ISSN 2517-7850

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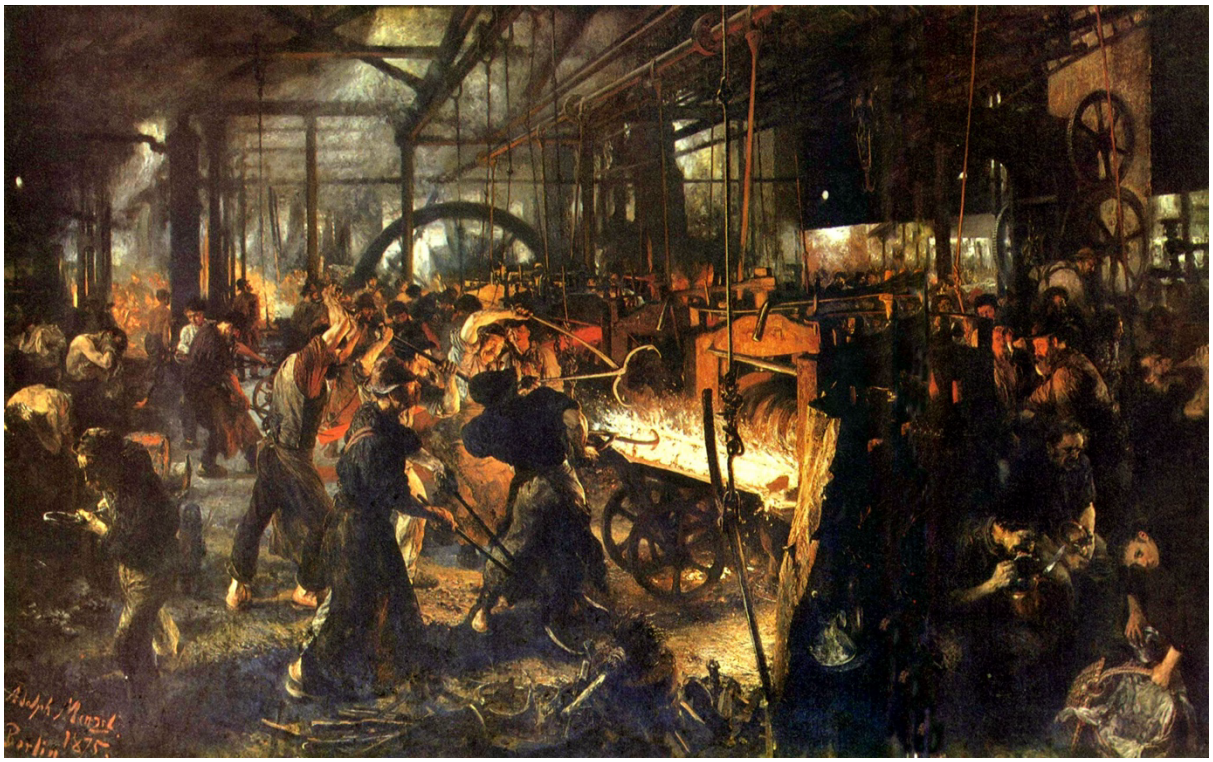
Romance, Revolution and Reform

The Journal of the Southampton Centre for Nineteenth-Century Research



Issue 7: Labour in the Long Nineteenth Century

Editorial Board & Acknowledgements

Editorial Board

We would like to thank the academics who participated in the double-blind peer review process for this issue. We are also grateful to Edinburgh University Press, University of Minnesota Press, and Bloomsbury for their assistance in providing copies of the texts reviewed. We gratefully credit Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie / Andres Kilger for our cover image of Menzel's 'Das Eisenwalwerk' (1861) and the National Gallery of Art, Washington for their image of Magni's *La leggitrice* (1861) used in article 7.5.

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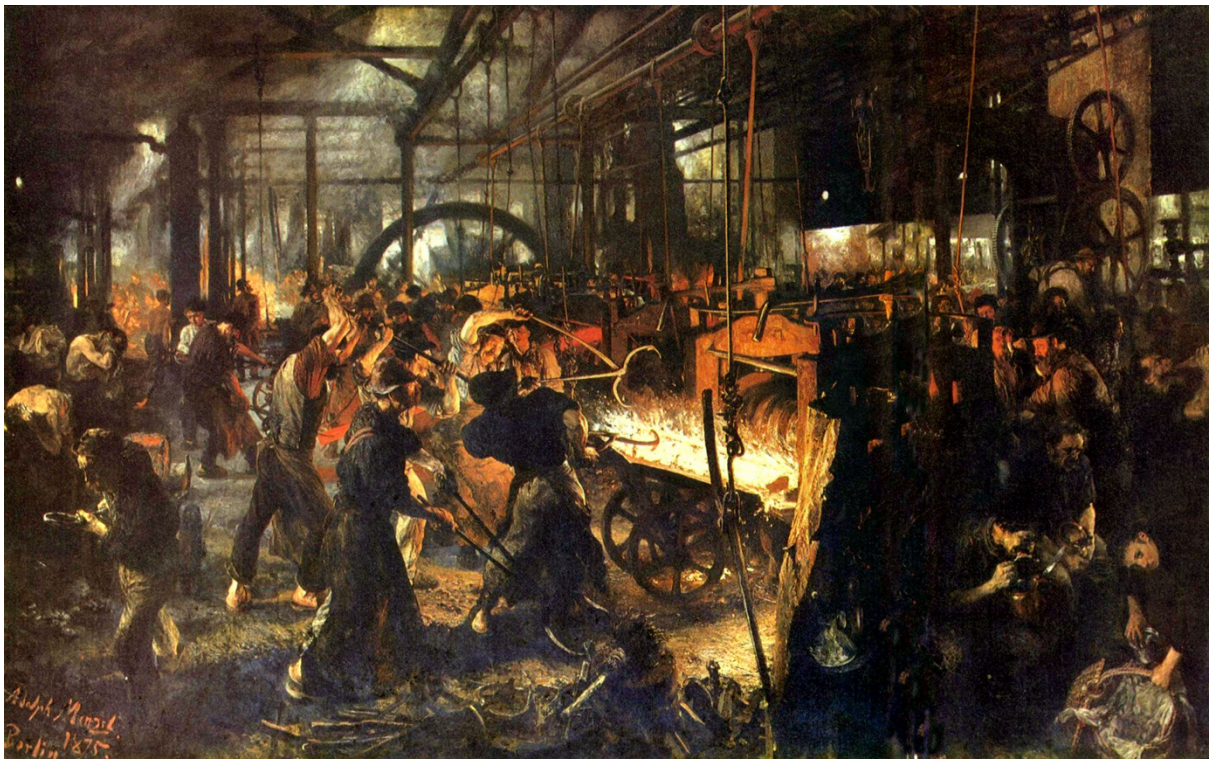
Editorial: Labour in the Long Nineteenth Century

JOHANNA!HARRISON-ORAM
(EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)



U"#$!‰'()!*+,$-., Adolph von Menzel's *Das Eisenwalzwerk* (1872-5) – the cover image for this special issue, literally translated as *iron-roll-work/factory,* or more traditionally, 'Iron Rolling Mill' – upholds traditional understandings of 'labour' in the long nineteenth century. Factory work, industry, and the hard, muscular labour of toiling men: none of these immediately offer a particularly novel angle on the role, or implications, of labour in this period.

However, viewed from other angles, *Das Eisenwalzwerk*'s underlying structures, or grammars, of nineteenth-century labour invite themselves to be unpicked. The process of combustion, trading units of energy between labourer, material, and heat, promises the realisation of future value: in the bottom right of the painting, workers eat, refuelling their bodies within the factory's economy of energy transfer. Of course,

the viewer – or reader of this editorial – also labours through the work of interpretation, and the effort required to imagine the somatic and sensory experience that Menzel constructs. We might also reflect on the physical work of viewing this in a gallery, of the physical and economic labour involved in traveling to the venue, paying for a ticket, and being required to stand for periods of time in front of the work to see it up close. We must also consider the labour of the artist: Malika Maskarinec, for example, compellingly argues for *Das Eisenwalzwerk* as a seemingly 'improbable' allegory for the process of painting itself, noting that painting and steelmaking both require technological prostheses to manipulate chemicals, heat, and material to produce something of novel craftsmanship.[1] The nineteenth century was inherently creative in both the factory and art studio – as well as all the spaces in between – and this process of creation, whether industrial, artistic, or intellectually imaginative, thus invites a broad conceptual approach to the labour(s) inherent therein.

Aside from its pedagogical purpose, my choice of image for 'Labour in the Long Nineteenth Century' underlines that to visualise labour is to only ever capture a fleeting moment of exchange, one which both belongs to a very specific moment – here, a system of shift work, a fleeting moment of bodies in motion, interacting with factory mechanisms as industrial prostheses of capitalist activity – but which also partakes in the nineteenth century's systems of value transfer. To use Timothy Morton's term, the *hyperobjectivity* of nineteenth-century labour points us towards its organisational role in global, and conceptual, systems of social organisation in this increasingly connected period.[2] The work of human minds and muscles – in the telegraph cage, the turnip field, the factory, the public square, the banking system, the nursery, the kitchen, in government, in schools, in the laboratory, at the writing desk, in workhouses, hospitals, and on the streets – contributes towards a porous whole, a future dependent on the

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labours of a nineteenth-century 'now' that may benefit a speculative, and speculated, 'tomorrow'.[3]

And now that we have arrived at one of the 'tomorrows' imagined by Menzel's factory workers, we find that labour is still, of course, at the forefront of some of the greatest anxieties of our age. In a hyper-connected world, is labour still 'labour' if it does not benefit another – and is it even possible to undertake labour if it only benefits ourselves? Must there be some kind of sacrifice, an abnegation of the self, in order that the products and processes of labour might be imbued with moral value? Must we still 'earn' rest as a reward for 'working hard'? And what does it mean to undertake labour of any kind in an era of climate crisis, when its systems of consumption are underpinning the most urgent of ecological and social breakdowns? As Cal Sutherland notes in the first article of this issue, 'Humans created global warming in the sphere of labour, and will equally halt or undo it in that sphere': perhaps, then, to theorise upon labour is fundamentally a practice of ecological speculation, one which both upholds and problematises the 'tomorrow' underwritten by the labours of today.

In inviting papers on the theme of 'labour', this issue has actively encouraged re-definitions of how, and where, we might locate labour practices: this is part of a general movement, particularly in ecocritical and postcolonial fields, to try and claim space for those who have paid for our 'today' with their specific forms of enforced labour.[4] Cara New Daggett argues that the waste products of labour are generated 'at the intersection of race, gender, class, virtue, pollution, and ecological violence': and whilst this was not actively given as a provocation in this Issue's Call for Submissions, it is telling that all six of the articles interrogate many of these aspects in new and creative

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ways, revealing an broad interdisciplinary sensitivity to the winning and losing groups within formal and informal labour economies.[5]

In our first article, Cal Sutherland argues for a new model of considering the relationship between land, labour, and property in Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes,* arguing that interpretations of the *Guide* using this relational model stem from Wordsworth's grounding within seventeenth-century philosophy: Sutherland draws upon Wordsworth's Lockean and English republican inheritances to trace Wordsworth's arbitration of labour and property accumulation, arguing that 'specific property forms, in this understanding of the *Guide,* constrain one to virtuous or unvirtuous relations with the land'. As Sutherland compellingly demonstrates, Wordsworth's conceptualisation of the relationship between property, labour, and nature resonates with contemporary ecological debates, particularly those pertaining to the politics of rewilding and the accumulative acquisition of rural property via private investment firms.

We then turn to Calyx Palmer's research, which interrogates the impact of gender on the experience of enslaved women in Saint-Domingue with a particular emphasis on 'sexualisation and sexual violence in depth, both crucial components of the lives of women of colour'. Palmer interrogates the 'archival silence[s]' surrounding the lived experiences of enslaved women to consider the impact of childbearing and childcare on their ability to achieve manumission, offering compelling examples of how their reproductive capacities both upheld and challenged the power dynamics that allowed slavery to proliferate in the French Caribbean. Palmer extends Gaspar and Hine's framework of the 'double burden' to argue that, in fact, their burdens were 'multifold, as they were not only oppressed in a variety of gendered ways … but were granted fewer ways in which they could work themselves towards manumission and freedom'.

Moving into the mid-nineteenth century, Megan McLennan's article extends this consideration of how bodies mediate power in an imperial context, this time focusing on a particular figure: that of a bricklayer, whose story Henry Mayhew tells in his

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landmark *London Labour and the London Poor,* published between the 1840s and 1860s. The bricklayer finds that he is given more money by London's 'middle-class purses' if he pretends to be a shipwrecked mariner, an identity which, as McLennan argues, offers his middle-class donors 'greater economic and social value than a bricklayer' as it is 'imbued with colonial identification'. Thus, McLennan exposes the affective politics of street philanthropy in Mayhew's work, revealing the internalisation of imperial discourses in even the most chance interactions between London's poor and their more affluent passers-by.

