausibility generated gives a foundation for a

radical change that might happen. Embodiment is important: matter matters. Critics of the time were alarmed by the flow of information in seemingly aimless literature, and the qualities of being slippery and fluid are dangerous as there are no clear borders, no hierarchy, where things can flow unimpeded. The sensation genre actively invites this communing.

The flow of action and sensation back and forth is demonstrated in *Lady Audley's*, between Lucy and her maid Phoebe, Lucy and the locksmith, and Lucy with her material possessions. Ann Gagné points to the narrator's description of Sir Michael's proposal to Lucy, where Lucy interacts with a ribbon around her neck; she notes, "As Lady Audley is touching and manipulating this ribbon, the description suggests that this ribbon is actually touching her back or enacting tactile violence [...] Lucy's anxiety and agitation seems to rise with 'her hands clutching at the black ribbon about her throat, as if it had been strangling her' as she continues with the marriage negotiations of sorts" (68). I am reminded of Doyle writing about his impression that "[t]he system learns to tolerate" the poison. Notice that Lucy does not pull away from the ribbon if it is indeed strangling her. This is the narrator speaking, not Lucy. She may not perceive this feeling as threatening in the way the narrator suggests "as it might have been." Actions have ripple effects: Lucy's subterfuge nearly costs people their lives, but the reader can easily trace her motivations back to George and her father, and their motivations back further, to class issues, gender issues, and the like, which Robert Audley will succinctly model.

Feelings do not flow in only one direction: *Lady Audley's Secret* maps out fears about communing and intermingling unawares – engaging in dangerous dalliances with lower class women against one's knowledge, for example, but also living daily with the threat of poisoned blood, where unknown symptoms and illness may strike at any time without the person's foreknowledge. Lee's idea of this new power relationship is played out with a twist: Lady

Audley, in both cases, is the one with more power. She is able to navigate the new technologically advanced world in nineteenth-century London and its surroundings to pull off an impressive reinvention of herself, and she is one of two people who know that she may carry a hereditary disposition towards madness.

That twist is ultimately undermined by the novel's conclusion, one where Lady Audley is imprisoned in a sanitarium and Robert Audley is free to enjoy his now-orderly patriarchal life. However, as Elaine Showalter asserts in *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*, "Lady Audley's unfeminine assertiveness [...] must ultimately be described as madness, not only to spare Braddon the unpleasant necessity of having to execute an attractive heroine with whom she in many ways identifies, but also to spare the woman reader the guilt of identifying with a cold-blooded killer" (167). She concludes, "As every woman reader must have sensed, Lady Audley's real secret is that she is sane and, moreover, representative" (Showalter 167). Lady Audley's real crime, then, is to engender feeling, even sympathy, and most destructive, empathy. If her character succeeds in doing any of these, Braddon's text offers a path for analysis that decentered or moves laterally rather than following an analytic path that looks for a traditional narrative structure. Recalling Wynne's notion of the discourse between journalist/author and reader, Hughes and Lund so amply investigate in *The Victorian Serial,* a rhizomatic analysis reveals the discourse between human and non-human materials that is happening. The sensational genre is poisonous because it is about feelings flowing back and forth – feelings of rebellion and anxiety, chief among them. The circulatory reading system challenges the notion that destructive or poisonous elements can be avoided or cast out; one cannot inoculate oneself from the rot that is borne out of the system one creates, or that one is inextricably bound to.

Perception is half the battle, of course, and it can be difficult to parse out the source of the contamination, particularly if the source of degradation is the embodiment of Imperialist ideology. *Lady Audley's Secret* appears to be a tale about a beautiful scheming woman determined to marry into financial and social comfort, at the expense of her child and the lives of anyone committed to thwarting her plans. Critics have generally addressed the role of gender and attending issues of identity and agency as they are depicted in the text. For example, Showalter argues that "Mary E. Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) presents us with a carefully controlled female fantasy, which Braddon understands and manipulates with minute exactitude" (163). Showalter considers the text "underrated" and "not only a virtual manifesto of female sensationalism, but also a witty inversion of Victorian sentimental and domestic conventions" (164). What makes *Lady Audley's Secret* ultimately disappointing is that Braddon does not follow through with the "witty inversion," at least not if one is able to let go of the red herrings and follow the real villain at the heart of the text's anxiety over infiltration and contamination. Once the reader lets go of Lady Audley and the feminine sensationalism as main focal points, one can map out Imperial ideology that underpins the serialized story.

In *Lady Audley's Secret,* materialities represented as feminine are also represented as poisons or as having the qualities of being poisonous. Most overtly, the plot concerns a common woman attempting to infiltrate the landed gentry class through deceit. In this way, the story is about a potential poisoning – the poisoning of the social class, the blood-line poisoning if Lady Audley were to produce an heir. The obvious power struggle in the text is between Lady Audley and the landed gentry into whose family she has married. Lady Audley injects herself into the social and financial stratosphere of the landed aristocracy, and through her foibles, the reader can see how the poisoned person contributes in some way to their downfall. However, a rhizomatic

reading that takes into account the history of metal and wood, the tensions embedded in excavation and illness, reveals the obvious power struggle as poisonous red herrings in the search for the true malevolence, given that the ending of the story is so unsatisfying. The most important poisoned power struggle in the text is Robert Audley's internal struggle between his pull towards traditional English masculinity and his desire to continue down a more modern, resistant path that cedes power but fulfills his desires. The greatest threat to England is portrayed in the form of the dangerously malleable and unstable Robert Audley, who picks at other people's scabby secrets to avoid vivisecting his own weak constitution.

Gilbert suggests that treating *Lady Audley's Secret* as a sensation novel reveals how "interests, issues, and themes gendered female are [...] sacrificed [...] to maintain a classed and gendered hierarchy [...] the masculine-genre coming-of-age novel, with its implicit self-critique, is elided in favor of the less complicated reading of a feminine-genre low-culture sensation novel" (9). Before diving into reading *Lady Audley's Secret* as Robert's tale of self-discovery – "*with its implicit self-critique*" that Gilbert asserts – I first want to focus on how the feminine materiality works not only as a diversion but as an invaluable clue to correctly reading the masculine coming-of-age story.

Lady Audley's attempt to infiltrate society speaks to a lack of agency on the part of the infiltrated: the threat is wholly external. Indeed, the writing of the age reveals that nineteenth-century British writers were very concerned about external threats of invasion: in the physical sense, from the intermingling of black and brown people in London and its environs, impoverished people, and crime, to more abstract invasive threats, from ideas like mass education and mass literacy. One of the most fear-inducing elements of these invasive threats is that they may take place undercover or in secret: hence, the title of the serialized fiction at hand.

Lady Lucy Audley has three primary secrets as the story begins: first, she has a child whom she has abandoned. Second, she is a common woman with no social or financial stability, and third, she may have inherited madness along her matrilineal line. These three secrets propel her primary action in the text – to marry into the landed gentry and effectively conceal her past. She accomplishes her goals until Robert Audley, nephew of her new husband, Sir Michael Audley, finds himself caught between his desire for her and for George Talboys (her previous husband).

First, "Lady Lucy Audley" is an assemblage of many names and identities: the character begins life as Helen Maldon (the daughter of a lieutenant in the British Navy), becomes Helen Talboys (wife of a wealthy family's scion, who departs abruptly for Australia after being disinherited), transforms into Lucy Graham (her chosen name upon abandonment of her child), and finally becomes Lady Lucy Audley. Her chosen name is notable as she combines the name of the revered patron saint of the blind (and whose name, derived from Latin, means "bringer of light"), with the surname "Graham," "derived from OE. graeg- ham, 'grey; home;,' from the manor of that name" (Black 323). The entry goes on to dispute a legend: "The popular derivation from a chief named Grim or Gram who broke through the wall of the emperor Antoninus between the Forth and Clyde in 420 A.D., which afterwards from him became known as 'Graham's Dyke, is nonsense" (Black 323). It is unsurprising that the young Helen Maldon, born into poverty and abandoned by her husband, but choose an avatar for herself that combined the image of blindness and light with an old stone manor and the act of breaking through barriers – she sees herself, perhaps, as a way-maker for other lower class women as beautiful and as deserving as she is to break through the ancient class barriers of Old England. Indeed, Lucy comments that, "'In the sunshine of my own happiness I felt, for the first time in my life, for the

miseries of others. I had been poor myself, and I was now rich, and could afford to pity and relieve the poverty of my neighbors'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 204). The feminine force breaking through stone and other ancient materials will be revisited later in this chapter.

"Insertion" as a verb is invoked several times throughout the text as a material way Lucy transforms herself – she is repeatedly using newspaper notices to move through society. Her first insertion is to have the death of "Helen Talboys" made official: "'The advertisement was inserted in the Times, and upon the second day after its insertion George Talboys visited Ventnor, and ordered the tombstone which at this hour records the death of his wife, Helen Talboys'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no.17] 205). Printing the announcement in the physical paper of a paper of record makes the death official – inserting this knowledge into the common discourse makes it real.

Lucy makes her first move into a loftier social position by responding to an insertion in the Times: "She had come into the neighborhood as a governess in the family of a surgeon in the village near Audley Court. No one knew anything of her, except that she came in answer to an advertisement which Mr. Dawson, the surgeon, had inserted in the *Times*" (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 280). It is difficult to ignore the psychoanalytic reading that is begging to be addressed – the word "inserted" is easily linked with "penetration," in this case sexual.

However, mapping out the element of influence within and without of the literature using a rhizomatic approach affords a broader and deeper understanding of "penetration" that goes beyond sexual connotations. It is a gendered action, and one even more abnormal in a heteronormative context, as the primary female character attempts to penetrate the patriarchal elite establishment. Her penetration – in the halls of Audley Court, into the landed nobility, breaking into and making vulnerable all manner (manor?) of ancient English vulnerabilities –

can be read not only as a social threat but a psycho-sexual one as well. This woman brings with her too much deceptive power – surely, she will be castrating her male consort and his nephew, as she has cast-aside her first husband. What is more, she expresses an interest in bringing other women in similar positions as her own into her world, giving them access to her own injected trajectory. The inverse of heterosexual infestation, where sperm floods the uterus – here we have flocks of low-class women threatening the fragile stone and wood of Audley Court, heralded by a woman able to successfully conceal herself and mimic the very people she means to infect.

This imagery is in stark contrast to the depiction of Robert Audley – a rather feckless, aimless lump who sees no urgency to act, let alone inject himself into the turbulence of either a career, politics, or society. In fact, Robert Audley seeks to absolve himself (and potentially give cover to Lucy) from the agency of one's position, telling Lucy, "'I have shrunk from those responsibilities and duties, as I have from all the fatigues of this troublesome life: but we are sometimes forced into the very position we have most avoided'" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 11] 76). Rather than inject himself, he has "shrunk," pulled inside of himself, quite a self-castrating act. Rather than choosing to step up and inject himself into a position of authority, he instead is "forced" into the position. In this case, he has been forced by the mystery that is Lucy and the concurrent mystery of his friend George Talboys' disappearance. Thus, it is the absence of his bosom male friend and the intrusion of the physically alluring but ultimately deadly female character who forces Robert to take a position of authority. Robert's attraction to Lady Audley puts him at a critical disadvantage. Robert's attraction to all kinds of consumable and raw materials also reinforces his attraction to acting out white supremacy in the form of Imperialism.

As he leaves, Alicia Audley remarks, "'I suppose the unhappy creature has had a brief forced upon him by some evil-starred attorney and is sinking into a state of imbecility from a

dim consciousness of his own incompetence'" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 15] 533). This statement is notable for Alicia's assertion that Robert is "sinking into a state of imbecility" because he dimly recognizes his own incompetence. "Imbecility" could refer to general foolishness, or it could mean a more serious state of intellectual disability (as the term was used in 1830). This more serious usage would have Alicia laying the groundwork (for the reader) to anticipate Robert's worry over "madness" or a mental disability in the future. At best, Robert is being labeled essentially impotent to move with authority in the very areas Lady Audley is ready to best him in.

These relationships can be mapped rhizomatically to pick apart the surface-layer scab from the fresh meat below. This battle of wills in the socio-economic area is not fought between Robert and Lucy, but rather between Lucy and Alicia, her stepdaughter. As the narrator notes, while Alicia would have "preferred a hearty pitched battle to this silent and undemonstrative disunion," Lucy resists "open warfare" in favor of "armed neutrality," and, in fact, "[...]Lucy Audley would not make war" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 16] 86). What do these women have to fight so passionately about? Ostensibly, the most important thing possible: control over Audley Court and its resources. The narrator assures the reader that the way to peace is through visible combat – aggression and violence that manifest as visible external threats. However, Lucy's resistance to external, visible warfare is what keeps her in control of the situation. First, Lucy is not being honest about herself, so she is not laying bare her weakness alongside her strengths. Alicia, who represents the "legitimate" aristocratic claim to the land and the court, wants to fight in the open in a more honest fashion. In fact, Lucy is perhaps being compared to a scheming banker rather than a noble military man: "She carried forward the sum of her dislike, and put it out at a steady rate of interest, until the breach between her stepdaughter and herself [...] became a great gulf"

(Braddon [vol. 4, no. 16] 86). This banker position is not the active position of physical insertion, of breaching the line – this is the passive yet aggressive move of a conniving character.

The narrator points out that noted enemies England and France have battles such as Cressy and Trafalgar to thank for the strength of their current union: “We have hated each other and licked each other and *had it out,* as the common phrase goes; and we can afford now to fall into each others' arms and vow eternal friendship and everlasting brotherhood” (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 16] 86). Forebodingly, the narrator also chooses to insert one more example: “Let us hope that when Northern Yankeedom has decimated and been decimated, blustering Jonathan may fling himself upon his Southern brother's breast, forgiving and forgiven” (Braddon[vol. 4, no. 16] 86). I will expand a bit more upon the role England played in the American Civil War in chapter five, but this commentary is notable because it cases “Jonathan” (Brother Jonathan, a caricature of New England) as the one acting to bring forth peace, by “fling[ing] himself upon his Southern brother’s breast.” In this analogy, Alicia is “Brother Jonathan,” the more active participant, flinging herself eventually at the stoic and passive Lucy. The narrator portrays Alicia as the fierier and blustering party to Lucy’s infuriating calm which conceals a deep, abiding dislike. Aligning Lucy with the American South aligns her with a more conservative political position, as opposed to the more radical anti-slavery “Jonathan” of the North, which suggests a more nuanced ambivalence to Lucy’s moral stature – that is, Lucy is being given equal moral grounding as Alicia, and the narrator’s only complaint is that she will not openly fight.

And yet, that open “aggression” so heralded by the narrator is so feared by Robert Audley. In reaction to his burgeoning feelings for Clara Talboys and his general malaise towards life, Robert launches into a spectacular defenestration of women attempting to assert control and agency, sarcastically posing aloud to no one in particular, “‘What a wonderful solution to life's

enigma there is in petticoat government!'" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 416). Showalter argues, "Ostensibly denouncing the immemorial wickedness of women, the monolog is really a thinly veiled feminist threat that women confined to the home and denied legitimate occupations will turn their frustrations against the family itself" (167-168). While it may be a feminist threat from Braddon, the monologue doubly offers a glimpse into Robert's villainous ineptitude and ineffectuality.

Robert's chief complaint is that women are too loud for him; they do not sufficiently appreciate quietness, stillness, and thoughtful repose. Robert imagines how Clara Talboys is one of those women who agitate for the men in their lives to take advantage of their power in a patriarchal society, because, as he whines, "'Who ever heard of a woman taking life as it ought to be taken?'" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 416). To Robert, a woman does not simply speak and gesture towards men taking action; "'[s]he pushes her neighbors, and struggles for a good place in the dismal march; she elbows, and writhes, and tramples, and prances to the one end of making the most of the misery'" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 416). She is "loud," "restless," "noisy," dragging and pushing husbands, driving them into positions of power. Robert argues that "'[i]t is because women are *never lazy*. They don't know what it is to be quiet'" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 417). He concludes his rant by saying, "'To call them the weaker sex is to utter a hideous mockery. They are the stronger sex, the noisier, the more persevering, the most self-assertive sex. They want freedom of opinion, variety of occupation, do they? Let them have it. Let them be lawyers, doctors, preachers, teachers, soldiers, legislators—anything they like—but let them be quiet—if they can'" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 417).

Robert is not lauding women's tenacity here – "lazy" as it applies to men in Robert's context is living correctly, which women do not know how to do. Women, in Robert's mind, are too *much*

in all ways, and their physicality and noise are directed at men, as opposed to, perhaps, being directed at fellow women with whom they may resolve their differences and nervous energies. This need for quiet should endear Lucy to him, as she is quieter in her approach to power acquisition than Alicia or even Clara Talboys (who does not seem overly power hungry but simply agitated to find her brother). Lucy's quiet, however, contributes to the danger she poses. To Robert, women threaten the order of things not solely because they are interested in power, but because they create disturbing noise and chaos while doing so. He seems to contradict the narrator's ideas for the proper and most constructive ways of engaging in warfare, which are also, coincidentally, the most patriarchal. The narrator names noted, recorded battles between nations and within a nation, fought primarily by men for political and territorial control. The feminine subterfuge is to be eschewed. Robert says he would have women deliberately step into the social and political roles occupied by men, if it meant that women would leave men (who know how to live properly) alone. An injection of women into society, into male spaces, presumably does not faze him if he is left to while away his time. This is not a sincere wish, I would argue, based on Robert's behavior later in the novel. Robert would much rather dispatch the "quiet" Lucy and keep the "agitators" like Clara and Alicia in his midst, because he trusts that he can control them. There is a greater sense of agency, and the ability to fight back, when the invading party is knowable and definable. Lucy, however, is quiet and sly; this idea of acting quiet and duplicitous as one injects themselves into forbidden territory, while suggesting they might open the door to more invaders while the infiltrated is unaware of the threat, leads me to examine the more frightening construct, that of poisoning where the victim is unaware of the threat.

Poisoning is rhizomatic, like tendrils extending through matter. Recalling Doyle's experiment with gelseminum: he was deliberate in his actions and essentially knew the danger he was in. Doyle was not in complete control, as this was an experiment to test the limits of ingesting gelseminum, but he was at least acting with far more agency than the character of Sir Michael Audley – at least on the surface – who puts his body and his estate in jeopardy of being invaded and infected. Gilbert writes that "[t]he body is constructed as the most irreducible physical space of the self. There is an inside and an outside, and various liminal structures which connect the two, and elaborate cultural rituals attend the proper utilization of those structures" (43). The cultural rituals, including dining and tea taking, are characterized in *Lady Audley's Secret* as spaces of either mystery or, often, spaces of discontent. Gilbert goes on to write, "[P]ain or discomfort makes us aware of our bodies, and in those moments we construct ourselves as alienated from them" (43). These cultural rituals of consumption reduce agency on the part of the consumer; examining the resulting discomfort (or the threat of discomfort) is expressed in *Lady Audley's Secret* as fears of infiltration and fears of introspection, even in the presence of poisonous attributes.

Lady Audley's Secret is full of characters becoming intoxicated; Lucy herself is a chief intoxicant: "For you see, Miss Lucy Graham was blessed with that magic power of fascination, by which a woman can charm with a word or intoxicate with a smile" (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 280). Lucy's beauty defines her and defines her future, and immediately the reader learns of her ability to draw people to her. She is not only beautiful, but her beauty is bewitching as if from a supernatural source. The temporality of her physical beauty is not her strongest gift; rather, she intoxicates through her ability to perform as an intoxicant, quietly molding herself to be whatever others wish her to be, giving them a false sense of agency. Lucy's power comes from

her innate ability to make others perceive power they do not have; in this way, she is an inversion of Robert Audley, who believes himself to be a person with powerful innate goodness, who is intoxicated on the perception of his agency, yet whose failure springs forth internally.

"Lucy as Intoxicant" evolves into "Lucy as Poisoner," positioning her power as something that comes from the outside. Consider the following passage, from the narrator, about women, in general, pouring tea:

> The most feminine and most domestic of all occupations imparts a magic harmony to her every movement, a witchery to her every glance. The floating mists from the boiling liquid in which she infuses the soothing herbs; whose secrets are known to her alone, envelope her in a cloud of scented vapor, through which she seems a social fairy, weaving potent spells with Gunpowder and Bohea. At the tea-table she reigns omnipotent, unapproachable. What do men know of the mysterious beverage? (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 423)

The "feminine" and "most domestic" activity is magical, and she is imbued with "witchery." She alone knows what those "soothing" herbs are and what they can do to the consumer. Unlike Doyle, those who imbibe this liquid are not aware of what is coming into their bodies, and in what quantities. Compared to Doyle's exacting notes, this is full abandonment of scientific precision on the part of the one who ingests, who assumes they are consuming some measures of Gunpowder and Bohea tea leaves. The female preparer of this concoction is associated with having a "legitimate empire" in the form of the tea set; the narrator assails men attempting to perform the tea ritual for their "dreadful barbarism" against "the witch president of the tea-tray" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 423). Men are too clumsy, and "imperil" the fragile china as well as the "taper hands of the priestess" (Braddon vol. 3, no. 14 423). The narrator goes on to say, "Better

the pretty influence of the tea cups and saucers gracefully wielded in a woman's hand than all the inappropriate power snatched at the point of the pen from the unwilling sterner sex" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 423). The narrator seems to be referencing a power struggle similar to warfare, similar to the discussion of Alicia and Lucy in Chapter XXIV. The narrator also seems to be opposing Robert Audley's assessment of "noisy women as disruptive forces" – rather, in this description, it is a lady's gentle hand on fragile tea cups and saucers, pouring unknowable concoctions that may intoxicate the senses, that is preferable to the silent but violent political acts done by men with the stroke of a pen when negotiating a power struggle.

The web-like entanglements of love offer another entry point to this rhizomatic analysis, as the reader investigates how people are connecting and by what impetus (love, ambition, escape, Imperial solidarity). In Chapter XXXIII, the narrator suggests that Sir Michael muses about his love for Lucy, noting "that one woman who out of all the women in the world had power to quicken the pulses of his heart," and considers "why Robert failed to take the fever from the first breath of contagion that blew toward him" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 193). Sir Michael thinks about how some men miss the love of a beautiful young woman, only to encounter, later in life, "some harsh-featured virago, who knows the secret of that only philter which can intoxicate and bewitch him," quite a different interpretation of her comely attractiveness (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 193-194). Until very near the end of the narrative, Lucy has been the antithesis of a virago: beautiful rather than harsh-featured, demurring rather than domineering; quiet rather than violent or bad-tempered, in front of those higher than her in the social hierarchy. The tea now becomes a love potion, with a deliberate use and effect. The implication is that Lucy used an external power to attract and control Sir Michael Audley, to keep secret her true "harsh-featured identity" – that of a poor widowed mother of an unwanted

child. Sir Michael has had his agency stripped from him by a woman determined to first infect his body and mind with an intoxicating love spell, then infect his family, status, and progeny with her low-classness and her madness.

Lucy does not pass on love potions to her lower-class associates; instead, Lucy entices a London locksmith to break into Robert Audley's rooms at Figtree Court with enough money to purchase fine wines for his family and a few lady friends. As Robert learns of this potential breach of his premises by a locksmith he did not request, he goes to the man's abode. There, he fines a scene of unexpected luxury:

> The locksmith, with his wife and family, and two or three droppers-in of the female sex, were clustered about a table, which was adorned by two bottles; not vulgar bottles of that colorless extract of the juniper berry, much affected by the masses; but of bona fide port and sherry—fiercely strong sherry, which left a fiery taste in the mouth, nut-brown sherry—rather unnaturally brown, if anything—and fine old port; no sickly vintage, faded and thin from excessive age: but a rich, full-bodied wine, sweet and substantial and high colored. (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 12] 200)

The gin is vulgar because it is not refined, not textured or nuanced in terms of taste and effect – the drink of lower classes who could neither afford, nor ostensibly appreciate, higher quality drink. The family now has "bona fide" port and sherry that have bold, unnatural colors, as opposed to "sickly" "faced" and "thin" port that is old, flat, and stale. Lucy's goal in bribing the locksmith is a nefarious one, in that she hopes to stop Robert Audley from finding out her secret past, but she also manages to accomplish another goal: lifting up the fortunes of those as poorly situated as she once was. As Lucy says in Chapter XXXIV, "'I had been poor myself, and I was now rich, and could afford to pity and relieve the poverty of my neighbors'" (Braddon [vol. 4,

no. 17] 204). Doing so and having the recipients of her generosity spoil themselves with richly colored and flavored intoxicants, typically reserved for a higher class of people, confirms the tension between the infiltrating and intoxicating way Lucy's presence is felt (or is sensed) by the aristocrats and her effect on people of her original station. Contrast the locksmith and his family's appreciation for their libations with a later scene of Robert Audley, having lost George Talboys, dwelling in the absolute nothingness of his life:

> He had come to the luxurious eating-house to dine, because it was absolutely necessary to eat something somewhere [...] Robert ate his dinner, and drank a pint of Moselle; but he had poor appreciation of the excellence of the viands or the delicate fragrance of the wine. The mental monologue still went on, and the young philosopher of the modern school was arguing the favorite modern question of the nothingness of everything, and the folly of taking too much trouble to walk upon a road that went nowhere, or to compass a work that meant nothing. (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 416)

While Robert is accustomed to dining well, he loses the ability to perceive the "excellence" of his food and wine, as the narrator notes, because he is consumed with his inability to act in a decisive and effective way. Robert is, then, unable to feel and to experience sensation; he seems cut off from the consumable luxuries his status provides for him.

Robert's loss of connection to the world he inhabits is the inverse of what Lucy experiences through her family connections to illness. The tendrils of madness become another fruitful site of rhizomatic mapping. The concept of taking a poison or intoxicant into one's body, potentially unaware, reflects what the novel ostensibly tells the reader is the most serious and dangerous of Lucy's malingering: her concealment of hereditary madness. Scholars have written about the abrupt nature in which the madness twist appears; though there is a passage or two

prior, indicating that there is some mystery as to why Lucy's mother was absent from her life, the hereditary madness reveal happens in the later chapters. This, in fact, is the real "secret" that Lucy has kept from everyone, including George Talboys – neither her poverty, nor her first marriage, nor her cast-off son, can compete with the gravity of this condition.

Hereditary madness was not a new trope; penny dreadfuls and Newgate tales reveled in the possibility that madness was lurking around the corner in every criminal proceeding. England had experience with madness being concealed on the largest stage possible with King George. First, of course, we are not necessarily dealing with a diagnosable mental illness in the cast of the fictional Lucy; though some may see Lucy as potentially experiencing postpartum depression after the birth of Georgey, that does not account for the matrilineal inheritance that Lucy so fears and so conspires to keep secret. In her case, she believes that she carries the same madness in her body as her mother did.

Feminine madness specifically is a well-worn trope feverishly examined by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their seminal 1979 book, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. *Jane Eyre* and Bronte's depiction of mad Bertha in the attic establishes the character and situation that will haunt Lady Audley and countless other characters. Because the title character, Lucy, believes herself to be at risk of inherited madness, the reader gains insight into the fears the character has via the narrator. Lucy's fears may also be mirroring the fears Victorian critics had about the "deleterious effects on the body; the genre was frequently associated with physical, mental, and moral 'poison' and 'disease'" (Kennedy 486). Brantlinger argues, "But her ultimate secret—her supposedly hereditary madness—hints also at a contrary, though buried, passionate side of her character […] Her final incarceration in the madhouse in Belgium seems as desolate and wasteful as the deaths-

by-passion of Catherine and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*" (*Reading Lesson* 158). I will examine waste and wastefulness more fully in chapter six; in *Lady Audley's Secret*, Lucy is discarded when she is no longer useful as an external distraction for Rober Audley, to keep him from doing the sort of internal inspection necessary to find the root cause of his anxiety.

In the novel, madness is brought up first as the notion that "indeed, the simple Dawsons would have thought it something more than madness in a penniless girl to reject such an offer" of marriage to Sir Michael Audley (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 282). The great reveal of Lady Audley's hereditary condition occurs in Chapter XXXIV. Lucy parses the language Robert uses to accuse her of George Talboys' murder, wanting to distinguish "treacherously and foully" murdering someone, and, as she states, "'kill[ing] him because I AM MAD! because my intellect is a little way upon the wrong side of that narrow boundary-line between sanity and insanity'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 200). "[T]hat narrow boundary line" is pregnant in a similar way to the Guttenberg Press, however, and a rhizomatic mapping framework is useful to make that liminal space more visible. Upon hearing George's threats, Lucy finds that her "'mind, never properly balanced, utterly lost its balance, and *I was mad*!'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 200). She calls this madness "'the secret of my life!'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 200). Lucy makes a point to compare the imagery she had in her mind regarding her mother's status as a mad woman, saying, "'I was always picturing to myself this mad woman pacing up and down some prison cell, in a hideous garment that bound her tortured limbs. I had exaggerated ideas of the horror of her situation'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 201). Lucy here is echoing a stereotype of madness that can be found in *Jane Eyre* and other texts such as *The Woman in White*; Patrick R. O'Malley marks this Gothic trope as one reimagined for the sensation novel, as it moves the imprisoned body from "live burial in the ecclesiastical prisons of the traditional Gothic novel" to more modern institutions

under the pretext of madness (81) . The physicality of this raving figure – bound in fabric, moving without purpose or effect – exists in opposition to the figure that haunts Robert Audley: the noisy, determined, active woman who demands things cogently. Lucy admits that her fantasy of the horror of madness was untrue: "'I saw no raving, straight-waist-coated maniac, guarded by zealous jailers, but a golden-haired, blue-eyed, girlish creature, who seemed as frivolous as a butterfly, and who skipped toward us with her yellow curls decorated with natural flowers, and saluted us with radiant smiles, and gay, ceaseless chatter'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 202). Lucy's mother is the radiant woman with "gay, ceaseless chatter" – a noisy sort of woman that would traumatize Robert far more than the easily bound, caged, and controlled "mad" woman.