In our fourth article, Rosemary Archer also explores a particular kind of remunerative performance by applying Arlie Russell Hochschild's twentieth-century theory of 'emotional labour' to Margaret Harkness' novellas *Connie* (1893-94) and *Roses and Crucifix* (1891-92), as well as her journalism. Archer argues that both Harkness' fictionalised and non-fictionalised women must 'display appropriate feeling-states […] to generate a positive feeling-state' in others, and that this kind of affective exchange holds value in an increasingly professionalised end-century labour economy, consequently creating what Macdonald and Sirianni would later term the 'emotional proletariat'. Archer considers Harkness' arbitration of these ideas through her literature and journalism to expose the gendering of affective labour towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Garth Wenman-James then brings us to the very end of the long nineteenth century, stretching the periodisation of the journal ever so slightly with his study of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's final novel *Mary,* written in 1915, but published posthumously in 1916. He positions *Mary* as 'a post-Poor Law text that dismantles the affective power of the male gaze […] moving away from the strict surveillance the workhouses and the board of guardians represented'. Like Archer, Wenman-James explores the fluid and complex working environments for women in the fin de siècle and turn of the twentieth century: his reading, however, particularly focuses on a facsimile of Pietro Magni's 1861 statue *The Reading Girl,* through which – as Wenman-James notes – Braddon navigates questions of labour, homelessness, gender, sex work, and slumming. In doing so, Wenman-James argues for women's philanthropic labour, and the homosocial spaces

this creates, as a mode of literary emancipation in the later stages of the long nineteenth century.

We round off this issue with John D. Attridge's novel comparative study of Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905) and Arnold Bennett's *The Card* (1911). Attridge argues that this combination of texts provides a lens for navigating debates surrounding poverty and wealth in the UK and US, both in legislature and social practice, and 'how changing representations of labour at the turn of the twentieth century functioned as imaginative reactions against the moralistic lessons of the popular Victorian social/social protest novel'. Attridge points towards economic and social principles at work in both countries that generated texts ready to re-navigate these pressing social questions for a new century, ultimately identifying Bennett as an author more prepared than Wharton to 'discard the prejudices around work and poverty that were pervasive through the long nineteenth century'.

All six authors in this issue have shown a creativity in both the scholarship of labour and the labour of scholarship, implementing diverse and convincing methodologies in pursuit of re-approaching the nineteenth century using labour as a unifying lens. In this way, labour is both practice and praxis. It is found in the imaginative leap of original research, of taking that germ of an idea and (re)fashioning it via the forms and etiquettes of academic convention, perhaps in the process refashioning those conventions themselves: the editorial work within the Journal's community: and the labour of you, the reader, as you situate this new research within your own field and expertise. It is my hope that this Issue undertakes some of that labour for you, and sparks inspiration for your own labours: may they be as rewarding as possible as we head into 2025.

RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

‘A Perfect Republic’: Labour, Landscape, and Property in Wordsworth’s Guide to the Lakes

CAL SUTHERLAND

> And we shall honor our Mother the earth, by laboring her in righteousnesse, and leaving her free from bondage and oppression.
>
> —Gerrard Winstanley, Letter to Lord Fairfax

I$! /&(! 2018! overview of the history of Romantic ecological literary criticism, Jeremy Davies distinguishes between two potential paths which that flourishing sub-field could have taken between the 1970s and today. One, which would have taken the work of John Barrell and Raymond Williams as its foundation, did not come to pass; indeed, it ‘would have been very different to the one that we now know,’ concerned with '[q]uestions of labour, consumption, landownership, and class'.[1] The one which did come to pass took as its foundation the early 1990s work of Jonathan Bate, Karl Kroeber, and James McKusick, itself inspired in large part by Kroeber’s groundbreaking and influential study of Wordsworth’s ‘ecological holiness’ of 1973.[2] In place of Barrell and

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Williams's concern for the economy and politics of landscape, the most prominent thread of Romantic ecocriticism between then and today has concerned itself with, in the words of Scott Hess, 'philosophical issues and celebrated universalized ideals of ecological dwelling, holism, and consciousness.'[3] One of the classic test cases for this thread has been the work of William Wordsworth, who has become a kind of Romantic ecologist *par excellence*. In what follows, I make the argument for the relevance of cultural materialist concerns over land politics and economics to an ecocritical understanding of Wordsworth, particularly as these concerns meet in the twin figures of labour and property: I hope to show here that, despite their elision from so much ecocritical scholarship, these concepts are central to Wordsworth's thought, and central to any consideration of the climate crisis as it stands today.

I will address Wordsworth's position throughout this article, but I will begin by elaborating on ecocriticism's problematic elision of labour and property. This has largely taken place through the adoption and spread of a set of ideal concepts, beginning with a 'paradigm' that 'pervades early Romantic ecology in particular,' the 1970s 'deep ecology' of Arne Naess and others.[4] The legacy of Jonathan Bate's concern with 'dwelling' and 'rootedness,'[5] for instance, can be seen in a more or less diffuse form in Kate Rigby's 'Romantic resacralization of nature,' in Dewey Hall's flat dismissal of political concerns in favour of a purified tradition of 'Romantic naturalists,' through to Anne-Lise François's 'nonemphatic revelation' in her groundbreaking *Open Secrets* (2008).[6] These keywords do represent, as Hess suggests, 'ideals', but a compelling alternative representation – traceable through this legacy – is that of *possibilities.* It is in precisely this that the value of Romantic ecocriticism lies – its search, in Anahid

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Nersessian's words, 'for alternative ways of engaging with the material world.'[7] For François, these alternative engagements – found in textual moments of seemingly 'passiv[e] and inconsequen[t]' action – must be divorced from 'the capitalist investment in value and work and the Enlightenment allegiance to rationalism and unbounded progress,' or in short, from instrumental reason.[8]

The value of this thread of Romantic ecocriticism cannot be overstated. If the seemingly inexorable 'progress of this storm,' to borrow Andreas Malm's term, can indeed be stopped, a reparative relationship with nature will indeed require a movement beyond instrumental reason, and I am convinced that Romanticism can provide a blueprint for this.[9] But the search for alternative relations necessitates a turn towards moments of 'grace, understood both as a simplicity or slightness of formal means and as *a freedom from work*.'[10] This is entirely understandable. The concept of labour is a touchstone of instrumental (or for Bate, 'utilitarian') reason; whether treated within a capitalist or an anti-capitalist framework, any focus on labour can only repeat Enlightenment discourses of progress and rationality. In reading the Romantics, then, ecocritics have tended to privilege moments of 'aesthetic experience,' often in texts read as 'apologia for the contemplative life,' and this has imposed some characteristic limits upon these readings.[11] These are exemplified by Jonathan Bate's theoretical stance in *Romantic Ecology*. His turn to reading 'with the grain'[12] is figured, in his highly polemical introduction, as a retort to the 'crude old model of Left and Right' underlying the New Historical theories he derided as 'beginning to look redundant as Marxist-Leninism collapses in Eastern Europe.'[13] Those I have classed as Batesian or 'idealist' ecocritics, then, in distancing themselves from the concept of labour and in adopting broadly reparative reading practices, have tended to elide historical change

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altogether.[14] Even where this work is explicitly anti-capitalist, as is the case with François, their 'shared presupposition,'

> too deep!rooted to be articulated fully, is that human attitudes and sensibilities are the fundamental drivers of environmental change, and that the reverential spirit of true ecology can manifest itself – as it did in the Romantics and must do again today – in relative independence from the historical circumstances in which texts are produced.[15]

This notion has received powerful blows in recent years, on two fronts: nearer the end of this section I will follow Andreas Malm in questioning the value of this turn away from labour itself, but first I would like to address the tendency, in this Batesian strain of ecological criticism, to treat non-instrumental (contemplative, aesthetic, passive) action as inherently independent of historical circumstances. Scott Hess's 2012 monograph, *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship,* powerfully exemplifies this line of critique. Hess works to 'call into question the ways in which [Wordsworth's] writing has been invoked as an ecological ideal in recent years,' examining the particular construction of nature to be found in the writing of William Wordsworth and returning it to its historical context in Wordsworth's 'specific social position.'[16] This construction, which Hess reads as emerging from broader trends among the early nineteenth-century middle-class, is

> identified with individual consciousness and identity, as opposed to social or communal life; with aesthetic leisure and spirituality, separated from everyday work, subsistence, and economic activity; and with 'disinterested' aesthetic contemplation and the forms of high culture, as opposed to more social, participative, and sensually immersed forms of culture and relationship.[17]

'Environmental criticism of the Batesian variety,' Hess continues,

> in reclaiming Wordsworth as a universalized 'poet of nature,' unfortunately also reclaims many of these social and cultural assumptions under the contemporary

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> sign of ecology, often without self-awareness. Such criticism tends to associate 'nature' with silence, solitude, high-aesthetic activity, and contemplation, as opposed to (for instance) popular culture, productive labor, sports and games, and sociability.[18]

For Hess, 'Wordsworth's own construction of "nature" was primarily cultural and aesthetic, not ecological'[19] – and, even more importantly, was dependent on a class position that permitted a non-laborious[20] relation to nature.[21] The elision of the historical relations underlying Romantic moments of aesthetic engagement with nature lead these ecological readings of Wordsworth to read *into*, rather than read, his work, imposing contemporary ecological thought on a historically distinct text.[22] This is forcefully illustrated by Hess's reading of Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes*, a core text in Bate's *Romantic Ecology*. The *Guide* stands for Hess not as a lesson in how to dwell in a landscape or locality, but as a sustained aestheticisation of the Lake District, textualising it as a middle-class space of contemplation and visual observation, a space removed from, and exclusive of, the 'social, participative, and sensually engaged ethos of laboring-class culture.'[23] When Wordsworth reads the repeated visits by 'persons of pure taste' to the Lakes as testifying to their 'deem[ing] the district a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and

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a heart to enjoy,' the visual metaphor should be taken as telling: this is no ecological socialism, but a middle-class 'museumification' of an agricultural region.[24]

Hess's argument ultimately represents, therefore, a watershed moment in Wordsworthian ecocriticism. Its critique of Batesian ecocriticism can, however, be expanded. The refusal to historicise non-laborious action does weaken Romantic ecocriticism's claim to locate in Wordsworth and others non-instrumental ways to engage with nature, but the goal of identifying such engagements itself remains both sound and useful to those looking to construct an ecologically-oriented society. The turn away from labour altogether, though, seems to limit the scope of these texts to 'the day after the revolution:'[25] for in the Romantic era – which was also the era of the 'shorter industrial revolution'[26] and of the height of Parliamentary enclosure – just as in the grip of our present climate crisis, humans relate to nature in a climatologically significant way only 'inside a sphere of human praxis that could be summed up in one word as labour.'[27] 'In a warming world,' Malm writes elsewhere,

> there is good reason to privilege labour as the pivot of material flows. The rise and rise of large-scale fossil fuel combustion has not occurred in the sphere of play, sex, sleep, leisure, philosophical contemplation or aesthetic appreciation but precisely, and evidently, in that of labour.[28]

Humans created global warming in the sphere of labour, and will equally halt or undo it in that sphere, whether as a change of existing practice or through the introduction of new kinds of labour on the land, such as rewilding. As such, if 'attitudes or sensibilities' are the 'drivers of environmental change,' it is only as they emerge from historical property relations. In Malm's concise phrasing, 'social property relations form

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the central axis along which humans relate to the rest of nature through relations to one another,'[29] and so an ecocriticism which can inform a comprehensive historical understanding of the climate crisis – and of what we must do to halt or slow it – must take account of the historical property relations which compel and drive the destruction of natural ecosystems.

In light of Hess's and Malm's critiques, I would suggest that if one believes in the value of Wordsworth's potential contribution to contemporary ecological thought, then one will have to seek that value somewhere other than Wordsworth's 'ecological' discourse, which is usually identified with non-laborious action and which is primarily subsumed, as Hess shows, into broader aesthetic discourses which arose from specific property relations.[30] Wordsworth was, however, a powerful and prescient political and economic thinker, whose discussions of human self-organisation often took place within the context of land, landscapes, and nature.[31] Rather than focusing on nature, locality, or 'dwelling,' I intend to draw on the spirit of Barrell and Williams to suggest that Wordsworth was actively concerned with questions of agricultural economics and industrialism, particularly as they relate to *property.* The *Guide to the Lakes* is, as I will show here, a potent example of Wordsworth's land politics and economics, immersed in the language and ideas of his political forebears.

I intend to trace three different political discourses which coexist within the *Guide* – Lockean, Burkean, and Republican – which address the problematic relationship between nature and its enclosure as property through the concept of labour (a different aspect of the role it plays in translating capitalist property relations into a climate crisis).

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I will first introduce labour as the hinge concept through which Locke explains the origins of private property, the fact of labour having been undertaken representing a claim to ownership. I will then go on to examine how Wordsworth's focus on labour shifts, in a more Burkean discourse, from an understanding of labour as a singular, undivided concept, the presence of which can justify property, to labour as a *process* which can be qualitatively judged, and which thus has the capacity to justify or condemn the specific types of property associated with specific laborious processes. I will conclude by introducing a third discourse, that of seventeenth-century Republicanism: a political language which emphasised active civic participation in place of a monarchy, but only amongst those freed from dependence and its attendant political corruptions through the ownership of property in land. This discourse will provide an overarching frame within which Wordsworth's approach to property can be understood.

One consequence of this focus is that ecology *strictu sensu* will retreat into the background for much of the reading that is to follow. Romantic ecocriticism's focus on contemplative or aesthetic engagements with nature has led to readings which look remarkably green: they close in on representations of the natural world, which, for all that they are mediated by aesthetic discourses (the picturesque), appear fresh, and at hand. My contention, however, is that a reading of the mediating social relations that seem rather to separate society from nature offers us a more acute look at how we got into this situation, and at what kind of societal changes might offer us a way out.[32]

Land, Labour, and Property, from Locke to Wordsworth

To begin teasing out Wordsworth's considerations of property, I will start with Section Second of the *Guide*, 'Aspect of the Country, as Affected by its Inhabitants.' This section, as the title suggests, is the most overt consideration of economics and property relations in the text: although the substance of Wordsworth's depiction of the material history of the Lakes has been strongly critiqued,[33] what I am concerned with is rather the *manner* in which Wordsworth connects the changes humans have made to the landscape of the Lake District to his history of the different property forms which have existed in the region.

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This connection closely echoes John Locke's movements in the fifth chapter of his 1690 *Second Treatise on Government*, 'On Property,' which attempts to reformulate the very foundation of property ownership. Duncan Wu notes that Wordsworth 'was examined on Locke at St John's College, Cambridge, in June 1789 [...]. In 1827 he described the Essay as the 'best of Locke's works [...] in which he attempts the least.'[34] The latter comment suggests some familiarity with other of Locke's writings; whether or not this includes the Treatise is unknown, but the importance of Locke's work to the post–Glorious Revolution version of capitalism hegemonic by Wordsworth's adulthood suggests that he would have been familiar with the basic concepts: Locke's advocacy of the Great Recoinage 'paved the way for the Financial Revolution,'[35] and so underpinned the development of the national debt and of paper money, important political concepts throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, as well as the expansion of British imperialism.[36]

Locke wrote to counter the idea, unpalatable after the English and Williamite Revolutions, that 'the holding of private property was [...] made possible by, and conditional on, the property-holder's subjection to the king;'[37] in thus writing to circumvent a reliance on monarchy, he begins from the position that land was given by God to man in common. The fifth chapter of the *Treatise*, then, works to justify the enclosure of common land as property:

> [...] 'tis very clear, that God, as King *David* says, *Psal*. CXV. xvj. *has given the Earth to the Children of Men*, given it to Mankind in common. But this being supposed,

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> it seems to some a very great difficulty, how any one should ever come to have a *Property* in any thing [...].[38]

Locke's well-known and incredibly influential answer to this is that one's ability to make land productive through *labour* legitimises property ownership. This is to say: the *fact* that labour has been applied to the land, largely regardless of the kind of labour in question, legitimates its enclosure as property. In his classic formulation: 'Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with it, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*'[39] (27.4–7). The relationship between property and land that this produces can be expressed visually as follows:

> *Nature — [Labour] → Property*

where *labour* becomes a kind of hinge between common land and its enclosure. This figure is necessarily reductive, and may seem slightly over-complicated – if we follow Locke's words there, it would be more simply expressed as *Nature + Labour = Property*. But by using a right-facing arrow which moves from nature to property, expressing enclosure, and which, to reach property, needs to pass through the concept of labour, I express a rhetorical relationship between these concepts, in which labour does not only take on an *explanatory* role for the existence of property, as Locke would explicitly put it, but also a *justificatory* role. In short, my figure emphasises labour as a hinge concept in both Locke's material sense, and in his rhetorical sense. I will return to this figure near the end of the article, but I hope it will serve for now to represent the movement from Locke's explanation of property to the rhetorical reading which is to follow.

This is, indeed, an oft-elided movement in readings of the Treatise – a movement from the *genetic* account of individual plots of land (smallholdings) to the *justification* of forms of property accumulation, in particular gentlemen's estates.[40] Given that the enclosure of a smallholding relies upon the personal application of labour, Irvine notes that '[t]he amount of property that can be claimed through labor on this basis is clearly

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quite limited, for purely practical reasons.'[41] 'But to this practical limitation,' Irvine continues,

> Locke adds two moral provisos. The first proviso is implicit in Locke's denial that one man's appropriation of part of the world necessarily impoverishes everyone else, 'at least where there is enough, and as good left in common for others' (*T*, 27.12–13; this limitation is repeated at paragraph 33). This implies that where appropriation does not leave 'enough and as good' for others, that appropriation is not legitimate. The second proviso stipulates that the property thus claimed is only legitimate so long as it is not then wasted: it must be used (a crop eaten or bartered, land worked) by the owner.[42]

This, of course, raises a problem for the justification of forms of property accumulation. Locke's work-around, Irvine argues, is a kind of rhetorical sleight of hand regarding the scope of the term 'labour,' which, in the original formulation quoted above, seems to be necessarily limited to manual labour. In Locke's discourse, the introduction of money (and the broader money economy) allows the fruits of any given property to be traded to others (the enclosure thus no longer impoverishing anyone) and for these fruits to be exchanged for something non-perishable (negating waste).[43] In this sense,

> the work of the merchant too is 'labor;' so is the work of the landowner, for that matter, insofar as he too is engaged in commerce. Thus the effect of understanding Locke's account of labor in terms of its fulfillment of a teleology of natural resources is to strip specifically manual labor of the unique, originating role in the production of value that the early paragraphs of chapter 5 appear to grant it. What differentiates manual labor from other areas of commercial activity is the moral significance ascribed to it by scripture, which provides Locke with his starting point. Locke's rhetorical strategy in his chapter on property, then, is to use 'labor' as a synecdoche for commerce, so that the moral meaning of plowing and reaping can be extended to trading and banking as well.[44]

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The move from labour as *manual* labour, which justifies the ownership of individual plots of land workable by an individual or family, to labour 'as a synecdoche for commerce,' allows Locke to get around the moral provisos which had earlier complicated the justification of property accumulation.

This detour through Locke demonstrates the centrality of labour to the earlier thinker's justification even of property *accumulation*, but it is also important to note another consequence of Locke's discourse: his general levelling of all labour. Locke's expansion of the concept essentially rids it of any qualitative distinction; the mere existence of labour explains and justifies the enclosure of land as property. This flattening will bear an important role as I turn back to Wordsworth's *Guide*: I will trace through the text the general relationship (*Nature — [Labour] → Property*) identified in Locke, and then Wordsworth's own movement from explanation to justification. I will argue that Wordsworth, in adopting a Burkean discourse of 'natural processes,' rejects Locke's flattening of labour, reintroducing qualitative distinctions which allow him to rhetorically strip property accumulation of its Lockean justification.

'A Disagreeable Speck': Larches, Land, and Labour

Wordsworth seems, when explaining the origins of the various historical property forms he observes in the Lakes – meaning primarily feudal and post-feudal (customary) tenantries, as well as individual hillside smallholdings – to appeal to what I have identified as the Lockean relationship between nature and property, as mediated by labour. This relationship reappears even in discussions of feudal or patriarchal assignment of property – the distribution of this property by the patriarch in question is always justified by labour productivity:

> These sub-tenements were judged sufficient for the support of so many families; and no further division was permitted. These divisions and sub-divisions were convenient at the time for which they were calculated: the land, so parcelled out, was, of necessity more attended to, and the industry greater, when more persons were to be supported by the produce of it.[45]
>
> [...] so, while the valley was thus lying open, enclosures seem to have taken place upon the sides of the mountains, because the land there was not intermixed,

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> and was of little comparative value; and, therefore, small opposition would be made to its being appropriated by those to whose habitations it was contiguous. Hence the singular appearance which the sides of many of these mountains exhibit, intersected, as they are, almost to the summit, with stone walls.[46]
>
> We have thus seen a numerous body of Dalesmen creeping into possession of their home-steads, their little crofts, their mountain-enclosures; and, finally, the whole vale is visibly divided; except, perhaps, here and there some marshy ground, which, till fully drained, would not repay the trouble of enclosing.[47]

Three different property forms and periods are analysed here, and in each, we can see productivity – the application of labour – take on an explanatory role in this account of origins.

The justificatory aspect of Locke's discourse on property is also present in the *Guide*, however, and it reaches its greatest prominence in Section Third, 'Changes, and Rules of Taste for Preventing Their Bad Effects.' The term 'changes' keys us into Wordsworth's project here: throughout Section Third, he considers several alternate property types either traditional to or emergent in the Lakes, and judges whether or not their presence – or their replacement of older forms – can be justified. These property types are smallholdings on the one hand, and on the other hand those which can broadly be considered kinds of property accumulation: consolidations of smallholdings, touristic property, industrial property (or 'vegetable manufactories'), and gentlemen's estates.[48] I hold that Wordsworth's justificatory discourse does repeat the basic schema of Locke's, in which the presence of labour becomes a means of judging the acceptability of a given form of property, but Wordsworth makes some important changes – unflattening Locke's expanded labour – particularly in his discussion of arboricultural estates in the Lakes.

This discussion raises what appears to be a rather sensitive topic for Wordsworth: the introduction of the larch tree to the Lake District. The passage concerning larches departs from the general tone of the *Guide*, growing increasingly splenetic as the pages turn and displaying an odd aggression towards the tree itself, as well as towards its

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advocates. This rant is presented, within the *Guide* and within much commentary upon it, as a purely aesthetic concern: Section Third is suffused with aesthetic concerns and language, and the larch rant is preceded by a passage on the application of picturesque principles to the landscape, in which the presence of white buildings is taken to 'destro[y] the gradations of distance.'[49] There are nods towards less superficial oppositions to the tree's presence – the question of how well larches would actually grow in such conditions – but, in truth, these seem fairly perfunctory when read alongside the venomous diatribe which comprises the majority of the passage, a diatribe which *does* remain aesthetic in scope:

> It must be acknowledged that the larch, till it has outgrown the size of a shrub, shows, when looked at singly, some elegance in form and appearance, especially in spring, decorated, as it then is, by the pink tassels of its blossoms; but, as a tree, it is less than any other pleasing: its branches (for *boughs* it has none) have no variety in the youth of the tree, and little dignity, even when it attains its full growth; *leaves* it cannot be said to have, consequently neither affords shade nor shelter. In spring the larch becomes green long before the native trees; and its green is so peculiar and vivid, that, finding nothing to harmonize with it, wherever it comes forth, a disagreeable speck is produced. In summer, when all other trees are in their pride, it is of a dingy lifeless hue; in autumn of a spiritless unvaried yellow, and in winter it is still more lamentably distinguished from every other deciduous tree of the forest, for they seem only to sleep, but the larch appears absolutely dead.[50]

One can see why Hess would describe this passage as 'based on cultural and aesthetic rather than ecological grounds, with little sense of environmental effects or consequences.'[51] In the full passage, Wordsworth more explicitly positions the larch within specific aesthetic discourses: for Wordsworth, monocultures of larch cannot attain the scale necessary to be sublime, nor the uniformity necessary to compose neat units of picturesque design.[52] On the kind of scale possible in the Lake District, '[t]he

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terminating spike renders it impossible that the several trees, where planted in numbers, should ever blend together so as to form a mass or masses of wood,' those concluding units being drawn from the language of picturesque landscape design.[53] Likewise, its unsuitability for mixed forests is expressed in the passage above as a lack of visual harmony. Larches are thus impossible to position within a picturesque landscape, Wordsworth complains, adopting the kind of aerial and compositional viewpoint that John Barrell associates with the Claudian picturesque.[54] The kind of ownership entailed by this viewpoint is not one of stewardship, nor one concerned at a more than superficial level with the physical interactions between entities that comprise an ecosystem; rather, it is a viewpoint which seeks to organise, to make readable, a landscape which resists that very picturesque organisation.[55] Implicit in this viewpoint, Barrell suggests, is the idea that 'one must control nature in order not to be controlled by it.'[56]

Hess would go further: in Wordsworth's case, he is not just wrestling for control with nature, but with rival tastes.[57] Throughout Section Third, Wordsworth pits his particular version of the picturesque against the more evidently constructed landscapes of the wealthy landowners, and in the larch rant in particular, this picturesque aesthetic appears to be set against aesthetic 'signs of human industry and ownership.'[58] But this rhetorical struggle does not entirely take place on the plane of aesthetics. Nicholas Mason has recently shown that larch plantations, particularly in the Lake District, carried important political and economic valences which can shift a reading of the passage away from the 'unpleasantly intrusive aesthetic effects' of the larch towards the labour involved in this kind of industrial use of the landscape.[59]

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The introduction of the larch tree to Britain in the early eighteenth century had come, by the time of the Napoleonic Wars, to be seen as a response to 'a scarcity of oak timber for the use of the navy.'[60] In the context of this national need,

> [d]riven by a desire to create vast intergenerational wealth and the conviction that they were serving the greater good, a band of leading Cumbrian landowners led by the renowned Whig prelate Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, set about converting the fells of Westmorland into an industrial-scale experiment in commercial forestry,

planting millions of larches across various estates and enclosed waste lands in the name of an ideology of Whig improvement.[61] Larches were a perfectly emblematic 'improvement' crop: encouraged by reports of its successful commercial growth in Italy and Russia,[62] for instance, and by 'flattering promises from the speedy growth of this tree,'[63] improvers like Watson and his 'local acolyte[s]'[64] insisted on planting larches 'in rich soils and sheltered situations' where they were like to grow 'full of sap and of little value,'[65] in defiance of traditional practices and of the constraints of the land. The ideology of improvement, then, was one of mastery over the landscape and over nature through which, like Claudian composition, one could 'control nature in order not to be controlled by it.'

This ideology was not one held by, or indeed for, smallholders: when Watson asserted 'that individual landowners could "do much more towards perfecting the

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agriculture of the kingdom" than any official committee,'[66] he was not referring to landowners in general, but to a particular type of landowner: those who possessed estates, or accumulations of land (often enclosed).[67] 'Like many modern-day frackers, clear-cutters, and strip-miners,' Mason writes, 'Watson firmly believed that the industrial-scale extraction of natural resources could be simultaneously self-enriching and a societal boon.'[68] This scale is one which required a large labour force beyond the resources of the minor landowner or the tenant farmer, as well as newly developed techniques. The need to make these enormous plots of land economically viable as 'vegetable manufactories' thus forced landowners to shift – just as in Locke – from manual labour to white-collar forms, in this case both economic and scientific.