It is difficult to read the passages in which Lucy describes her mother's malady, and the manifestation of her own "madness," without considering the reality of what we know today as postpartum depression. Of her mother, Lucy notes, "'She, my mother, had been, or had appeared sane up to the hour of my birth, but from that hour her intellect had decayed, and she had become what I saw her'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 202). Lucy goes on to say, "'My baby was born, and the crisis which had been fatal to my mother arose for me'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 203). While it is possible that Braddon is alluding to a legitimate mental illness experienced by many people after birth, I believe an equally important interpretation is that, upon giving birth, both Lucy and her mother experienced a crystalline realization of what their lives would be like: that is, both Lucy and her mother realized that their children would tie them to a life that was impoverished and powerless, with all hope being ceded to the success of their spouse. For example, Lucy explains the deterioration of her mood after the birth of Georgey:

> "I escaped [the same quick descent into "madness" that her mother experienced], but I was more irritable perhaps after my recovery, less inclined to fight the hard battle of the

> world, more disposed to complain of poverty and neglect. I did complain one day, loudly and bitterly; I upbraided George Talboys for his cruelty in having allied a helpless girl to poverty and misery, and he flew into a passion with me and ran out of the house." (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 203)

These are not necessarily the descriptions of a person experiencing a psychotic break; rather, Lucy is describing her feelings of despair at a life of hardship and poverty. Perhaps she is attempting to paint herself in a more positive light in front of Sir Michael Audley, attempting to make him see the sympathetic nature of her plight, but I believe she is already resigned to the fact that, once she reveals her self-diagnosis of madness, the minutiae of her relationship with George are of little importance.

Lucy does admit that, now that the "'hereditary taint'" in her blood had made itself known, she "'became subject to fits of violence and despair'" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 203). She does not make clear how the "fits of violence" manifested: verbal or physical violence towards Georgey or her father? Violent thoughts, being physically violent in her surroundings (by slamming doors, for instance) or self-harming violence as she expresses that the violence is coupled with despair? The primary act of physical violence performed by Lucy is pushing George Talboys down the well at Audley Court.

That moment of violence is Lucy's first murderous act (which should be the most important damning evidence of her villainy) and is an important entry point made visible through a rhizomatic mapping approach: the socio-political assemblage of the country estate, Audly Court, where the narrative begins. Linearity favors the red herrings. On the very first page of the serial, where the following sentences appear:

> It lay down in a hollow, rich with fine old timber and luxuriant pastures; and you came upon it through an avenue of limes, bordered on either side by meadows, over the high hedges of which the cattle looked inquisitively at you as you passed, wondering, perhaps, what you wanted; for there was no thorough-fare, and unless you were going to the Court you had no business there at all. (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 278)

"It" is Audley Court – the narrator waits to name "it" until the last line of the second paragraph, suggesting perhaps that the proper name (and the current owners) is less important than the material reality of the building and its environs. The narrator invokes "old timber," calling to mind "the walls of England." Immediately, secrecy is invoked, and a distrust of outsiders. There is no hospitality implied – if anything, there is aggression. Outsiders, directly addressed as "you," are not invited to wander, no matter how enticing the "luxuriant pastures" might be. Even the flora and fauna are suspicious of wanderers, of the curious.

From these first few lines, Braddon is describing the estate as a setting that, like metal, is in an assemblage in a state of mutability and unsteadiness. From the outset, the reader is asked to call to mind stately old England, with its "fine old timber," and yet, it is ultimately a hybrid site of intrusive metal and secret spaces, grounded in anxiety over Britain's greatness, as the article "Iron Walls and Iron Roads" previewed. The narrator juxtaposes invocations of peace and nobility with caveats and warning about secrets and unsteady unknown, undercutting the soothing effect of the former. For example, Saverio Tomaiuolo points out that "[t]he image of 'peacefulness' introduced in the opening section of *Lady Audley's Secret* is ironically juxtaposed, some pages after, with Robert Audley's explicit reference to notorious crimes such as the Glasgow poisoning of 1857" (27). The narrator continues, in the opening section, to posit past solidity with fragile modernity, in a dueling fashion, calling the estate's arched entrance

"very old, and very irregular and rambling" with "uneven" windows, "some with heavy stone mullions and rich stained glass; others with frail lattices that rattled in every breeze; others so modern that they might have been added only yesterday"(Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 278). "Straggling ivy" is holding the "great piles of chimneys" by "crawling up the walls and trailing even over the roof" (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 278). The indigenous flora, though struggling to catch up, still manages to hold together the human work of chimney bricks, to form an assemblage both noble and vulnerable.

The narrator offers this rich description of the "principal door" of the Court:

> The principal door was squeezed into a corner of a turret at one angle of the building, as if it were in hiding from dangerous visitors, and wished to keep itself a secret—a noble door for all that—old oak, and studded with great square-headed iron nails, and so thick that the sharp iron knocker struck upon it with a muffled sound, and the visitor rung a clanging bell that dangled in a corner among the ivy, lest the noise of the knocking should never penetrate the stronghold. (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 278)

The entrance to the domestic space is hiding, wishing to stay away from the prying eyes of the uninvited, and yet it is at once "a noble door for all that"? Hiding does not strike one as a noble action, but perhaps that is because, as the narrator describes, this is a door made of "old oak" which has been penetrated by "great square-headed iron nails." The wood, assembled with iron nails, is no longer truly fortified by some mystical ancient greatness. Yet its robust thickness holds back, for now, the intrusion of the "sharp iron knocker" and reduces the knocker's impact to that of a "muffled sound" – a sound only generated by an outsider, wishing to "penetrate the stronghold," which has already been breached by the nails (among other things). Penetrating modernity is upon the house in material ways, and those interventions (much like the

interventions of Lucy, Lady Audley, when she is conspiring to keep her secrets intact) have left the historic sense of British might with a painful question of legitimacy.

The estate is an assemblage of violence, extraction, penetration, and secret-keeping, and mapping this space out rhizomatically permits us to achieve a deeper understanding of the meaning-making matter at work. The domestic space is overtly in danger from poisonous interlopers, but looking at the assemblage of elements, the domestic space was already imbued with violence from well before Lucy appeared on its premises. This violent fictional past was likely informed by Braddon's historical awareness of the estate which inspired "Audley Court," Ingatestone Hall. The Hall traces its history back to approximate 950 AD, when "King Edgar granted to the Abbey of Our Lady & St. Ethelburga at Barking lands at Yenge-atte-Stone (whence [the site gets] the modern name of Ingatestone)" (*History of Ingatestone Hall*). The manor became known as Gynge Abbes. In 1535, Henry VIII called for Thomas Paine to begin the process that would culminate in the Dissolution of the Monasteries; Paine's assistant, William Petre, was tasked with examining the monastic houses. He found Gynge Abbes so desirable that he leased it, and later purchased it (*History of Ingatestone Hall*).

Years later, after Petre retired from his royal service, Ingatestone Hall became a key setting in the story of a Catholic martyr, Blessed John Payne. Petre's widow was a devout Catholic, and under her stewardship, Ingatestone became a refuse for persecuted Catholic clergy. In *The Lives of English Martyrs*, Dom Bede Camm recounts that, in 1855, martyr Blessed John Payne's hiding spot was unearthed. The details of what the hiding spot looked like were described as follows:

> The entrance to this secret chamber is from a small room attached to what was probably the host's bed-room. In the southeast corner the boards were found to be decayed ; upon

> their removal, another layer of loose boards was observed to cover a hole or trap-door two feet square. A ladder, perhaps two centuries old, remained beneath. (425)

Payne's identity, and his location of refuge in the Petre household, was revealed by George "Judas" Eliot, as *Lives of the English Martyrs* dubs him. Payne was ultimately arrested and hung for treason, making him one of the Catholic Forty Martyrs of England and Wales.

In the novel, Alicia Audley discovers this priest's hiding-place under the floorboards of her great nursery room, and the narrator describes the hiding-place thusly: "a hiding-place so small that he who had hid there must have crouched on his hands and knees or lain at full length, and yet large enough to contain a quaint old carved oak chest, half filled with priests' vestments" (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 279). The wood of the floorboards, centuries-old ladder, and in the case of *Lady Audley's Secret*, a "quaint old carved oak chest," protected the priests from slaughter, but also protected the owner of the estate from their own accusations of treason. These, in the estimation of a sympathetic narrator who judges the time as "cruel days," are secrets worth protecting.

This historical terror is juxtaposed with the descriptions of the nuns; according to the narrator, "To the left there was a broad graveled walk, down which, years ago, when the place had been a convent, the quiet nuns had walked hand in hand" (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 278). The nuns' calming presence mitigates the narrator's observance of a "rusty wheel of that old well of which I have spoken": "It had been of good service in its time, no doubt; and busy nuns have perhaps drawn the cool water with their own fair hands; but it had fallen into disuse now, and scarcely any one at Audley Court knew whether the spring had dried up or not" (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 279). The narrator's reference here to the lack of definite knowledge about the state of the well recalls the liminal space occupied by Lucy's fears of madness and the interpretation of her

madness by Dr. Mosgrave. The characters do not know if life-giving water is available or not, and they do not pursue the issue; they are content to let disrepair set in. The narrator is also foreshadowing the attempted murder of George Talboys. Lucy reveals the murder attempt in Chapter XXXVII, telling Robert Audley, "'I was seated upon the broken masonry at the mouth of the well. George Talboys was leaning upon the disused windlass, in which the rusty iron spindle rattled loosely whenever he shifted his position'" (Braddon [vol. 25, no. 631] 312). Lucy is sitting on stone that has come loose, while George leans against the metal and rope pulley system that hovers over the well. After George threatens to expose her secret (that of her marriage to him and of their child), Lucy reacts by attempting to eliminate the threat:

> "[I]t was then that I drew the loose iron spindle from the shrunken wood, and saw my first husband sink with one horrible cry into the black mouth of the well. There is a legend of its enormous depth. I do not know how deep it is. It is dry, I suppose, for I heard no splash, only a dull thud. I looked down and I saw nothing but black emptiness." (Braddon vol. [25, no. 631] 313)

Every element of this well is loose or inactive. The wheel is rusty, the spindle loose, the wood shrunken, and there is no longer any cool water. Robert Audley envisions George Talboys' body "lay[ing] hidden among the moldering ruins of the old well at Audley Court" (Braddon [vol. 25, no. 631] 313). Lucy attempts to bury the physical manifestation of her lesser secret – George Talboys – by allowing her primary secret (hereditary madness) to consume her – she uses the crumbling and antiquated technology of the well, hewn together with fragile metal, rotting wood, and crumbling stone, to her advantage as her ability to physically harm George by herself would have been nil. The synthesis of the ancient materials, in concert with Lucy's present madness, conspire to literally put George out into darkness. George, acting with impetuosity, represents the

English desire to plunder another country to wealth and prosperity whether or not his family is in agreement, and his desires ultimately come back to inflict pain upon him.

Martyred priests and murdered friends abound, but the action no longer takes place in mysterious medieval castles – rather, the scene of the crime is a country court estate. As Brantlinger argues, "[C]rime in sensation novels usually occurs in apparently proper, bourgeois, domestic settings, and the criminals are often, like Lady Audley, members of the family" (*Reading Lesson* 145). For Carol Margaret Davison, "'Gothic' connoted the specters of Britain's primitive, superstitious, corrupt and tyrannical Catholic past – things far removed from its putatively rational, Protestant, eighteenth-century present and the Enlightenment's traditional association with the illuminating daylight of reason" (25). However, the narrator is sympathetic to that past consisting of "cruel days," and Braddon strategically moves the site of these specters from the traditional Gothic spaces. Tomaiuolo argues, "The transition from medieval castles to Victorian country houses as the new sites of transgression and penetration of the female 'other' becomes a relevant variation of the Gothic mode" (26). Braddon is ultimately weaving a story about the way one's actions can revisit harm upon oneself and one's family, and how the danger of disease and disintegration is most likely an internal one. Therefore, she must situate the bulk of the story's setting in a location that represents both the image of British nobility and supremacy as well as the inherent fragility that is being covered up in vain. The seat of British anxiety is the homestead, not an Italianate foreign threat, for example.

Of course, George does not become forgotten. The man who abandoned his family to seek his fortune in Australia becomes the object of Robert Audley's obsession. The second reference to madness in *Lady Audley's Secret* occurs in Chapter XXIV, in the words of the narrator. At the beginning of the chapter, Robert is musing first on happiness, and then on

marriages, and finally, on his fortune to speak with Clara, George Talboys's sister, and how she has inspired him to keep his investigation into George's disappearance at the fore. Upon having to pay the Hansom cab driver, however, Robert is thrown into a meditation on having to "submit to all the dreary mechanism of life" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 415). The narrator continues:

> We are apt to be angry with this cruel hardness in our life—this unflinching regularity in the smaller wheels and meaner mechanism of the human machine, which knows no stoppage or cessation, though the mainspring be forever hollow, and the hands pointing to purposeless figures on a shattered dial. (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 416)

The narrator expresses this sentiment on behalf of Robert Audley but speaks in a more universal manner. "We" are the fortunate sons like Robert Audley, who would prefer to read books and dine luxuriously with time to dream. Robert Audley and his like are being called to service, however, and are resistant to the "unflinching regularity" of the mundane tasks of day-to-day life for the modern wealthy gentleman. The narrator describes these mundane tasks as part of a clock, one where the daily task and responsibilities are "the smaller wheels and meaner mechanism of the human machine" – a machine that Robert and his ilk created, and benefit from immensely, one must note. This imaginary metal assemblage is impotent, however, as the narrator notes that the mainspring is hollow; the mainspring is a spiral torsion spring of metal ribbon that, when wound, is the source of energy for a clock mechanism. This imagined clock of social and political order has no stored energy and cannot create stored energy. Even if it could hold energy, the hands of the clock cannot tell time (or be useful in a measurable way). The dial is shattered – the outward facing mechanism by which the entire assemblage demonstrates its purpose is impotent.

Time keeping assemblages are important, as the conception of time was a pressing concern on the prevailing cultural thought of the nineteenth century; "time at once contracted and expanded," argue Hughes and Lund, in the wake of innovations in technology (primarily the railroad), geology, archeology, and biology that reached the reading public (Hughes and Lund 5). McLuhan asserts, "Time measured not by the uniqueness of private experience but by abstract uniform units gradually pervades all sense life, much as does the technology of writing and printing" (199). Time figured as a constraint in terms of what is being written and produced. The emergence of periodicals marks many changes: one significant aspect was that periodicals were not meant to last. They were printed with frequency, and their subject matter followed that course, aiming to represent topical and even ephemeral subjects. McLuhan argues, "By the nineteenth century [the clock] had provided a technology of cohesion that was inseparable from industry and transport, enabling an entire metropolis to act almost as an automaton" (*Understanding Media* 149). The clock, then, gives the illusion of collapsing the many assemblages at play in the metropolis into one large, orderly machine – that perception is, perhaps, part of how the British readership of nineteenth century serialized publications became more and more detached from and unaware of the assemblages around them that they were plugged into. The systemic alienation from human, and particularly non-human, elements contributed to a mass hallucination of linear productions and productivity.

The beginnings of this mass hallucination were happening against the tide of what Hughes and Lund argue is a new embrace of historicism (6). They further note that "[i]f at times it made most sense to figure history as a straight line, many Victorians also felt impelled (Carlyle among them) to see history as a series of cycles, each cycle becoming an embodied whole" (Hughes and Lund 60). In fact, Erickson argues that, in the late 1830s, "because writers needed

to appeal to a larger number of less educated readers, prose style changed from the prevailing balanced antithesis of the eighteenth century to familiar anticlimax, which reinforced received wisdom and illustrated axioms with a multitude of examples and parallels" (73). The writer of "Iron Walls and Iron Roads" notes, "Our triumphs over space and time, as evidenced in our railway flights, have been great, and we are assured that the powers of heat, in the production of steam, are soon to receive a new development, and, consequently, the railway-train to achieve yet a higher speed" ("Iron Walls and Iron Roads" 167). Blake writes, "In a world where time and space appear to have collapsed, new methods of measuring and organising time are crucial to navigating modernity. Railway timetables, daily newspapers, the postal mail, and telegraphic transmissions subjected modern life to time-keeping based on transport and technology" (3). In chapter six, I will elucidate how, in the fall of 2022, a similar collapsing effect was initiated by the advent of ChatGPT, and I will use the same rhizomatic mapping approach taken for nineteenth-century British serialized crime novels to break down that collapse.

This changing perception of what time meant, and what one's existence meant, did not produce overwhelmingly positive feelings, but more significantly, it was not met with significant resistance. As McLuhan argues, "The effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance" (*Understanding Media* 18). People are too often inured to challenging the hegemonic structures, even when they can sense that the prevailing structures imposed upon them are creating negative outcomes. Few were willing to smash the clocks, literally or metaphorically.

One particular clock figures prominently in *Lady Audley's Secret*: the clock turret that looms large over the court, and is portrayed as a decayed, inaccurate, confounding and "stupid" thing by the narrator and Lady Audley. The passage in the opening chapter of the text describes

the clock and clock tower, an object that will be referenced several times over the course of the story. The narrator submits, “At the end of this avenue there was an old arch and a clock tower, with a stupid, bewildering clock, which had only one hand—and which jumped straight from one hour to the next—and was therefore always in extremes. Through this arch you walked straight into the gardens of Audley Court” (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 278). This detail is commensurate with Ingatestone Hall’s design: architect James Paine may have been responsible for the additions to estate during the ninth Lord Petre’s residence (1764-1770), which included an expansion of the north wing and “buildings around the outer court were rebuilt, complete with the one-handed clock above the arch” (*History of Ingatestone Hall*). Others suggest that clockmaker, John Richmond of Chelmsford, may have been responsible for the clock, due to its unique design: “No other turret clocks, signed by Richmond are known, but the turret clock in Ingatestone Hall is of a very similar construction and was probably made by him. The clock has an anchor escapement and, very unusually for a turret clock, rack striking” (“History - Stables”). Both Paine and Richmond are lauded for their craftsmanship, which leads one to question the designation of words like “stupid” and “bewildering” to describe their work. Jonathan Betts, Curator Emeritus at the Royal Observatory (National Maritime Museum), notes that innovations in the construction of turret clocks in the eighteenth century: “Some clockmakers in particular regions of the country had always used frames of wooden construction but the most common material, wrought iron, also changed during the 18th century to cast iron. An intermediate form, often seen in movements made during the middle of the century, employs cast iron members for the frame, but with wrought iron inserts for the threads holding the frame together, as this form of iron is stronger in tension and shear” (Betts).

Betts goes on to passionately argue:

> Unlike domestic clocks and watches, turret clocks were distinctly public in their role, with many more people depending on their good timekeeping, yet they were often expected to perform under conditions no other form of clock would tolerate. The very size of the dials and hands and their exposed situation puts additional burdens on turret clocks and the remoteness of their placing, often high up in a tower or roof space means they have to tolerate poor environments, atmospheric pollution, wide variations in temperature and humidity and often considerable neglect.

Assessing the assemblage of a turret clock rhizomatically, one can see how it was interacting with many challenging contributors, such as the climate and environment, and the clock itself contributed to the challenge of keeping social and economic order. Considering this web of influence, the narrator's insistence on calling the clock "stupid" and "bewildering" calls attention to itself. The word "stupid" appears twenty-seven times in *Lady Audley's Secret*; the word is used twelve times by the narrator to describe the clock, bales of wool, large men, George Talboys' stare, "unprofitable days" (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 10] 477), and cattle, among other things. Hannah-Freya Blake suggests that "'stupid" in this case refers to a lack of purpose" (3). I agree, and I connect the "stupid" clock with "the smaller wheels and meaner mechanism of the human machine" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 416) and Robert Audley's general malaise that is described throughout the chapters until his obsession with George engulfs him.

"Stupid" appears to also suggest that something or someone is "frustrating" in the sense of time and space. That is, things that do not seem to move or resolve themselves quickly and precisely, that seem slow-moving and lumbering, are considered "stupid." Everything around the clock turret, including the clock itself is marked by a contrast between slow and fast. For example, the narrator describes the clock turret as a "gray and ivy-covered pile of building,"

adding, “[t]he very repose of the place grew painful from its intensity, and you felt as if a corpse must be lying somewhere within [...] so deathlike was the tranquility of all around. (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 8] 288). Tranquil to the point of death, it seems! The clock slows down everything, including the characters who are meant to be in a hurry, but permits some to gain speed: “The one hand of the stupid clock had skipped to nine by the time they reached the archway; but before they could pass under its shadow they had to step aside to allow a carriage to dash past them” (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 10] 480). That one metal hand of the clock is like a slow-acting poison – its effect is difficult to name, but the poisoned party is ultimately ground down by the interminability of it.

The narrator goes on to complain that the “stupid clock [...] knew no middle course, and always skipped from one hour to the other, pointed to seven as the young men passed under the archway; but, for all that, it was nearer eight” (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 10] 477). A second hand to count the minutes would give the impression that time was moving more accurately and more quickly. But alas, this feat of eighteenth-century craftsmanship merely marks hour by hour – not incorrectly, just simply not as fast as the cunning and manipulative Lady Audley needs it to be.

Lady Audley is the embodiment of speed: she moves quickly, and she breathes quickly in the text. She is often contrasted with the slow clock turret and archway, even as she is very clearly part of the assemblage of the estate as much as the clock turret and archway are. For example: “She walked with a firm and rapid step under the archway. As she passed under that massive arch, it seemed as if she disappeared into some black gulf that had waited open to receive her” (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 16] 96). Louise Lee notes that “this crinolined malefactor” is made so potent as an actor because she possesses not only “speed” and “mental acuity,” but also a talent for “manipulating modern media,” such as inserting a false obituary in *The Times* (135).

Lee argues, "Railways and other new communication technologies collapse the boundaries between the public and private spheres, creating a new and decidedly proximate spatiality" (135). As McLuhan reminds us, "The railway […] accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions, creating totally new kinds of cities and new kinds of work and leisure" (*Understanding Media* 8). That is, the railway, the metal, time, labor, rest, and social networks are all part of the great assemblage built upon speed. As Robert Audley draws closer to forcing Lady Audley to admit her secrets, he seems to speed up as she begins to slow down. Yet, the clock and Robert are "stupid," – slow to adapt, slow to master the art of reading time correctly, slow to assume their appointed role in society as enforcers of patriarchal capitalism.

Earlier in this chapter, I noted that critic Henry Mansel made the point that sensation fiction had to be contemporary – "laid out in our own days" (489). Mansel reiterates on the next page: "The sensation novel, be it mere trash or something worse, is usually a tale of our own *times*" (Mansel 489; emphasis added). The sensation novel is also a novel about feeling time – feeling one's age, one's usefulness, worth. The one-armed clock is a product of the past, representing an engineering leap forward in being able to organize and give the appearance of controlling time. It was designed – to reuse the imagery from "Iron Walls and Iron Roads" – of propping oneself up with metal hardware to fortify one's power and durability, but at what cost? The author of "Iron Walls and Iron Roads" writes, "We invent engines of war, which have a *restless* force, and we strain our powers to produce shields which shall prove to be *irresistible* barriers" ("Iron Walls and Iron Roads" 167). These two words, "restless" and "irresistible," could also be used to describe Lady Audley, especially when they are counterbalanced with the notion of straining one's powers. Late in the text, Chapter XXXIII, Lady Audley had another encounter with her adversary, the clock. The narrator explains:

> The solitary hand of the clock over the archway was midway between one and two when my lady looked at it.
>
> "How slow the time is," she said, wearily; "how slow, how slow! Shall I grow old like this, I wonder, with every minute of my life seeming like an hour?" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 195)

Time is against Lady Audley, even as she attempts to (and largely succeeds at) move at a faster clip than her would-be foes. Her irresistibility is tied to her often-commented-upon youth, which will fade over time. Her restlessness to secure her place – financially and socially – is exacerbated by her understanding of time's impact on her ability to move so quickly and deftly.

Speed is a double-edged sword, certainly. The trains must move quickly, the steam-presses must churn out information in the form of periodicals at even faster paces to satisfy waiting consumers. Mark Turner argues, "[T]here are significant differences in how the future is conceived, as "tomorrow," "next week," "next month," "next season," or "next year," all of which periodicities are accounted for and constructed by the print media in the nineteenth century […] a sign of its modernity" (312). Hughes and Lund note, "The time between installments in serial literature gave people an opportunity to review events with each other, to speculate about plot and characters, and to deepen ties to their imagined world" (10). For Lady Audley, time's march brings forth not only her aging out of her most powerful window of time for being irresistible, but also, as the narrator comments, hastens the unravelling of her schemes: "Lady Audley [...] was looking at the stupid one-handed clock, and waiting for the news which must come sooner or later, which could not surely fail to come very speedily" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 197).

After pausing to dissect the clock and time imagery, let me return, now, to that second mention of madness. After describing the hardships of menial daily life tasks, the narrator continues thus:

> Who has not felt, in the first madness of sorrow, an unreasoning rage against the mute propriety of chairs and tables, the stiff squareness of Turkey carpets, the unbending obstinacy of the outward apparatus of existence? We want to root up gigantic trees in a primeval forest, and to tear their huge branches asunder in our convulsive grasp; and the utmost that we can do for the relief of our passion is to knock over an easy-chair, or smash a few shillings' worth of Mr. Copeland's manufacture. (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 416)

As I noted previously, the clock and Robert Audley's social roles are enforcers of patriarchal capitalism. The narrator connects the "first madness of sorrow" with "unreasoning rage" over the unbending quietness of consumption. "Who has not felt" – Lady Audley has not felt this, presumably, as she treasures her objects. The feminine modernity of consumption, paired with the dangerous Orientalism of Turkey carpets which will not budge in their stillness, is contrasted with a primal English male desire to demonstrate dominion over the most English of images, "the gigantic trees in a primeval forest." What can a man like Robert Audley do? Knock over a manufactured chair cut from those trees, held together by metal nails – impotent and quiet.

The narrator continues thus:

> Madhouses are large and only too numerous; yet surely it is strange they are not larger, when we think of how many helpless wretches must beat their brains against this hopeless persistency of the orderly outward world, as compared with the storm and tempest, the riot and confusion within—when we remember how many minds must

> tremble upon the narrow boundary between reason and unreason, mad to-day and sane to-morrow, mad yesterday and sane to-day. (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 416)

The narrator appears to be explaining Robert's madness in a manner that extends to "numerous helpless wretches" – to all men in Robert's station and position in English society – who are driven into a state of mental unbalance by "this hopeless persistency of the orderly outward world."

I disagree with the narrator's claim: the "orderly outward world" is the delusion, and Robert's (and others') attempts to fit into this orderly outward world has the maddening poisonous effect on them. The delusion of the "orderly outward world" is, in fact, the real poisonous secret of *Lady Audley's Secret* and the world of the novel's serialized publication, Lucy's actual placement in an actual madhouse prefigures Robert's abstract madness.

Robert wishes to avoid publicity, to hide the secret of his family's beguilement, by exploiting Lucy's belief that she has matrilineal inherited madness. Notably, the diagnosing physician, Dr. Mosgrave, rejects Robert's assertion that Lucy suffers from insanity, based on the tale Robert relates to him (which is not reproduced for the reader by the narrator). The narrator does relate the following exchange:

> Dr. Mosgrave looked at his watch, a fifty-guinea Benson-made chronometer, which he carried loose in his waistcoat pocket as carelessly as if it had been a potato.
>
> "You would wish to prove that this lady is mad, and therefore irresponsible for her actions, Mr. Audley?" said the physician.
>
> Robert Audley stared, wondering at the mad doctor. By what process had he so rapidly arrived at the young man's secret desire?

> "Yes, I would rather, if possible, think her mad; I should be glad to find that excuse for her." (Braddon [vol. 25, no. 631] 304)

Note the attention the narrator pays to the timepiece the very busy physician carries: an expensive example of high craftsmanship that the man treats as if it is a common, coarse item. James William Benson was a clock and watchmaker, becoming a retailer of clocks, watches, and jewelry in 1874 under the name J. W. Benson Ltd. They obtained Royal patronage in 1879. Mosgrave's chronometer would have been a superior timekeeper as opposed to a common watch or clock, with precision capabilities. Yet Mosgrave appears to have little use or little care for it as a treasure; he sees only the utility of the object, given that he is governed by regulated time as a member of the working class. He reads Robert Audley correctly to perceive his motive. A diagnosis of madness is an expedient choice to be made.

Mosgrave does not entertain Robert's desires: "'I fear that I shall not be of any use to you,' the physician said, quietly; 'I will see the lady, if you please, but I do not believe that she is mad'" (Braddon [vol. 25, no. 631] 305). In repeating Robert's story back to him, Mosgrave details why (as the reader has gathered throughout the serial) Lucy is not mad – she is angry. The young woman fled an unhappy marriage, aimed for "fortune and position," and obtained it through the illegal situation of bigotry (again, not madness, but cunning). As Mosgrave notes, "'When she found herself in a desperate position, she did not grow desperate. She employed intelligent means, and she carried out a conspiracy which required coolness and deliberation in its execution. There is no madness in that'" (Braddon [vol. 25, no. 631] 305). No madness indeed, until there is no first husband to whom Lucy can be passed off. Mosgrave declares, "'The best thing you can do with this lady is to send her back to her first husband; if he will have her,'" and the narrator describes how "Robert started at this sudden mention of his friend" (Braddon

[vol. 25, no. 631] 305). Robert admits that George is presumed dead, and the narrator reports that "Dr. Mosgrave saw the startled movement, and heard the embarrassment in Robert Audley's voice as he spoke of George Talboys" (Braddon [vol. 25, no. 631] 305).

Tomaiuolo argues that "Dr Mosgrave's changed diagnosis of 'latent' and 'dangerous' insanity, originating in a maternal 'hereditary taint in her blood,' is the sign of the precarious condition of Victorian women, left at the mercy of middle-class professional man who acted as their confessors, judges and executioners" (30). Employing a rhizomatic mapping approach, however, one can see that there is more going on in the exchange between Mosgrave and Robert to prescribe the change. Mosgrave is persuaded to change his automatic diagnosis because there is no husband to whom she may be discharged, and after he examines Lucy and assesses George Talboys' disappearance, he cannot be assured that Lucy would in fact be convicted of murder. Lucy must be legally controlled in some way, to prevent her from spreading: either her first husband must be made legally responsible (whether "he will have her" or not) or she must be able to be confidently tried and convicted of his death if it is no longer possible for him to be legally bound to her. Only after Mosgrave has ruled out both possibilities does he reluctantly err on the side of madness, so he may be certain of Lucy's legal assignment to a patriarchal figure who will keep her from mingling with society and possible aid those of her class who aspire to higher heights. Mosgrave understands how to read Lucy and sees the web into which she has found herself interwoven. Mosgrave corrects Robert and lays out the truth, a passage that enables the reader to understand Lucy too, because the reader can perceive the web as well. The reader witnesses Robert's rejection of the truth, his inability to engage with a cogent mapping out of Lucy's situation, and his pressure upon Mosgrave to deliver the linear solution to the crime narrative – that Lucy be deemed mad and sent away.