The narrative of improvement, then, was a kind of intellectual georgic: while those who worked the land could be dismissed as unthinking beasts, the oxen drawing the plough,[69] the daily *negotium* of the georgic could be transferred to 'the literate and progressive tenantry,'[70] the 'gentleman farmer,'[71] whose theoretical, managerial, and scientific labour entered into the classic georgic struggle against the 'difficulties and predations' of nature,[72] portrayed as timeless but often raised by the scale at which their agriculture was being practiced. In 'the eighteenth-century tradition of georgic poetry,' according to David Fairer, 'this primal element of recalcitrance – Nature's tendency to pull against human life – provides a resistant energy to drive effort and ingenuity – mental as much as physical,'[73] and this association of 'ingenuity' and progress with a kind of *overcoming* of nature allowed for the lionisation of such scientific agriculturalists as Lord Kaimes, Richard Watson,[74] and Humphry Davy – who

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could write in 1802 that the farmer's 'exertions are profitable and useful to society, in proportion as he is more of a chemical philosopher.'[75] Despite this rhetoric, though, science cannot plant trees, and so the scientific labour of the landowners flowed downwards, changing the manual labour practices carried out on the ground. The larches were thus planted in unsuitable soil,[76] and planted incredibly densely in an attempt both to improve yields and to counter the hillside exposure of the trees, prone to bend their already 'sinuous' trunks,[77] an effort which required owners to clear the land of rocks and undergrowth. In a more explicitly scientific vein, Mason informs us, some owners 'performed gruesome experiments with young larches to see if its naturally sinuous trunks might yield longer and straighter planks if trained to grow horizontally.'[78] These 'gruesome experiments' carried out upon the larches sum up the kind of labour that was being performed under the aegis of Whig improvement, labour which fought against the constraints of nature – constraints understood as a general 'recalcitrance' – in a georgic drama of resistance and progress.

Wordsworth's antipathy to the results of such 'improving' labour are clear. But I believe that there is, in the *Guide*, a more direct critique of this kind of labour itself, primarily through his identification of an opposing form of labour. This is illustrated in a passage a few pages along in which Wordsworth explains the natural process by which trees are planted:

> Seeds are scattered indiscriminately by winds, brought by waters, and dropped by birds. They perish, or produce, according as the soil and situation upon which they fall are suited to them: and under the same dependence, the seedling or the sucker, if not cropped by animals, (which Nature is often careful to prevent by fencing it about with brambles or other prickly shrubs) thrives, and the tree grows, sometimes single, taking its own shape without constraint, but for the

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> most part compelled to conform itself to some law imposed upon it by its neighbours. From low and sheltered places, vegetation travels upward to the more exposed; and the young plants are protected, and to a certain degree fashioned, by those that have preceded them. The continuous mass of foliage which would thus be produced, is broken by rocks, or by glades or open places, where the browzing of animals has prevented the growth of wood. As vegetation ascends, the winds begin also to bear their part in moulding the forms of the trees; but, thus mutually protected, trees, though not of the hardiest kind, are enabled to climb high up on the mountain. Gradually, however, by the quality of the ground, and by increasing exposure, a stop is put to their ascent; the hardy trees only are left: those also, by little and little, give way – and a wild and irregular boundary is established, graceful in its outline, and never contemplated without some feeling, more or less distinct, of the powers of Nature by which it is imposed.[79]

The final sentence of this passage falls neatly in line with the aesthetic discourse identified by Hess; a Hessian reading, as it were, could likely subsume the passage in its entirety to that aesthetic moment, a description of 'the powers of Nature' which culminate in this aesthetically pleasing treeline. Indeed, the passage is introduced as a means to 'justify our condemnation' of the aesthetically poor larch plantations, and it is followed by a lament for the inability of 'artificial planters' to replicate the *effects* of nature.[80] This explicitly aesthetic context sits uneasily, then, alongside the fact that this is one of the few sections of the *Guide to the Lakes* in which Wordsworth approaches a genuinely ecological position: the connection of a spacious, random planting of trees and 'the browzing of animals' reflects, whether intentionally or not, contemporary awareness of the delicate ecosystem supported by a forest's busy, varied undergrowth. To remove this passage from its largely aesthetic context would rob it of any significance except as an uncanny premonition. But this does not mean condemnation. Rather, I believe that an alternate reading can be found in the weight given to *process* in the quoted passage, as it is balanced against the weight given to *result*, a reading in

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which Wordsworth is also concerned with techniques, methods, and processes (natural and laborious) in general and *in and of themselves*.

When we return this passage to its context – both in terms of the larch rant and in terms of the ideology of improvement with which the rant is in dialogue – we see attention paid to precisely the natural constraints that the larch-improvers sought to overcome: the suitability of the soil, mentioned both at the start of the passage and again at the end, as Wordsworth rhetorically moves up the side of the mountain; the production of 'glades or open places' by the inconsistency of seed distribution and the presence of rocks, which may also be connected to the ability of a tree to 'tak[e] its own shape without constraint,' endowed with the space to grow outwards as well as directly upwards; and the natural distribution of trees according to height.

I am not the first to note this focus on natural processes. Nicholas Mason, in identifying in Wordsworth's 'Rules for Taste' 'the language and logic of Burkean conservatism,'[81] draws an important connection to what Burke calls, in a discussion of the development of the British constitution, 'the method of nature:'[82]

> You will observe, that from Magna Charta to the Declaration of Right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties, as an *entailed inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom without any reference to any other more general or prior right. […]
>
> This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know, that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission; without at all excluding a principle of improvement.[83]

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Several elements of this quote from Burke's 1790 *Reflections on the Revolution in France* have gone on to provide the backbone to Katey Castellano's important reading of Burke's, and by extension Wordsworth's, conservative ethos of conservation,[84] his use of the language of land ('entailed inheritance,' 'estate'), and his concern for 'inheritance' leading towards an ethos of 'intergenerational responsibility,'[85] developed by Wordsworth as an 'intergenerational imagination.'[86] It is not this particular attitude or 'imagination,' however, that I wish to highlight in Burke and in the *Guide*. Rather, I see in both a kind of translation in which the 'method of nature' – in Burke a socio-historical process which occurs at a scale beyond individual agency, in the social forces of 'second nature,'[87] and in Wordsworth the processes by which forests are naturally propagated[88] – is blurred into a *laborious* process.

Burke tends to present the appropriate laborious process through which government ought to be undertaken as a matter of 'following nature'[89] – the course he advocated in the previous quote – in her 'models and patterns of approved utility.' This is, as Castellano suggests in an instructive comparison of Burke and Paine on the question of obligation, a politics in praise of *constraint*:

> While Paine disregards an imaginary relation to future generations, Romantic conservatives [such as Burke] understand an imaginary connectedness to both past and future generations as a necessary prerequisite to right action and right relation to the environment.[90]

Castellano emphasises the extension of Paine's concept of liberty, within the *Rights of Man*, from an immediate liberty from despotism to a liberty first from the traditions,

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ideas, and processes of the past, and then from any obligations to future generations. 'The liberal individual comes into being,' Castellano writes, 'through a negative conception of freedom, a freedom from the moral obligations or political principles that might extend from one generation to the next.'[91] In contrast to this, then, Burke's idea of a good laborious process, in terms of government, is one constrained by obligations to future generations and by past ways of doing things in a given place.

It is worth briefly noting that in Burke, this following of constraint often tips over into a *complete* passivity: human labour in the sphere of government is essentially reduced to the mere facilitation of pre-existing natural processes. This is also a conclusion we may reach about ecological labour on reading the following passage from the *Guide*:

> Contrast the liberty that encourages, and the law that limits, this joint work of nature and time, with the disheartening necessities, restrictions, and disadvantages, under which the artificial planter must proceed, even he whom long observation and fine feeling have best qualified for the task. […] It is therefore impossible, under any circumstances, for the artificial planter to rival the beauty of nature.[92]

This may be an instinctively attractive model for an ecological labour, one in which nature is allowed to work freely, but I believe that Wordsworth's critique of improvement is more nuanced. Section Third of the *Guide* is concerned with a landscape in which natural processes, such as the natural propagation of woods, have already been disrupted; they are no longer running the show. Wordsworth emphasises that the larch growers are 'thrusting every other tree out of the way, to make room for their favourite;'[93] he is concerned in his 'Rules of Taste' to address the 'scenes [which] have been injured by what has been taken from them,' and the 'harsh *additions* that have been made.'[94] It is a manmade landscape with which Wordsworth is concerned, and in this sense, his project is not dissimilar to the contemporary project of 'rewilding:' the desired results are certainly different, but in each case, an emphasis is placed on

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the role of laborious processes (Wordsworth's conscientious, if picturesque, planting) in undoing inappropriate or harmful changes to the landscape, correcting the perverted course of the landscape's natural processes. The active intervention of human labour is still necessary.

What this passage (and the *Guide* as a whole) emphasises, then, is another instance of what Bruce Graver identifies in 'Michael' as 'the limitations of georgic values,'[95] or the limitations of the 'learned control of nature, embodied in the unceasing toil' of Michael, Wordsworth's 'ideal georgic shepherd.'[96] In 'Michael,' this limit is found in the adult dissolution of Luke, raised into the georgic labour of his father. In the *Guide*, it is found in the limits Wordsworth rhetorically imposes on the potential of laborious processes which are pitched against nature, which engage in the contrast between innovative labour and a 'recalcitrant' nature found in the georgic narrative of improvement, and which seek to *overcome* the 'necessities, restrictions, and disadvantages' imposed by nature. In place of such a labour Wordsworth does not propose a lapse into passive *otium*, nature being pitched as uncorrupted and self-sustaining;[97] rather, he proposes a different kind of active labour: one which embraces the Burkean form of constraint I have outlined above. As I will argue more fully in the next section, just as a nation's history ought to constrain the labour of its government for Burke, for Wordsworth good laborious processes are constrained *by the particularities of a given landscape*.

Smallholding Labour and Natural Constraints

To demonstrate this, I would like to turn now to Wordsworth's positive depictions of human labour. At this point, the context of the *Guide* as a geographical text – or, to follow the 1822 title, as *A* Description *of the Lakes* – begins to preclude the *direct* depiction of labour; one can work back, however, from the appearances which are described to understand the labourious processes behind them, and one can do this most easily in the depictions of the traditional (according to Wordsworth, at least)

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smallholdings of the region. In turning to these depictions, I hope to solidify my reading of Wordsworth's constrained labour, but I also wish to return this discussion of labour to its original context in the *Guide*'s justificatory discourse: for Wordsworth, distinct types of labour emerge from distinct forms of property, and thus serve as a means to justify – or not – their existence.

The labour associated with smallholdings has, in Wordsworth's description of it, a tendency towards the gradual and the varied. The gradual nature of smallholding labour – slow production, based on requirement and emergent necessity – can be seen in Wordsworth's description of the production of ever-smaller churches through the inner vales, a non-agricultural form of labour, certainly, but still one associated with the smallholding way of life:

> Chapels, daughters of some distant mother church, are first erected in the more open and fertile vales, as those of Bowness and Grasmere, offsets of Kendal: which again, after a period, as the settled population increases, become mother-churches to smaller edifices, planted, at length, in almost every dale throughout the country.[98]

This scattering according to suitability and need is analogous, of course, to the naturally conditioned distribution of seeds we have already observed; further, we can note the familial and botanical language used to describe the relationships between the older and newer edifices. It is thus suggested that the 'smaller edifices, planted, at length, in almost every dale throughout the country,' grow naturally within the constraints of the image of their 'canonized forebears,'[99] the 'mother-churches'.[100] The cottages belonging to the region's smallholdings are also 'scattered over the vallies'[101] according to pre-existing constraints, these being natural: 'the several rocks and hills, which have been described as rising up like islands from the level area of the vale, have regulated the choice of the inhabitants in the situation of their dwellings.'[102] The construction of these cottages, too, follows natural guidance. They are kept low by the wind, are often

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'of the colour of the native rock, out of which they have been built,'[103] and their roofs are made of local slate which, being imperfectly split, allows nature to bed itself in in the form of 'lichens, mosses, ferns, and flowers.'[104] Materials, techniques, processes, and the interaction of the building with the landscape work within natural constraints. Even the white rough-cast that Wordsworth elsewhere in the guide decries as overly bright is allowed to be darkened and naturalised by time, wind, and rain.

While Wordsworth writes less about the agricultural labour of the smallholdings, his focus on common fields, intermixed and divided with existing 'stones, bushes or trees,'[105] produces yet another image of constraint: there is little attempt, in this depiction of smallholding labour, at mastery; where there is – in the enclosure of 'intermixed plots of ground in common field' with 'fences of alders, willows, and other trees,' for instance[106] – the use of existing, local materials, as in the construction of the cottages from 'native rock,' represents labour constrained by locality. Wordsworth's depiction of the other major form of labour carried out upon these smallholdings, however, will return us to the point I wish to make again about the *manner* in which Wordsworth depicts labour and property. The weaving and spinning activities which comprised the region's cottage industry are seen to emerge as a natural corollary of the smallholding as property form:

> The family of each man, whether *estatesman* or farmer, formerly had a twofold support; first, the produce of his lands and flocks; and secondly, the profit drawn from the employment of the women and children, as manufacturers; spinning their own wool in their own houses (work chiefly done in the winter season), and carrying it to market for sale.[107]

This labour emerges naturally from the conjunction of a surplus of wool, proper to the family-run smallholding, with a seasonal constraint on growth and harvesting which opens up the time to deal with said surplus. This movement can be generalised throughout the *Guide to the Lakes*: particular forms of labour, in the positive as well as the negative, are associated with particular forms of property. Just as the accumulation

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of land is associated, in the georgic narrative of rural improvement, with scientific forms of labour which act against the constraints of a 'recalcitrant' nature, Wordsworth himself associates smallholdings with labour which is carried out within or even guided by those same constraints.

Conclusion: Wordsworth and the Seventeenth Century

Throughout this article, I have been following a certain direction of thought, repeatedly expressed through a right-facing arrow: *Nature — [Labour] → Property*. This framework has been traced through different aspects of Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* in the form of both good and bad labour, which does or does not accept and work within the constraints of nature, and which can or cannot explain or justify the property forms to be found historically or contemporaneously in the Lake District. This, I have suggested, is Wordsworth's inheritance from Locke, whether through the *Treatise* or through its vast influence on liberal thought through the eighteenth century.

But this is only one direction in which we can read this general framework, and the direction I have chosen was that most convenient for the sake of exegesis, of pulling out the general relationships that exist within the text. If we look at the framework from another direction – *Property → [Labour] → Nature* – then we begin to draw out another seventeenth century influence visible throughout the *Guide*. It is an influence which has already manifested itself through this article, in fact: in my repeated insistence on the importance of *constraint* to Wordsworth's good labour, I have pointed towards a relevant vocabulary drawn from seventeenth-century Republican discourse. Wordsworth's Republican inheritance was identified as early as Z. S. Fink's 1948 'Wordsworth and the English Republican Tradition,' and Fink's analysis has been developed through David Simpson's *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination*, Tim Fulford's *Landscape, Liberty and Authority*, and Philip Connell's 'Wordsworth's "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty" and the British Revolutionary Past.' Fink's explanation of the general sense of Republicanism – meaning, here, the political thought of John Milton, James Harrington, and Algernon Sydney, among others – remains succinct and accurate:

> Perhaps the most striking single consideration about the whole problem is the fact that all of these men, approaching the matter perhaps from somewhat different angles, share with Wordsworth a common concern for compensating

> for the defects of human nature by the contrivances of government. Human nature being either imperfect or subject to corruption and degeneration, they display an endeavor to contrive the institutions of the state so that "all corrupt means to aspire" will be prevented. This was considered essential, in the interest not only of promoting individual morality, but of preserving the health of the state.[108]

Hence my focus on the term *constraint*. Republicanism is a political idea based around the 'equation of civic virtue with some form of social constraint.'[109] For earlier Republicans in Florence and Venice, in the words of J. G. A. Pocock, 'the highest form of active life was that of the citizen who, having entered the political process in pursuit of his particular good, now found himself joining with others to direct the actions of all in pursuit of the good of all;'[110] the ownership of property was held to constrain one to 'the full austerity of citizenship in the classical sense,'[111] warding off the corruption of self-interest or dependence.

The critics who have read Wordsworth in light of this influence have seen Wordsworth's adoption of it as more or less altered and mediated. Philip Connell, for instance, identifies a Republican vocabulary caught up in the contemporary discourse around the historical meanings of England's seventeenth-century revolutions, which are used to point up the shortcomings of Foxite responses to the Peace of Amiens;[112] for Simpson, Wordsworth adopts the political ideals of the Republicans more literally, but 'not so much in laws (although he does not discredit laws) as in creative habits bred by experience and environment.'[113] I tend to cleave closer to Fink's reading, which sees Wordsworth as a conscious and aware political thinker who draws, at various points in his life, on Republican ideals. In this sense, I would reverse Simpson's formulation, where Wordsworth adopts the idea of social constraint as leading to political virtue, but sees

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that constraint as more varied and environmental. Rather, I see Wordsworth as deeply concerned with *property* as a form of constraint, but which constrains individuals in both political and non-political ways. Turning back to the Lockean framework which I have now reversed – *Property → Labour → Nature* – we may now begin to see in full clarity the broader pattern of constraint evident throughout the *Guide*: specific forms of property constrain their owners to specific kinds of labour, and thus to specific kinds of relationships to the land which comprises that property.

The term which naturally associates itself with this line of thought, particularly within the context of republicanism, is *virtue*: just as property ownership conferred a kind of political virtue (through the independence it facilitated), so specific property forms, in this understanding of the *Guide*, constrain one to virtuous or unvirtuous relations with the land. This language of virtue provides a neat takeaway from Wordsworth's text, but it also brings it into a kind of dialogue – limited, certainly, and requiring a great deal of interpretive work – with the broader political thought of the early part of the long nineteenth century. As Gregory Claeys notes, the language of republicanism 'either disappeared in this period or adopted quite different forms:'[114] across the radical–conservative spectrum can be identified, in a variety of forms, a range of theories which associate various configurations of land and property with virtue, from advocacy of an agrarian law in James Burgh to the more Wordsworthian emphasis on parish administration of land revenue in Thomas Spence.[115] In this context, the reversal of Locke's formulation may be seen as a means of understanding the ecological potential not only of Wordsworth's land politics, but of the many and varied considerations of land and property that suffused the political climate of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Wordsworth's reorientation of Republican political ideas towards the relationship between landowners (and by extension those who work on that land) and the landscape itself may also offer us, then, a novel framework with which to understand

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and evaluate current concerns around ecology and land ownership. This relationship is an extremely urgent one, particularly here and now in Scotland: on March 23, 2024, the Scottish land reform campaigner Andy Wightman released his latest survey of 'Who Owns Scotland,' revealing that '83% of rural Scotland is owned by private entities (individuals, companies, trusts etc.),' and that '[t]he ownership of privately-owned rural land has become more concentrated since 2012 as a result of existing owners acquiring more land.'[116] This concentration has always been characteristic of land ownership patterns in Scotland,[117] but it has now led to new considerations about property types and sizes. The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill 2024 proposes the institution of 'lotting' – the breaking up of estates which are being sold into smaller parcels[118] – but Wightman 'has encountered another investment firm trying to buy 14 properties covering nearly 6,000 hectares, none of which would meet the lotting threshold.'[119] 200 years later, the problem of rural property accumulation rumbles on.

This is often framed as a political problem, but it can also be understood as an ecological one. Take, for instance, the problem of rewilding: the aforementioned investment firm, Gresham House, engages in forestry projects, marketed 'as tax-efficient investments' (Carrell b).[120] Other rewilding projects are funded (and, importantly, made profitable) by the sale of carbon units and pending issuance units:[121]

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just as larch growth needed to be sped up to make large properties profitable in the Romantic era, so in 2024 projects like the restoration of Cashel Forest's adjoining peatland are being pushed and sped up beyond natural constraints to make good on the sale of PUIs.[122]

If we approach this question in light of Wordsworth's land-Republicanism, we may well ask whether land owned as an investment can allow for the kind of labour which embraces natural constraints, rather than mastery of the land. An answer to this question does not fall within the scope of this article, but it should point, I hope, to the *kind* of ecological potential latent in Wordsworth's *Guide*, a potential inherent in its political and economic thought, and a potential which can exist alongside the aestheticising discourse which has previously been taken to characterise its contributions to ecology. This approach can offer those of us convinced by Scott Hess and others' rigorous critiques new ways to appreciate Wordsworth's lifelong poetic obsession with nature and land, and ways for us to continue learning from his work.

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Romance, Revolution & Reform

Gendered Dehumanisation; Labour, Oppression, and Resistance of the Enslaved Women of Colour of Saint-Domingue in the Long Nineteenth Century

CALYX PALMER

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-.$)',+!)#!)/. transatlantic slave trade, and the institution of chattel slavery, was the dehumanisation of Black people. In order to justify the terrible conditions and brutal treatment which enslaved people were forced to endure, it was necessary to view enslaved people not as people, but as property. The deeply racialised nature of transatlantic slavery permeated every aspect of early modern colonial life in the French Caribbean. This meant that this dehumanisation and racist treatment also affected the *gens de couleur*, despite their free status.[1] Enslaved women were not thought of by their enslavers as people, and were also constrained and oppressed specifically by their gender within their labour, avenues to manumission, and resistance. Their experience, both in terms of enslavement and of freedom from slavery, was therefore deeply gendered. David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine have both expounded on the 'double burden' that enslaved women faced, being 'exploited as slaves in regards to both their productive and reproductive capacities'.[2] Looking specifically at the French colony of Saint-Domingue, formalised in 1697 and abolished with the creation of the nation state of Haiti in 1804, this article assesses the gendered ways in which enslaved and free women of colour were exploited.

This article argues that the enslaved women of colour in Saint-Domingue were both not thought of as women, or indeed people, by their enslavers, and yet were

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repeatedly constrained and oppressed in a variety of gender-specific ways throughout Saint-Domingue's colonial existence. I begin by looking at understandings of womanhood, and the ways in which they did not apply to, or directly contradicted the lived experience of, enslaved women of colour. I then assess the labour of these women, and the way in which they were overworked as a result of their gender. I analyse sexualisation and sexual violence in depth, both crucial components of the lives of women of colour, particularly in relation to their treatment at the hands of white colonists. Next, I focus on the nature of motherhood and family for these women and the ways in which it was constrained, controlled, and damaged by the realities of slavery, and the cruelty of enslavers. Then, I examine how the very legislation of pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue restricted the lives of women of colour and enslaved women due to their gender. Finally, I look at the gendered avenues of resistance to slavery which were present in Saint-Domingue. Although women of colour were active participants in all aspects of colonial life, from owning slaves to being revolutionary soldiers, the primary sources on, and from, Black and *mulâtre* women are notably lacking from the archives.[3] This kind of archival silence, not uncommon in the histories of marginalised peoples, can come as a result of purposeful exclusion by those in power as much as by a community's history and culture being recorded in a way which does not cater to archival norms.[4] As such, I will be unearthing the lives of these enslaved women of colour through the white colonial sources which have survived, with an awareness of the inherent bias within them, and the understanding that these sources are often written directly in opposition to the women who constitute this article's focus.

Understandings of Black Womanhood & Divisions of Labour

The nature of womanhood in the long nineteenth century was itself complex, particularly regarding enslaved women. The cult of 'true womanhood', as proposed by Barbara Welter, centred around the values of 'piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity', and was an idealised concept of womanhood intended to depict and

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shape upper- and middle-class white women.[5] Even among white Europeans, this idealisation of womanhood as submissive, even fragile, did not fully align with the increasing importance of the role of the *citoyenne* in French revolutionary politics. As Mary Louise Roberts, Welter's analysis of the cult of true womanhood 'failed to understand the cult as an ideology that performed political and cultural work' in the ways in which it reinforced and ensured women's subordinate role within wider society.[6] Moreover, the concept of 'true womanhood' applied specifically to wealthy white women. Linda Perkins argues that while working-class white women could aspire to the values of this ideology, this was not the case for Black women, who 'were not perceived as women in the same sense' – that is to say because Black people were not universally recognised as people.[7] As such, while ideas of womanhood were present in, and indeed important to, Saint-Domingue's society, this understanding of womanhood was fundamentally white. The specific, and different, role of Black womanhood was disregarded under plantation slavery, particularly by enslavers.

Jessica Marie Johnson argues that the trauma of the Middle Passage 'ungendered the captives…reducing woman and girls and boys and men to units of measured "flesh"'.[8] This deeply dehumanising experience had both physical and psychological ramifications for those who suffered through it. Purposeful dehumanisation, much like the consistent understanding and legal framework of enslaved people as merely property rather than people in their own right, allowed slaveowners to maximise the productivity of their labour force. By viewing them first by their unfree status, and only then accounting for personhood or gender, enslavers ultimately added to the double burden of enslaved women; enslaved women were expected to work hard, manual jobs for the same duration as their male counterparts. In fact, in the French Caribbean, proportionally more women worked the fields than

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men, despite this being the hardest manual labour task available on the plantations.[9] Despite being expected to work as many hours and equally strenuous tasks as enslaved men, enslaved women were much less likely to move into specialised work, such as carpentry or masonry.[10] These specialised roles made it easier to buy back freedom, as the worth of the work was much higher than that of field labour. By predominantly being denied this opportunity, enslaved women had even the potential for that method of manumission suppressed. In addition to this praedial work, enslaved women were given additional, gendered tasks, such as breastfeeding.[11]

Although enslaved women did not seek out the supposed privilege of becoming a domestic slave, and indeed 'broadly rejected the notion that to labour in the big house was "better" than working in the field', they were more likely than enslaved men to be moved to such a position.[12] Since the inception of the colony in 1697, women had been a minority population within Saint-Domingue, especially white women. This dynamic had greatly affected the role of enslaved women of colour within the colony. Julien Raïmond, a wealthy *affranchi* planter, argued that although colonists had initially only had sex with their slaves due to a dearth of female settlers, ultimately the colonists 'preferred girls of colour over these women'.[13] Even once there was a greater proportion of white women settled on the island, these relationships continued, therefore leading to the creation of a predominantly free *mulâtre* class. He also noted that colonists who did not marry women of colour often still 'chose from their slaves to care for them and their households', and went on to clarify that 'they made them into wives under the title of housekeeper', suggesting a sexually abusive component to this dynamic.[14] This

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highlights the complicated nature of the role of domestic slave or housekeeper, as while their role might nominally have been to manage the household affairs, there was some expectation or connotation of sex. Similarly, Deborah Jenson and Laurent Dubois both highlight the role of *menagère*, as described by Médéric-Louis-Élie Moreau de Saint-Méry, a wealthy white creole planter.[15] The *menagère* was a domestic position for an enslaved woman of colour, and, according to Moreau de Saint-Méry, had 'all the functions of a spouse, without being necessarily inclined to assume the responsibilities of such a position'.[16] This particular depiction, as Dubois notes, was undoubtedly coloured by Moreau de Saint-Méry's personal relationship with his own *menagére*, Marie-Louise Laplane, with whom he had both a long relationship and a daughter, before ultimately parting ways with her to marry a white woman.[17]

The nature of the power dynamics between enslaver and the enslaved means that any relationship was non-consensual and abusive; the power imbalance of ownership is inherently coercive, regardless of whether the enslaved person is manumitted, or the relationship culminates in a legal marriage. Raïmond wrote on the acceptance of slaveowner and slave relationships after the initial settlement of the colony, and how they were not just legitimised through marriage to the slave woman in question, but that children born of such a union were raised free, given land, and often grew up to be slaveowners in their own right.[18] Although this shows the equity possible at times from a relationship which started as slaveowner and enslaved person, it cannot be said that the enslaved women in these relationships were ever truly willing participants. Although at the beginning of Saint-Domingue"s colonisation, it was not uncommon for slave owners to marry the enslaved women with whom they were having relationships, particularly if they had children together, this changed over time. Almost two thirds of manumitted slaves in Saint-Domingue were women, and marrying a colonist was a common avenue of manumission, up until the late 1760s.[19] This

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potential for liberty added another level of coercive power to any relationship between slave and slave-owner, and as David Geggus notes, many of Saint-Domingue"s plantations functioned as 'harem[s]' for the planters and their white employees, because enslaved women were likely to submit to the sexual advances of their owners 'out of a mixture of fear and hope'.[20] Likewise, Raïmond declared that female slaves explicitly had 'their greatest recompense, their freedom' leveraged against them to coerce them into these relationships.[21] Yet, Jessica Marie Johnson has argued that sex as a common or successful avenue to manumission was predominantly a myth, rooted in 'slaveowning European travel writers' own lascivious assumptions' rather than in any reality or historical record.[22] Ultimately, whether or not manumission occurred is less relevant than the fact that it was being leveraged to coerce enslaved women into sexual acts.