Tomaiuolo asserts, "In Villebrumeuse and in the Crystal Palace inmates and goods are both ‘on display’, in its double meaning of being transparently shown to the public and surveyed by institutional powers […] Braddon depicts madness not simply as a mental malady that affects rebellious women but […] as one of the conditions of modernity" (32). The display of madness is a condition of modernity as modernity demands adherence to an orderly world created on the backs of enslaved people – an adherence which creates anxiety which must be displaced onto gendered madness. To put more plainly, a man such as Robert Audley refuses to reckon with the nature of Imperialism, and attempts to reject, at every turn, the modernity Imperialism affords.

After Lucy confesses her secrets to Robert and Sir Michael, Sir Michael abandons Audley Court with Alicia in tow, leaving Robert to sort out the affair. Robert energizes himself by imagining that he is at war and cannot refuse the call to arms – imagery that counters the “orderly outward world” and is more akin to battling “the gigantic trees in a primeval forest.” After he sends out one missive to secure a doctor who can treat “mania,” as he terms it (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 210), and a second one to the recommended physician, Dr. Mosgrave, he retires to his old room. There, the narrator shares a glimpse into Robert’s thoughts:

> But had [Clara Talboys] heard that he had been in danger, and that he had distinguished himself by the rescue of a drunken boor? I fear that, even sitting by that desolate hearth, and beneath the roof whose noble was an exile from his own house, Robert Audley was weak enough to think of these things—weak enough to let his fancy wander away to the dismal fir-trees under the cold March sky, and the dark-brown eyes that were so like the eyes of his lost friend. (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 17] 211)

The narrator’s evaluation of Robert is striking in its chastisement for his wish to believe that Clara, the clear substitute for George, will hear of his physical feats of daring and think him

heroic. Robert's fantasy is further associated with the "dismal fir-trees" and dark-brown eyes (Clara's, but precious to Robert because of their similarity to George's). Robert is mocked as "weak" for dreaming of being known for his physical prowess and bravery and is further mocked for fixating on the fir-trees. This scene suggests to me that Robert – one who is full of inertia and malaise throughout the book, motivated solely by his obsession with George Talboys – believes himself to be connected to a more violent and noble past rooted in English imagery, specifically connected to trees and wood. This fantasy anchors him (or so he thinks), but the narrator does not permit the reader to see it as such. The reader is reminded that Robert's ideas are, in fact, weaknesses – a concept that he may not even realize he is permitting to pollute his body and render him useless.

By approaching an analysis of *Lady Audley's Secret* through a rhizomatic framework – looking across history, beyond binaries and arbitrary boundaries, the reader can see that Robert is rejecting that which makes himself possible, the snarling assemblage of people and raw materials and technology and politics and waste and cruelty. He cannot face his own rejection, however, and thus he must displace that rejection into a figure that is the very opposite of what he must believe that he is. He believes himself to be a strong, virile, primeval tree fighter, though the narrator sees his weak fantasies; he must work to restrain and prevent the spread of the fantasies he sees in others, such as low-class Helen Talboys hoping to infiltrate his social sphere.

Because Robert is either unable or unwilling to see himself as poisoned or as the conductor of poison, he is drawn to investigate the secrets of others. The development of the inspector character, which will see a boom in the nineteenth century, coincides with increasing tension between England and its Imperialist activities – that is, the tension between England's image of itself with the reality of Imperialism's barbarism – and the rise of serialized fiction in

periodicals such as *The Sixpenny Magazine* and *All The Year Round* which more regularly featured inspector-type characters. As I will examine in chapter five, where I take up *The Moonstone*, the white male character inevitably attempts to mask the fact that white supremacy and the pursuit of white power is the ultimate poison, and the white male detective endeavors to sort out these secrets, particularly feminine madness, in order to cover up his own vulnerability.

Brantlinger suggests, "The detective serves as an expert observer or reader of clues, one who is able to read differently from the (mere) novel-reader [...] The emergence of the detective seems to be linked to a weakening or defaillancy of narrative authority, which in turn may be linked to a paradigm shift in modes of observation [...]" (*Reading Lesson* 146). *Lady Audley's Secret* effectively marries the inspecting/detecting character with the heightened sensory experience of dramatic behavior in 1862 as well, and I would set Robert Audley next to the detecting characters in *The Moonstone* in terms of sharing similar anxieties about fragmenting "truths" and assembling a readable narrative.

The act of assembling a readable narrative links the characters' actions with the mode of storytelling – serialization – which itself is inextricably linked with the Imperial materials trade. Sensation and crime/detective fiction are both well suited to serialization in that serialized fiction is characterized by its fragmentation and need for assemblage in order to present a completed narrative. Beth Palmer notes that "[...] sensation novels, with their cliff-hangers and red herrings, made good use of serialization" (86). Crime and sensation fiction, as *Lady Audley's Secret* marries them, expresses, in its plot, the fantasy of pulling the pieces together to solve the mystery. Sensation and crime fiction reflect the anxieties of print culture: Palmer further argues, "The sensation novel then was situated at the center of these anxieties about a rapidly technologizing print culture and its perceived effects on readerships and was very conscious of

its status as such" (Palmer 87). *Lady Audley's Secret* expresses, in its plot, the fantasy of pulling the pieces together to solve the mystery in a manner that satisfies the main male white character who perceives a threat to the normal patriarchal social order. The fragmented dispersion of cheap, popular, entertaining literature was also seen as a threat to the normal patriarchal social order, and, as Palmer wisely notes, "sensation fiction's most significant and lasting legacy is a self-consciousness about how the contemporary moment is constructed in and by print culture as it mediates the past" (87). Looking backwards for clarity and order, and finding none – or worse, finding that the tried-and-true concepts of the past are nothing more than illusions, and threateningly poisonous illusions at that – is a theme that runs concurrently through the serialized text and the anxieties surrounding the spread of cheap, violent, entertaining stories broken into shards.

Vincent E. H. Murray expresses these anxieties in his article, "Ouida's Novels," published in 1873. He writes, "The society which reads and encourages such literature is a 'whited sepluchre' which, if it be not speedily cleaned by the joint effort of pure men and women, will breed a pestilence so foul as to poison the very life-blood of our nation" (Murray 935). Murray references the biblical verse in which Jesus compares the hypocritical religious leaders of his day to white-washed tombs: vessels that contain rot and death, but have been artificially enhanced to portray the opposite, cleanliness and purity. In this passage, he indicts the reading class as having a rotted core while sporting a polished veneer of civility, suggesting that permitting and championing the consumption of useless literature (literature that is not traditionally instructional, for example, or not biblical) will spread the internal social rot like a virus. "[T]he very life-blood of our nation" is different from the rot inside the reading class, according to Murray, but his anxiety is misdirected; the more accurate target of Murray's worry

should be more in line with how Joseph Conrad uses the phrase "whited sepluchre" to refer to Belgium in his novella, *Heart of Darkness* (12).That is, the rot inside the reading class is an easy scapegoat – a red herring, if you will – for the real source of rot ("the very life-blood of our nation") when the life-blood of the nation is the Imperial spirit, the obsession with white supremacy, the need to dominate, and the fear is that such a spirit will be curtailed if it is not fed, daily, a diet of patriarchal fodder which only supports and never questions the machine that threatens to overwhelm poor Robert in Chapter XXIV. In the minds of upper and middle-class Victorians, Brantlinger argues, "The world might contain many stages of social evolution and many seemingly bizarre customs and 'superstitions,' but there was only one civilization, one path of progress, one true religion" (*Rule of Darkness* 173). That fallacy is rocked by the sort of information sharing, voice-lifting work done by serialized crime fiction, which by its nature undermines such a hierarchical reading of the world.

In *Lady Audley's Secret*, Braddon constructs the "masculine-genre coming-of-age novel" that Gilbert suggests using a seemingly empty vessel in Robert Audley. When the reader first encounters Robert, we learn that he is a barrister, but a barrister who has never had a brief. The narrator explains:

> Sometimes, when the weather was very hot, and he had exhausted himself with the exertion of smoking his German pipe, and reading French novels, he would stroll into the Temple Gardens, and lying in some shady spot, pale and cool, with his shirt collar turned down and a blue silk handkerchief tied loosely about his neck, would tell grave benchers that he had knocked himself up with over work. (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 9] 386)

In his introduction to the reader, Robert Audley is publicly demonstrating his exhaustion and his physical frailty to the benchers (a senior member of one of the Inns of Court in London), who

can easily detect such “pleasant fiction” in his performance – they regard Robert as a kind person with a core full of “his listless, dawdling, indifferent, irresolute manner” (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 9] 386). Robert’s exercise comes from his German pipe, his French novels, and his Turkish tobacco – a cosmopolitan and particularly continental approach to leisure**.** Richard Nemesvari notes that “as a barrister he is an official caretaker and defender of his society's laws. His ‘development’ throughout the text will be measured by a growing awareness of his social responsibility to ensure their authority is maintained” (519) – but Nemesvari argues further that the more interesting version of Robert is the Robert prior to his full acquiescence to the Imperial conformity demanded by the whited sepulchre to which he belongs.

Taking a rhizomatic approach to analyzing Robert uncovers the more expansive assemblages the character is plugged into and effecting, however, and the reader can see how Robert fends off conscription into the metaphorical Imperial march through such avenues as being unwilling to give up his attachment to books of the Continent, as if to resist all the trappings (literally) of a machine life of London – to become a cog in the assemblage of Imperialism, ingesting, internalizing, and reproducing the poisonous truths about the kingdom’s utter frailty ad nauseam.

Robert knows that he must trade one poison for the other. Take, for instance, his petulant exchange with Clara Talboys:

> “Do you think I can read French novels and smoke mild Turkish until I am three-score-and-ten, Miss Talboys?” he asked. “Do you think there will not come a day in which my meerschaums will be foul, and the French novels more than usually stupid, and life altogether such a dismal monotony that I shall want to get rid of it somehow or other?” (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 19] 428)

Robert vents his frustration and anxiety onto Clara, the female embodiment of George Talboys, as the reader is repeatedly reminded. Those Continental pleasures he chooses to enjoy will turn rotten (either through taste, smell, or intellectual rigor) and he will be left with a dull monotony that, unlike the dreariness of Imperialist capitalism, will only frustrate him but will not, critically, empower and enrich him. This is important because if one reads with attention to the machines that Robert is being plugged into, Braddon is making this contradictory system visible.

Clinging to his relationship with George Talboys above all else, however, tethers him completely to Imperialism. In passing references to Eton in chapters throughout the novel, Nemesvari argues that Braddon is invoking an understanding of homosexual behavior at these types of schools, but he also asserts, "It is also, of course, such elite male schools, which by definition exclude female participation, that form the homosocial bonds at the heart of British patriarchal power (521). The elitist reading is, for me, the more precipitous fact that illuminates the fraught assemblage at hand. Robert has been set up to slip effortlessly into the Imperial assemblage, yet he resists with spoils from the Continent. Notably, his three predominant consumables come from France, Turkey, and Germany: three countries not colonized by Britain. Robert is not concerned with the tea, imported from India, that he consumes, or palm oil from West Africa. He chooses to preoccupy himself with less inflamed commodities, feigning recognition that they keep him from his colonial work. The loss of George Talboys – the severing of his connection with Eton, with the "homosocial bonds at the heart of British patriarchal power" – is what snaps him out of his indulgent stupor and he uses the female George figure to restore his connection to that patriarchal power in George's absence. Clara will also be a useful prop as Robert establishes the heteronormative seat of power in his own rustic homestead by the serial's end, where he can still nurture his homosocial bond with George and

the men of his class in peace. Through his supposed death at the bottom of the stone well, George is tied to national pride and tradition, and Robert's ties with George are representative of his desire to be enmeshed with the assemblage of Imperialism. The most important danger of this homosocial relationship is not that Robert will transgress heteronormativity – it is a danger that George may present a reflecting pool where Robert may be compelled into an introspective position. That position would be too revelatory and too traumatic; thus, Clara is awkwardly substituted into George's position. Reading laterally – rhizomatically – links Robert to the Imperial machine materially, enabling the reader to perceive Robert's trajectory as far more than a straightforward commentary on homosocial relations.

The process of detecting and inspecting is uncomfortable for Robert. Clare Clarke notes that "Braddon's amateur detective Robert Audley is appalled at the investigation of his uncle's household that he must perform in order to get to the bottom of his friend George Talboys' disappearance" (33); the narrator in *Lady Audley's Secret* asserts that "[Robert Audley's] generous nature revolted at the office into which he found himself drawn – the office of the spy, the collector of damning facts that led on to horrible deductions (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 13] 318) and Robert suggests that Clara is indirectly to blame for his wayward detective thoughts, saying "'she forces me onward upon the loathsome path—the crooked byway of watchfulness and suspicion'" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 14] 415). It is not advisable for men such as Robert to look too closely at anything, lest they suspect that there is more going on under the surface, that there are dangerous elements all around them, cloaked in the garb of "laudable virtues" such as Imperialism and capitalism.

Surely, not only are the characters concerned with letting the *right people in*, and avoiding infiltration, but they are concerned with the actualities of crime and punishment – not

necessarily with justice and fairness, but how their familial power and position may be polluted. John Scaggs argues, "The emphasis on right conduct, reinforced by the harsh punishments meted out in the stories from the Book of Daniel, is characteristic of most narratives of crime up until the mid-nineteenth century, including the stories of Edgar Allan Poe" (9). Yet we see in *Lady Audley's Secret* (as well as *The Moonstone*) a concerted attempt to continue the secret-keeping as it serves to protect the aristocracy. As Scaggs writes: "[I]t is this drive to make the unintelligible intelligible which characterises both Gothic romance and crime fiction. Characters protect themselves in the present by covering up their secrets in the past" (16). Robert conscripts Dr. Mosgrave into having Lady Audley committed, which can be done out of the spotlight.

Robert as detective is full of angst and discomfort, as the text I have pointed to demonstrates. I return now to the passage where Robert comes into his full detective self – where previously, I highlighted Robert's focus on his being "forced into the very position we have most avoided," but he continues thus: "'Lady Audley, did you ever study the theory of circumstantial evidence?'" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 11] 76). He barely pauses his speech, even as Lady Audley protests that she does not wish to hear such "horrid" things:

> "Circumstantial evidence [...] that wonderful fabric which is built out of straws collected at every point of the compass, and which is yet strong enough to hang a man. Upon what infinitesimal trifles may sometimes hang the whole secret of some wicked mystery, inexplicable heretofore to the wisest upon the earth! A scrap of paper, a shred of some torn garment, the button off a coat, a word dropped incautiously from the overcautious lips of guilt, the fragment of a letter, the shutting or opening of a door, a shadow on a window-blind, the accuracy of a moment tested by one of Benson's watches—a thousand circumstances so slight as to be forgotten by the criminal, but links of iron in the

> wonderful chain forged by the science of the detective officer; and lo! the gallows is built up; the solemn bell tolls through the dismal gray of the early morning, the drop creaks under the guilty feet, and the penalty of crime is paid." (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 11] 76)

This rich passage offers several more clues about how Robert conceives of his social position. He accurately describes evidence as a fabric constructed from far-flung straws ("[a] scrap of paper, a shred of some torn garment" that, once drawn together into a readable text, can serve to enact a perception of justice. I explicate paper and such woven materials in chapter three, but for this analysis, straw like esparto grass from Northern Africa represents the basest of Imperial actions, drawing out all manner of latent, poisonous anxiety over the rape of people and land as if the straw were plantain leaves wrapped around a limb with a spider bite. Instead of throwing away the plantain leaves, however, the straws of evidence channel the poisonous anxiety into the detective, and the reading populace. Robert is bringing together the confluence of materials to determine guilt, bringing timekeeping to the fore with his invocation of Benson's watches, and linking criminality with the "links of iron" – a phrase Robert uses to invoke the impenetrability of the evidence and the way the evidence is solidly connected. Looking at the totality of this analysis, however, we can interpret Robert's description as also invoking the nationalism of iron, implying the righteousness of punishing the wicked, and how that punishment protects the social and political hierarchy. The iron links of evidence become the iron shackles of the guilty, transforming finally into the gallows for a final judgement.

The criminal, in Robert's telling, leaves clues of paper and fabric – insubstantial, inconsequential, in Robert's consideration – but to the gentleman, they are not only visible, not only readable, but able to be organized and acted upon. Robert's words about the detective's role echo Doyle's self-poisoning efforts, as he says those bits of papery evidence become "links of

iron in the wonderful chain forged by the science of the detective officer" (Braddon [vol. 3, no. 11] 76). "Science" is the crutch, argued to be a rational position that is utterly defensible, rhetorically clad here in iron forged in the heat of certainty. For as strong as these images and these words sound, we know that they betray a real fear of critical, foundational vulnerability. Robert believes himself to be the detective, protected by the iron, but just as the writer from "Iron Wall and Iron Roads" laments, does that metal promise to strengthen a fundamentally weakened (wooden) national identity? I argue yes, it does: Robert is still a whited sepulchre then, and the reader must read him as looking for ways to shore up his crumbling frame. Doyle is performing a similar task, experimenting with his own body, a vessel he likely believes is socially and politically strong, but that he understands is actually weakened by internal forces (whatever may be causing his neuralgia). These men cloak themselves in the shield of science to avoid addressing the sorts of weaknesses endemic to a "white supremacist" body. If the poison is the white man, where does it come from? The answer lies in the material actions – the embodied supremacy – that includes creating serialized crime fiction through gathering materials, experiences, and intentions that result in the visible, tangible spreading of information. I do not mean that serialized crime fiction itself is solely evidence of white supremacy, nor do I mean to suggest that *Lady Audley's Secret* offers some kind of antidote to the poisons carried throughout the colonized world. I do mean to suggest that we would not have serialized literature without Imperialism (at least not in the same way as what was developed), and it seems unlikely that the effects and affects of Imperialism could avoid bleeding through the art produced within those many pages of text and images.

Lady Audley's Secret offers a solid demonstration of how sensational crime fiction might aid in deciphering the cost of Imperialism. The end of *Lady Audley's Secret* attempts to cauterize

the circulation of poison through the system via Lady Audley's internment and eventual death off-page, and the post-script, where the reader encounters a scene of seeming domestic bliss: "Two years have passed since the May twilight in which Robert found his old friend; and Mr. Audley's dream of a fairy cottage has been realised between Teddington Locks and Hampton Bridge, where, amid a little forest of foliage, there is a fantastical dwelling place of rustic woodwork, whose latticed windows look out upon the river" (Braddon [vol. 4, no. 19] 432). Robert Audley's dream is far away from the stone and iron of Audley Manor, as he and his new family are tucked into a dwelling made of "rustic woodwork," surrounded by "a little forest." The references to "fairy" and "fantastical" suggest that this is a dream or a hallucination and not grounded in reality, but Robert's madness to believe in the fantasy of a happy patriarchy is necessary to Britain's forward progress. He no longer reads his French novels – he has no use for sensation to fill up his emptiness, or to tempt him away from his singular purpose of pursuing his "one civilization, one path of progress, one true religion," as Brantlinger writes. His dalliance into detective work brought him, perhaps, too close to turning his powers of observation upon himself. In *Reading Lessons,* Brantlinger writes, "[...]the double-seeing of the detective-voyeur becomes a kind of perverse, ambiguous wish-fulfillment, expressing the desire to be both the law-giving father and his obscene double [...]The ultimate secret—and scandal—of *Lady Audley's Secret*, as of other sensation novels, is that it encourages the reader in her or his own radical doubleness, without deciding the issue" (*Reading Lesson* 162). In Chapter VII, the narrator comments, "We hear every day of murders committed in the country. Brutal and treacherous murders; slow, protracted agonies from poisons administered by some kindred hand; sudden and violent deaths by cruel blows, inflicted with a stake cut from some spreading oak, whose every shadow promised—peace" (Braddon [vol. 2, no. 9] 395). This is the same country

to which Robert has moved Clara and their child, one in which he surrounds himself with soothing woodwork that betrays no hint of the anxieties he might endure if he would only play detective again, looking for the source of those "slow, protracted agonies" that feel like a decorative ribbon strangling the life out of someone. Rather than grapple with the source of his fear, Robert sent Lady Audley away, so that neither he, nor the reader, would be encouraged to examine the evidence further. *Lady Audley's Secret* skips over the part where Robert may have acted in a truly transgressive way, fully enacting the promises of a lateral reading that would destabilize the "happy ending" that is not even realistically constructed at the end of the story, as Robert must live in a fantasy world to support the rapidly assembling iron and steel reality of Imperial Britain.

CHAPTER V

THREADS AND THREATS IN *THE MOONSTONE*

> "The arrangement of the materials of which the author has availed himself is admirable; but we doubt whether, as the reader follows the course of the plot, he will not become painfully sensible of the unsatisfactory foundation upon which the whole superstructure is based."
> —Charles Mackay, "The Moonstone," p. 115.

In 1927, Earle Radcliffe Caley published his article, "The Stockholm Papyrus: An English Translation with Brief Notes," in the *Journal of Chemical Education*. The Stockholm Papyrus, also known as *Papyrus Graecus Holmiensis*, is a "technical recipe book of the chemical arts as they were known and practiced about the third or fourth centuries A.D." which "emphasizes the arts of dyeing, imitating precious stones, and other operations" (980). Caley concludes that the Stockholm Papyrus "tends to show that chemical arts in ancient Egypt were largely in the hands of the priestly caste" and argues that both the Stockholm Papyrus and the Leyden Papyri (found in the same location) are important artifacts to the history of chemistry (1001). Of the many recipes for treating stones and textiles, one stands out. Caley's translations read:

> By the following procedure one likewise makes papyrus sheets, which are written upon, clean again so that they appear as though they never had been written upon. Take and dissolve natron in water. Then put in, when the soda solution has formed, 1 part of raw earth, 1 part of Cimolian earth, and cow's milk in addition so that all of it comes to a glutinous mixture. Then mix in oil of mastic and daub it on with a feather. Let it dry and then scale it off [...] If dealing with a papyrus sheet only coat the characters" (982).

Papyrus sheets were not considered precious materials — the papyrus plant grew in abundance in Egyptian marshes. When thinking of reusing writing material, as one does with palimpsests, one thinks of animal skins of the Middle Ages, a far more precious commodity. Yet here is a chemical solution designed to remove the ink from papyri. The priestly chemist advises the practitioner to put the concoction directly on the characters, which would have been created using ink containing lead (Christiansen et al. 27825). The paste ostensibly lifts the ink, enabling the papyrus to be returned to a pre-marked condition. The assemblage of ingredients, being drawn from disparate places, offers alchemic transformation.

Today, writers may think little of erasing a pencil mark, deleting a line of text from a digital document, or throwing away a piece of paper with ink marks. Writers are routinely engaging in cleaning up their workspace and getting rid of the old to make way for the new. The process of wiping the slate clean is nothing new, nor is the act of revision. Stories are ever-changing. The process of cleaning papyrus is, perhaps, an extravagant method of cleaning a writing surface that was, ostensibly, plentiful. The goal may have been not only to increase the usability of the papyrus, but also to make those ink markings disappear, as if they had never been made in the first place.

Advancements in technology, therefore, led to the development of papyrus, the development of ink, and now the development, via chemistry, of ways to remove the markings of ink on papyrus. These developments are worthy of study when one aims to understand the effects of Imperialism and colonization on creative and iterative productions. In *The Alchemy of Empire*, Rajani Sudan assesses materials such as mortar and paper; she explains, “I want to emphasize that I am treating these practices and process of production [...] as t*echnologies* of colonialism and empire. [...] Mortar isn’t simply the sum of its parts but becomes a technology of building a

city that later represents British imperial presence in India [...] paper is embedded with the marks of intellectual labor" (7). In the case of paper, technology both reveals and obscures, as processes are developed to create paper and clear it of markings. In *Technology, Literature and Culture*, Alex Goody references Heidegger's writing on technology to argue, "[T]echnology in essence is not a technological thing or things, but the way these things disclose or reveal themselves. What modern technology has done is to take this essential 'bringing-forth' and extend it to a challenging of all nature" (31). Taking up this idea of revelation and disclosure, I look rhizomatically – that is, I follow the threads of relationships developed between human and nonhuman matter across time and space – at the way the assemblage of paper and paper-like qualities are present in *The Moonstone*, and argue that *The Moonstone* presents a question to the readers: what texts can we "disappear" as if they never happened? Can we ultimately cover up the trail of something devious?

This project – using a rhizomatic framework to map the nineteenth-century British publishing industry as a network of relationships that emerge in serial literature – aims to answer these questions and is part of a conversation bringing together publishing history, media studies, literary studies, and new materialism. This project contributes to the current conversation around "paperwork" or "paper studies" by treating paper as an assemblage, but also expands the conversation to include other contributors to the publishing industry (metal, and waste). The burgeoning field of "paper studies" (driven by media theorists like Lisa Gitelman, Ben Kafka, and Jonathan Senchyne), for example, homes in on paper itself – the role of paper and the presence of paper. This chapter specifically is an extension of the paperworks literature, in that it includes paper as one of the three contributors being analyzed, along with metal and waste, because the project is built off first treating the publishing industry as an assemblage. The most

significant deviation is that this project is focused on treating everything as assemblages that function through ecological relationships, rather than treating an object (like paper) as a singular object of study. For example, both Kevin McLaughlin (in *Paperwork: Fiction & Mass Mediacy in the Paper Age*) and Jonathan Senchyne (in *The Intimacy of Paper in Early and Nineteenth-Century American Literature*) analyze paper and its relationship to human culture, though they argue opposing conclusions (Senchyne sees paper as bringing about a greater intimacy of people from different classes in what he calls "paper publics" (Introduction), while McLaughlin views paper as a thing that creates difference and detachment, "an irreducible plurality of lonesome readers" (114). My project is less concerned with the presence of paper as an object in the literature (as both McLaughlin and Senchyne are); rather, I am looking at the presence of the qualities of paper as an assemblage (qualities like deceptiveness, polyvocality, and contextural-ness) as evidence of the machines being plugged into each other (a desire for immortality being plugged driving the machine of colonialism, for example).

The Moonstone, written by Wilkie Collins and published in *All The Year Round* from January to August 1868, wrestles directly with colonialism, as it begins with a harrowing description of the storming of Seringapatam in 1799, in which the British East India Company allied with the Nizam of Hyderabad and Maratha against the Kingdom of Mysore – the British siege was successful, and while many artifacts (not including the fictional Moonstone) were pillaged, one notable element of violent combat was the successful use of the first iron-cased rockets in war, launched by the Mysore Army against the British. In Collins' narrative, violence is used to obtain the Moonstone from its Brahmin keepers: Colonel Herncastle murders the three priests who are guarding the diamond and steals it. As Ronald R. Thomas argues, "If the diamond stands [...] as a sign of religious devotion, imperial plunder, colonial revenge, capitalist

desire, personal vengeance, sexual experience or psychological integration, the novel [...]is an orientalist romance, a critique of imperialism, an inheritance plot, an allegory of seduction" (65). Collins organizes his plot around the theft of the Moonstone once the precious gem makes it back to England and introduces several detective figures. *The Moonstone* is remarkable for that detective plotting, as Thomas suggests: "[...]*The Moonstone* might qualify [...] as the first and best of the *modern* English detective novels [because it demonstrates] the emergence of the modern field of forensic science and its growing importance to a new science called criminology" (67). As A. D. Hutter notes, "Detective fiction involves the transformation of a fragmented and incomplete set of events into a more ordered and complete understanding," a point which will prove salient throughout this analysis (175). This fragmentation models the formation of *The Moonstone*'s installments.

When Herncastle brings the Moonstone to England and dispatches it off to his sister Julia's daughter Rachel Verinder with devious intent, the narrative blossoms, with its art of detection on full display. In fact, the characters refer to catching "detective fever" as they attempt to solve the mystery of the missing Moonstone, seemingly pilfered from Rachel Verinder's bedroom in the dead of night. Several figures play the role of detective, including Lady Julia Verinder's house steward, Gabriel Betteredge; Lady Verinder's nephew, Franklin Blake; and most obliquely, Sergeant Cuff, of whom Blake exclaims, "'If half the stories I have heard are true, when it comes to unravelling a mystery, there isn't the equal in England of Sergeant Cuff!'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 460] 219).

The most important detective, however, is not the police official, but the enigmatic Ezra Jennings, who susses out the critical mystery — that of who absconded with the Moonstone. Jennings is the most complicated figure in the narrative, as he is consistently described (by others

and by himself) as a liminal figure embodying so many binaries: he is of English and indigenous descent (though his mother's lineage is not spelled out, she is from one of England's colonies); he is physically unlike white English people, but he operates within the small country society as the assistant of Mr. Candy, the local doctor. He is described repeatedly as having piebald hair, and he labels himself as having masculine and feminine qualities. As I will explain later in this chapter, Jennings is the literary embodiment of Imperialism, and he has embodied it to the point of enacting its policies to disappear himself. The subaltern abjectifies himself, actively. Though he is the most successful detective in the narrative, he is ultimately the great concealer, and his story suggests that detective stories are really about concealment.

Erasure and concealment of wrongdoing permeates *The Moonstone.* Like *Lady Audley's Secret*, there are elements of misdirection and the use of red herrings. The reader is led to pay more attention to a trio of mysterious Indian men, rather than suspect the dashing, charitable, and noble Godfrey Ablewhite (cousin to Rachel Verinder and Franklin Blake), of stealing the diamond and attempting to sell it to pay his debts. In this case, however, the misdirection is pointing the reader to contemplate the source of the "original sin," that of the actions Herncastle took to steal the Moonstone in the first place, and then, by extension, the actions of the East India Company that led up to the violence in India.

This theme of erasure is present in the assemblage of paper as well; Sudan writes, "[...] the labor that produces high-quality paper is erased from its use: writing letters, poems, novels, plays, recipes, scientific treatises, and the like, our attention is drawn to what is signified on the material rather than the material itself" (125). People may have a difficult time seeing, or may choose to avoid seeing, the "behind the scenes" machinations, and allow only what is immediately visible to determine what is true. This corrupted perception affects the crime

narrative in *The Moonstone.* The characters in *The Moonstone* complain about what they can and cannot perceive, and what they do see is often skewered by their own biases. It is only when Franklin Blake, Lady Verinder's nephew, puts the narratives together that the reader gets a complete-*ish* picture; ultimately, though, they are deceived into thinking their understanding is complete. All is (not) revealed. The detective narrative is culpable: the entire notion that you can solve a crime in such a linear way, with one bad actor, as if malfeasance is a spot on an apple that can be cut out before the whole apple is ruined. Like mold on the loaf of bread: by the time you see the mold, the entire loaf is infested with spores. One cannot clean what one cannot see, or what one does not acknowledge as a problem — one's perception is inherently flawed. Rather, the plot has been neatly laid out for the reader to obscure the most important and deadly details: the harm inflicted on the India continent, the horror of the American Civil War, and the internal white supremacist ableism. The reader never learns what the great lie spread about Ezra Jennings is. We never learn what illness is about to take his life. The reader only learns that he is suffering on multiple levels, and that he can read people better than others. Throughout *The Moonstone,* several of the characters try to satisfy the loss they experience, but because they are not addressing the core of their loss — the Imperialism and ableism around them — they cannot know real peace.

In this morass of detective characters, Ezra Jennings emerges as the great detective: this liminal character, performing experiments with chemicals, reading Mr. Candy correctly, and interpreting his cryptic language. Jennings is rendered unsatisfactory in the eyes of the Imperialists and summarily punished, but he is the most competent character in the serial. His duality is the embodiment of colonialism, including as he attempts to launder the world of his existence at the end of his life. He successfully tailors Candy's story, his history is exotic, and his

nomadic lifestyle spreads him out laterally. Ezra Jennings is the Imperialist's ultimate fantasy: he is useful, he fills in holes (plot and otherwise), and he then willingly disappears himself, erasing all evidence of his liminal self, dangerously walking between two worlds.

Critically, Ezra Jennings functions as the linchpin; to understand his position, one must understand paper as an assemblage of assemblages by employing a rhizomatic, rather than an arborist, analysis. A more complete understanding of paper assemblages elucidates how detective fiction, as a genre, was imagined to be an enactment of Imperialism and particularly, efforts to launder the sins and effect of imperialism. Passages from Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales further the dramatization of these concepts, as Doyle, writing well after Collins, is often more explicit in his expressions of anxiety. Using close readings of the text, one can perceive how *The Moonstone*'s narrative structure, the "elaborate puzzle," undermines the crime narrative's attempt to launder Imperialist sins, to an extent. Ultimately, I argue that Jennings is the great complicator because his very state as the ultimate Imperialist fantasy offers enough cracks through which a more aggressive critique of Imperialism can be seen.

Sudan's work offers a model for looking at many marginalized stakeholders with systems; she pulls together the theoretical framework that attempts to account for all these moving pieces, when she writes, "[c]onnections between trauma, trade, and global position may be read through the intersection of material geography and the psychosocial formation of nation" (154). Her work focuses on the 18th century, and geographically on the relationship between India and the British Empire, but Sudan performs the type of system-focused deconstruction of contemporaneous literary texts that could be similarly performed on 19th century-serial publications. Sudan's reading of sections from *Emma*, particularly regarding Harriet's material poverty and character development as it relates to the price and process of producing paper

(129), demonstrates that a close reading of 19th century publishing systems is a radical act of subverting the dominant moves of materiality that keep our readings tied to limited conceptions of the time.

The "psychosocial formation of nation," as Sudan puts it, can be observed in paper. Paper is related to power through its use as the vehicle for law (the printed justification for discipline and punishment) and money (paper legal tender). In *Empire and Communications,* Harrold Innis argues that, while it may seem "irreverent," "[T]he changing character of the British Empire during the present century has been in part a result of the pulp and paper industry and its influence on public opinion" (25). Paper is both *civilizing* and *is* civilization; paper embodies and reflects the civilization that makes it. In October 1858, *The Scottish Review,* an arm of the Scottish Temperance movement, published an article entitled "Substitutes for Paper Material," in which the author(s) noted, "the vast importance of paper as an agent of civilization" ("Substitutes for Paper" 290). In fact, paper was seen as a critical element of national identity. In *The History Of The Worthies Of England Who For Parts and Learning Have Been Eminent In The Several Counties*, Thomas Fuller writes, "Paper Participates in some sort of the Caracters of the Countrymen which make it, the Venetian being neat, subtile and courtlike, the French light, slight and slender, the Dutch thick, corpulent and gross, not to say sometimes also charta Bibula, sucking up the Ink with the sponginess thereof" (148)**.** Fuller's descriptions underscore the nationalistic connections drawn onto paper as a production and suggest a concern, from the British perspective, over the craftsmanship of foreigners— and the potential desire of foreigners like the Dutch to soak up "ink," which may be read as wealth, land, or opportunities.

For the British in the nineteenth century, paper's ability to civilize and mirror civilization necessarily meant that paper assemblage was going to be informed by the national Imperial

exercises. Innis suggests, “In the printing period we are able to concentrate on paper as a medium, but we can note the introduction of machinery in the manufacture of paper and in printing [...] and the introduction of the use of wood” (27). Paper’s ecological relationships run expansive and global: where metal goes down (as discussed in chapter four), paper goes horizontally, threading out from trees, from grass, then from cotton and rags. Senchyne notes, “Every sheet of paper is an archive of human labor [...] it is also true of the rags that make up paper” (Introduction). He gives a specific example of this idea in practice: “[S]everal ‘it narratives’ exist in which a sheet or a quire of paper tells its story from flax seed to cloth to paper to print or manuscript and back to earth again” (Senchyne introduction). As the author of “Substitutes for Paper Material” puts it, “Could we have the autobiography of a rag, who can doubt that many a stirring ‘romance of real life’ would be introduced into public notice?” (“Substitutes for Paper” 295). Senchyne points out that “[t]he most well-known of these is probably the 1779 English magazine story ‘The Adventures of a Quire of Paper,” but they were so common that schoolchildren could write them out from memory” (Introduction).

The *Scottish Review* cast this interconnectedness as evidence of the life cycle of value. They write, “This is an apt illustration of utilitarianism—of the fact, that nothing can be said to be absolutely useless or valueless. Having terminated its career as an article of dress or clothing, having begun, perhaps, as the shirt of a king and ended as the duster of a cook, the cast-away rag enters on a transition state, and, after so many vicissitudes, it begins a higher and civilizing mission—it becomes paper” (“Substitutes for Paper” 295). The life cycle of value can also represent an uncomfortable, intimate interaction with material that has previously been intimate with a distinct “lesser than.” The *Scottish Review* is forthcoming in this respect: “Little does the fair denizen of our urban drawing rooms, who sits with jewelled finger at her magnificent papier-

mâché' escritoir, dream that that very escritoir may have once formed the scanty covering of the dirty back of some miserable smuggling Irish family in the wilds of Tipperary; or that the embossed leaves of her gorgeous album may have been the clothing of the inmates of a lazar-hour or jail!" ("Substitutes for Paper" 295). There is an air, in this passage, of the sort of erotic excitement of intermingling and danger that Rachel Verinder expresses at the thought of Indians enacting violence upon her person for wearing their sacred Moonstone gem on the bosom of her dress.

Paper is an intimate material that is also critical to nation-building — thus, when England began experiencing a paper crisis in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, anxiety flourished. By early in the nineteenth century, publications were writing about paper making and experimentation in paper technology. The hunt for suitable materials from which to craft a product that can hold markings for a lengthy period became a national obsession. For example, an article titled "Enthusiasm in Paper Making," in *Chambers Edinburgh Journal* in 1837, details the experiments of M. Schäffer which included using different types of bark, vegetation pulp, and even bird debris, in an attempt to make paper without linen rags ("Enthusiasm in Paper" 32). These experiments are cast as amusements and entertainments for a curious gentleman. In 1854, an article titled "The Paper Difficulty," which appeared in *Chambers Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts,* leads off with the statement: "Our readers can hardly be ignorant of the fact, that the materials for English paper are becoming somewhat scarce" ("Paper Difficulty" 295). The attitude towards paper innovation grows darker as the years follow.

This lack became a source of concern in terms of national pride and identity. Innis and Sudan have already pointed to paper as critical to nation building, and writers of the time turned the paper deficit into an opportunity to reinforce their colonial identities. Britons had to lean into

innovation, experimentation, and knowledge of chemistry and botany. It is also true that Imperialism and colonization made those innovations possible. The subtitle of Jim Downs' *Maladies of Empire* encapsulates this idea: "How Colonialism, Slavery, and War Transformed Medicine." He writes, "Slavery is imprinted on the DNA of epidemiology" (Downs 196), ultimately arguing, "Epidemiology resulted from larger aggressions against people and places that have been erased from history" (Downs 201). The same dark alchemy was at work as Britain struggled to meet its paper needs, including the need to produce paper which would be used to sign ideology into law, or to spread the vision of a detective crime novel over the span of a year to the reading public. The author of "Substitutes for Paper Material" describes their charge to their readers in this way:

> To point out how the most insignificant or useless weeds may, by the ingenuity of man, become material agents in the 'march of intellect' and the progress of civilization throughout the world; to direct the attention to the underdeveloped resources of our own isles and of our colonies, and to stimulate the study of the despised or unapplied treasures of the vegetable kingdom" ("Substitutes for Paper" 290).

Of course, when the author refers to "the ingenuity of man," the implication is "the ingenuity of the white British man;" indeed, only the white British man can transform subaltern weeds into "material agents of civilization."

Paper is viewed as a critical aspect of national identity in all aspects, from the texture and consistency, to the words inked upon it, and the very nature of its creation. In 1862, the *Examiner* took an aggressive tone in its article titled, "The Paper Manufacture," in which the writer argues for a greater reverence for British companies and production — in this way, paper is a symbol of British industrial might (and national identity). The writer calls those British

papermakers who have weighed in on the topic "prophets" if they have argued that the paper manufacturing sector is in danger, accusing them of prophesizing that the domestic industry would be utterly in ruins: "By this time, according to the prophets, the manufacture of paper should have wholly ceased in this kingdom [...]. Foreigners should be in complete possession of the market, competition with them being impossible" ("The Paper Manufacture" 98). The *Examiner* article declares that "We had faith, however, in free-trade principles, and remember that the British farmer had survived all the calamities predicted [...] we cherished the belief that the paper manufacturer would hold his ground with the advantages of superior capital and machinery" ("The Paper Manufacture" 98). This exuberant confidence will seem misplaced as shortages intensify and ingenuity is not forthcoming.

The anxiety over possible incursions by foreigner manufacture is an echo of similar concerns regarding metal and iron, as I explored in chapter four. In the case of paper, however, there seems less a concern about questionable solidity and stability, and national defense — here, the threat seems more oriented to questions regarding the interconnectedness of economies. The threat is more focused on the inevitable interconnectedness of nation building as well: if the paper Britain needed to build itself came from foreigners and the fortuneless.

The internal collecting of rags for repurposing was simply not going to meet the needs of British paper consumption. The *Scottish Review* writes, "The country has been fully awakened to the necessity which exists for procuring supplementary or substitutional paper materials; foreign shores are being ransacked in every direction for fibrous plants; commercial and scientific men alike have embarked in extensive series of experiments" ("Substitutes for Paper Material" 298). Innovation was quite hard to come by: In the *Journal for the Society of Arts*, June 5, 1863 edition, a report from an extra meeting of the Society of Arts included the contents of a paper

read at said meeting, from William Hawes, titled “On the Results of the International Exhibition of 1862.” Hawes reported that the jury was disappointed with the number of paper exhibitors during the Exhibition, and further noted that:

> Great attention was directed for a time to the discovery of a new material for the manufacture of paper as a substitute for rags, but, notwithstanding the offer of the large prize of £1,000, by the proprietors of the *Times* for a good paper made from any material except rags, and the general stimulus which was given to invention by the contemplated scarcity of rags, no important discovery has been made, and that, notwithstanding large quantities of paper are made in England and abroad, from straw, esparto, and other fibres, all first-class printing and writing papers are still made from rags. (494)

He further writes, “[...] since the passing of the Patent Law Amendment Act in 1852 to the close of 1857, 147 patents were obtained for improvements relating to paper [...] with the exception of those relating to straw and esparto, [none] of the above patents have come into profitable use. Since 1857, 229 patents have been taken out, with I fear very similar results” (Hawes 494). The promise of English exceptionalism was not bearing fruit.

If England was unable to innovate at home, England would have to look elsewhere for inspiration and materials. The importation and exportation industry, as it surrounded and plugged into the nineteenth-century British publishing industry, is at the heart of this project of literary analysis: Maxwell and Miller argue that literary criticism (or, as they write, “[e]ngagements with the literary qualities of texts") is obligated to include an analysis of the totality of circumstance surrounding the object prior to and after production, including their nature of products of labor (179). Indeed, the *Scottish Review* goes into detail regarding the hunt for new paper materials,

where “new branches of trade are being opened up in India, the West Indies, Australia, New Zealand, and Africa” (“Substitutes for Paper” 302). The writer goes on to suggest:

> It is by no means improbable that the field of productions of crude materials for our textible fabrics and cordage, as well as for our paper manufacture, may speedily be transferred to our colonies where the soil is fresh, land cheap, and labor abundant. Many of our most abundant weeds, which are not only at present useless and worthless, but are positively deleterious to the contents of our fields and gardens, furnish fibres capable of conversion into excellent paper; and, judging from the results already attained by experimentalists, many more remain to be tried with every prospect of success. (“Substitutes for Paper” 302)

The spirit of scientific inquiry is being stoked aggressively by the writer, as morbid curiosity for the experimentation may be used to alleviate the growing need for new ways of crafting paper. The colonies are seen as places and spaces for exploitation, not only of the natural resources but of the human capital — the frustrating labor of paper development can be outsourced. The writers suggest that the weeds of England are not only “useless and worthless” but also “deleterious” to the thriving natural resources England can create. The hope expressed is that the fresh labor of the colonies can turn weeds into paper. The desire for paper, in this instance, fuels Imperialism, which delivers maps, laws, decrees, trade agreements and the like. Imperialism, in turn, furnishes more paper.

One searing example of the global political and ecological impact of the nineteenth-century British publishing industry comes in the form of paper creation: in the early half of the nineteenth century, the British publishing industry was dependent on the cotton, harvested and shipped from their former colonies, the United States, to be used in English textile mills to

produce rags – which then could be turned into paper. Of course, by the middle of the 1800s, England's former colonies were embroiled in a civil war over the continued enslavement of the people who picked the cotton to send to England for publishing. As Lee Erickson points out, as "the Northern blockade of Southern ports effectively halted the export of cotton to textile mills, in England, the price of paper rose, thus encouraging the development of new processes for making paper first from esparto grass and then from wood pulp" (170–171). Paper, whether being made primarily from cotton or from esparto grass, has an international trade route; cotton was sourced from the American South, primarily, picked by enslaved Africans and their descendants. That import, however, was drastically interrupted, and England turned to esparto grass because, during the American Civil War, Northern ships blockaded Southern ports, preventing the export of cotton that was grown in the Southern states and Texas. The English attempted to deal with this inconvenience by blockade running for the Confederacy, supplying the Confederates with ammunition in exchange for cotton. After the end of the American Civil War, the United States brought charges and claims against Britain, and *Fraser's Magazine* ran an article titled, "The American Case Under the Alabama Claims." In the article, the author lays out the stipulations of America as articulated in the Treaty of Washington, which formally charged Great Britain with grievances related to acts violating Britain's neutrality in the American Civil War. The article relates Part V of the treaty, which outlines the charge of aiding the Confederacy with a particular gain in mind: America's contention that British ships, organized out of Liverpool, used Nassau "as a depot for supplies of arms and munitions of war" to be further conveyed to Southern ports such a Charleston and Savannah by blockade runners ("The American Case" 386). The article further implicates Britain in a scheme to profit from Southern cotton. This section concludes by admitting no guilt on the part of the British, but neither making

a case that British ships were engaged in non-neutral commerce – rather, the article laments the lack of civility on America's part.

Though they were attempting to import Southern cotton and then sell the cotton back to the American North for profit – for all their tacit support of the enslavement of Africans and their descendants – the British found a replacement material in esparto grass, found primarily in Northern Africa. A colorful description of the exotic land of esparto grass can be found in a column in *The Athenaeum*, published on February 17, 1877. In a section titled "Geographical Notes," Capt. Mouchez, of the French Navy offers "a careful survey of the sterile coasts of Southern Tunisia and Tripolitania" – "sterile," even though bountiful quantities of "alfa, or Esparto […] being exported from Tunis and Tripoli" ("Geographical Notes" 228). This sterile environment, Mouchez contends, is "inhabited by predatory tribes, who do not hesitate to massacre the crews of any vessels" ("Geographical Notes" 228). His reception is far different from Col. Lambert Playfair, the article notes, as Playfair, a British soldier and author, was reportedly "received a perfect ovation on account of his belonging to a nation which 'defended the Sultan'" ("Geographical Notes" 228). The article notes that the volumes of esparto grass will be shipped away "in English, Italian, and Turkish bottoms," while "French paper-manufacturers do not appear to appreciate sufficiently this substitute for rags, for most of it finds its way to England" ("Geographical Notes" 228). In publications like *The Glasgow Daily Herald*, esparto grass's wonders were celebrated: in 1863, an article praised esparto grass as being "held in esteem by the ancients" for its durability in rope making ("Esparto Grass in Paper-Making" 3). The printed page of *The Glasgow Daily Herald* offers an intriguing placement of the article quoted above, titled "Esparto Grass in Paper-Making": it appears at the bottom of the fifth column from the left. "Esparto Grass in Paper-Making" is placed in a column below two articles

entitled “Pursuit of the Confederate Cruisers” and “The Irrepressible Negro.” The tension between the righteous pursuit of justice by the incredibly able British Navy, as portrayed in “Pursuit of the Confederate Cruisers” and the article below it, a condemnation of racism in the American North (indicting the Irish as hearty racists as well), in concert with the following article on esparto grass, smacks of hypocrisy. The visual arrangement is a narrative: the noble Navy, the charge of hideously racist Americans (coupled with the idea that Europeans cannot understand such racism), culminating in a seemingly innocuous description of this lovely new commodity, esparto grass, which comes into the nineteenth-century British publishing industry precisely because of racism, a cause directly aided by Britain, and cultivated from North African lands which were deemed “sterile” and full of savages. The intersection of Britain’s relationship with the American South (characterized by bitterness, subterfuge, and greed), their relationship with North Africa (hypocrisy), and the presentation of their self-image as laid out in periodicals maps out a rather mutually destructive configuration. Finally, the engagement of Britain with America and esparto grass – specifically, the failure of the British to remain neutral and the failure of the British to obtain cotton in their usual way – is not a failure to be discarded, recalling Deleuze and Guattari’s writing on desiring-machines and their attendant failures, as explored in chapter two. Failure is part of the process, part of the story, and in no way an anomaly.

Considering the concept of paper as an assemblage, understanding the relationship between paper and India is essential to understanding *The Moonstone.* Prior to the Sepoy Mutiny, we have the assemblage of the East India Company, which brings the British to India. In the Introduction to *The East India Company and the Natural World*, titled “New Imperial and Environmental Histories of the Indian Ocean,” Alan Lester argues that the East India Company

can easily be seen as an assemblage: he uses the word "network," which can be comprised of "nodal points" that scale up or down, "from individual people through institutional spaces such as the mission station, the laboratory or the botanic garden, to agglomerations such as towns, cities, regions and countries" (4). He asserts that the assemblage "can be seen as constituted by flows of capital, movements of people, objects or organisms, and the communication of ideas [...] via the physical and imaginative routes connecting them" (Lester 4). Ultimately, Lester argues, "The East India Company itself was one such assemblage, constituted as much by the commodities, specimens and artefacts, and the regimes of knowledge [...] as by the merchants, sailors, lascars, officials, bureaucrats and ships that sustained their movements" (1). I connect the East India Company with the establishment of British Imperialism in India, as the East India Company establishes production hubs in Masulipatnam in 1611 and in Surat in 1615. The East India Company would ultimately be dissolved following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, and the British Raj would be established. The rebellion began with troops who were employed by the East India Company.

This cataclysmic event, known variously as The Indian Rebellion of 1857, Revolt of 1857**,** Sepoy Mutiny, and The Great Rebellion, coalesces the assemblages of imperialism, paper, and *The Moonstone*. The presence of animal fat on rifle cartridges, the ostensible cause of the mutiny is a critical component of how the mutiny took on a mythical status, is an important story to pick apart because it represents the level of misinformation that can be spread virally. The story also speaks to the way colonialism creates the conditions that fortify such misinformation and is not so much "misinformation" as it is eliding the facts — the British were abusing the Indians, they just were not exactly doing it through pig fat on paper. Making sure the paper is clean of offensive animal fat *seemed* to be the most important action the British could have taken

to quell the mutiny, but even then, it was really about convincing the sepoys that the paper was clean.

The Moonstone opens with the story of the theft of the Moonstone, a priceless diamond revered by Indians, during "the Storming of Seringapatam" in 1799. The British victory in this violent act was an important milestone in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War of 1789-99, where British control over India was fortified under Arthur Wellesley's reign as Governor-General. The reading audience would also be consuming *The Moonstone* in the wake of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, and while that action is not part of the plot's direct action, Collins' work in *The Moonstone* offered the reading public a different take on the prevailing British point of view: in "'Dirty Linen': Legacies of Empire in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone,*" Melissa Free suggests, "Barely ten years after the Sepoy Mutiny, Collins speaks back to the hysteria it generated — or, exacerbated — and counters the myth of English victimization, casting Herncastle as the '*gentleman*' exposed" (351). The reading audience could have read Collins' thoughts on the mutiny in his essay, "A Sermon for Sepoys," which appeared in Charles Dickens' *Household Words* in 1858. In the essay, Collins writes, "Such lessons exist in the shape of ancient parables, once addressed to the ancestors of the sepoys, and still quite sufficient for the purpose of teaching each man among them his duty towards his neighbour [...]" ("Sermon" 244). Free further argues that Collins' develops a "[...] counter-legend (of success) to (the horrors of) the Mutiny [...] [which is] all the more striking as a scene of brutality and greed committed by an English soldier, who [...] stands in metonymically for imperial depredation" (347). The act of "speaking back," as Free terms it, invites the reader to also reinterpret the Indian (or half-Indian) characters in *The Moonstone.*

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 was the result of many abuses by the English colonizers against the Indian people, but it is often, and reductively, described as being inspired by an Indian soldier being forced to consume pig fat, which would directly violate their Hindu beliefs against consuming pork; in some cases, it was believed to be cow fat, in direct violation of Muslim beliefs. In 1856, conscripted Indian soldiers, known by the British as sepoys, were given new weapons, the Enfield Pattern 1853 rifled musket. These muskets used different ammunition than their previous weapons, and in this case, the Minié balls were encased in paper cartridges that were pre-greased. To fire the weapon, the person would have to bite off the top of the cartridge before loading it into the weapon.

The generic telling of the story suggests that the sepoys believed (rightly or wrongly) the cartridges were pre-greased with tallow from pigs. If they had to bite the top of the cartridge, they necessarily had to consume pig tallow. The story demonstrates the callousness and ignorance of the British (in terms of cultural and religious mores) and, if they were wrong about the grease, the ignorance and gullibility of the sepoys.

In an article for *The International Ammunition Journal*, Daniel R. LeClair addresses the reductive ways the Indian Mutiny has been described, arguing that "[m]any contemporary historians of the Indian Mutiny had very paternalistic interpretations of the 'greased cartridge affair,' which reduced *sepoy* reaction to the new cartridge to near child-like misunderstandings" (98). LeClair offers compelling evidence that the cartridges were not greased in a way that actually put pig or cow tallow into people's mouths, but for my analysis, it does not matter. He points out that "[t]he paper used for smooth-bore cartridges had specific requirements," and that, "[u]ntil 1842 the Company imported cartridge paper from England [...]. Beginning in 1842, however, a mill at Serampore began manufacturing paper of a quality near enough for balled

cartridges" (LeClair 105). The perception of the paper's befouled state was enough to engender revolt. This is important because it connects to the fluid nature of truth as it applies to imperialism and detection.

The sepoys did not need to see the Enfield rifle cartridge, and even if they did, they would not have been able to discern whether the grease was pig or cow in origin. LeClair explains how the British paper was sourced and makes a cogent argument that the greased portion of the cartridge would have been the opposite end of the part the sepoy would rip with his teeth. The fibrous British paper could conceal the supposed treachery easily, and why wouldn't the British engage in such a petty, passively violent act?

LeClair ultimately argues that the British were not using animal tallow, and in fact, were attempting to respect the Hindu and Muslim beliefs regarding animal products by inviting the sepoys to grease their own cartridges. The facts are incidental. The stories being spread amongst the ranks became factual — the rumors moved with speed, which one might associate with the speed at which someone hopes to solve a puzzle or mystery. There may have been satisfaction in confirming the hatred and racism of the British, and that narrative had fuel. The paper surrounding the cartridges was a power metaphor for the British colonization of India. The paper was imported from England, meant to cover the metal balls being used by Indians to wage war against their fellow Indians. The fibers might hide this religiously offensive material, but it cannot be uncovered by regular viewing. The cobbled-together rumors thread together a believable narrative that confirms their suspicions of British devilry, and a mutiny is more easily fomented. The fibers of the British paper carry with them and in them the many injustices of British ideology, as atrocities such as induced famine and economic exploitation were being

enacted on Indian soil by British invaders. The threads model the insidious way that white supremacy via colonialism threads through an indigenous culture.

The fallout, politically, reverberated in terms of reconstituting the way Britons looked at their involvement in places around the globe. Patrick Brantlinger notes that the term "Imperialism," would have only been used in reference to French miliary actions; he writes, "For most Victorians [...] the British were inherently, by 'blood,' a conquering, governing, and civilizing 'race; the 'dark races' whom they conquered were inherently incapable of governing and civilizing themselves" (*Rule of Darkness* 21). Francis Hutchins argues that, post-Mutiny, Britons took a much darker view of the opportunities presented in India: "India attracted the person who was disturbed by the growing democratization of English life [...] a man to whom the permanent subjection of India to the British yoke was not a repugnant thought" (xi). India represented a place where all supremacist violence could be enacted without reproach. Hutchins' point that some Britons were becoming frustrated by "the growing democratization of English life" opens a critical avenue of inquiry, acknowledging that the rot was taking root at home. England was exporting darkness, not bringing it back with them.

In the wake of the Mutiny, Britain responded to fears of uprisings and a chaotic response to their Imperialist position by deploying scientific rationale: as Ronald R. Thomas points out, "As early as 1858 [...] Sir William Herschel [...] began using prints of the palm, the forefinger and the thumb on contracts with Indians to authenticate, and, eventually, identify them" (69-70). The science of fingerprinting arrived earlier than Sherlock Holmes or any other detective figure as a means of cataloging those under the command of the Raj. Other hallmarks of detection, identification, and classification work their way into Collins' *The Moonstone*, where he rhetorically employs several detective figures to suss out the criminality of Colonel Herncastle

(and perhaps the existence of the British Raj in general). The detective figures struggle less with the criminality taking place in India, however, and are tasked more explicitly with detecting, identifying, and classifying the misdeeds of those on British soil. As Free notes, "The stakes of the theft are greater than the loss of the family's (questionable, at best) treasure, for what is really on trial in this novel is personal and national responsibility in the violence of imperialism" (341). Collins uses the genre to give the reader an opportunity to grapple with the source of criminality.

Collins was not the first writer to employ detectives or detective figures; Thomas notes, "Detectives began to appear in popular fiction in England almost as soon as the detective branch of the Metropolitan Police was established in Scotland Yard in 1842" (65). There is disagreement regarding the very first appearance of a fictional detective, or what tale can be considered the first detective story. It was certainly not Sherlock Holmes, and one can argue that "detecting" characters go back to the ancient Middle East with *One Thousand and One Nights*. There are only a few essential qualities to consider: the detective understands that there is a mystery regarding some event or happening, the detective looks for clues, and the detective explains. The detective does not necessarily solve the mystery, or act as the focal point of the entire narrative. A. D. Hutter argues, "The resolution of the mystery is never as important as the process itself of connecting and disconnecting, building a more complete account from an incomplete vision or fragment" (192). With these bones, on the surface, the detective figure is essentially the body of discovery and of norm reinforcement. As I demonstrated in chapter four, *Lady Audley's Secret* turns Robert Audley into a detective, one who ultimately indicts himself as the most dangerous threat to the empire. With *The Moonstone,* and its collection of detective figures, one gets closer to the idealized detective that aligns with imperial enforcement.

Imperial enforcement is a critical term to unpack. During the nineteenth century, we see the rise in taxonomical events and attractions, such as museums and expositions. There is a drive to name and claim with unprecedented precision. I have written previously about the age's preoccupation with geology and evolution — they were keenly aware of time in a new context, for both the speed of life and the speed at which knowledge was advancing. The detective figure is the embodiment of naming and claiming, giving context to seemingly unknowable clues in a world that seems chaotic and unstable. In her book, *Anxieties of Empire and the Fiction of Intrigue*, Yumna Siddiqi argues, "[...][F]ictional accounts of detection and spying not only reveal anxieties about Empire, but also tend to allay them through narratives that delineate and enact a process of ordering" (8). That is, this critical intervention made by the detective figure is to give the *appearance* of white logical superiority through naming, classifying, and story-telling procedures. Siddiqi goes on to note, "[The] writing attempts to resolve ideologically the anxieties generated by administrative policing characteristics of Empire in both its British colonial and its global manifestations" (8). The chaos and instability is, presumably, coming from the intrusion of the "alien" world beyond the island's borders, where Indians and Africans might invade the hallowed streets of London, as they do in the texts I take up in this project.

Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales offer an explicit demonstration of these anxieties: for example, in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," Sherlock Holmes is visited by Helen Stoner. Before Stoner can begin to tell her tale of death and despair, Holmes masterfully "reads" her body for clues and pronounces two facts about her: that she has travelled by train and by dogcart to arrive at Baker Street. Stoner reacts with "a violent start" but is also impressed, as is Watson, and as is the reader. These facts are meaningless to the case at hand (though they do tell Holmes that Stoner must live some distance out of London), and Stoner did not need convincing to trust

Holmes (she already knew of his effectiveness through his work on Mrs. Farintosh's case), but the reader must be assured that Holmes sees differently than we do. Like a newfangled microscope, Holmes does not make up details, he sees more clearly and reads with greater literacy than "normal" people do. In this case, we also see Holmes correctly read threats both internal and external: he is able to decipher that neither the foreign "gipsies" nor the wildlife native to India are to blame for the treachery, but rather the murderer is Grimesby Roylott, "the last survivor of one of the oldest Saxon families in England" (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" 144). Holmes does not land firmly on the same conclusion Helen does when hearing Julia's last words ("speckled band") and think of the "gipsies" who live on the Roylott property. He holds space in that clue for a different interpretation.