Sexualisation and Sexual Violence

While purity and submissiveness were ideals ascribed onto white women by colonists, women of colour, particularly *mulâtre* women, were instead viewed predominantly as sexual objects by the white colonists. In 1797, Moreau de Saint-Méry, in writing a description of the Saint-Domingue colony, declared that 'the entire being of a *mulâtress* is dedicated to sensuality', and went on to rhapsodise on the 'most delicious ecstasies' which he believed to be the sole focus of *mulâtre* women's lives.[23] This commonly held perception, the overt sexualisation, and the objectification of *mulâtre* women, dehumanised *mulâtre* women in the eyes of the colonists, and allowed them to trivialise their problems. Moreau de Saint-Méry also wrote on the 'lure of the submissive *négresses'*, showing that this sexualisation was not reserved solely for *mulâtre* women.[24] According to Desdorides, a lieutenant-colonel stationed in Saint-Domingue during the

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American Revolutionary War, 'mulatto, quadroon, and black women dress with taste, and use their appearance, their height, and their walk as an invitation to seduction'.[25] Crucially, Desdorides stated that these women 'avoid any other device or activity to excite men', reinforcing that this perceived 'seduction' was not actually reflective of the actions or intentions of these women of colour.[26] As Dorothy Roberts argued, this concept of innate lasciviousness led to white colonists claiming that Black women 'could not be raped'.[27] Enslaved women suffered differently than their male counterparts, facing gendered forms of sexual violence and degradation alongside the already brutal conditions of slavery. This fetishisation and objectification undoubtedly worsened the sexual assaults which both enslaved and free women of colour endured in the colony.

Writing in the mid-1780s, Raïmond described the custom of systematic rape and coercion enforced by the white colonists on the *gens de couleur*.[28] Raïmond related a common practice of white men walking into the homes of *hommes de couleur* and declaring their intent to have sex with their wife or daughter, resorting to coercion, violence, or even having the *homme de couleur* arrested, in order to get their way.[29] Stating 'sometimes it is a white whose official post gives him complete control over a man of color', it is clear that this practice was not limited to their slaves or servants, but instead underlined a hierarchy and societal power dynamic based on race which the white colonists had all become used to exploiting.[30] Notably, Raïmond at no point seemed to depict the ramifications of this custom on the women involved: although he stated that 'the white brings all manner of pressure to make the wife or daughter yield', the actual act of rape is only alluded to as the 'dishonour' of the *homme de couleur*.[31] While Raïmond thoroughly condemned this tradition, the systematic rape of *femmes*

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de couleur in this manner is not framed as an abusive act in itself, so much as an abuse inflicted on the *hommes de couleur* they were related to.

Abbé Grégoire, an abolitionist and campaigner for human rights for all, commented in his 1790 *Letter to Those Who Love Mankind*, that the 'uncontrolled lechery of so many whites' made it impossible to control population growth in Saint-Domingue, making it clear that the coercion and rape of women of colour was well known.[32] For Grégoire, much like Raïmond, the sexual abuse suffered by these women of colour was not a priority; Grégoire was arguing that the class of *mulâtres* should be prioritised as it was ever increasing, as a result of the sexual abuse inflicted by white colonists. While neither of these men focus on this abuse, it is raised both by Raïmond and Grégoire in a perfunctory manner, belying the degree to which this sexual violence in the French Caribbean was common knowledge. These fleeting contemporary references to rape and coercion, therefore, are crucial, as to even acknowledge this as a form of abuse shows that there was a level of agency and personhood to be violated. This therefore suggests that enslaved people were not merely thought of as property but understood to be people with agency in their own right being infringed upon. It is therefore through this contemporary acknowledgement of their mistreatment that the degree of their personhood and their oppression is made clear.

Motherhood and Family

Already seen to some degree in the way in which slaveowners would coerce enslaved women into relationships, the role of enslaved women within the family is crucial to understand the extent to which both their labour and their oppression were gendered. Family was central to the culture and experience of those enslaved before their capture, and both the Transatlantic slave trade and plantation slavery were reliant on the dissolution of the family unit.[33] The control which planters wielded over the lives and families of their slaves, from requiring the planters' consent to marry to being willing and able to sell members of their family to other plantations, was often geared towards

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the discouragement of strong family bonds. As previously stated, many enslaved women were expected to work the fields as well as perform additional, gender-specific, roles; new mothers were sometimes forced to nurse the newborn babies of their owners, and subsequently to neglect their own children. Not only did this damage their relationship with their own children: by depriving the enslaved babies of most of their mother's milk it also increased the child's likelihood of malnourishment and infant mortality. Records show that at least one plantation had new mothers amongst their enslaved women work as wet-nurses, while their own children were suckled by the plantation's female goats.[34]

While Emily West's work has predominantly focused on the antebellum American South, the wider points of her analysis, undertaken alongside R. J. Knight, of enslaved women being forced to wet-nurse white children can certainly be applied to those enslaved in the French Caribbean. They argued compellingly that not only was the practice of forcing enslaved women to breastfeed their enslavers' infants exploitative, it was inherently abusive.[35] Not only did this practice endanger the health of their own children, but it was another avenue through which enslaved women's bodies and reproduction were controlled and manipulated by their enslavers. The usage of enslaved women of colour as wet-nurses was recommended, in part, because of the white European colonial belief that Black women had a 'superior ability to suckle'.[36] This idea predated transatlantic slavery and was based on the racist observations and conclusions of colonial European travellers to West Africa. These observations, focused predominantly on the breasts and bodies of the Black African women they had encountered, assigned decidedly bestial and animalistic traits to the women in question, and ultimately developed into the ideas both that Black women had particularly easy childbirths, and that they were well suited to hard manual labour.[37] In pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue, there was a sense with some contemporary white colonists, such as Moreau de Saint-Méry, that enslaved women were particularly talented at motherhood, and that said children could 'never have more assiduous

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care'.[38] Moreau de Saint-Méry, as previously suggested, was likely influenced by Marie-Louise Laplane's behaviour as a mother to his daughter. Cruelly, the disruption that slavery caused to family connections for the enslaved, particularly with enslaved women being forced to stop breastfeeding their own children, with children or family units being split across different plantations, and with enslaved women forced to spend more time and energy raising their enslaver's children, meant that 'as far as slaveowners were concerned, they "were not mothers at all"', at least not to their own children.[39]

Motherhood was a particularly crucial and complicated aspect of slavery as, from the *Code Noir* onwards, liberty and slavery were literally maternal inheritances:

> Children, both male and girls, will follow the condition of their mother and be free like her, in spite of the servitude of their father; and that if the father is free and the mother enslaved, the children will be slaves the same.[40]

As the children of enslaved women were legally slaves, while the children of free women were free, regardless of the legal status of the father, motherhood held a very different legal role to that of fatherhood. Moreover, the relationship between resistance and motherhood in Saint-Domingue was extremely complicated, and made more so by the low fertility rate and high infant mortality rate which afflicted the slaves. The birthrate of the enslaved populace of Saint-Domingue was merely 3%, almost half the death-rate of acclimatised slaves.[41] There has been much debate over the degree to which the low birthrate was natural, or a product of abortion. Pregnancy was an extremely complex matter for female slaves, and the trauma of the passage to the Caribbean often caused temporary infertility.[42] Adding to this, the brutal working and living conditions of plantation slavery meant that the mortality rate for a newly arrived slave was 50% in the first year.[43] Furthermore, malnourishment and sleep deprivation were highly common issues, all of which increased the likelihood of miscarriage. Moreover, there was divided opinion amongst slaveowners as to whether slaves' pregnancies were

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a benefit to them or a disadvantage. Some slaveowners considered slave children an investment, as they were legally their property and would grow up to become workers. As such, they would encourage their enslaved women to have children; they would offer payments to new mothers and their midwives, and some would even free the mothers of six living children.[44] Justin Girod de Chantrans, a visitor to Saint-Domingue in the 1780s, described a punishment given by some plantation owners to slave women thought to have had abortions: 'iron collars fitted with long spikes…which they have to wear day and night until they have produced a child for their master'.[45] His use of the phrase 'suspected of having abortions' suggests that this particular punishment could be given to any slave woman at her master's discretion, ultimately punishing the idea, not just the reality, of abortions, miscarriages, and infertility.[46] Other planters, however, considered the time which mothers needed to birth and nurse their children as a drain on resources, decreasing the efficiency of their workforce, and so they would encourage or pressure pregnant slaves to have abortions.[47] In either case, white colonists were inclined to believe that abortion or infanticide were at fault for low fertility or high infant mortality rates, rather than these being the result of the conditions of slavery. Both by forcing them to have children or abortions, enslavers controlled the bodies of enslaved women and their choices surrounding motherhood.

There were high infant mortality rates in Saint-Domingue, and there is little doubt that this was due in part to the harsh living conditions of plantation slavery, but white colonists tended to instead classify them as the result of purposeful infanticide as a method of slave resistance. Almost one third of enslaved children in Saint-Domingue died from tetanus, specifically presenting with lockjaw.[48] There was a common belief amongst colonists and plantation owners that midwives and mothers would use a needle to the fontanelle to induce lockjaw in newborns, and indeed at least one midwife

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admitted to doing this while on trial.[49] She claimed that she had done this to hundreds of children in order to save them from having to live under slavery, but this confession came after some time under arrest, and it is impossible to tell whether it was coerced through torture. This does not preclude the possibility of infanticide as a form of resistance to slavery, however. Suicide as a form of slave resistance has been well-documented, as it both provided an escape from slavery and inflicted a punishment in the form of 'economic damage' to the slave-owner.[50] Although contemporaries considered slaves to be very good mothers, the conditions of slavery were so brutal that any form of escape or liberty was acceptable to some;[51] there survives a record of a mother and daughter about to be executed together, where, in order to help give her daughter courage, the mother declared 'Be glad you will not be the mother of slaves'.[52] This highlights the way in which women considered their choices; so constrained by their uniquely gendered form of subjugation, death was in itself a form of freedom, and perhaps so too was infanticide.

Overall, there were a variety of ways in which the labour and oppression of enslaved women of colour was directly tied to the reproductive capacity, and the role of 'mother'. The purposeful erosion of the family bonds of enslaved people by their enslavers was combined with the forced participation of enslaved women in family structures, whether through being forced to breastfeed their enslavers' children, or through incentivising childbirth. The nature of enslaved motherhood, and the complicated legacy of free or unfree status as a matrilineal inheritance, was a uniquely gendered aspect of the oppression of enslaved women. The burdens placed on enslaved women regarding pregnancy were manifold and varied depending on the plantation in which they were enslaved, but consistently enslaved women were exploited for their reproductive capacity.