Holmes is well versed in what is native, what is foreign, and where the danger is brewing. It's important to acknowledge, however, that Holmes does err in the story, and offers up a resolution that is not factual but fantastical. The "speckled band" is not a handkerchief but a snake, namely a "swamp adder," which is not a real breed of snake. The reveal does not exist beyond the pages of *The Strand*. And yet, this tale was Conan Doyle's favorite, and is routinely named first among reader's favorites. It is satisfying because the villain dies by the foreign beast which he had weaponized. Holmes, the emblem of Britishness, has seen through the haze of modernity to read the story within the story. He can "see" Roylott's fall from grace, his inherent violence, his hatred of women, and can script out the final act. As Siddiqi suggests, "Thus imperial fiction registers apprehensions both about the influences of the Empire on the metropolis, and about the adverse effects on English character of the exercise of imperial rule" (20). Holmes is not providing closure, however. He is not solving the puzzle of why Roylott was violent, or what might stop other men who go to India from becoming "savage." The reader is,

perhaps, left to consider that they should be concerned about their own impulses and attraction to violence and mania, rather than worrying about what interactions with "heathen natives" or suspicious "gipsies" have done to them.

Britain, however, was not nurturing that sort of introspection; as I explored in chapter four, *Lady Audley's Secret*, written 30 years prior to "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," also tacitly argued that Robert Audley positively could not engage in introspection, lest the Empire crumble. One of the most visible spaces dedicated to taxonomy and demonstration was the Crystal Palace, home of the Great Exhibition of 1851. From 1798 to 1849, Paris, France, hosted The Great Exhibition of Products of French Industry — following the French Revolution, many festivals and exhibitions were staged to reinforce positive aspects of French culture and industry. Prince Albert, Henry Cole, and other members of Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce were determined to create a spectacle that would establish Britain, not France, as the industrial capital of the world. Subsequently, Joseph Paxton sketched the design for the Crystal Palace on a sheet of blotting paper. His use of blotting paper is an intriguing detail: blotting absorbs ink — it replaced sand as a useful way to wick away ink. Of note, when blotting paper is used in this manner, the words will appear in reverse on the blotting paper — Doyle used this as a plot point in "The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter," which sees Sherlock Holmes find a message on the blotter in the missing rugby player's room.

When he experienced pushback on his design, Paxton went around the Commission and had his design published in the *Illustrated London News* — and the massive support his design garnered changed the Commission's position. Richard Altick describes the building as such: "Housed in the first prefabricated public building in history, a vast construction of iron and glass set in London's Hyde Park, the exhibition was intended to demonstrate Britian's supremacy in

design and manufacture. The design, most modern authorities agree, was atrocious; the manufacture was most ingenious" (11). The web of iron and glass may not be celebrated as a marvel today, but Paxton's *vision* promised a clearer version of the British world reflected upon the British people of the time.

Papermaking was one of the many industrial demonstrations during The Great Exhibition of 1851 — there were also demonstrations of firearms, telescopes, and electrical instruments. People were invited to marvel at all Britain had to offer. Part of the pleasure was to see British industry sitting beside foreign industry, signifying Britain's status as a trader on the global market and perhaps to offer observers an opportunity to judge the British effort as, overall, superior. There were only eleven English papermakers exhibiting (Hawes 494).

That clearer vision was ideologically necessary because the reality was not optimistic for Britons in power; Ilse Bussing López argues that the Crystal Palace "[...] is a crystallized attempt to hold on to a reality which is slipping [...]; being at the summit, however, implies being able to foresee the inevitable descent, and the Crystal Palace was a built effort to delay or completely deny this" (98). Britain's position was a world power was already slipping, and perhaps to stop the drain, the Crystal Palace was to be a trick mirror, showing visitors what they wanted to believe about themselves and their imperialistic might. López writes, "[...] the great irony behind this [...] is that this effort to stuff a seemingly transparent and honest space with things that were desirable also shed unwanted light on the fears and anxieties that were meant to stay outside of the exhibition" (108). The seen and the unseen, and their placement, as described by López recalls Timothy Carens' argument in "Outlandish English Subjects in *The Moonstone*": "Freud's discussion of the uncanny helps to account for the faulty construction of these 'lines of demarcation' between familiar imperial culture and its strange Oriental colony" (241). The

uncanny, as a temporal situation where the visible renders the subject flush with anxiety, is useful to decode both the unsettling properties of the Crystal Palace, and the so-called "invasion" of the Verinder estate by Indians (and by a devilish diamond). The Verinders, Franklin Blake, and some of their servants, experience or express anxiety over what they see as threats (members of the "strange Oriental colony" who are in their British community) as opposed to what they should be threatened by (the uncomfortable uncovering of British inadequacy and the violent response to that revelation).

That illusory quality, and its relationship to paper and fiber, manifest in *The Moonstone*, so it is relevant here to consider what López argues is the main function of the Crystal Palace. The Crystal Palace was a place to see exhibitions, to learn more about British industry and foreign trade, and to feel a swell of nationalistic pride in the sheer scale of British industry. The magnitude of the space itself, and the marvel of its construction, seemingly attests to the might of the British imperial and colonial project. The Crystal Palace was also a place to be seen, where the visitors themselves were commodified as the enforcers of British imperialism. The best way to shore up imperialism is to suggest that the right people can gain entrance to a set of information, which they can then use to regulate their communities. It's not that the act of learning is an act of imperialism, but saying that there are absolutes, and that one particular set of "facts" is the only acceptable articulation of the material and psychological world, then that is shoring up imperialism. To then create a crystal building, that allows visitors to have the illusion that they are outside, but not, viewing the exhibits, when they themselves are part of the exhibition as much as the textile exhibits, is to continually reinforce the supremacy not only of the industry but of the citizens as well. The middle class was being enticed to participate, to become part of the spectacle, to confirm their participation in not only the spectacle but of the

imperialism that makes the spectacle possible. The railway, made by iron, transporting the people and the product to the great crystal miracle held together with iron — that is a model for how to regard *The Moonstone.*

The detective narrative is an enticing crystal palace, inviting readers to become visitors among the evidence, invited not to necessarily draw conclusions of their own, but to be entertained by the authoritative way the detective names and claims the facts of the case. Siddiqi argues, "The protagonist[...]eventually perceives the nefarious underbelly of social and political institutions. Such a narrative of social detection becomes a way of commenting on the corruption of society as a whole, and not just on individuals" (11-12). The dream of Imperialism is order, but the reality is chaos and disruption. The Imperial fantasy demands that the veneer of binaries and discipline, but by its very nature, Imperialism means opening oneself up to variety, dynamism, and unpredictability. That nature is also best expressed in the form of the detective. The detective appears to uncover the truth and restore order (often legal and moral) using logic and reason, but in reality, he brings variety, excitement, and disorder to light for a reading public that may not be cognizant of the variety and chaos in their midst. Perhaps more gets unraveled rather than getting solved. If England did not go out and try to conquer everyone, they would not be dealing with mutinies and foreigners in their midst. Reflecting on Collins' novel, *The Woman in White*, Gabrielle Ceraldi argues that "[...] Collins's denouement reveals that the cultural superiority that was trumpeted by the Great Exhibition ironically has shielded Britain from the very 'struggle for existence' that would guarantee its future development" (176). The narcissism is ultimately blinding and debilitating.

On the surface, *The Moonstone* establishes this paternalistic version of the foreign invasion. Betteredge writes:

> "f he was right, here was our quiet English house suddenly invaded by a devilish Indian Diamond—bringing after it a conspiracy of living rogues, set loose on us by the vengeance of a dead man. There was our situation as revealed to me in Mr. Franklin's last words! Who ever heard the like of it—in the nineteenth century, mind; in an age of progress, and in a country which rejoices in the blessings of the British constitution? Nobody ever heard the like of it, and, consequently, nobody can be expected to believe it. I shall go on with my story, however, in spite of that. (Collins [vol. 19, no. 455] 103)

The real horror that inspires the "invasion" that Betteredge references is the very backstory obscured by the actions of the idle rich. *The Moonstone* could have been a novel focused on Herncastle's atrocities in India, and how his actions brought shame and violence upon his family. Collins shifts the focus to the perceived aggression of the three Indians and aggression against the perfect British constitution, the paper document which inherently civilizes all over whom it governs. Collins' detective narrative structure does permit a glimpse, though, into the more accurate reality: as Patrick Brantlinger argues, "[...]the structure is always a double one, both poison and medicine, and therefore an exact analogue of Socrates' pharmakon [...] because the story of detection in the law-abiding narrative present always consists of the reconstruction and retelling of the criminal past" (Brantlinger, *Reading Lesson* 8). In this case, the reader realizes that the criminal past is that of the British, not the Indians. One must fully reckon with the latter to get the former.

A scene from "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches," published by Doyle in *The Strand* in June 1892 expresses this sentiment overtly. Holmes and Watson are taking a train out of London to visit their client, who is living in Hampshire at her employer's estate. Watson observes Holmes looking out of the train car window, and he remarks, "'Are they not fresh and

beautiful?' I cried with all the enthusiasm of a man fresh from the fogs of Baker Street" (Doyle, "Copper Beeches" 618). Holmes reaction surprises him, as Holmes says,

> "Do you know, Watson," said he, "that it is one of the curses of a mind with a turn like mine that I must look at everything with reference to my own special subject. You look at these scattered houses, and you are impressed by their beauty. I look at them, and the only thought which comes to me is a feeling of their isolation and of the impunity with which crime may be committed there." (Doyle, "Copper Beeches" 618).

Holmes shatters the illusion Watson has regarding the dichotomy between city and country. Watson is the good agent of Imperialism, of course, a wounded veteran soldier of the Afghan War who adheres to a conventional British gentleman presentation. Venerating the countryside, where modernity has not corrupted the people and the land, strikes Watson as natural. Holmes complicates Watson's vision, which skims only the surface. Watson does not see properly—he never does.

Watson's responses indicate the violence Holmes has done: "'Good heavens!' I cried. 'Who would associate crime with these dear old homesteads?', and "'You horrify me!'" (Doyle, "Copper Beeches" 618). And yet, of course, Watson does not throw down his newspaper and leave Holmes to catch the villain. Watson calls it "horror," but it is actually "desire." Doyle establishes this immediately in *A Study in Scarlet* — upon hearing from his friend Stamford that a man named Holmes is looking for a flat mate, Watson remarks, "'If I am to lodge with anyone, I should prefer a man of studious and quiet habits. I am not strong enough yet to stand much noise or excitement. I had enough of both in Afghanistan to last me for the remainder of my natural existence'" (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet.* 3). Immediately upon moving in together, Watson sets about making lists and cataloging everything he can regarding the mysterious Holmes. He

knows how poorly this may reflect on his character, writing, “The reader may set me down as a hopeless busybody, when I confess how much this man stimulated my curiosity [...] Before pronouncing judgment, however, be it remembered, how objectless was my life, and how little there was to engage my attention” (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* 8). Watson has told us that he wants peace and quiet, as his adventures in Afghanistan have done him in, but that is not true. Life in London is boring to Watson and he must seek out stimulation. The switch flips when a telegram comes for Holmes from Gregson of Scotland Yard — Watson brims with excitement while Holmes dithers: “I was amazed at the calm way in which he rippled on. ‘Surely there is not a moment to be lost,’ I cried, ‘shall I go and order you a cab?’” (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* 16). When Holmes is not comparably roused, Watson tempts him thus: “‘Why, it is just such a chance as you have been longing for’” and after a second rebuff, “‘But he begs you to help him’” (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* 16–17). Finally, Holmes is cajoled into meeting Gregson, and his reason for agreeing is that “I may have a laugh at them [Inspectors Gregson and Lestrade] if I have nothing else” (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* 17). Neither Holmes nor Watson is driven by a burning passion to know the truth or to deliver justice (at least, not at this point in the very first story to feature the characters). Watson has recently been seriously injured in the Battle of Maiwand, as he describes in the opening paragraphs of Chapter 1, which was a major event occurring on July 27, 1880, during the Second Anglo-Afghan War. The war was fought between the British Raj and the Emirate of Afghanistan. He describes his actions thus: “[...]I naturally gravitated to London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained” (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet.* 2). He reports that he led “a comfortless, meaningless existence” spending all the little money he was drawing as a wounded veteran, received “from a paternal government” for a period of nine months (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* 2).

Watson further notes, “So alarming did the state of my finances become, that I soon realized that I must either leave the metropolis and rusticate somewhere in the country” or share lodgings (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* 2).

Watson is both the “every man” Englishman and the unique figure who has personally experienced the violence of British Imperialism first hand as a secondary tool of Imperialism (he serves as Assistant Surgeon for the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers, so he is not directly engaged in combat). He is left physically ruined by his experience in Afghanistan, which is only worsened by contracting enteric fever while convalescing in Peshawar after being shot in Maiwand. Watson has essentially been drained of all life due to his participation in Britain’s political engagement with Russia in “The Great Game.” He sees London as this drainage area for the people who have been engaged in Imperial activities — when he says “the loungers and idlers,” I believe he includes those wounded, those demoralized, and those abused by the violence of invasion, war, theft of property and goods, genocide and cultural eradication. These people are drawn back to the center not because they choose to be there, but because they have no way to continue to participate in Imperial activities. Watson says he does not want to experience noise and excitement, that his sojourn to the front lines was enough, but it is never enough for a person ensnared in the machinery of Imperialism.

Watson recognizes, too, as he runs out of money, that he may have to abandon the cesspool in favor of rusticating in the countryside — a place for less action and, accordingly, less money. As Holmes and Watson sit in the train car in the scene from “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches,” Watson returns to the idea of the rustic countryside as the antithesis of the urban cesspool. However, Holmes’s power is of sight and reading the scene before him, and he interprets the solitude as something far more sinister:

> "There is no lane so vile that the scream of a tortured child, or the thud of a drunkard's blow, does not beget sympathy and indignation among the neighbours, and then the whole machinery of justice is ever so close that a word of complaint can set it going, and there is but a step between the crime and the dock. But look at these lonely houses, each in its own fields, filled for the most part with poor ignorant folk who know little of the law. Think of the deeds of hellish cruelty, the hidden wickedness which may go on, year in, year out, in such places, and none the wiser." (Doyle, "Copper Beeches" 618–19)

In the city, little can be truly hidden, because of the proximity of people living and working on top of each other. If inertia draws people to London, then it also draws them very close together, where one loses (or at least disrupts) efforts to create boundaries. The greater threat to safety, as Holmes notes, is where one can operate in near total obscurity, away from prying eyes and ears.

This is another way that the detective is an invader and disruptor. Crime/detective fiction expresses, in its plot, the fantasy of pulling the pieces together to solve the mystery. However, this fantasy is easily desecrated: as Clare Clarke points out, "[T]here immediately was considerable discomfort surrounding the idea of this body of policemen who were authorised to penetrate middle and upper-middle-class homes" (33). The detective's access to intimate secrets enacts a temporary collapse of public and private spheres; the triumphant solving of the crime attempts to restore order and reassert the sanctity of middle-class domestic life. In "Suspicious Minds: Wilkie Collins and the First Detective Novel," Jane Hu argues, "[...] Cuff's police infiltration of the Verinder family home [...] dramatizes broader anxieties about the rise of state control at a moment of rapid industrialization and urbanization. Hutter echoes that sentiment, writing, "The first function of the new detective police was the preservation of property and the protection of the middle-class consumer; the police were needed to 'read' a city which had

grown far beyond the easy knowledge of its inhabitants" (178). Of course, *All the Year Round* also invaded middle-class consumers' homes, bringing each new installation of *The Moonstone* to their eyes, and *The Moonstone* promised to lay bare the lives, loves, hopes, and desires, of a proper British family via the ink upon the paper fibers.

The Moonstone offers up several characters who engage in detecting activities, and *The Moonstone*'s structure is an assemblage of these character's notes, letters, and missives that detail, from their unique points of view, what has happened at the Verinder estate and, subsequently, in London. Lady Verinder's nephew, Franklin Blake, takes charge of this assemblage, asking different characters to contribute, on paper, their recollections. Blake and the house steward, Gabriel Betteredge, contribute multiple sections of the narrative.

Betteredge forgets his social role as he becomes obsessed with solving the riddle of who took the Moonstone and where it resides now. His character represents the link between detection, crime, and class; about who can do the "looking," who really sees, who can interpret, and who can ultimately name, shame, and punish. Betteredge is notable for his obsession with *Robinson Crusoe*, his loyalty to the Verinder family, and his susceptibility to what he calls "detective-fever." In the case of the first two, Betteredge is situated firmly as a faithful subject of the Crown with his unquestioned ideas about the supremacy of white Britons. The third attribute, however, may seem a logical outgrowth of the first two, as I have suggested previously: detecting is a form of imperialism, so it makes sense that Betteredge, like his fellow countrymen, would be deeply attracted to the idea that he can know things. However, in this narrative case, Betteredge's self-diagnosed detective-fever — his desire to treat the hunt for the Moonstone as an obsession with fact-finding and thread-pulling (figuratively and literally in this case) — is a demonstration of how the lower classes may attempt to get ahead of themselves and need

reminders of which class of people are the knowers and namers. For example, Betteredge acknowledges that he forgot myself in the interest of guessing this new riddle" — the mystery makes him assertive rather than demure (Collins [vol. 19, no. 462] 269). Later, he acknowledges, "The detective-fever burnt up all my dignity on the spot" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 465] 365). Perhaps Betteredge does represent a "better age," one devoted to serving the crown without question, rather than seeing themselves as independent foot soldiers for imperialism.

The development of his "detective-fever" is inspired by the arrival of Sergeant Cuff to the Verinder estate. After interacting with Cuff, answering his questions, and leading him around the estate, Betteredge comments, "Left alone, under those circumstances, a devouring curiosity pushed me on to make some discoveries for myself" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 461] 245). He decides to ply the servant women with tea to get them to be open about their experiences with Rosanna, the seemingly reformed thief who is enamored of Franklin Blake, and believes that he has gotten as much information into the situation as Cuff. Betteredge uses his position and operates in his social sphere, but to probe for answers without the direct involvement of Sergeant Cuff falls afoul with the man himself. After learning of Betteredge's attempts as subterfuge, Cuff responds, "'Mr. Betteredge,' says the Sergeant, 'you have done a very foolish thing in my absence. You have done a little detective business on your own account. For the future, perhaps you will be so obliging as to do your detective business along with me'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 461] 246). Betteredge is flattered by this assertion and begins to attribute his behavior accordingly, remarking to Blake, "If there is such a thing known at the doctor's shop as a detective-fever, that disease had now got fast hold of your humble servant" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 462] 266). Betteredge uses the language of illness and of consumption to describe the way he is taken with the idea of investigating: he calls his malady "the infernal detective-fever," and notes that it

burns in him (Collins [vol. 19, no. 462] 269). He describes himself as having "another attack of the detective-fever," which he terms "disgraceful" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 464] 315). He warns Blake that he will also catch this detective-fever: "'It will lay hold of you at Cobb's Hole, Mr. Franklin. I call it the detective-fever; and I first caught it in the company of Sergeant Cuff'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 474] 580).

Betteredge lays the blame for his behavior at the feet of Sergeant Cuff, who, according to Betteredge, "[...] had left his infection behind him. Certain signs and tokens, personal to myself, warned me that the detective-fever was beginning to set in again" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 466] 364). Betteredge sees this desire to uncover, to see what is hidden, as a grim malady, and yet he is raucously swept up in the adventure. The addiction is satisfying even as it embarrasses him (at least a bit) as he does not believe this questing for clues is correct for the station of a "humble servant."

These descriptions of "detective-fever" recall the role The Crystal Palace played in inciting curiosity. The exhibition also attracted people of lower and middle class, eager to see and learn, to suss out the mysteries of the planet and the world around them. The case of the missing Moonstone does not touch Betteredge, in that he does not ever seem to be a suspect, and his household position should not be impacted no matter who the guilty party is; he is, perhaps, attracted to the chance to be seen as the "seer" and the person who reads the situation clearly. He seems to relish in his opportunity to assign guilt, to demonstrate his value as a "seer," as one who is in charge. Sergeant Cuff praises Betteredge's humility, when Betteredge acknowledges that "my detective-fever suddenly cooled" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 462] 267). Betteredge says to Cuff, "'You don't want me,' I said. 'What good can I do?' 'The longer I know you, Mr. Betteredge,' said the Sergeant, 'the more virtues I discover'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 462] 267).

Ultimately, Betteredge's hunt leads him to one of the most important bits of fiber in the narrative. Betteredge commits the following passage to one of his sections of the narrative, writing:

> "It's not the Diamond," says the Sergeant. "The whole experience of my life is at fault, if Rosanna Spearman has got the Diamond."
>
> On hearing those words, the infernal detective-fever began, I suppose, to burn in me again. At any rate, I forgot myself in the interest of guessing this new riddle. I said rashly, "The stained dress!" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 462] 269)

This passage brings together the two issues of detective-fever and these interwoven threads, which hold some discoverable truth. The thing of value which is lost is no longer just the Moonstone — Betteredge realizes that the treasure which holds equal if not more value is the stained fabric, which may reveal the thief and (or) exonerate Franklin Blake. The central crime at the center of *The Moonstone*, really, is that a member of an upstanding British family has wrongly been accused of a crime, not that a sacred Hindu gemstone is lost. It is, of course, fitting that fibers of a dressing gown, an intimate apparel, which brushed his skin and then the wet paint, are the most valuable materials to bear witness to Blake's culpability. To wit, Blake is not "innocent" of the crime: he did take the gem. He is the thief, and yet, because he is under the effects of opium that he did not ingest willingly, he is perceived by his community to be innocent. Lillian Nayder makes a very valid point, writing, "[...] Collins appears an apologist for empire when he supplies Blake with an alibi for his theft of the diamond" (147). Yet Collins is also not letting Blake, or the entire family, escape unscathed because his crime is fueled by the intoxicant: "[...] the use of opium to acquit Blake also renders him suspect, since this commodity was widely associated with the imperial wrongdoing of the British and discredited their high

claims to moral guardianship of benighted peoples" (Nayder 147). There is a thievery in Blake's bloodline — it's how the Moonstone comes to be in the unseeing and insensible Franklin's hand. He is, perhaps, sleepwalking in more areas than one.

Here, in part, is the tragedy of *The Moonstone*: Franklin Blake, the great white hope, is feckless at best. Blake is the empire's worst nightmare of capable leadership and authority. His most effective action is to cobble together the writings of others, as himself, to create the story of the Moonstone's movements. Franklin is key to the assemblage of *The Moonstone*'s narrative, as he tasks others with writing down their observances and experiences regarding the acquisition and loss of the Moonstone diamond, ultimately gathering the narrators' scripts and ordering them into the story that appears in serial form. Franklin expresses his interest in creating coherent narratives to Betteredge: "'There is a curious want of system, Betteredge, in the English mind; and your question, my old friend, is an instance of it. When we are not occupied in making machinery, we are (mentally speaking) the most slovenly people in the universe'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 456] 122). He posits that order (both narrative and otherwise) is an essential English skill, and in the absence of that order, all is lost.

Franklin's role in the Moonstone's theft is marked by the stained fabric of his flannel dressing gown. Paper is fragile, expensive, political, colonial, fibrous, weaving, and interwoven. Paper is also emblematic of labor and theft, but threaded together so seamlessly that it is difficult to assess whose material is whose. In T*he Moonstone*, for example, Rosanna's love for Franklin, with whom she cannot be, leads her to uncover the object clue which proves Franklin stole the diamond, the looming symbol of India, a jewel of the British Empire. That object – a nightgown, made of fibers – is streaked with paint (made with lead), which marks the fibers indelibly with a color signifying Franklin's entrance or exit from Rachel's room to take the Moonstone (or some

equally valuable virginity) – Franklin and the fabric are compromised. The stained fiber becomes a potential weapon for Rosanna to manipulate Franklin, who has ignored her; however, her inability to force a conversation with Franklin, and the increasing suspicion falling on her, inspires Rosanna to drown herself in quicksand.

The language of the threads of detection (for example, “Mr. Franklin took up the lost thread, and went on” (Collins [vol. 19, no. 456] 122) coincides with the description of the hunt for the sullied fabric, which ties Rosanna and Blake to the crime. Prior to the theft of the Moonstone, Franklin and Rachel had been engaged in a messy art project involving Rachel’s bedroom door. During his investigation, Sergeant Cuff finds his first great clue, a smear in the paint, courtesy of the blundering Superintendent: “‘[...]Mr. Superintendent, suddenly pointing to a little smear of the decorative painting on Miss Rachel’s door, at the outer edge, just under the lock. ‘Look what mischief the petticoats of some of you have done already. Clear out! clear out!’” (Collins [vol. 19, no. 459] 196). Initially, the female servants are blamed for the smear, as they wear petticoats of the right length to have put the fabric in the right place to interact with the paint. Cuff announces, “‘Find out (third) how the person can account for having been in this room, and smeared the paint, between midnight and three in the morning’” (Collins [vol. 19, no. 460] 223). Cuff ultimately realizes that he can use the time frame when the paint would be wet to further narrow who in the home may have had access to Rachel’s room.

This turn, from searching for a diamond, to searching for paint-stained fabric, is critical, as it demonstrates the associations between jewels and conquest, and fiber and conquest. Previously in this chapter, I have laid out the relationship between paper fiber and Imperial violence, and Collins is bringing that to bear through fiction. The linen fiber bears the evidence of the crime - not just the theft of the diamond, but of the destruction of the wooden door

(consider the elucidation of wood from chapter four of this project) as Betteredge so deftly describes as a moral failing. In fact, Betteredge writes the following to Franklin: "With the view Sergeant Cuff took of the loss of the Diamond, he would be sure to end in examining our linen and our dresses" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 477] 1). Betteredge presumably means that Cuff is dogged in his pursuit of the Moonstone and will be so dogged as to ultimately inspect everyone's underwear. This affront to modesty and privacy recalls Clarke's analysis of the home invasion properties of detectives. It also recalls the popular life cycle narratives of rags, including the warnings from *The Scottish Review*: poor people and wealthy people could comingle in the use and reuse of cloth fibers, when the rags covering the shoulders of the indigent become the diary paper of the elite as they scribble in their boudoir. The lowest of society is in the most intimate spaces of the highest, where the wealthy and power put their thoughts and their laws onto the bits of fibers which could still bear flakes of flesh from the impoverished.

Fabric emerges again as a plot point regarding the charity to which Godfrey Ablewhite and his cousin, Drusilla Clack, belong: "the Select Committee of the Mothers'-Small-Clothes-Conversion-Society" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 467] 386). Collins does not stint on his satirical edge as Clack gives an overview of the committee's charge:

> The object of this excellent Charity is—as all serious people know—to rescue unredeemed fathers' trousers from the pawnbroker, and to prevent their resumption, on the part of the irreclaimable parent, by abridging them immediately to suit the proportions of the innocent son. I was a member, at that time, of the select committee; and I mention the Society here, because my precious and admirable friend, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, was associated with our work of moral and material usefulness. (Collins [vol. 19, no. 467] 386)

The role of fabric in these two plot points reinforces a fundamental truth that the narrative repeatedly conveys: wealthy people break everything in their path, and it comes back to haunt them, and even if the lower classes do not feel a part of the Imperial machine, they are materially implicated. Their linens ultimately form the documents on which war is made. The linen is again the crossroads, the liminal space between classes. Rosana embodies the liminal space too, and Jennings has mastered it.

Cuff gives another clue to support this reading, when he says, "'In all my experience along the dirtiest ways of this dirty little world, I have never met with such a thing as a trifle yet. Before we go a step further in this business we must see the petticoat that made the smear, and we must know for certain when that paint was wet'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 460] 221). Twenty-three years later, Arthur Conan Doyle will have Sherlock Holmes make two similar statements: "'It is, of course, a trifle, but there is nothing so important as trifles'" (Doyle, "The Man with the Twisted Lip" 632) and "'You know my method. It is founded upon the observation of trifles'" (Doyle, "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" 413). Why this focus on trifles? "Trifle" comes from an old French word that means "to mock or deceive," and was used in the Middle Ages to denote a story told to fool or amuse. Unlike Holmes (generally), Cuff is fooled, and misreads the nature of the offending fabric. He is wrong about what garment made the smear and holds the stain, as he assumes it must be from the voluminous petticoat fabric worn by the women of the household. Who else could be so careless? Who else could be a thief? His gendered assumption leads him in the wrong direction, while it also adds a layer of interest to the way Franklin Blake's desire for comfort (Rosanna speculates that he was cold in his nightdress and found the warmer dressing gown, a flannel one).

In her confession letter, Rosanna explains not only how she obtained the stained fabric,

"'I easily got rid of these by scraping away the stuff of the flannel. This done, the only proof left against you was the proof locked up in my drawer'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 476] 604). Free argues, "The novel's literal dirty linen, a stained nightgown, hidden in a quicksand marsh and marked with Franklin Blake's "OWN NAME," represents the family's buried guilt" (353). Rosanna scrapes the evidence of guilt off the fabric in a similar manner to the way scribes would scrape the chemical solution off their papyri in order to clean their documents of residual writing stains.

The most important aspect of Franklin Blake, however, is that he serves as an object lesson for the reader about the ways in which the upper class had a propensity to destroy things and ask questions later. Rachel's painted door figures in prominently as a clue-bearer, as I have discussed in the previous section: the paint found on the fabric worn by Franklin marks him as involved in the Moonstone's disappearance. The actual painting of the door, as described by Betteredge, is significant as well to understanding Franklin's role in developing the Imperial themes of the text. The paint functions poorly as a disguise of familial guilt: "[...] [T]he paint cannot cover over but in fact elucidates Blake's guilt; and the smudge is thus a (family) stain that, though buried, cannot be made to disappear" (Free 354). Ultimately, as the narrative progresses, the reader will find that Franklin Blake functions as the fairly inept scientist, in contrast to Ezra Jennings' innate talent.

In Chapter VIII, Betteredge begins describing the project thus, "Mr. Franklin's universal genius, dabbling in everything, dabbled in what he called 'decorative painting.' He had invented, he informed us, a new mixture to moisten paint with, which he described as a 'vehicle.' What it was made of, I don't know. What it did, I can tell you in two words—it stank" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 146). Blake's innovative genius is on display. Betteredge explains further that Blake and Rachel did not see this activity as play but "work," which they "never seemed to tire of"

(Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 146). He ultimately writes, “Who was the poet who said that Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do? If he had occupied my place in the family, and had seen Miss Rachel with her brush, and Mr. Franklin with his vehicle, he could have written nothing truer of either of them than that” (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 146). It is understandable that scholars perceive coded references to sexual behavior in this scene—Franklin is leading Rachel in this unseemly endeavor, as she is “under his directions and with his help,” the activity is dirty, smelly, and uncouth; Betteredge suggests that the activity is mischievous. I want to focus on the way Betteredge’s description of Franklin’s experiments and activities works in light of a later passage from Betteredge’s writing. In Chapter VIII, Betteredge indulges in a seemingly off-topic dissertation about the way “gentlefolks” so easily have their idleness, which he calls “a very awkward rock ahead in life,” turn to destructiveness (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457]145). He writes,

> Their lives being, for the most part, passed in looking about them for something to do, it is curious to see—especially when their tastes are of what is called the intellectual sort—how often they drift blindfold into some nasty pursuit. Nine times out of ten they take to torturing something, or to spoiling something—and they firmly believe they are improving their minds, when the plain truth is, they are only making a mess in the house. (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 145)

An aspect of “gentle-ness” as a class status is a lack of work, in Betteredge’s estimation, and when one has no work to do, one indulges in intellectual pursuits, which are practically, to Betteredge, nasty as they involve torture. What he is referring to here, as he goes on to explain, are crude experiments on small animals and insects, in ways that mimic the sort of scientific pursuits that people like Darwin, for example, were engaged in. These experiments would also

be, perhaps, a shadow of the sort of exhibits housed in the Crystal Palace. Betteredge further explains:

> I have seen them (ladies, I am sorry to say, as well as gentlemen) go out, day after day, for example, with empty pill-boxes, and catch newts, and beetles, and spiders, and frogs, and come home and stick pins through the miserable wretches, or cut them up, *without a pang of remorse,* into little pieces. You see my young master, or my young mistress, poring over one of their spiders' insides with a magnifying-glass; or you meet one of their frogs walking downstairs without his head—and when you wonder what this cruel nastiness means, you are told that it means a taste in my young master or my young mistress for natural history. (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 145-146; emphasis added)

Betteredge is describing here a scene that is contradictory to the anticipated veneration of children that we might expect, as well as contradictory to the celebration of scientific inquiry. Betteredge sees through those constructs and recognizes the way gentlefolk justify their cruel, destructive behavior. He suggests that this cruelty is not related to gender but to class, and he specifies that these young people are "without a pang of remorse," as it is justified as "a taste [...] for natural history."

Betteredge continues:

> Sometimes, again, you see them occupied for hours together in spoiling a pretty flower with pointed instruments, out of a stupid curiosity to know what the flower is made of. Is its colour any prettier, or its scent any sweeter, when you do know? But there! the poor souls must get through the time, you see—they must get through the time. (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 146)

This indictment of the scientific process is insightful; Betteredge challenges the practical

rationale of the pursuit. What has been made better by the destruction? Recall the arrogance of The Scottish Temperance League: "[...] how the most insignificant or useless weeds may, by the ingenuity of [the English] man, become material agents in the 'march of intellect' [...] to direct the attention to the underdeveloped resources of our own isles and of our colonies, and to stimulate the study of the despised or unapplied treasures of the vegetable kingdom" ("Substitutes for Paper" 290). Betteredge is essentially indicting the immorality of the idly wealthy and charging them with the violent destruction, not Godly progress:

> "[...] the secret of it is, that you have got nothing to think of in your poor empty head, and nothing to do with your poor idle hands. And so it ends in your spoiling canvas with paints, and making a smell in the house; or in keeping tadpoles in a glass box full of dirty water, and turning everybody's stomach in the house; or in chipping off bits of stone here, there, and everywhere, and dropping grit into all the victuals in the house; or in staining your fingers in the pursuit of photography, and doing justice without mercy on everybody's face in the house. (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 146)

Betteredge's list of sins here is fascinating, in that he sees destruction is a variety of areas. How does photography get indicted here? Because it is held up as some kind of scientific truth? Some way to prove a thing happened? Documentation? Seeing is believing? Betteredge says photography is capturing too much "real" and showing people personal ugliness.

Betteredge ends this lengthy passage by suggesting that the lower classes bear the brunt of this destruction:

> It often falls heavy enough, no doubt, on people who are really obliged to get their living, to be forced to work for the clothes that cover them, the roof that shelters them, and the food that keeps them going. But compare the hardest day's work you ever did with the

> idleness that splits flowers and pokes its way into spiders' stomachs, and thank your stars that your head has got something it must think of, and your hands something that they must do" (Collin [vol. 19, no. 457] 146)

Franklin is a character full of idleness; for example, after he steals the Moonstone, Betteredge describes him thus: "It [Rachel's treatment of him] left him unsettled, with a legacy of idle time on his hands, and, in so doing, it let out all the foreign sides of his character, one on the top of another, like rats out of a bag" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 465] 341). Franklin's mind is adrift — his thoughts are practically *continental!* — and he is only able to focus himself when he determines himself called into service and compelled to act to uncover a secret harming his family. The instinct to protect his family leads him into action. The action he takes appears to be in defense of his family from the outside; he is engaged in proving who took the diamond and where they have hidden it. However, Franklin is actually exposing the criminality embedded in his family, both internally and abroad, demonstrating how Franklin's very Victorian desire for detecting, identifying, and classifying the misdeeds of those on British soil ultimately reveals his culpability. Nayder asserts, "Blake's guilt is acknowledged only partially, since he is simultaneously convicted and exonerated by the novel's logic and its displaced representation of his imperial crime" (148)**.** This is, perhaps, Blake's greatest success.

Narratologically, Franklin's main action is to create the novel — specifically, the shape of the serial novel as an assemblage of letters (and, materially, the serial magazine in which the assembled letters in the shape of Collins' monthly episodes appear), is itself an indictment of imperialism. Melissa Free argues that "[...]his archive - that is, in fact, *The Moonstone* - actually documents not innocence, but collusion with the imperial project, enacted and perpetuated by a family collectively unable to identify imperial assault as a 'crime [that] brings its own fatality

with it' (340). While Franklin is the second British man to steal the Moonstone, his cousin Godfrey Ablewhite is the third and more villainous character, who plans to make off with the Moonstone and sell it for personal enrichment. The multi-character written narrative struggles with how to elucidate the roles each Verinder-Herncastle-adjacent male has played in the crime cycle. Following the ransacking of Godfrey's rooms, Drusilla Clack, niece of the late Sir John Verinder (and thus, cousin to Franklin and Godfrey), believes "Mr. Godfrey had been the victim of some incomprehensible error, committed by certain unknown men," (Collins [vol. 19, no. 467] 388). Her assessment is thus: "A dark conspiracy was on foot in the midst of us; and our beloved and innocent friend had been entangled in its meshes" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 467] 388). Free suggests, "Family history operates as imperial history writ small, and the murders and thefts that the family tries to keep quiet serve as a cloak for a murderous, thieving nation, generating and purportedly preserving its empire" (343). Drusilla is more equipped to believe that the meshes of a "dark conspiracy" had arrived at England's shores to ensnare the innocent, pious Godfrey, than the truth: Godfrey has the heart of a "dark conspiracy" very much at home in his personal and political values, the tangles of which impact everyone around him.

Ultimately, the villain Godfrey meets his end violently — there could have been no other conclusion to the violent beginnings of the tale. Franklin Blake reports entering the room where the swarthy fellow has absconded into, writing, "The man had not left the room. He lay, dressed, on the bed—with a white pillow over his face, which completely hid it from view" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 484] 175). The white pillow fully hides the face of Godfrey, painted in dark make up, having been smothered by the Indians pursuing the lost, sacred Moonstone. This image is a coherent metaphor of the most appropriate response to Imperialism: the threads of the family's conspiracy, white and seemingly pure, not likely stained with the paint used to hide their sins, the

breath of life extinguished by the fruits of colonial labor. The structure of the detective story works to keep this truth "hid [...] from view" with many innocent distractions like the threads of the white pillow. By this point, of course, Godfrey cannot be questioned. He cannot be made to reveal all. The narrative's loss of the opportunity for punitive closure feels keen, as death is too easy an out for generational trauma.

The idea of loss haunts the whole of *The Moonstone.* There is, of course, the missing Moonstone, but with closer examination, the Moonstone is the least important missing object. "The more money he had, the more he wanted; there was a hole in Mr. Franklin's pocket that nothing would sew up" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 454] 78). Betteredge points to the idea that something is missing from these young masters and mistresses' lives that causes them to use a quest for knowledge as an excuse for cruelty. The search for a replacement for a dearth of linen and rags for paper fits into this framework as well, and the British go off in search of "useless" native fibers with which to experiment. There is, of course, the missing Moonstone, as well as the missing fabric with the tell-tale paint stain.

Several of the characters seem to grapple with larger and more abstract losses: they seem to be lost in terms of purpose. Their response is to try to fill that void by stealing — stealing from nature, stealing from each other, stealing a thing's life force. It makes sense, then, why the detective figure is so appealing — someone who can pull back the curtain, rectify loss, identify "evil-doers," and essentially, make others whole. Siddiqi writes, "In fiction of intrigue, the genealogical condition of the narrative is the trauma of a loss of order [...] The reader [...] feels this loss of harmony. An impetus to maintain or reestablish order drives the stories [...]" (21). That loss of order refers to the Imperial hegemony, for sure, but I believe it also refers to a more global, ecological order. While Franklin paws at science to destroy the natural world, characters

Sergeant Cuff and Rosanna Spearman are bound inextricably to the natural world. Cuff and Rosanna represent this return to the natural, to earth. Cuff is obsessed with the flowers, and Rosanna is the delicate, deformed servant who succumbs to the gaping maw of sand. Both exhibit melancholy traits that predict the arrival of Ezra Jennings.

Freud establishes that melancholy is a pathological condition where the person experiences the loss of an object, and instead of the libido finding a new object to which to attach, the libido turns back and inwards to the self. This latter part is the moment of departure from mourning: a person in mourning experiences loss of the object and seeks to replace that lost object, but does not turn inward, and eventually, "respect for reality gains the day" (Freud 244). In melancholia, the self becomes the lost object, the locus of deficiency, and then the libido cannot break out of the cycle of loss and disappointment. This cycle results in a dark assessment of the self. Freud points to hallmarks of melancholia: "profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings [...][that]culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment" (244). This torment has potentially violent outcomes, in which the libido's fixation on the broken self may turn to thoughts of self-destruction.

While *The Moonstone* features two characters who are on that Freudian melancholic trajectory, Collins is also clearly tying feelings of loss and inadequacy to the treatment of the natural world. Notably, Franklin Blake is the more destructive figure, even though Cuff is described as unendingly melancholic. Cuff is established as the antithesis of Franklin; Cuff remarks, "'No, thank you. I won't take a rose. It goes to my heart to break them off the stem. Just as it goes to your heart, you know, when there's something wrong in the servants' hall'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 461] 244). Cuff is regarded as some version of "melancholic" twelve times in the

narrative. The tune Cuff hums is "The Last Rose of Summer," notable for the lyrics, in which the speaker, moved by the apparent loneliness of the last rose on the bush, "kindly" plucks the rose from the bush and scatters the pieces of the rose on the ground so it can be with its fallen mates. This calls back to the ruthlessness. Betteredge writes, "It reminded him, you see, of his favourite roses, and, as *he* whistled it, it was the most melancholy tune going" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 460] 223). The song reminds the reader of Betteredge's assessment of the idle rich, destroying things like plants and animals because they are bored.

These representations of flora and fauna under attack brings to mind what Timothy Morton calls "dark ecology." He writes, "It is ecological awareness, dark-depressing. Yet ecological awareness is also dark-uncanny. And strangely it is dark-sweet" (Morton 5). Freud writes of a person suffering from melancholia as having a keen insight into themselves, that they know a dark truth. That awareness of the self is very similar to the painful awareness of the connection between the self and Earth (or the self and the environment).

People struggle to address feelings of loss, and at this time, many would turn to a readily available substance: opium. Opium plays a pivotal role in the plot of *The Moonstone* and in the characterizations within; opium also marks the return of the East India Company into this analysis. The story of opium cultivation and trade speaks directly to the direct and indirect abuses of imperialism, yet the beginning of opium usages go back to pre-recorded history. In "Drugs from Natural Products—Plant Sources," S. Morris Kupchan writes, "Dioscorides in the first century A. D. was fully acquainted with the method for collecting and preparing opium, and his directions for preparing syrup of poppy are essentially unchanged in modern pharmacopeias" (2). The use of opium to treat melancholy specifically is well recorded: writing in *Medical Review*, Lillian J. Nuckolls, M.D., argued, "With the experience that I have had in the treatment

of these diseases, I feel confident that opium is the drug, par excellence, in the treatment of motor or excited melancholia" (880). The cultivation and use of opium and its derivatives gains a global audience as word of its power spreads, most notably in England and China.

India, however, had a critical role to play. Rolf Bauer's book, *The Peasant Production of Opium in Nineteenth-Century India,* illuminates the history of opium production in India, the central role it played in the sustaining of the British Raj, the way in which opium impacted trade between several countries, and ultimately, the various ways in which the opium trade, as spurred on by the East India Company, victimized the peasant population tasked with producing said opium. He notes that India was producing and consuming opium long before the British arrived, and that it was consumed for both medicinal and recreational purposes (Bauer 11). Bauer also emphasizes that opium was an ideal trading commodity because of its return on investment: "The value to weight ratio was high and opium was in high demand in China, Java and Malacca, where sought-after luxury goods such as porcelain, silk and pepper were sold" (12). In a point reminiscent of the Enfield rifle cartridge affair, Bauer points to other scholars who have revealed deceptive rhetorical strategies, namely that the British tried to assert that Mughals actually operated a monopoly on the opium trade long before the British arrived to establish their own monopoly, in an effort to legitimize their take-over. Bauer writes, "Private British opium traders profited from the EIC's conquest of Bengal [...] [however] many of them were actually Company employees and [...] [used] their connections with the new political power to get rid of rivals and obtain a -monopsonistic status"; indeed, the British were behaving badly for their commercial and consumptive desires (13).

In *The Moonstone,* opium is used as a plot point and a character builder. In a manner reminiscent to the discussion of experimentation and innovation with plants to make paper, the

poppy is another plant cultivation that the British seize upon — they are addicted to commodities, and it changes the shape of their nationality (including, now, introducing a highly addictive narcotic to the mix, changing their trade position in India and China). The idle wealthy like Franklin and Rachel seek stimulation through cutting up a flower (again). Recall Betteredge's comment: "The griffins, cupids, and so on, were, I must own, most beautiful to behold; though so many in number, so entangled in flowers and devices, and so topsy-turvy in their actions and attitudes, that you felt them unpleasantly in your head for hours after you had done with the pleasure of looking at them" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 146). Opium brings back the chorus of using science to manipulate flora in a quest to fill a void.

The first character associated with opium is that of the initial villain of the story, John Herncastle, who stole the Moonstone during the Storming of Seringapatam. After returning to England, Herncastle is a mysterious figure at the fringes of the Verinder and Blake families. Betteredge remarks, "Sometimes they said [Colonel Herncastle] was given up to smoking opium and collecting old books; sometimes he was reported to be trying strange things in chemistry" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 455] 102). As Thomas suggests, "At once an illicit substance and a legitimate medical treatment, opium is an apt representation of the Empire's complex and controversial place in nineteenth-century Britain, and in the novel" (71). The association of opium, paper, and chemistry is meaningful here, as it ties into Betteredge's later descriptions of the idleness plaguing wealthy people as well as Franklin Blake's attempts to solve himself (and his family's reputation) from the theft of the Moonstone.

The second discussion of opium comes in Chapter IX in the later narrative, where Ezra Jennings explains to Franklin Blake that he suffers from "'an incurable internal complaint,'" and "'[t]he one effectual palliative in my case, is—opium'" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 78). In this

section, Jennings first floats the idea that Blake could have ingested opium during the night the Moonstone was stolen. The "incurable internal complaint" is a clue that the devastating rot befalling England is coming from the inside — the ideology of imperialism is toxic. The soothing balm to that toxicity, opium — or the global pursuit of enslavement of people and material — is itself toxic.

Jennings' experiments, like Herncastle's, are considered suspect. Betteredge has no compunction with letting Jennings know the intensity of his desire to be insubordinate: he calls Jennings' experiment "'hocus-pocus [...] with the laudanum and Mr. Franklin Blake'" and details for Jennings how desperately he wanted to ruin the experiment (Collins [vol. 20, no. 482] 126). Yet Jennings is able to attract Blake, and attract Blake's trust, even though Blake is unable to see past Jennings' otherness as it is ascribed not only in Jennings' physical appearance but in his personality. Blake describes his investigative read of Jennings thus: "He had what I may venture to describe as the *unsought self-possession*, which is a sure sign of good breeding, not in England only, but everywhere else in the civilised world" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 74). Franklin goes on to write:

> Connecting the few words about himself which thus reluctantly escaped him, with the melancholy view of life which led him to place the conditions of human happiness in complete oblivion of the past, I felt satisfied that the story which I had read in his face was, in two particulars at least, the story that it really told. He had suffered as few men suffer; and there was the mixture of some foreign race in his English blood. (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 74)

Jennings' truth is embedded and revealed through his melancholic, suffering otherness. This makes him irresistible to Franklin, as a curiosity first and foremost. Franklin is not interested in

helping Jennings resolve his scandalous past or setting him up with a more comfortable life. Franklin regards Jennings as an exotic item to be dissected, and he is both entranced and frustrated when he is unable to effectively peel back Jennings' layers. Franklin is unable to engage in a satisfying rhizomatic reading of Jennings, left only to perceive the most surface-level, hierarchical and arboristic clues.

While Franklin would certainly like to be doing the scientific exploration on Jennings, Jennings is able to experiment on Franklin. After determining, through his analysis of Candy's murmurings, that Franklin Blake was given laudanum (a mixture of 10% opium powder and high proof alcohol) without his consent, Jennings proposes a re-creation of the night of the vandalism. Jennings suggests to Blake "that the influence of the opium—after impelling you to possess yourself of the Diamond, with the purpose of securing its safety—might also impel you, acting under the same influence and the same motive, to hide it somewhere in your own room" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 481] 102). Jennings' audacious exercise forces Franklin Blake to unwittingly reveal his guilt in the crime, while simultaneously releasing him of culpability because "the opium (he didn't mean to take) made him do it!" This resolution may strike the reader as a case of the clever author "having one's cake and eating it too." Franklin Blake, representative of the Imperial establishment, is revealed to be guilty of theft, just as his uncle before him. Thomas argues that "[Jennings'] bold experiment reveals that the suspicion the English cast upon the Indians should be returned upon themselves (72). That indictment could be read, easily, as a general indictment of Imperial thievery. Yet, Franklin Blake is noted as being against the use of opium, and so the fact that he is administered opium against his will means he can be absolved of condemnation. Perhaps the lesson here is to see how the fruits of Imperialism (both the

substances obtained and the white supremacy driving the ideology) poison even the seemingly innocent participants caught in the hegemonic web.

Jennings' challenge is to live up to the fantasy of the subaltern giving the colonizer what he (thinks he) needs. Recall Sudan's words: "[c]onnections between trauma, trade, and global position may be read through the intersection of material geography and the psychosocial formation of nation" (154). Paper's ability to civilize and mirror civilization necessarily meant that paper assemblage was going to be informed by the national Imperial exercises. The character of Jennings is the result of an author, who himself is part of the Imperial machine, trying to point to the problem of Imperialism without solving the problem (even rhetorically). Collins seems to be trying to "disappear" the offense of Franklin's theft, but he must also get rid of the evidence of how the crime was solved as well. Curiously, Jennings expresses an affection for Blake that comes out of nowhere, and he is uniquely qualified to right Blake's wrongs, because he can do precisely what Blake wishes he too could do: Jennings has actually mastered scientific inquiry and literacy. When the British are without, they go looking for other people and other materials to fill that need. When they need paper, they hunt the globe for innovative ideas and materials. When they need drugs, they create a monopoly in India. Ultimately, the "innovation" is actually destruction. Jennings does not need to destroy in order to solve Blake's problem and need for absolution — but he seemingly must destroy himself as evidence of those problems.

It is clear early on that Franklin Blake is not equipped to save himself or his family's reputation. A detective figure must emerge, and at first, it seems that Sergeant Cuff will fill that role; he is the correct British figure to do so, after all. Betteredge refers to him as "The great Cuff" or "the celebrated Cuff" repeatedly in the text. However, Cuff exists largely to speak as a

detective might, rather than practice his craft; as the uncredited author of "Forerunners of Sherlock Holmes" notes, "Sergeant Cuff formulated into words the theory which Sherlock put into action" (56). In "The Detective in Fiction," Valentine Williams argues that, while *The Moonstone* represents an important milestone in British detective fiction, "[...] Sergeant Cuff is not the hero, and later drops altogether out of sight" (390). The "the detective-fever" may be quite contagious among the white British characters, but the character who embodies the skill of the detecting figure best is Ezra Jennings.

Perhaps at first glance, Jennings is an unlikely detective hero. He is an outsider to the community in impractical ways: where Cuff is the noble upholder of British rule, Jennings is an outcast of dubious parentage who is beset with unnamed scandal. He is an opium addict who keeps to himself. These factors, however, act not as a deterrent to his ability to divine the truth of what happened to the Moonstone — rather, there is no character more suited to solve the mystery than Jennings. He exists in a rarefied space that essentially serves to exonerate the white Britons without completely exonerating them. Jennings exists as a mutable figure in a liminal space. There is an element of irritation that Jennings plays this exculpatory function, but one can also read Jennings as a recapitulation of the chorus suggesting that the British are to blame for the savagery they experience.

What sets Jennings apart from the other detective figures is his role as a medical man and a scientist who is based in empathy. In "*The Moonstone*, Detective Fiction, and Forensic Science," Ronald R. Thomas argues, "In Jennings Collins created the forerunner not only of the modern forensic scientist, but also of the practice of medical science as a form of surveillance and discipline, of police work as a form of therapy" (77). Yes, Jennings uses his understanding of what we will later call forensics as therapy, but I disagree that Jennings is using it as a form of

surveillance and discipline. In fact, Jennings does not surveil or discipline; that is the province of other less successful detectives. Hutter concurs, writing, “Ezra Jennings is the ultimate detective of the novel who succeeds precisely because he is able to see both the significance of the most trivial details and to allow his mind to wander past the boundaries of rational thought” (183). His care and concern for others gives him a clearer vision and enables him to solve the puzzle at the heart of the crime narrative. Jennings is unlike Blake in that Jennings feels intensely for others. He does not need to have different sides of himself — the continental sides, for example. He is a magnifying glass that reflects before it amplifies.

Jennings engages in two critical detective interventions, the first of which is written. Of the detective genre, Hutter argues, “Detective fiction is the peculiarly modern distillation of a general literary experience that makes central the subtle interaction with, and interpretation of, language” (178). In his capacity as Dr. Candy’s assistant, Jennings is witness to the sick doctor’s seemingly incoherent mumblings. Rather than ignore Candy’s murmurs as a nonsensical mishmash, Jennings commits himself to preserving the doctor’s words without trying to make meaning immediately. His strategy is to take notes in shorthand, and then, as Franklin Blake records Jennings saying, “‘[a]t odds and ends of time [...] I reproduced my shorthand notes, in the ordinary form of writing—leaving large spaces between the broken phrases, and even the single words, as they had fallen disconnectedly from Mr. Candy’s lips’” (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 75). These gaps are not gaps at all, of course; Candy is too ill to form the words, but they are, presumably, there in his fevered mind. Jennings wisely leaves gaps where he knows more clarity can be achieved. Blake captures Jennings’ explanation: “‘I then treated the result thus obtained, on something like the principle which one adopts in putting together a child’s ‘puzzle.’ It is all confusion to begin with; but it may be all brought into order and shape, if you can only

find the right way'" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 75). These are, of course, the actions of a detective, but they are also the actions of someone who has a greater grasp of his place in the Imperial assemblage. That is, Jennings' perception of his place — or, his lack of place, his unique, undesirable place — puts him in a position to see gaps and spaces between things, ideas, and places as fruitful, not barren.

Jennings exhibits patience and reaps the results: "'In plainer words, after putting the broken sentences together I found the superior faculty of thinking going on, more or less connectedly, in my patient's mind, while the inferior faculty of expression was in a state of almost complete incapacity and confusion'" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 75). Hutter explains it thus: "Here is the reconstructive core of detective fiction, that restatement of the past in the language of the present which transforms the shape of a personal or collective history, which provides it with new meaning and coherence" (184). Franklin Blake describes the papers put before him this way, "They consisted of two large folio leaves of paper. One leaf contained writing which only covered the surface at intervals. The other presented writing, in red and black ink, which completely filled the page from top to bottom" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 481] 97). Jennings explains to Blake:

> "The repetitions, in this sense, were of some assistance to me in putting together those fragments. Don't suppose," he added, pointing to the second sheet of paper, "that I claim to have reproduced the expressions which Mr. Candy himself would have used if he had been capable of speaking connectedly. I only say that I have penetrated through the obstacle of the disconnected expression, to the thought which was underlying it connectedly all the time. Judge for yourself." (Collins [vol. 20, no. 481] 99).

Repetitions, just like serialized literature, getting iterations that, together, cobble a story. Jennings talks about things having the quality of being "connectedly," while Blake characterizes Jennings' talent as textile crafting. Blake writes, "Admiration of the ingenuity which had woven this smooth and finished texture out of the ravelled skein was naturally the first impression that I felt, on handing the manuscript back to Ezra Jennings" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 481] 99). The manuscript, written on an assemblage of paper that has a similar body-shape as Jennings, lays bare Jennings' ability to perceive what the British detective figures cannot. This is alchemy of a purer kind than the British wished for themselves in their quests to innovate where the colonized had not: the ability to use creativity to fill in the blanks. Jennings looks for patterns and makes suggestions. Franklin Blake dreams of having this level of imagination that springs from a place of care rather than a place of boredom.

Blake's imagination is also captivated by Jennings' physical features. Collins is relentless in describing Jennings' unique physical features; he repeats the descriptions of Jennings skin, eyes, and hair, largely from Franklin Blake's point of view. At first, this appears to be a typical accounting of the Other from a physical point of view: "His complexion was of a gipsy darkness [...] [h]is nose presented the fine shape and modelling so often found among the ancient people of the East, so seldom visible among the newer races of the West" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 476] 606). Collins notes, repeatedly, the brown and dreamy quality of his eyes: "From this strange face, eyes, stranger still, of the softest brown—eyes dreamy and mournful, and deeply sunk in their orbits—looked out at you, and (in my case, at least) took your attention captive at their will" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 476] 606). Finally, the part of Jennings that seems to befuddle Franklin Blake, his hair: "Add to this a quantity of thick closely-curling hair, which, by some freak of Nature, had lost its colour in the most startlingly partial and capricious manner [...] [t]he

line between the two colours preserved no sort of regularity. At one place, the white hair ran up into the black; at another, the black hair ran down into the white" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 476] 606). Jennings' eyes and his hair identify him as someone both appealing and repelling at the same time; he is hypnotic, having the qualities of a magician or mesmerist.

Jennings delivers scant details about his personal history and does so reluctantly. First, he reveals his parentage to Blake, "No. I was born, and partly brought up, in one of our colonies. My father was an Englishman; but my mother—We are straying away from our subject, Mr. Blake; and it is my fault" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 74). As Thomas notes, "He is, quite literally, a child of the Empire" (71); Jennings is also quick to take the blame for sharing this history, as if it is unsavory or polluting to Blake. He follows this admission with another about his constitution: "'I laid the poor fellow's wasted hand back on the bed, and burst out crying. An hysterical relief, Mr. Blake—nothing more! Physiology says, and says truly, that some men are born with female constitutions—and I am one of them!'" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 75). Jennings is aware that his many dualities make him of interest to a man like Blake.

Blake writes, "I looked at the man with a curiosity which, I am ashamed to say, I found it quite impossible to control" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 476] 606). Jennings meets this "involuntary rudeness" with "an apology which [Blake] was conscious that [he] had not deserved" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 476] 606). This moment establishes the crux of Imperialism at the heart of *The Moonstone*: Franklin Blake, and all he represents, are involuntarily and existentially rude (and violent), and the fantasy response of the colonized is to deliver modest absolution.

However, Jennings does not want to be poked, prodded, and taken apart. Of course, Blake is only drawn in more. Blake writes, "He made that bitterly professional apology for his tears, speaking quietly and unaffectedly, as he had spoken throughout. His tone and manner,

from beginning to end, showed him to be especially, almost morbidly, anxious not to set himself up as an object of interest to me" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 75). Jennings has been painted as a creature most worthy of dissection, attracting Blake by promising some information. Blake is even compelled to repeatedly draw Jennings' face on paper that he was supposed to be using to communicate vital information to Betteredge. Rather than fulfill that purpose, Blake describes his obsession:

> What was to be said in answer to that, which would be worth the paper it was written on? I sat idly drawing likenesses from memory of Mr. Candy's remarkable-looking assistant, on the sheet of paper which I had vowed to dedicate to Betteredge—until it suddenly occurred to me that here was the irrepressible Ezra Jennings getting in my way again! I threw a dozen portraits, at least, of the man with the piebald hair (the hair in every case, remarkably like), into the waste-paper basket—and then and there, wrote my answer to Betteredge" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 479] 51).

The image of Jennings consumes Blake and distracts him from his task and causes him to misuse his paper. Blake sketches and dissects Jennings' appearance on these sheets of paper, wasting the material as documents his obsession with Jennings' otherness and, specifically, the most overt representation of Jennings' dualities, his hair. Blake discards the paper, whose fibers hold his pen strokes, into the trash, getting rid of the evidence of his obsession.

Most importantly for the upholding of Empire, Jennings uses his skill to make it possible for Franklin Blake and Rachel Verinder to be reunited, particularly as he is able to break Franklin Blake's obsession with him. The house is righted, thanks to Jennings' skill as a medical man, a chemist, and a person familiar with opium. One of the odder moments in Jennings' efforts to bring them together is after he has conscripted Rachel into helping set the scene for his

experiment with Blake. Having come to the conclusion that Blake was given laudanum without his consent, Jennings hopes that, by creating the exact same physical layout of the Verinder home, if Blake were to take laudanum again, he might repeat his actions of that fateful night. Of course, this time, Blake is aware that he will be taking the drug, but Jennings trusts that the drug's effects will trump that consent. Rachel sends a missive to Jennings on the night of the experiment: "'Pray let me see you measure out the laudanum; I want to have something to do with it, even in the unimportant character of a mere looker-on.—R.V.'" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 483] 148). This moment recalls the level of interest Rachel has in being adjacent to danger: upon meeting "the celebrated Indian traveller, Mr. Murthwaite," and hearing from him that "dressed as you are now [with the Moonstone pinned to her dress], your life would not be worth five minutes' purchase," Betteredge reports, "Miss Rachel, safe in England, was quite delighted to hear of her danger in India" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 458] 169). Free argues, "Danger is romantic — "thrilling"—and/because distant, its echo is not its presence an "accompaniment" to the dullness and safety that is home" (345). We see this echoed in Doyle's "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches," where Holmes points out that the greater danger is in the seeming peace of the country. In the case of *The Moonstone*, Lillian Nayder writes, "Collins often links imperial crime to patriarchal oppression, combining a critique of empire and British domination with one of male privilege and enforced powerlessness among women" (140). Free expands upon that idea, writing, "Women, it would seem, not only need to be protected — from colonial savages — they also need to be adorned — with colonial goods" (358). Women like Rachel desire the prospect of danger perhaps because it would break the cycle of Imperial hegemony but are unprepared for what the reality of that violence may entail.