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Legislative Curtailing of Women of Colour

The lives of people of colour, both free and unfree, were strictly legislated, first by the *Code Noir* in 1685, and then by ongoing legislation as the changing social position of people of colour was perceived by white colonists to threaten their own superiority. In the early 1770s, laws were introduced which punished white colonists for marrying any woman of colour by stripping them of their noble status and honours. Subsequently, planters were even less likely to marry their slaves, and although female slaves were still more likely to be manumitted than male slaves, there is no evidence to support whether this was related to their #sexual availability".[53] The marriage of women of colour was strictly legislated throughout Saint-Domingue's history. From the *Code Noir* in 1685 onwards, there were strict laws in place about the marriage of enslaved people, either to other enslaved people or to free people. The marriages between enslaved people were forbidden without the consent of their masters, but it was illegal for their masters to 'use any means to constrain their slaves to marry'.[54] There was some impetus for the owners of enslaved women to arrange marriages with enslaved men from other plantations, as any children of this union would be the legal property of the owner of the mother.[55] In practice, however, there were many enslaved people who chose to remain unmarried, and instead had long-term and fulfilling relationships with other enslaved people while maintaining personal independence, as opposed to seeking permission to marry from their owners. These partnerships depended on mutual respect, and the enslaved people involved would often amicably break up and find new partners later in life, dynamics unattainable under traditional European social mores.[56]

Despite the sexualisation of women of colour within Saint-Domingue, their sexuality was strictly legislated. Léger-Félicité Sonthonax's *Decree of General Liberty* in 1793, which abolished slavery, also included a law which stated 'Women who do not have an obvious source of income, who are not working agriculture or employed in someone's home…will be arrested and put in prison': this law was introduced as an

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attempt to decrease prostitution.[57] Prostitution was a major sector of work available to women of colour in Saint-Domingue, due in part to the constant over-sexualisation of *négre* and *mulâtre* women by white colonists. Prostitution was particularly common in the port cities, such as Cap Français, Saint-Domingue being somewhat infamous for its prostitution.[58] One of the contributing factors towards its prevalence was the lack of other options available to women of colour. As enslaved women were not often trained in specialised fields, but were twice as likely to be manumitted as enslaved men, it could be very difficult for them to find a source of income once they were free.[59] It is clear from Sonthonax's decree, as well as a similar law passed in a proclamation by Toussaint Louverture in 1800, that prostitution had continued to such a degree, despite previous efforts to legislate against it, that they needed to legislate against it repeatedly to curb it.[60] Louverture was particularly preoccupied with prostitution as an immoral act, stemming from his strong Catholic views on the modesty and decency of women. In a proclamation made in 1801, Louverture reprimanded the vanity and 'libertinage' of women living in Saint-Domingue's cities.[61] Their narcissism was 'a result of their prostitution', according to Louverture, and they would 'harbor evil men, who live on the product of their crimes'.[62] He went on to strongly suggest that the cities' authorities should focus on eliminating prostitution, as opposed to finding or arresting these 'evil men'.[63] It is clear that, to Louverture, prostitution was an immoral act, both because it was dependent on women behaving in a manner which he considered to be sinful, and because he believed that it financed other criminal behaviours.

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Pamphile de Lacroix described a function where Louverture 'was seen throwing his handkerchief over the bosom of a young lady' in order to preserve her modesty.[64] This emphasis on decency was undoubtedly related to Louverture's strong Catholic faith, as Lacroix wrote that Louverture insisted that women 'dress as if they were going to Church' when attending one of his events.[65] Louverture's wish to focus on modesty and decency, and to treat the *femmes de couleur* as society ladies, was also tied to his adoption of French citizenship; like Étienne Polverel, one of the French commissioners who worked alongside Sonthonax, he was adopting European conventions of womanhood and traditionally-European ideology about gender and society, and attempting to apply them to the women of colour in Saint-Domingue. Not only did he police their clothing and behaviour: Louverture strictly controlled women's access to his higher ranks, and allowed the race of the women with whom he was interacting to impact their position within his own social circle. Lacroix noted that while any white woman would be invited into Louverture's social circles 'by right', the only women of colour accepted were the wives of his high officials.[66] Moreover, after the public addresses were over, he and his male officers would retire to discuss policy; given that the female officers in the revolutionary army were often the wives of other officers, this exclusion would limit their influence and knowledge over current events.

Notably, one of the most famous laws passed during the French Revolution was the 1792 *loi autorisant le divorce*, in which the Legislative Assembly not only legalised divorce, but made it a civil institution. Prior to this, annulment was possible only with a special dispensation from the Pope, and there were no legal avenues for divorce. Marriage was important to Louverture, who defined it as a 'civil and religious institution' in his constitution of 1801, and intended to once again permanently outlaw divorce throughout the colony.[67] Beyond the theological justification of marriage underpinned by his strong Roman Catholic faith, he also believed that marriage helped to cultivate and strengthen morality and virtue, and wanted Saint-Domingue's government to

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recognise and distinguish spouses who were deemed notably virtuous.[68] Having made divorce illegal, Louverture also intended to introduce a legal framework to establish the rights and social status of those born out of wedlock.[69] These laws, Louverture declared, would be created and 'designed to spread and maintain social virtues, and to encourage and cement family bonds' among those born out of wedlock, despite their illegitimacy.[70] Lorelle Semley argued that Louverture's new measures were intended to '[maintain] families through bonds of marriage' more than they were about stopping relationships and partnerships from dissolving, suggesting that the role of the family as property-owner was more critical to maintain than the moral imperatives on married couples to stay together.[71] Comparatively, Jean-Jacques Dessalines' *Haitian Constitution of 1805* declared that marriage 'is a purely civil deed', and that divorce would be legal 'in certain specific cases'.[72] Given Dessalines was not Catholic, and also legalised freedom of worship, it is perhaps unsurprising that he legally changed marriage from a religious act and institution to having a secular and civil legal status.[73] In a proclamation in November 1801, Louverture announced that military or public officials 'who are legitimately married and keep concubines in their houses, and those who are unmarried and live publicly with several women are unworthy of command' and would lose their jobs immediately.[74] This enshrined into law Louverture's strong moral judgements regarding marriage, legally penalised the more informal relationships previously accepted within slave culture, and removed an avenue of personal freedom which had been available to women of colour.

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Gendered Resistance

Grand marronage, the act of running away from plantations and establishing a separate settlement free of slavery, was a major aspect of slave resistance. Women tended to commit *marronage* far less than men, making up only 12-15% of Saint-Domingue's maroons in the eighteenth century.[75] While this was thought by some historians to be due to a combination of fear and sentimentality, Arlette Gautier and Bernard Moitt have both convincingly argued that the practical difficulty of either bringing a child on the run, or leaving a child behind, impacted the low numbers of female maroons.[76] Although women made up a significantly smaller percentage of maroons, they were arguably more critical for the longevity of *grand marronage*, as women overall had more knowledge of cultivation and agriculture, and were therefore key to creating a self-sufficient and long-lasting community.[77] Moreover, there is evidence that some female maroons would cross-dress in order to more easily escape suspicion, such as Magdelaine in 1790, who was described by her runaway advertisement as being 'in the habit of dressing up as a man and passing herself off as free', perhaps complicating the records of the gender divide within *marronage*.[78] Another key aspect of resistance, Nah Dove argued, was motherhood: specifically, the raising of children to resist the structures of slavery.[79] While nearly two thirds of enslaved people in Saint-Domingue were African-born, the importance of enslaved women raising their children to oppose and fight against slavery ought not be underplayed.[80] Furthermore, once slavery had been abolished, women would challenge the new form of forced labour by making use of the old laws regarding motherhood; Cecil, who had been a slave in Les Cayes, refused to work more than a six-day week as she had multiple children, insisting on her right to a tradition which had been set up under slavery to incentivise childbirth.[81]

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Colonists in Saint-Domingue used the lack of gender roles within slavery, and the de-gendering of women of colour, to suit them; similarly, they adopted a more traditionally European view of gender differentiation with regard to women of colour after Sonthonax's *Decree of General Liberty*, once doing so became more beneficial on a wider societal scale than de-gendering women of colour. Étienne Polverel laid out strict rules and regulations for plantation labour after emancipation in the Southern and Western Provinces in various proclamations throughout 1793 and 1794. In the rules he established in 1794, he introduced a key gender-based disparity which had not previously existed: while all *cultivateurs* were due to work the same hours and tasks as each other, female *cultivateurs* were to be paid less.[82] In Article 18, it was legally enshrined that 'women aged fifteen and above will have two-thirds of a share' while men working the same tasks would get one full share.[83] Despite the many complaints from female *cultivateurs*, Polverel was insistent that the 'natural inequality in the strength of men and women' meant that a lesser pay was justified, an inequality which had not impacted enslaved women who were expected to work the fields previously, as this supposed inequality of strength had not decreased the hours they were expected to labour in the fields.[84] Polverel also stressed the leave which was granted to pregnant women and new mothers, as well as leave taken due to women's 'usual and regular ailments', to highlight the differences between men and women, and to state that male *cultivateurs* worked more than their female counterparts despite having the same responsibilities and working hours.[85]

Moreover, Polverel argued that male *cultivateurs*' salaries would inevitably be spent on their female partners, and declared 'Africans, if you want these women to be reasonable, be reasonable yourself'.[86] By framing the complaints in this way, Polverel not only made the complaints of female *cultivateurs* seem unreasonable, but attempted to pit their demands against the male *cultivateurs* by appealing to a division between

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men and women which had not previously been a part of their lives under slavery. It is worth noting that many of the complaints of female *cultivateurs* had been accompanied by their refusal to work, and threats to leave their plantations. These strikes proved highly effective, and although they were female-led, male *cultivateurs* often participated, which suggests that Polverel's attempt to foster a gender division had not impacted their behaviour.[87] Polverel's application of the European understanding of power differentials between men and women at this point, however, indicates that he was hoping to undermine the co-operation and equality among the *cultivateurs* which united them against the planters. As such, it is clear that the gendered power dynamic accepted in European ideology was not applied to slaves when it might have impacted plantation owners, and in fact they had been to some degree de-gendered, but was imported as soon as it became more convenient for the colonists.

When the National Convention officially upheld the abolition of slavery in 1794, the forced labour laws created by Sonthonax, Polverel, and the other commissioners went into place. In order to maintain the colony's plantation-based agriculture and economy, all slaves were to become *cultivateurs*. As *cultivateurs*, they were expected to work on the same plantation, under the same colonists, doing the same tasks, and although they were supposed to be compensated for their work, wages had not been set, and so they were expected to work for free and then be paid retrospectively once wages had been decided upon.[88] When these rules were read out as a declaration in plantations across Saint-Domingue, there were multiple cases of female *cultivateurs* not believing the authenticity of these regulations, and refusing to obey.[89] Challenging the authority of their prior owners, they said that until French Revolutionary officers came to confirm the declarations, they would not work. Although women led these challenges to the planters' authority, the remaining male *cultivateurs* joined them. The Laborde plantation was one such plantation, and Pierre Duval, a government official, wrote to Polverel asking for help in resolving the matter.[90] The advice he received was to threaten to expel all women refusing to work, reinforcing that this protest was instigated by women, and relying on the women's dependence on the accommodation provided

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by the plantation, and the community they were a part of with their fellow ex-slaves, to motivate them to acquiesce to the new rules. While these threats succeeded, and work resumed on the Laborde plantation, refusal to work as a form of protest remained a popular method of voicing dissent, and one that was predominantly led by women.

A plantation in Grande Colline had a similar protest, with *cultivateurs* believing that the new regulations were a trick of the colonists, and the plantation owner asking for help, ideally in the form of sending some soldiers to officially confirm the new regulations.[91] There was a case of two women on the Codère plantation who, when told to work into the night by their *conducteur*, not only refused to do the work but also 'said the worst things to the *commandeur*, threatening him'.[92] In fact from as early in the revolution as October 1791, when a local official named Gros was captured, and later wrote that 'the *négresses* were far more rude, harsher, and less willing to return to work than the *négres*', women had been challenging the idea of a return to plantation labour.[93] The confidence which all of these women showed in openly challenging the authority of their male superiors on the plantations, even threatening them, may have been related to their personal and sexual relationships with these men. Moitt argued compellingly that the role of the mistress undercut the power dynamic between enslaved women and colonists, and subsequently female *cultivateurs* and colonists, to such a degree that the women felt empowered to openly challenge them.[94] Regardless of where this confidence came from, it is clear that female *cultivateurs* were instrumental to protesting and resisting workforce exploitation.

Another example of a previously enslaved woman using legal means to challenge her position, and to protect her freedom, is that of Marie-Rose Masson, a *creole* slave who had grown up on the Gallifet plantation. In 1802, wary of a potential re-establishment of slavery, she wrote to the Marquis de Gallifet to appeal to his 'justice and goodness'.[95] While Masson and her mother had both been technically freed in

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1787, various financial delays and the death of the plantation manager had meant that the matter had not been fully resolved before the revolution. As the new plantation manager, Massu, was unaware of the previous agreement, and presumably unwilling to believe Masson, she wrote directly to the Marquis de Gallifet, complaining that Massu was 'exercising an authority over me that is contrary to your justice' and that 'it is therefore necessary that you inform him to let me go once I show him the receipt'.[96] She went on to ask for reassurance 'to assuage my worries', and signed off 'with the respect due to a good former master'.[97] Within this letter, Masson both highlighted the current precarity of her freedom, and simultaneously underlined that the Marquis de Gallifet was and would remain her 'former master'.[98] Referring to the delays in her legal manumission thus far as 'errors', Masson was clearly aware of her legal and legitimate challenge to Massu's orders, and felt comfortable and confident in appealing directly to the plantation owner to rely on his intervention. Her letter implies that she had previously attempted to use the documentation at her disposal to legally stop Massu, but that she had not been taken seriously without the testimonial of the Marquis de Gallifet. This suggests that even when women of colour went through legal and legislative channels to protect their legally mandated rights and freedom, they were still dependent on the men upholding those channels choosing to help or hinder them, still limited by their gender.