Jennings gives Blake what he thinks he wants, but he does not give Blake the satisfaction of knowing the insides of him. Rosanna's diary does that. Jennings gives Blake Candy's diary (of sorts) to give him satisfaction. However, unlike Rosanna, Jennings won't allow himself to become the disemboweled flower.

Rosanna sets the scene for the correct way that the subaltern should behave, particularly Others who have physical maladies. She is depicted as deformed, both physically and morally, as she was convicted of thievery, and is only employed at the Verinder estate through the Christian generosity of Julia Verinder. Betteredge offers a slightly kinder portrait of her than he does Jennings; of her, Betteredge writes, "When I got out, through the sandhills, on to the beach, there she was, in her little straw bonnet, and her plain grey cloak that she always wore to hide her deformed shoulder as much as might be—there she was, all alone, looking out on the quicksand and the sea" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 8). Rosanna has a connection with an area called the Shivering Sands. Betteredge describes the area as having human qualities that are unsetting: "the broad brown face of the quicksand began to dimple and quiver—the only moving thing in all the horrid place" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 462] 266). Betteredge calls the area "horrid" repeatedly, filled with "a melancholy plantation of firs" and "the loneliest and ugliest little bay on all our coast" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 457] 98). Sergeant Cuff is similarly repulsed: "'Looking at it from my point of view, I never saw a marine landscape that I admired less. If you happen to be following another person along your sea-coast, and if that person happens to look round, there isn't a scrap of cover to hide you anywhere'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 462] 266). Melissa Free rightly notes, "Like the diamond and the opium, however, the Sand itself does not inherently possess mystical — read, Eastern — power; rather, it, like those other things Oriental / ized, connotes the secrecy, displacement, and the repudiation of responsibility by means of which imperialism commits so

much of its violence" (355). After having been drawn there on her walks, Rosanna chooses the Shivery Sand to be both her hiding place for Blake's nightgown, her confession of the true story of her role in hiding evidence, and her grave. Unlike Cuff, Rosanna can see how the Shivering Sands can provide cover for her secrets (and still ultimately reveal them).

Suicide is frowned upon, but at least she is gone, following the ableist instinct to get rid of broken bodies. Sean Grass notes, "As architects of the novel's most complex plots, Rosanna and the Indians are exceptional at concealment, eluding detection though they are the primary objects of suspicion" (100). Rosanna writes, in her confessional, "'Not even my grave will be left to tell of me. I may own the truth—with the quicksand waiting to hide me when the words are written'" (Collins [vol. 19, no. 476] 602). The quicksand does hide her body, and her preserved writing allows her to own the truth. Rosanna writes, "'I shall go to the Shivering Sand—don't be afraid of my letting my footmarks betray me!—and hide the nightgown down in the sand, where no living creature can find it without being first let into the secret by myself'" (Collins [vol. 20, no. 477] 3). Returning to Charles Mackay's review of *The Moonstone,* "The arrangement of the materials of which the author has availed himself is admirable; but we doubt whether, as the reader follows the course of the plot, he will not become painfully sensible of the unsatisfactory foundation upon which the whole superstructure is based" (115). That "unsatisfactory foundation" can refer to the carefully constructed plot having holes, it can refer to the deadly quicksand which threatens to keep Blake's innocence unrevealed, and it could hint at the very real "unsatisfactory foundation" upon which the Empire's might was constructed.

Once Jennings solves the mystery of how Blake came to be the thief, he is free to die like the plucked flower, to bury his own broken body far away from the gaze of others. Blake records Jennings expressing a melancholic thought: "'Perhaps we should all be happier," he added, with

a sad smile, “if we could but completely forget!’” (Collins [vol. 20, no. 480] 73). Perhaps Jennings cannot completely forget the wrongs done to him, but he can effectively remove himself from the scene. When Mr. Candy writes to Blake after Jennings’ death, he remarks, “And then he said—not bitterly—that he would die as he had lived, forgotten and unknown. He maintained that resolution to the last. There is no hope now of making any discoveries concerning him. His story is a blank” (Collins [vol. 20, no. 485] 197). Candy goes on to write that Jennings requested, “‘Let my grave be forgotten. Give me your word of honour that you will allow no monument of any sort—not even the commonest tombstone—to mark the place of my burial. Let me sleep, nameless. Let me rest, unknown’” (Collins [vol. 20, no. 485] 197). This moment can be misleading. On one hand, it seems like Jennings is fulfilling an Imperial fantasy, in which the Oriental Other serves the Master completely and essentially disappears, to fulfill a purpose but not to remain as a reminder of anything negative. Ezra Jennings’ physical self, as described by Collins, is an ambulatory reminder of Imperialism and Empire, one that makes characters like Gabrielle Betteredge revolted. At first, it seems like the most Imperial act possible for Jennings to erase himself from the landscape, so that, presumably, Franklin Blake and Rachel Verinder can marry and have children without the specter of India and opium hovering over the next generation.

One pauses, however, and reconsiders what Jennings said to Blake about the flowers: “‘The truth is, I have associations with these modest little hedgeside flowers—It doesn’t matter’” (Collins [vol. 19, no. 476] 74). This melancholic man identifies with the modest flowers, amongst a character like Cuff who is mildly obsessed with flowers, and with Blake, who Betteredge describes as the sort of idle rich who cruelly dissects flora and fauna. Jennings here expresses an awareness like the one described by Morton as “dark ecology,” where Jennings sees

himself as the weeds unwanted because they are not useful, yet beautiful in their own way without needing to present as expressly useful. He picks the flowers, killing them, because he knows he too will be plucked from his own life soon. Jennings' ability to see his own dark end in the demeaned flowers foregrounds the melancholy he projects.

However, Jennings is also able to deny those who might wish to take him apart piece by piece for their edification and amusement, and render himself, frustratingly, unseeable. He stands directly opposed to the wishes of the detective genre— he deliberately obscures himself from prying eyes. It is a far more radical move than the action may seem at first blush. If his body is a text, then he washes the markings from sight. He does not leave a diary, as Rosanna did. He confounds a full accounting of his story.

As discussed earlier, the characters in *The Moonstone* struggle to see and to perceive accurately, and the serialized novel is an effort begun by Franklin Blake to collect multiple narratives in the hope of reading the situation correctly — if only for the purposes of exonerating him from suspicion and blame regarding the Moonstone's theft. Sean Grass points out a considerable problem: "Trusting to the stare, *The Moonstone's* characters ignore the subjectivity of those they see, dealing instead in superficialities that produce bigotry and cruelty […] they engage in unconscious and willful psychological repressions that mean to conceal their illegitimate desires" (97). Seeing is believing for Franklin Blake and others, except for the accounts from Rosanna and Jennings, who do much to illuminate the uncomfortable truth.

Grass rightly points out that, in order to absolve Franklin Blake of suspicion, the crime narrative must make multiple desires visible: "This is the problem for Collins's novel, this need to make desire enter the visible world of the text" (101). Indeed, it is a genre problem: Detectives are [...]inevitably concerned with the problem of knowledge, a problem only intensified by the

urban upheaval of the world[...], by the disorder, the multiplicity of detail, the constant impinging presence of other people, other accounts, other viewpoints" (Hutter 178). A more challenging problem arises, however, when the vision through which the characters must see to perceive the truth comes from the servants. In "Servants and the Victorian Sensation Novel," Anna Peak argues that "[...] the correlation among reading, understanding, and serving suggests that the middle classes must learn to survey themselves through the eyes of their employees" (840). The servants, and the subaltern, are not appropriate gazers. We must return to the Crystal Palace at this point and reimagine the seeing and being seen that was occurring. How did the glass framing give the illusion of perfect vision? Of being able to see, clearly, the ways in which Britain was superior to all others? The natural ascendancy owed to the British, to bestow their rules, laws, and corporate structures on others? The God-given right to quantify, qualify, name, rename, use, abuse, and discard? The Crystal Palace promised so much, just as Franklin Blake's endeavor to prove his innocence promised more than it could deliver. At the end, Blake is completely under the gaze of Jennings and Rosanna, who see Blake's theft. Only Jennings can escape Britain's clutches, however, without being dissected and laid bare. He is left somewhat intact, his story and his truth unmolested.

CHAPTER VI

WEBS AND WASTE IN THE TALES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES AND BEYOND

> "Dr. Doyle saw how he could interest intelligent readers by taking them into his confidence, and showing his mode of working [...]. These are at once so obvious, when explained, and so easy, once you know them, that the ingenuous reader at once feels, and says to himself, I also could do this; life is not so dull after all; I will keep my eyes open, and find out things [...]. Yet, after all you say, there is nothing wonderful; we could all do the same."
> —Joseph Bell, "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," p. 80.

In October 2017, a series of wildfires took root in Northern California; one of the most destructive of the many fires was called the Tubbs Fire, which burned through wine country, including Napa and Sonoma counties. When the grapes were harvested for the purpose of making wine, they were infected with what scientists call "smoke taint." The grape skins had absorbed the smoke from the wildfires, attributable to climate change. The resulting wine from the 2017 harvest tasted of smoke and ash, nearly unpalatable. As Associate Professor Sigfredo Fuentes, an Associate Professor of Digital Agriculture & Food Sciences at the University of Melbourne, noted in an article, "While flavour characteristics caused by the soil, plants and environment are the source of the variety we appreciate in wines, these spoilage characteristics certainly make the wine less palatable for wine lovers" (Winthrope). Wildfires, enhanced by man-made climate change, produce clouds of toxins which seep into the pores of the grape skins, ultimately altering the taste and quality of an indulgent intoxicant. The wine is often undrinkable, and is often disposed of, as it is unfit for sale. Researchers have proposed mapping solutions: "These models combined with affordable geo-referenced NIR spectroscopy measurements of

berries could allow growers to map contaminated areas of a vineyard to facilitate decision making at harvest" (Fuentes et al.). Fuentes et al. reports, "Spatial maps of smoke contamination can also help to achieve differential harvests to avoid mixing fruit with smoke-tainted fruit" (Fuentes et al.).

This chapter takes up Sherlock Holmes as the quintessential detective figure and builds off the analyses of chapters four and five, now adding the "waste" to "paper" and "metal." Moving to the present, this section demonstrates how the rhizomatic analysis I've used to explore nineteenth century texts also explicates the development of generative AI. In many ways, the development and deployment of generative AI echoes the development of the multiple assemblages that make up the steam powered printing press of the early nineteenth century. I tie these together and demonstrate how one would not be surprised by the conversations regarding ethics and biases relating to generative AI if one has studied the analogous development of the nineteenth century publishing apparatus. I also use principles of cartography and game design to argue that spatial awareness of one's place within an assemblage is critical to developing a critical, empathetic understanding of the stakes regarding imperial developments.

One of the most celebrated maps of the time was the map developed by Dr. John Snow, in response to his observations of the cholera epidemic of 1854. The prevailing theory of disease held that illness was spread through the air through miasma and absorbed into the body. Miasma was linked to purification and the presence of waste. Authored in 1662 by Daniel Sennertus, N. Culpeper, and Abdiah Cole, *The Sixth Book of Practical Physick. Of Occult or Hidden Diseases; in Nine Parts* describes miasma as such:

> This Miasma or Contagion is spred and sowed about, by the pores of the skin. Sometimes it comes forth with the sweat, or sticks to the skin with a thicker excrement or filth.

> Sometimes it goes out of the body by the breath; sometimes by matter or quittor [pus] that comes out of the ulcers. Sometimes those Atomes flie about in the air, and therefore the seeds of the Plague are sowed far about. (Sennertus et al. 25)

The filth and stench of illness was, then, a significant vector for said illness. The authors go on to name materials other than porous human flesh that are disease facilitators:

> A Contagion or Miasma is sowed and spred abroad in two waies, either by fewel alone, or by the aire, and by its fewel. This fewel is not the subject of that form, but gives a place to the contagen. Such are all things that are porous and thin, as wool, flax, cotton, feathers, hairy beasts skins, and walles may receive Contagion, as experience shews: and some solider things, such as stones and Metals, but then they are foul, for when they are clean from filth, they cannot receive it so easily. (Sennertus et al. 25).

Items with more gap in the weave are more dangerous, giving the contagion a place to ride as the material is passed along. The "solider things" can be cleaned, and they do not share the same risky perforation as things like wool and cotton. One imagines how the layers of grime and dirt that had developed in London, for example, by 1662, and how the off-putting sights and smells must have easily been associated with contemporaneous illnesses being spread rapidly. In *Maladies of Empire: How Colonialism, Slavery, and War Transformed Medicine,* Jim Downs writes, "While some proponents of miasma developed ideas about "night air" and "foul air," they may have, at times, pointed to crowded spaces as the cause for disease but their focus remained more tightly attentive to the air's movement that emanated from rotten vegetation or corpses not simply by the physical environment" (Downs 25). Miasma theory seems like a direct prelude to germ theory, but it is important to focus on the surface-ness of miasma, only what the eye can see, and the olfactory senses can perceive. The lack of depth is a hallmark of the main issue this

chapter takes up: one cannot see a situation clearly if one is looking down from on high, or at a distance. One must position themselves parallel to the elements which are crashing and colliding together, rather than attempt to map out a problem from a two-dimensional perspective. Miasma theory was still *en vogue* in 1817, when cholera first came to England's shores, though, as Downs notes, "French and British physicians moved away from an analysis focusing purely on air as the central factor in the cause of disease and instead emphasized how physical conditions of crowded spaces caused disease to spread" (Downs 25). According to the World Health Organization, "Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*"(*Cholera*); one way that the disease spreads rapidly is that, symptomatic or not, infected people shed the bacteria through their fecal waste, which in turn pollutes the environment. In "John Snow, Cholera, the Broad Street Pump; Waterborne Diseases Then and Now," Theodore H. Tulchinsky writes, "[C]holera spread rapidly throughout the world largely due to inadvertent transport of bilge water in ships mainly from the Bay of Bengal. The Indian subcontinent has been a long-term focus of cholera and the source of six worldwide epidemics between 1817 and 1923" (Tulchinsky 79). The problem of cholera crystallized in 1854, when a particularly terrible cholera outbreak occurred in London, specifically near Broad Street. Anesthesiologist John Snow was unconvinced that miasma theory held the answer and believed that cholera was being spread by water. The traditional story asserts that Snow, through dogged inquiry in the neighborhoods blighted with disease, literally mapped out the threads of contagion, and traced it back to a singular water pump. He removed the handle from the pump and saved countless lives. The actual story is a bit different, and those differences speak directly to the thesis of this project: namely, many more people were involved in this project than one doctor, and that Imperialism was at the root.

Downs concedes that "John Snow's 1854 study of cholera in London is popularly regarded as the foundation of modern epidemiology, because Snow determined that cholera was spread through water contaminated by sewage," but argues that Snow was one of many doctors and sanitary-health officials studying cholera at the time" (Downs 84). He was not the only person to move away from miasma theory, and he was not even the first to map out illness. As academic geographer Kenneth Field argues in an ArcGIS blog titled, "Something in The Water: The Mythology of Snow's Map of Cholera, "[...]Snow isn't responsible for the creation of the mapping technique [...] or thematic mapping more generally. Layering thematic data on top of topographic maps pre-dated his work." While he did not include actual two-dimensional maps, John Simon, Medical Officer of Health to the City of London and surgeon to St. Thomas' Hospital, was contemporaneously thinking cartographically. In his *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the City of London, for the Year 1852-3*, Simon reports the following:

> When the 211 deaths are mapped upon a house-plan of the City (as may conveniently be done by stamping a black in mark at each place where one of them has occurred) the broad features of the epidemic are rendered visible at a glance […] many, dotted about in confined and crowded courts, where domestic cleanliness is rare, and atmospheric purity impossible; many, on the southern slope of the City, where it is an habitual complaint that stenches arise from the sewers. (11)

The professional detachment needed to speak of convenience when making stamp marks to indicate the death of someone's father, mother, son, or infant child is remarkable. Each blacked-in mark represented a likely agonizing death from dehydration or shock after hours or days of violent expulsions of human waste from the body. Simon writes that "the broad features of the epidemic are rendered visible at a glance," and one can argue that he is correct in terms of

obtaining an aerial perspective that showed patterns or clusters of illness. He can see where indications of deaths were more closely placed and draw inferences from qualities he associated with those streets and landmarks on the map. While there are still miasmic terms floating in this passage, such as "atmospheric purity," I am reminded of what Downs suggested about the theoretical turn, arguing that English and French doctors were focused on "the physical conditions of crowded spaces" (Downs 25). Simon's, and others', maps were a first step at coming to understand better the physical conditions of crowded spaces, and how one might trace the threads of illness across the physical landscape. Field points to Edmund Cooper's map, drawn for the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers, as another example of a cholera map that preceded Snow's.

One can also argue that Snow did not draw his map himself. As Field points out, "The drawing and lithography was done by Charles Cheffins, and like most cartographic and illustrative work in scientific publications of the time (and, to an extent, also the present day), the true author of the map remains largely unknown to the reader of the work in which it's presented." That train of thought is furthered by Downs, who argues that, "With epidemic diseases, the kind of information acquired from large-scale outbreaks, which played an important role in the development of epidemiology, was available to British physicians because of the global reach of the empire and the oppression of various populations" (74).

These maps, and others like them (including U.S. maps of disease during the Civil War), Downs asserts, "provided a bird's-eye view of the epidemic, which advanced the development of epidemiology" (194). One feels as if mapping, in this manner, is useful when one is aware that some kind of viral disease is afoot in an area. There is a sense that one can track, trace, and

identify the source (or starting point) for that spreading illness, and that the problem can ostensibly be "solved" with a well-done map.

Crime, too, has been regarded as a social contaminant, and the study of crime has used mapping for decades. In "Ecology of Crime in Urban and Suburban Area – Spatial Patterns of Crime in NIS (Serbia)," Dušan Stanković argues that "[t]he ecological theories of crime have a significant place among the criminological theories dealing with the nature and causes of crime, and the social reaction to the occurrence of crime" (38). The origin of crime mapping — that is, bringing social statistics and cartography together — can be traced to 1829, when André-Michel Guerry's map project with Venetian geographer Adriano Balbi debuted. The project was "a large, one page sheet containing three shaded maps of France [...] [showing] the departments of France, shaded according to crimes against persons, crimes against property, and school instruction" (Crank et al. 169). Crank et al. goes on to note that " [...] Guerry's decision to map crime levels was used by ecologists of the time and was also used later by the Chicago school, a term identifying a group of researchers from various universities in Chicago who gave rise to urban sociology" (169). Belgian scientist Adolphe Quetelet built off Guerry's work and "postulated the idea of 'social physics' that gave rise to the notion that habitats may have had an influence on social relations and actions" (Crank et al. 169). In *GIS and Crime Mapping*, Spencer Chainey and Jerry Ratcliffe argue, "The police have long recognised the inherent geographical component of crime by sticking pins into maps displayed on walls, where each pin represented a crime event, but it was studies such as those from the 'Chicago School' of the 1930s that first demonstrated the importance of geography in understanding crime" (1). In "Ripping Up the Map: Criminology and Cartography Reconsidered," Theo Kindynis asserts, " [...] Guerry and Quetelet's maps showed that crimes were not evenly distributed but clustered

geographically along with other observable social variables such as poverty and education levels, and that such patterns were consistent over time" (223). These data visualization efforts were mirrored in England by researchers Henry Mayhew and Joseph Fletcher. Crank et al. notes, "Mayhew included a detailed description of crime in London in terms of its ecology and included maps presenting the "intensity" of various crimes in different parts of the city," while "Fletcher sought to develop an index of crime for the districts of England that would not be affected by the migration of individuals" (170). These maps offered no conclusive information, but these projects represented efforts to link space and experience together in a two-dimensional product.

Crime is mapped rhetorically and narratologically in the crime fiction I have been exploring through the last two chapters, yet they do not include in their serializations any maps or map-like images. In "Maps Plans and Diagrams in the Detective Fiction of Dorothy L. Sayers and Others," Philip L. Scowcroft asserts, "We look in vain for a map or plan in Wilkie Collins' The Moonstone (1868), but then it would perhaps be out of place in such a stately work which is as much a straight novel as a detective story" (28). Scowcroft also points out that "[...] although three of the Sherlock Holmes short stories include maps or plans (in The Priory School it is a map of a stretch of moorland, in The Naval Treaty and The Golden Pince Nez a plan of buildings) these are very roughly (hardly "meticulously") drawn" (28). They are drawn with words only — attending illustrations features scenes of action and characters, not the maps referenced in the stories. In *Snobbery with Violence: Crime Stories and Their Audience*, Colin Watson argues that it was lesser authors who relied on maps to enhance their story-telling efforts: "The practice of inserting meticulously drawn ground plans eventually became a joke and had to be abandoned, but some plots were so complicated and their authors so weak on

description that pictorial aid was essential" (96–97). If space on a page is time and money, then in Watson's estimation, time, materials, and money were wasted.

Waste appears as a fear in a few of the Sherlock Holmes stories that appeared in *The Strand Magazine* from July 1891 to December 1893. The stories end with the apparent death of Sherlock Holmes, entwined with his greatest enemy, Professor Moriarty, as they plummet to the bottom of the Reichenbach Falls in Meiringen, Switzerland. I have referenced several of these short stories in the two previous chapters, largely because I feel so many of my ideas are most visible in the intertwined stories of Doyle, and I have relied on those stories to bring into sharper relief the theories and evidence I subsequently found in *Lady Audley's Secret* and *The Moonstone*. My belief in their hyper-clarity is likely because most of these ideas were seeded by close readings of Doyle's work, especially after having the opportunity in 2016, to hold and examine a copy of an unbound issue number 7 of *The Strand Magazine*, which contained, among other items, Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia," courtesy of Yale's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library. I have since had the pleasure of examining a copy of the November 1887 *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, featuring Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (the first appearance of Sherlock Holmes), at the Lilly Library at Indiana University. This "cheap, healthful literature," as *The Strand*'s George Newnes termed it, did not feel particularly hardy in my hands, and I felt the weight of disconsonance by how tenderly we were treating these artefacts, versus the air of disposability they must have had at the time. These magazines may have disintegrated and lined the streets, contributing to the general mess and grime of the landscape.

Doyle makes much of waste and detritus in those early stories: perhaps most famously, Doyle has John Watson describe London as "that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained" (*A Study in Scarlet* 2). I referenced this quotation in

chapter five, but I would like to focus now on the term "cesspool" — these were brick-lined pits into which the human waste from outhouses would drain. As Lee Jackson explains, however, "Cesspools would, however, come to acquire an evil reputation—courtesy of the flush toilet [...] it was discovered that the brick pits could not cope with the additional input of water. Foul-smelling liquid began to saturate gardens, or soak basements, before it could seep away." The invention — the new technology — put unforeseen pressure on an already unstable system.

By calling London a cesspool, Doyle has Watson equate the city to a pit with a gravitational pull for human waste — in this case, socially and economically wasteful people who are not contributing to the betterment of themselves or the Empire. Perhaps I can extend the metaphor to include the role technology played in creating the cesspool overflow; the technologies of empire were rapidly draining people of their life force and drawing them inwards. I would complicate this imagery, however, because I do not believe London is the center; rather, I think London is a nodule in the rhizomatic web of matter converging and diverging, a hub of many assemblages.

My understanding of assemblage theory is drawn from interpretations of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's assemblage descriptions, primarily from their seminal work, *A Thousand Plateaus.* Of those interpretations, I am primarily motivated by Jane Bennett's theory of vibrant matter as articulated in her book of the same name. All matter — human and non-human — is perpetually interacting with each other, influencing and being influenced, propelling and retracting, processing towards products (which, in turn, are part of process to more products). Assemblage theory delivers a framework for how to see the disparate materials that are in conversation with each other, especially when thinking of *assemblage* as a verb rather than a noun.

For example, one way to imagine assemblage is to think of a collage, or the bringing together of disparate items into one harmonious product. For example, one could think of the steam-powered printing press, and imagine all of the components and their provenances: iron must be harvested by men in the north of England, coal must be obtained beneath the earth's crust, laborers with unique skills must endure great physical hardship to produce these materials, inventors from different nationalities must contribute innovative designs in order to bring forth this great, hulking, pulsating, dirty machine that ultimately enables an expansive literacy that ultimately shores up a white supremacist national British ideology. However, this analysis stops short by seeing the steam-powered printing press as a fixed, stable point. I prefer the idea that the term *assemblage* describes the action of assembling that is always in motion: the steam-powered printing presses continue to shake together, to break down, to interact with paper and other raw products that either feed its steam power or rub against its barrels to press black ink onto ill-gotten fibers. Those inky fibers knit together into the creative transmission (narratives in the form of news reporting or entertainment, for example) that winds up in the hands of citizens and non-citizens, whose actions in turn spread the machine's process-as-product like a virus, until the point that the paper is discarded and begins the waste breakdown process, only to become embedded with matter like dirt and debris.

As an author working within the nineteenth-century British publishing industry, Arthur Conan Doyle was embedded in a network of ecological and Imperialistic relationships between contributors which are best clarified by assemblage theory principles; those ecological and Imperialistic relationships emerged in nineteenth-century British serialized fiction at large, and in the short stories Doyle published in periodicals. That is, my analysis functions like Luminol --

turn off the lights, and elements are revealed: in this case, depictions of eco-relationships in fictional works like Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales.

The inky fibers of Arthur Conan Doyle's short stories and novels serve as case studies for my analysis of the interconnectedness which forms bodies of knowledge and analysis of evidence of knowledge production in the form of texts. Before analyzing the content of Doyle's stories, I must first dissect the raw material streams that coalesced into the copies of *The Strand Magazine* that carried the stories into readers' hands. Of the many raw materials to choose from, I am focusing on waste and detritus as a key ingredient in the information system of the nineteenth publishing industry. One might consider the refuse to be limited to an after effect, or "post-information" and therefore, inconsequential to the analysis at hand, but I am suggesting that waste and detritus are one of the most important elements of the system of meaning-making. If one thinks of raw materials having visualized patterns, I propose that nineteenth-century paper, for example, has the environmental pattern of drawing *in* disparate elements like esparto grass, cotton, water, and energy, from far-flung places via steam-driven transportation. Waste, on the other hand, can be visualized as the expanding *out* of elements like carbon dioxide, metal poisons, human lives, and over-sourced raw materials that decimate spaces of growth.

The publishing industry was a vital industry bringing all of these "machines" together – in other words, it was a machine plugged into other machines (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 4). In fact, the growth of other industries directly permitted the growth of the publishing industry: a burgeoning middle class could afford more textiles, supplied by a booming textile manufacturing industry; in the middle-class pursuit of fashionable items (such as clothing and bedding), more rags were discarded long before they were fully useless to their owners, making them available to be transformed into paper (Erickson 7). Lee Erickson writes, "The new

mountain of rags on rubbish heaps thus allowed for an exponential growth in publishing and increased the availability of books and periodicals to the English common reader" (7). Erickson's description of rags as geological structures ("mountains") as summits of waste ("rubbish heaps") conflates two of the most important elements (in the forms of metal, lead, and coal) as well as waste (in the case above, material that has not even outlived its practical usefulness, discarded for vanity).

Erikson's choice of the word "mountain" is helpful, as it recalls that geology, as a field of study, evolved dramatically in the nineteenth century, and an awareness of strata (and how strata represented the epic passage of time) impacted people's conceptions of themselves and their place in history. Contemporary scholars like media theorist Jussi Parikka demonstrate how geology and nineteenth-century literature share commonalities, which enables an eco-critical reading, and opens the door to how geologists and social scientists have employed assemblage theory. In *A Geology of Media*, Parikka notes, "The relations to the earth are also part of the social relations of labor and exploitation that characterized […] the nineteenth century as much as they characterize contemporary digital capitalism of the twenty-first-century from mining minerals [and] geopolitics of the hunt for energy" (viii). Media theorists Richard Maxwell and Toby Miller argue that "[w]e must therefore see the culture industries, including literature, as environmental participants, not merely signifying agents of information or pleasure" (182). Parikka also overtly intervenes with *A Geology of Media*, demonstrating how media emerges directly from the ground; how we understand time and space is different precisely when we consider geology as the foundation of inquiry rather than focusing on machines as a unit (3). A geologically based exploration affords a clearer view of an assemblage's impact on the climate,

the climate's impact on an assemblage (such as the nineteenth-century British publishing industry), as well as the political economy of industrial and post-industrial production.

Finally, waste is a critical, yet often deliberately overlooked, part of these assemblages. Waste from the publishing industry came in the form of noise pollution, waste of resources, and smog. Waste, however, is not an end product. As Karen Barad writes, "The world is an ongoing open process of mattering through which 'mattering' itself acquires meaning and form in the realization of different agential possibilities" (817). Waste is part of a cycle that has meaning and effect/affect – waste is an iteration of previously valuable resources, and the result of industrious activity. In this way, waste embodies infinity: waste is largely unavoidable, uncontrollable, and yet humans try to hide it. One of the great interventions of the nineteenth century in London was the construction of the sewer system, developed by Sir Joseph William Bazalgette, in an effort to stem the deadly march of cholera as much as to stem the reminders of body fragility via "The Great Stink of 1858." Yet, as Maxwell and Miller note, "Removing waste didn't eliminate it: as a living, malodorous reminder of urban filth, the lowly ragpicker foiled the bourgeois fantasy of cleanliness" (186). Waste reemerges and returns no matter how hard humans try to ignore or relocate it.

From an industry perspective, the cost-benefit analysis is used to identify when the benefit outweighs the cost, where the product, or producing machine, is always worth the resulting waste: "The Gutenberg press, and others like it, changed media technology's ecological context, as synthetic alloys and other toxic metals were incorporated into the routine of printing" (184). The celebrated printer and publisher William Clowes was sued by the Duke of Northumberland after Clowes set up his steam presses next to the Duke's palace at Charing Cross – the noise, dirt, and smoke proved too much, as "the plaintiff and his witnesses described

the nuisance—the noise made by the engine in the underground cellar, some times like thunder, at other times like a thrashing-machine, and then again like the rumbling of carts and wagons" (Smiles 155). Clowes eventually moved his practice; the duke won, ostensibly, but the presses kept running (and producing waste).

With this perspective in mind, waste litters "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" and "The Adventure of the Crooked Man." Both stories as set against a backdrop of the British Raj, specifically the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Colonialism is a mass-polluting event, and that pollution seeps through into the drama of the Holmes narratives. In "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," published in *The Strand Magazine* in 1892, the reader meets Dr. Grimesby Roylott, a British doctor who practiced medicine in Calcutta in the 1850s. The two soldiers at the heart of "The Adventure of the Crooked Man," Henry Wood and Colonel James Barclay, served with the Royal Munsters in India as the Rebellion begins. The two stories present images of murderous actions committed by ostensibly noble British men (Roylott and Barclay) against fellow British people as well as native Indians. In "Speckled Band," Roylott grows more violent and reclusive after returning from India to his ancestral home in the British countryside. His stepdaughter Helen Stoner explains to Holmes, "'Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather's case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics'" (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" 144). Holmes directly implicates Roylott's time in India as a contributor to his evilness: "'The idea of using a form of poison which could not possibly be discovered by any chemical test was just such a one as would occur to a clever and ruthless man who had had *an Eastern training*'" (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" 157; emphasis added). Note that Roylott is described as first obtaining his medical degree, then journeyed to Calcutta to establish his

practice. Holmes is therefore referencing a training in malice and violence rooted in "Eastern" values and knowledge acquisition — presumably, which animal's bite or sting is most lethal, but also how to be uniquely vicious and cruel. He has become ignoble in India, and he has brought foreign violence home to poor England's bucolic land. He has polluted his Western training in medicine — as Holmes argues, "'When a doctor does go wrong, he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge' " (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" 154). He further pollutes his village (Stoke Moran, likely a fictional version of Stoke D'Abernon): Helen Stoner reveals that "'[...] he became the terror of the village, and the folks would fly at his approach'" (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" 144). Roylott has become a plague upon his ancestral home.

In "The Crooked Man," Colonel Barclay also uses indigenous knowledge to ruin lives, as he lies to soldier Henry Wood regarding the way to sneak around enemy (Indian) lines. Wood, Barclay's romantic rival, follows Barclay's advice right into the hands of the enemy, where he is captured and tortured. Wood is presumed dead, and Barclay marries the bereft Nancy Devoy. Wood learns ways to support himself from the indigenous people: "'There I wandered about for many a year, and at last came back to the Punjab, where I lived mostly among the natives, and picked up a living by the conjuring tricks that I had learned. What use was it for me, a wretched cripple, to go back to England, or to make myself known to my old comrades' " (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Crooked Man" 31).

Sherlock Holmes, of course, is on the case to illuminate the murderous actions of Roylott and Barclay —it is by virtue of Dr. John Watson's narration that the reader learns of the two evildoers, and through Watson's narration that Holmes' detecting is communicated. Per *A Study in Scarlet,* Watson is a former military man: as a medical doctor, he was attached to the 5th

Northumberland Fusiliers in India before joining the 66th Berkshire Regiment of Foot in Afghanistan, where he was seriously wounded at the Battle of Maiwand in July 1880. Watson's reproduction of Holmes' actions and narration bring these macabre stories to the reader, and one must question: do the tales of Sherlock Holmes demonstrate the supremacy of ultimate rationality, or does the act of recording Holmes' interventions actually draw the corruption and filth into view, by directing the reader's eyes towards the chaos in and around London? Nathanael T. Booth argues that the Doyle stories operate with "[t]he formulation whereby Holmes creates the adventure he solves" (17). The figure of Holmes is both clarifying and chaos-bringing.

Holmes's perceptions do draw in more filth by drawing our eyes towards the chaos, yet he is not a totalitarian when it comes to restitution. Holmes does essentially clean up the dreary messes that the colonialists leave in their wake by eschewing police involvement in both "Speckled Band" or "Crooked Man." In both stories, Holmes concludes that there is a reciprocity that may go unpunished via the British legal system, but is experienced bodily: in "Speckled Band," he asserts, "'Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another'" (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" 156). In "Crooked Man," he argues against bringing the misdeeds of Colonel Barclay to the authorities, saying to Henry Wood, "'[T]here is no object in raking up this scandal against a dead man, foully as he has acted. You have, at least, the satisfaction of knowing that for thirty years of his life his conscience bitterly reproached him for his wicked deed'" (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Crooked Man" 32). The readers know, and that is enough for Holmes. In both stories, it appears that reader knowledge suffices for the wronged parties of Helen Stoner and Henry Wood. Holmes is a master of reading detritus — the mud from the dogcart in "Speckled Band" and

Teddy the mongoose's filthy paw prints in "Crooked Man"; perhaps he is also a content to reveal these dirty secrets to the reader but is ultimately unwilling to put an end to the systems that inspired the filth in the first place.

Even with this resistance to air Imperial laundry, Holmes offers the beginning of a model for how the analysis I am doing in this chapter might be extended to the current ethic morass that is generative AI. In the "Adventure of the Crooked Man," Sherlock Holmes remarks to John Watson, "'You know my methods, Watson. There was not one of them which I did not apply to the inquiry. *And it ended by my discovering traces, but very different ones from those which I had expected*'" (Doyle 26; emphasis added). The great detective acknowledges that he allows his methods — careful observations of details that appear incidental and pulling from the mental catalog he has amassed over his many years of personal scholarship — to help him understand the true sequence of events. Holmes is descriptive rather than prescriptive, even though, as he notes, he does generate expectations. The methods of inquiry and close reading uncover information that can be surprising to those around him and himself. The method, and the streams of knowledge, are important, not necessarily the conclusion. Holmes exudes confidence in his ability to read a situation correctly because he hews closely to his process.

In December of 1892, Dr. Joseph Bell, a former teacher of Doyle's and the inspiration for Sherlock Holmes, penned a review in *The Bookman* of Doyle's writing. Bell praised Doyle's medical training, noting that Doyle possessed "[e]yes and ears which can see and hear, memory to record at once and to recall at pleasure the impressions of the senses, and an imagination capable of weaving a theory or piecing together a broken chain, or unravelling a tangled clue" (79–80). Bell explicitly links the great strides in the "recognition and differentiation by bacteriological research of those minute organisms which disseminate cholera and fever, tubercle

and anthrax" with Doyle's engaging descriptions of detective work, declaring that "[t]he importance of the infinitely little is incalculable" (80). Bell argues that Doyle's literary achievement is largely due to his ability to make the reader believe that they, too, could behave like a detective, that they could easily adopt Holmes' ability to see and read the world "correctly," and that the reader would ultimately be demystified regarding the practice. While Bell suggests that people may conclude that this kind of embodied close reading is no longer thrilling (because it is not as magical as Holmes' depiction on the page), I argue this is the exact lesson one should take from the Holmes stories and practice in all walks of life.

This Holmesian lesson may be applied to generative AI, which is the London-esque "cesspool" of the twenty-first century, drawing out the very worst of human behavior and polluting the landscape with every sort of degenerative waste. We have been told that generative AI violates the most important Western academic and literary tradition: that of plagiarism. We are told that generative AI gets information wrong all the time, and that it is biased and bigoted. None of this is surprising, as generative AI is not separate and apart from humans — generative AI is the most debased human of all, picking up on the worst habits of ourselves. Generative AI brings the worst of us into stark focus because it was born out of the antithesis of human care and collaboration. According to Ian Goodfellow et al., generative AI is "[...] analogous to a team of counterfeiters, trying to produce fake currency and use it without detection, while the discriminative model is analogous to the police, trying to detect the counterfeit currency [...]l the counterfeits are indistinguishable from the genuine articles" (1). Indeed, Bender et al. give us the term "stochastic parrot" to describe the violent use of unqualified, contextualized, or analyzed language (617).

A critical inquiry into the genesis and deployment of generative AI opens several lines for discussion surrounding labor issues. For example, generative AI is developed using data sets, and yet it is difficult to find out how those data sets are created. We must ask more questions about how people ethically gather information, and how we ethically share it with others. As my research suggests, when we do not behave ethically, our output is affected in obvious and (most insidiously) obscured ways. Ultimately, it seems like generative AI developers are creating problems to solve for financial gain. Interrogating AI gives us an opportunity to interrogate the writer-laborer's position. Everything gets polluted — we create more noise than signal (that is, useful content). However, I am bound to continue questioning: does playing detective clear things up or only give cover to bad behavior, if the processes never change?

I perceive the "virtues" of ChatGPT and similar AI-generative tools through a lens informed by Bennett's theory of vibrant matter, and assembly theory applications in spaces like education and literature, to deconstruct how knowledge is created and shared. The product generative AI creates is far less important than the process by which it creates that product. Let me now take up generative AI in the same manner as we took up the steam-powered printing press. Ragani Sudan offers a powerful model for this inquiry in her work *The Alchemy of Empire*, where she interrogates the role of Indian technology in relation to British colonialism. Sudan argues that "until quite recently, the disavowal of Indian techne was largely a result of an ideological necessity to maintain imperial dominion [...] [y]et mud continues to be deeply imbricated in more modern forms of imperial dominion" (15). In a note, Sudan explains further her meaning of "modern forms of imperial dominion" as "the complicated and transnational position that wireless discourse occupies" (166). She notes that a critical element in wireless exchange technology, ore columbite-tantaline (coltan), "was primarily mined from the mud of

the Democratic Republic of Congo," though countries like the United States found other sources when word of human rights abuses against children came to light (Sudan 167). Thus, "mud sublimates into the very sophisticated discourse of wireless technology" (Sudan 167), and I would argue that mud, in this case, also represents the ethical muddying of imperial dominion — the United States, a large consumer of this coltan, did not halt wireless technology production when the human rights abuses were uncovered. Rather, they simply moved on to plunder another country's resources. In this way, AI-generated texts may illuminate negative aspects of some types of scholarly and literary practices such as colonialism and theft as it scrapes the internet, fails to cite sources, commits labor and human rights abuses, and creates environmental pollution. Pollution on top of pollution. Put simply, AI pollutes.

First, let us consider generative AI as an assemblage of raw materials: we must imagine and source how generative AI is formed, what raw materials come together to create generative AI. We know computers and databases use rare, mined minerals, for example. In the case of Open AI, they committed human rights abuses with their use of Kenyan workers employed to refine the program (as detailed in Billy Perrigo's January 2023 article for *Time* titled, "OpenAI Used Kenyan Workers on Less Than $2 Per Hour to Make ChatGPT Less Toxic"). Experts warn that increased adoption of and dependence on AI has serious environmental consequences: for example, MIT has reported that the cloud (data storage and processing in remote servers) now has a larger carbon footprint than the entire airline industry, and a single data center might consume an amount of electricity equivalent to 50,000 homes" (Marr). Generative AI must be trained with increasingly larger and larger datasets, and Marr reports that, according to *MIT Technology Review,* "training just one AI model can emit more than 626,00 pounds of carbon

dioxide equivalent – which is nearly five times the lifetime emissions of an average American car." That is calculable pollution that impacts the growing effects of climate change.

Next, generative AI represents a polluted assemblage of knowledge: that is, generative AI tools mimic knowledge acquisition and deployment by gathering information from a variety of sources and cobbling it together into a collage of "new material." One knows there are traces of attributable scholarship, but those traces are hidden under layers of plagiarism and paraphrasing. This act of "standing on the shoulders of giants without naming them" recalls the politics of citation in general, where minoritized or marginalized authors are often left out of current discourse in favor of traditionally cited, privileged scholars. This omission has the effect of introducing bleach into a thriving ecosystem: the scholarly discipline is polluted by their absence, and given the role of scholarly publishing, those uncited authors may not be employed scholars or professional writers for long.

Generative AI further pollutes how we think and how we think of ourselves. As a perpetrator of mythology, generative AI tools also force scholars to reckon with the accumulative and derivative nature of scholarship, which believers of the "lone genius" myth (and its companion, "original thought"), loathe doing. That reckoning, I argue, is invaluable, as we might grapple with perceiving our scholarship as part of a stream rather than believing it must stand alone when it simply cannot.

Embedded biases are also of significant concern. Bender et al. write that the human need to assign meaning to the AI output leads to "encountering derogatory language and experiencing discrimination at the hands of others who reproduce racist, sexist, ableist, extremist or other harmful ideologies reinforced through interactions with synthetic language" (611). Microsoft had to deactivate its chatbot, Tay.ai, after Twitter users easily elicited racist and anti-Semitic

responses (Kraft). AI algorithms routinely misinterpret Black skin and features, while AI robots, trained just as Bender et. al. explain, label images of people of color as “janitor” or “criminal” (Raikes).

Generative AI also seems to pollute our very ability to think. Celeste Kidd and Abeba Birhane make aggressive and concerning claims about the interpretation of generative AI’s superhuman (or even just human) capabilities and how that interpretation affects the spread of misinformation. Titled “How AI Can Distort Human Beliefs,” Kidd and Birhane argue, for example, generative AI’s writing is declarative with no caveats, suggesting a level of certainty that is easily interpreted and unwarranted (222). They also warn that the depth of integration of AI into daily life (in chatbots and search engines) will necessarily increase people’s exposure to these often biased and flawed responses, inuring people to a healthy skepticism about the output. The authors point to research regarding the difficulty in changing one’s beliefs, related to one’s faith in the source reporting the (debatable) information (Kidd and Birhane 1223).

Like Holmes, we likely rely on files, clippings, books, libraries, our social position, our social-political-financial affordances, and more to engage with knowledge accumulation and distribution. In this way, Holmes is the embodiment of AI-generative tools, as he devotes himself to knowledge accumulation. In *A Study in Scarlet,* Holmes explains that brains are like empty attic spaces: “‘It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it, there comes a time when for every addition of knowledge you forget something that you knew before’” (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* 9). We are constantly taking in information that impacts our scholarly practices, and we might aspire to be like Holmes and keep our brain-attics full of only the most useful material. However, we must guard against quick fixes and assumptions; as Holmes would necessarily warn, “‘Data! data, data, I cannot make

bricks without clay!'" (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches" 618). Generative AI would suggest it makes bricks, but we cannot be certain that the clay is of good enough stock to hold the house.

A thorough mapping of generative AI, like mapping the *Sherlock Holmes* tales and other texts, also guards against the myth of the self-made, lone genius, scholar. Holmes's power of persuasion also seems like magic. In "A Scandal in Bohemia," Watson says, "'My dear Holmes,' said I, 'this is too much. You would certainly have been burned had you lived a few centuries ago'" (Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia" 62). Holmes fusses at Watson in "Crooked Man," saying "'The same may be said, my dear fellow, for the effect of some of these little sketches of yours, which is entirely meretricious, depending as it does upon your retaining in your own hands some factors in the problem which are never imparted to the reader'" (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Crooked Man" 23). Generative AI, too, looks like magic, and we have poor language to describe the work it does, such as "intelligence" where there is no intelligence. Recall the idea of Holmes the detective making things clearer or drawing our eye to the chaos — generative AI has the ability to draw our eyes towards the chaos and filth. Pollution can refer to violations of purity and sanctity, to profane and desecrate; it can also refer to environmental contamination and the introduction of dirt, stains, and waste. Pollution is not a thing that happens outside our control. We create the situation and others perpetuate it and demand that we buy their solutions to clean it up. Perhaps we can argue that Sherlock Holmes does not commit murders in order to give himself problems to solve. He does, however, participate in, literarily, in Imperialist nation-building, which in turn creates at least two (in the examples I have provided) colonialist crimes for him to solve. In the case of generative AI, the creators have directly and indirectly caused the pollutive environment they now lament — the environment they are now asking us to pay them

to remedy, such as encouraging institutions to pay for plagiarism and AI detectors that are known to be unreliable at best.

As our climate is negatively impacted by human interference, more places are susceptible to wildfires, and wildfires are becoming more and more intense and exist for longer durations. One of the many, many impacts of wildfires happen to occur at vineyards, where the grapes exposed to the smoke from wildfires produce an ashy, bitter wine. One of the products of the process of climate change is polluted wine. This event serves as an analogy for what we encounter with generative AI. At first, it seems applicable to invoke the old adage, "Garbage in, garbage out" when describing the flawed writing and scholarship that is produced through generative AI, but I think that is too simplistic. The wine scenario brings together the way disparate actions and matter experiences affect other processes and products. Particularly useful is the idea that wine making is centuries old, built on the non-human-aided process of fermentation. Wildfires, too, are historically a non-human-aided process by which the forest culls and restores itself. In the case of wine in the twenty-first century, humans must reckon with the far-flung consequences of their actions. Put simply, if you enact abuse, do not be surprised when the bitter dregs of your actions wind up in your most treasured creative endeavors, which is what we see in both the Sherlock Holmes stories and the output of generative AI.

I do not believe this is inevitable, or that courses cannot be changed. AI-generated essays may be very useful in helping writers grapple with "discovering traces" in their own work, much in the way Doyle's literature offers a fascinating view inside the Imperial assemblage of the nineteenth-century publishing industry. We must become detectives in our own right, investigating the assemblages into which we are plugged, identifying the matter we are influencing and being influenced by, as far extended from our corporeal selves as possible. To

accomplish this investigative work, we may rely on our classical liberal arts training as a model to use. We know that the writing *process* is key — let us lean into that process as a method of interrogation.

By recognizing the detrimental aspects of the process of generative AI, we might be able to not only point out the productive uses (I think immediately about advancements in accessibility), but also reinforce those practices in the writing community beyond discussions specifically about generative AI: for example, we have an opportunity to reestablish the communal nature of writing as opposed to reifying the myth of the "lone genius" creative. We can see ourselves and others as constantly building knowledge and see attribution via citation as demonstration of critical knowledge building infrastructures. We can use what we have learned from generative AI scraping and wasting to, instead, look for ways that generative AI tools might inspire us to be more supportive and more inclusive to all scholars. Bennett gives the fruitful example of the great North American blackout of 2003: "The electrical grid, by blacking out, lit up quite a lot: the shabby condition of the public-utilities infrastructure, the law-abidingness of New York City residents living in the dark [...] and the element of unpredictability marking assemblages composed of intersecting and resonating elements" (Bennett 36). This "waste" in the form of refuse and disintegration is not an end, but a vibrant point of articulation: assemblage theory also, critically, offers language to describe "failure" in a way that does not suggest stoppage (for there never really is stoppage — matter continues to crash into each other). We can see the failures of generative AI as an opportunity to reassess what our most basic goals are, as a writing scholarly community.

We cannot simply perceive the traces in the stream, however; we must get into the stream as best we can to follow those traces as far as we can. One critical intervention is to take this

project to its logical conclusion, with a dynamic narrative map using Esri StoryMaps (https://arcg.is/0ann4f0). The final part of my project is to create an experience that fulfills the mission set forth by Bennett in *Vibrant Matters*, which is to enable a more aware and empathetic response to a world of human-nonhuman assemblages. Bennett talks about being naïve and having an open-ended comportment (xv) – a posture of radical empathy can be most effectively achieved by putting oneself right there, in the relationships. The digital map that will accompany this dissertation will be made after the first draft of the text-bound mapping is done, after I have described the movement of human and non-human matter that had association with the nineteenth century print industry. Thomas Mantzaris proposes a new taxonomy for understand literary maps: "The fifth category includes literary texts that consider maps as both the foundation and the endpoint of a creative process" (14). This project will be bookended by maps, so this description seems apt.

The Esri StoryMap is not the only map that is associated with the project — in fact, this inquiry began, in part, with a desire to visualize the proximity of printers, inkers, paper mills, and publishers, living and working in certain British cities. However, as Hughes and Lund emphasize the way Victorian readers understood time (especially as it was affected by technology, such as the railway), passively reading about the locations of booksellers, bookbinders, and printers is insufficient in order to fully appreciate the labor involved in the publishing industry. Even the language employed by Hughes and Lund evokes cartographic qualities: "The temporal and spatial growth of a serial, which starts with a single, limited part, then grows through the issue of additional installments, and finally concludes with the appearance of the whole work, parallels the Victorian principles of empire" (110). Some raw material was imported, but even within the United Kingdom, materials had to be transported to produce the product (books, serials) which in

turn had to be transported. That speed (or lack thereof) and the technology that afforded the expansion of the print industry deserve a second look.

With ArcGIS tools, one can measure distances, observe cluster patterns, and look for systems of change that could ultimately become predictive theories. The project I have designed for 2018 SDI and my Research Competency requirement was of a much modest scale: I chose a short date range, a few cities, and a few trade professions. My goals for this project were to demonstrate my ability to use Python scripting to geocode addresses (using a Google API, because I had some issues with permissions for ArcGIS's API) and plot them on a map widget using Jupyter notebook. I learned this part in stages, first learning how to geocode one address right in the script, and then how to turn a CSV file into a DataFrame that could be manipulated. I used the geocoding data gathered from the DataFrames (which was then sent to populate CSV files) to create points and pop-ups on a new map in ArcGIS Pro. Finally, I was able to graphically represent one customer (George Bell, who took over Henry Bohn's shop) and his relationship with stationer/papermaker with whom he worked, Spalding & Hodge, and the printers he used, William Clowes & Sons (the yellow triangle in the middle of London) (Weedon 69). This golden triangle is exactly what I had hoped to find and create, to demonstrate the physical proximity between tradespeople who are engaged in commerce with each other.

My data came primarily from the British Book Trade Index and The Mills Archive. Though these databases are the best available for free online, many entries are missing complete data, and I excluded entries that were incomplete (unless I could verify the information from another source). For example, I was able to confirm the dates when the Barford Mill was active courtesy of a website the reproduces Alan Crocker's "Paper Mills in Headley & Bramshott" that was published in April 2001 in *The Quarterly* 38, *Journal of the British Association of Paper*

Historians (*Paper Mills in Headley & Bramshott | Headley Hampshire UK*). Part of my interest in this data is that it is very hard to come by, at least in my experience. After reading *An Empire of Print: The New York Publishing Trade in the Early American Republic* by Steven Carl Smith, I have become persuaded by his notes that indicate his information about the book trade in Revolution-era New York came directly from archives. My quest to find, for example, digitized images of Chapman & Hall records was fruitless. I am grateful for the details included in Alexis Weedon's *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market 1836-1916*, where I found my one customer/producer relationship.

I chose to limit my collection by time (tradesmen operating at least until 1860 or at most 1880), city (London, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, and Glasgow), and trade (printers, ink makers, stationers/papermakers, type founders, lithographers, and paper mills). I further chose to center my parameters around the construction of London King's Cross station, and emerging railways such as Great Northern Railway, Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, and the West Coast Main Line. Altick, Feather, Erickson, and Hughes and Lund address the role railroads played: beyond the railroad's role in changing travel and impacting the 19th century's conception of time, railroad stations provided an opportunity to sell books (and an opportunity to flout morality through choice of reading material), and trains are spaces where people had leisure time to read. Given how critical the railway system was to both the reading public and the production of the reading material, I wanted to keep railways as critical to my parameters.

On the Frequently Asked Questions page, the developers caution against using the data to draw hard and fast conclusions about the scale of the book trade based on data gathered via BBTI. For this small project, I believed the data had been useful enough, as it demonstrates the potential of a larger project.

In addition to expanding the project and looking for more (and cleaner) data, I also envision using the more artistic functions of ArcGIS to create a narrative around a larger map. I also believe that, if I were able to see more patterns, I would like to use the predictive tools to examine the current sources of raw materials that we use to build current publications, as well as e-books. The first ArcGIS map was cold and cruelly efficient and told me little about the way people were affected by the systems of harm. I realized I had to interrogate the positioning of the explorer. That map was not a waste, though, because I learned how powerful this sort of data visualization could be, and I found my way to both Esri StoryMaps as well as video games with cartographic components, specifically "Sherlock Holmes: The Devil's Daughter" and fan-created maps for "Skyrim."

Scholars like Souvik Mukherjee argue persuasively that video games which employ cartographic aspects more fully immerse players within games that explore colonial conditions. Mukherjee notes that "cartography has always been a key element in the colonial construction of space" (507), and while noting Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's argument that the subaltern cannot articulate itself, Mukherjee presents video games as a space where players can challenge the structures that create marginalized, "voiceless" communities (505). In other words, as the player, I cannot become the subaltern, and the subaltern cannot articulate itself through the game (the subaltern would no longer be subaltern in that case). What I can do, as a player navigating a game that seems to reinforce colonial principles, is to subvert traditional gameplay, to resist those colonizing impulses and modify my gameplay, even if I cannot change the game.
While games may be structured to uphold colonial structures (those which reward the hierarchical, patriarchal, and heteronormative), Toups et al. argue, in "Making Maps Available for Play: Analyzing the Design of Game Cartography Interfaces," that some in-game

cartographies enable players to indicate places or objects of value, enabling players to, potentially, reject prescribed hegemonic values and demonstrate a more diverse value system (20-32). In "Playing the World: Computer Games, Cartography and Spatial Stories," Sybille Lammes argues further that games using high engagement cartography compel the gamer to create the space through the interplay of "mapping and touring" (90) – the gamer is in a constant state of being and becoming, making, remaking, and reviving their territory in response to other contributors.

Maps, too, are statements of value and ethics, and maps often play plot roles in Victorian literature that aid the analyst in pulling back the constructed veils of hegemony and heteronormativity, for example. Sally Bushell's work on maps within late-Victorian works like Treasure Island, where she describes maps as "a kind of manipulative fiction rather than […] neutral, factual representations of the physical world" (164). She argues that if readers embraced this idea, fictional maps (both those in printed form and digital, ludic form) might have "the potential to illuminate this central, deceptive aspect of the map form" (164). The mapping has the potential to disrupt an aerial reading if the analyst embraces it as a "manipulative fiction" which can be treated as a hostile witness.

While literary mapping can serve that purpose, digital cartography, with its capacity for the back-and-forth flow of information (as an assemblage), might be engaged to integrate the reader into the acting, whether they realize it or not. The active engagement between player and game function – coupled with Toups et. al.'s assertion that, in multiplayer games, cartography often incentivizes player-to-player knowledge transfer (20) – can mimic (or at least, represent) the assemblage nature of the human-nonhuman relationships I represent in my map of publishing industry contributors. Bushell goes on to note how maps within Victorian texts challenge notions

of authenticity and highlight the collaborative nature of some types of map-making (625); this authenticity, when coupled with player agency within a game that supports a game cartography interface, provides a site of revealing and useful tension. Lammes identifies the "ludic powers" of players to engage in Imperial behaviors like marking territory, and defining and exploiting borders, as actions of resistance (93). Players may not be subaltern, or play as subaltern characters, but they can reimagine colonial actions and stories, which in turn may affect how they understand their own spaces in a global community, as they enact relationships, create "doings," and bear witness to the relationships vibrating around them, regardless of what the game's original mission is.

The capacity of cartographic gaming, as recognized by Mukherjee, Toups et al., and Lammes, are ripe for use in mapping the relationships identified throughout the nineteenth-century British publishing industry, which are emergent in *The Moonstone*, *Lady Audley's Secret*, and the *Sherlock Holmes* tales I have discussed. As I have covered in previous chapters, the publishing industry was in constant flux, with failures and bankruptcies an anticipated part of life, with materials dependent on British Imperialism and colonization actions, where combustible materials were dangerously harvested in order to power deadly machines that churned out dirty products and rank pollution. Deadly, destabilizing encounters populate the texts. Rather than read about those relationships, readers can become more active participants, experiencing an Esri StoryMap that represents a few aspects from the mapping narratives of chapters four, five, and six of this project.

For example, the *Sherlock Holmes* stories are rich in environmental descriptions. Colin Watson offers this full-throated assessment:

> The London of Holmes commends itself at once and unconditionally. It is quaint enough to make nostalgic appeal. It is exceedingly well-ordered: those telegraphic offices are never closed, no cab is ever otherwise than within instant hail [...] It is a cosy place. It is, for as long as a hawk-eyed man broods in Baker Street, a safe place. It does not exist. It never did. But Doyle managed to build it in the minds of his readers. (Watson 24)

Doyle imbues Holmes with a passion for the cityscape: in "The Red-Headed League," Sherlock Holmes explains, "'It is a hobby of mine to have an exact knowledge of London'" (Doyle, "The Red-Headed League" 199). In many stories, including "The Red-Headed League," Holmes is able to solve the case as a direct result of his intimate understanding of both the streets and alleyways, but also the underground geography of London, including "'the cellar of the City branch of one of the principal London banks'" (Doyle, "The Red-Headed League" 201); and the underground information network, most notably embodied by the Baker Street Irregulars (who first appear in *A Study in Scarlet,* and who are called "half a dozen of the dirtiest and most ragged street Arabs that ever I clapped eyes on" by Watson) (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* 37). Holmes' power comes knowing that "facts" are often not enough; when he exclaims to Watson, "'Data! data! Data! [...] I can't make bricks without clay,'" Holmes routinely proves that his clay is of a mineral rich variety, full of the kind of informal, ground-level knowledge of the waywardness and filth surrounding the denizens of London that elevates his reasoning (Doyle, "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches" 618).

In "A Case of Identity," Holmes proposes that "life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent" (Doyle 248). He goes on to suggest:

> "If we could fly out of that window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on, the strange

> coincidences, the plannings, the cross-purposes, the wonderful chains of events, working through generations, and leading to the most *outré* results, it would make all fiction with its conventionalities and foreseen conclusions most stale and unprofitable." (Doyle, "A Case of Identity" 248)

Holmes understands that simply reading the agony column of *The Times* is insufficient to have the deep understanding of human and non-human behavior necessary to offer conclusions to his clients. Holmes knows his knowledge must be more granular and more personal in order to get his answer, hence his penchant for disguising himself as common laborers, such as a "drunken-looking groom, ill-kempt and side-whiskered, with an inflamed face and disreputable clothes" (Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia" 67) and, a doddering opium smoker in "The Man with the Twisted Lip", and common loafer in "The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet." Holmes may wish to fly above in his fantasy, but what he does, practically, is put himself amongst the most common people to get as close to the truth (as he perceives it) as possible.

Holmes' approach informs my rationale for creating a more dynamic map that is less aerial and more terrestrial. In both game and fan maps, and even from my position as the researcher, the reader/observer is positioned above the action and descriptions of relationships. The reader/observer is told what to see and how actants are related. This chapter ultimately argues that my application of aspects of assemblage theory as a critical mapping tool for explicating the embedded Imperialism in serialized crime fiction is best embodied in the digital world, not in paper-and-ink representation, because the digital world has the potential to collapse the space between the player/user and the relationships meant to be experienced. Indeed, one should not simply make it a habit to observe the trifles in every nook and cranny, but to immerse

oneself in trifles so one perceives the many connections between nodes, elements, humans and nonhumans.

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