Conclusion

Life for the enslaved women of Saint-Domingue was uniquely complicated; they were simultaneously seen as objects of lust, of labour, of maternity, and yet often not recognised as humans. To return to Gaspar and Hine's framework, their 'double burden' was in fact multifold, as they were not only oppressed in a variety of gendered ways on top of the already-hard life of a plantation slave, but they were also granted fewer ways in which they could work themselves towards manumission and freedom. The avenue of manumission most commonly attributed to enslaved women, that of freedom

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through marriage, was highly controlled and legislated, on top of being in itself a form of sexual coercion at best. Enslaved women were lauded for their maternal instincts, yet forced to neglect their own children in favour of those of their owners. More than that, they were both praised or punished for their reproductive capabilities and were not allowed a modicum of bodily autonomy. The paths of resistance from both slavery and, with the *Decree of General Liberty*, forced labour, were likewise gendered. Although women of colour did hard manual labour tasks, both as slaves and as *cultivateurs*, they were depicted as weak or frivolous when circumstance benefitted the white colonists to apply these gender roles to them. As such, we can see that despite the dehumanisation of enslaved women, the institution of slavery within the French Caribbean still enforced gender divides throughout the society of slave colonies. Enslaved women may not have been recognised as human, with rights of their own, yet they were still constrained as women, and these constraints remained on women of colour even with emancipation. Confined by their race, regardless of their free status, women of colour's forms of forced labour, the oppression they suffered, and even their methods of resistance to slavery, were all also fundamentally affected by being women.

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0&#*',"/1: Calyx Palmer is a doctoral candidate currently finishing her PhD at King's College London. Her thesis examines the complex relationship between the concept of liberty and the Haitian Revolution.

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RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

‘[I]f your stumps had only been a trifle shorter’: The Exploitation of the Stare and Nautical Performance in Henry Mayhew’s London Labour and the London Poor

MEGAN MCLENNAN

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‘I never begged: I’ll die in the streets first’[1]: Disability, Begging, and Worthiness

P20+&(/.3!&$!%#2’!volumes between the 1840s and 1860s, Henry Mayhew’s *London Labour and the London Poor* offered a mid-nineteenth-century insight into the lives and work of London’s marginalised communities and individuals, including people with disabilities. In one such account entitled ‘Disaster Beggars,’ Mayhew – journalist, playwright, and social reformer – recounts how a bricklayer loses the use of both arms after falling off scaffolding.[2] After receiving ‘some little compensation,’ he begins begging dressed ‘in workman’s clothes’ and ‘carrying a paper on his breast describing the cause of his misfortune.’[3] His begging as a bricklayer is unsuccessful, and in desperation, he turns to the workhouse.[4] Before he can enter the workhouse, however, he is stopped by a man named Trafalgar Jake: ‘a sailor-like man, without ne’er an arm like myself, only his were cut off short at the shoulder.’[5] Trafalgar Jake convinces this man to not enter the workhouse and to instead join him in begging as a shipwrecked mariner. He agrees, and Trafalgar Jack teaches him ‘some sailors’ patter’ and provides him with a ‘sailor’s jacket and trousers and a straw ’at.’[6] Having taken on the mannerisms and costume of a sailor, the men go out onto the street and use a ‘painting they spread

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upon the pavement' to showcase how they acquired their disability.[7] The change in identity from bricklayer to mariner results in enough charity from the middle classes to acquire food and accommodation. The varying responses to the two different begging 'personae,' that of bricklayer and mariner, forces us to ask: what does a mariner offer the middle class that a bricklayer does not? I argue that, for a middle-class public, a mariner embodied a particular national and colonial identity, more so than that of a bricklayer: therefore, the mariner's identity relies upon an act of self-fashioning that exploits a pre-established relationship between sailors and the British public, to earn a living wage. As Mayhew's faux mariner uses this connection to access British purses, he exposes the contradictory nature of conceptions of the productive body in mid-nineteenth-century London.

Henry Mayhew began working on *London Labour and the London Poor* after leaving the *Morning Chronicle* in the autumn of 1850.[8] However, the 'twopenny weekly parts' that first constituted *London Labour* were largely 'a re-working, expansion, and re-arrangement of material [...] which had already appeared in the *Chronicle*.'[9] This initial work was bound into the first volume in 1851, and a four-volume edition was published between 1861 and 1862.[10] This work – which sought, but understandably failed, to account for all of London's poor – was heavily informed by the twin influences of the 1832 cholera outbreak and Chartism.[11] The cholera outbreak 'seized the popular imagination,' prompting 'detailed inquiries into the living conditions of the poor' given

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their comparatively accentuated suffering and mortality rate.[12] This motivation to document the lives and experiences of the urban poor was dually influenced by the growth of Chartism, which as a 'working-class political reform movement' aimed 'to alleviate social and economic inequality.'[13] 'Having been excluded from the modest democratic gains of the 1832 Reform Act', Chartists 'presented three appeals to Parliament between 1839 and 1848 [...] calling for reforms such as universal male suffrage, equal electoral districts, and the abolition of property ownership as a condition for candidacy to the House of Commons.'[14] Through a growing reformist concern over individual rights, the public became increasingly interested in the lives of the working class.

In response, Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* allowed the poor to tell their stories, offering an intimate look into their lives. As Anne Humphreys notes, this was intentional, as 'Mayhew's interviews are constructed in order to bring the reader into direct contact with the poor person in all his individual complexity.'[15] By removing Mayhew's 'responses' and 'questions [...] the interview unfolds as a kind of autobiography told by the individual poor person directly to the reader.'[16] As Mayhew disappears from the interviews, the people of London could feel as if they personally knew the poor, and in turn, care. Since Mayhew's 'commitment to reform remained steady after 1850, especially in regard to issues about the working class,' it is clear that he, to some extent, set out to inspire care for the poor.[17] However, while Mayhew acknowledges how 'words [...] come with their own histories of struggle and contestation' and that '[h]is work [...] is not an unwarped, unbiased, or 'authentic' picture of the poor,' he fails to consider how contemporary discourses on poverty, begging, and ability shape his representation of his interviewees.[18] In fact, as I will shortly discuss in further detail, Mayhew actively participates in the classification and hierarchising of London's poor and disabled.

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To understand how Mayhew perpetuates these narratives, we must first consider the period's legal and social positions on disability and begging. Nineteenth-century understandings of disability were informed by the cultural, economic, and social changes that were occurring in the period. Therefore, increasing industrialisation and the prioritisation of the capitalist economy were influential in distinguishing between the abled and disabled. Developing the work of Michael Oliver, Cindy LaCom notes that ''disabled' as a category evolved in the context of the industrial revolution and of the development of a work ethic that punished those who could not keep up' by exiling them 'from the capitalist norm, which demanded 'useful' bodies, able to perform predictable and repeated movements.'[19] The perception that disability resulted in an inability to create capital, and that this in turn would result in a financial burden borne either by the state or private individuals, was an ongoing concern. Mendicity, or begging, was similarly viewed harshly on the premise that the 'refusal' to work contravened the dominant ideology of self-reliance. Sally Hayward notes that self-reliance – that is the ability to 'act individually and independently' – was also tied into concepts of nation, masculinity, and religion.[20] Through self-reliance, national progress could occur at the level of the male body, as an individual's industrious work ethic and Christian values of 'service and reform' could help build the nation.[21]

While the culture of self-reliance arose in personal and social discourses, it most heavily influenced legislation through the New Poor Law (1834) and the Vagrancy Act (1824). In 1834, the New Poor Law sought to bring 'uniformity to practice' by implementing 'unions' in which the 'workhouse' was 'the heart of the new system.'[22]

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The New Poor Law then set out to standardise aid in the most cost-effective manner.[23] While the New Poor Law ultimately failed to 'to create a national standard of welfare,' the fact that 'workhouses rapidly came to be filled with people who were not able-bodied' highlights how they '[curbed] the appetite of the able-bodied for welfare.'[24] Self-reliance therefore necessitated labour from able-bodied workers. The belief 'that any kind of work, no matter how exploitative or ill-paying, was preferable to unemployment' informed 'the ideology on which the New Poor Law rested.'[25] This need for self-reliance is epitomised in *London Labour* by an injured coal heaver who states that he 'never begged: I'll die in the streets first.'[26] As self-reliance was made policy through the New Poor Law, the British government compelled the poor to work without addressing the conditions that led one to choose not to work or to beg, such as disability.

This dynamic is similarly seen in the Vagrancy Act (1824). Following the Vagrancy Acts of 1821 and 1822, the 1824 act was 'An Act for the Punishment of idle and disorderly Persons, and Rogues and Vagabonds, in England.'[27] The act defined disorderly persons, rogues, and vagabonds as 'every person wandering abroad and lodging in any barn or outhouse, or in any deserted or unoccupied building, or in the open air, or under a tent,' and most importantly for our mariner's purposes, 'every person wandering abroad, and endeavouring by the exposure of wounds or deformities to obtain or gather alms; every person going about as a gatherer or collector of alms, or endeavouring to procure charitable contributions of any nature or kind, under any false or fraudulent pretence.'[28] Even though disability would often deem one worthy of charity, it nevertheless meant that needy individuals should not seek it out through

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mendicity. Under the Vagrancy Act, beggars were not just suspicious; they were criminals.

This desire to classify – and in turn reward some while punishing others – is reflected in the charitable policies of the London Mendicity Society (hereafter referred to as the LMS). As Vanessa Warne outlines, the LMS 'hoped to mediate between beggars, civil authorities, and charitably minded individuals' to remove beggars from the streets of London.[29] The LMS, aware of donors' contradictory sentiments – that is, their distrust of beggars and their desire to provide aid – created a system that gave donors the power to determine an individual's trustworthiness, and in turn, their worthiness of charity. This system provided subscribers of the LMS with 'printed tickets' which 'could be exchanged for meals, but candidates first had to answer a set of questions about their history and habits and be deemed deserving.'[30] The inquiry included 'information concerning the applicant's family life, employment history, settlement, and rent levels [...] whether poor relief had been received, and whether belongings had been pawned or the applicant was in debt.'[31] After offering insight into their history, 'the mendicant had to explain how he or she came to be begging, and by whom and under what circumstances the ticket was obtained.'[32] In addition to this information, the individual seeking aid had to provide a reference.[33] Even after receiving aid, individuals could expect 'at least one home visit.'[34] Through this intense process of investigation, the LMS could establish worthiness. What becomes clear from such a method is that the LMS sought to provide aid for the 'acceptable' poor: that is those that fit within their criteria of appearance, lifestyle, and manner. In doing so, the LMS 'made no attempt to provide long-term treatment or assistance. Rather, it acted as a clearing house, identifying the moral condition of its clients and directing them to

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appropriate bodies and individuals for treatment.'[35] Middle-class Londoners could then act charitably, knowing not only that they were *only* supporting the deserving, but that they were additionally supporting and enacting the removal of *un*deserving mendicity from the spaces of London. This change was so drastic that a beggar remarked to Mayhew that '[t]he new police and this b--- Mendicity Society' had 'spoilt it all.'[36] No individual or group could thus diverge from the LMS's version of honesty, or truthfulness, in their begging. The LMS, like the New Poor Law and the Vagrancy Act, set out to distinguish between the honest and deserving who *could not* work – and those who were, conversely, 'dishonest' and 'undeserving' through their refusal to work. Through such categorisations these systems punished an inability or refusal to adhere to the contemporary ideology of self-reliance.

Whilst often outwardly remaining sympathetic to the poor, Mayhew nevertheless reinscribes and reinforces this hierarchy through the methodology of his own classification system. The first classification that Mayhew makes in *London Labour* is between 'two distinct and broadly marked races. viz., the wanderers and the settlers – the vagabond and the citizen – the nomadic and the civilized tribes.'[37] Through this categorisation, Mayhew uses highly racialised language to distinguish between the 'street-folk' and other Londoners. These others are separate, with 'distinctive physical' and 'moral […] characteristics.'[38] While Mayhew's interviews appear to inspire sympathy or empathy by giving a voice to the poor, this initial classification of street-folk as a separate race works against his initial humanisation of the poor. Not only does Mayhew seem to work against his own charitable goals, but this classification seems to justify the street-folk's exclusion. However, Mayhew also inscribes additional layers of 'otherness' through the (in)ability of certain individuals to work. Throughout the four volumes, Mayhew further distinguishes between 'those who *will* work, those that *cannot* work,' and 'those that *will not* work.'[39] This categorisation is enacted both at the beginning of the volume, by declaring that *London Labour* is 'A Cyclopædia of the Condition and Earnings OF THOSE THAT WILL THAT *WILL* WORK THOSE

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THAT *CANNOT* WORK, AND THOSE THAT *WILL NOT* WORK,' and through the organisation of *London Labour* itself, as Mayhew places street-folk into one of the three categories.[40] As with the New Poor Law, the Vagrancy Act, and the policies of the LMS, self-reliance comes to shape the hierarchy of Mayhew's classification. That Mayhew sees those who prefer 'to *sell* rather than *beg*' as 'possessing the strongest claims to our sympathy and charity,' points to the value he places upon labour and those who choose to participate in it.[41] Additionally, that Mayhew views labour 'as a means of redemption from beggary' highlights how he views mendicity as both inherently wrong and a situation stemming from beggars' own 'wrong' choices, from which they need to be saved.[42]

The classification of deserving and undeserving in *London Labour* becomes more complicated when an individual is disabled. In comparison to able-bodied beggars, beggars with disabilities in *London Labour* warrant limited sympathy. In London, disabled beggars who had 'acquired a sort of prescriptive right to beg where they please' were 'not considered to be impostors' and were 'allowed to pursue begging as a regular calling.'[43] The mariner, who Mayhew describes as 'scarcely in a position to earn his living by labour, and is therefore a fit object for charity,' should also fall under the category of deserving.[44] However, it is difficult to read this sympathy as entirely genuine since the language used to describe the working class and the begging poor are vastly different. The nutmeg grater seller – i.e., a person with a disability who works – is described as 'noble,' while people with disabilities who beg are described as a 'poor wretch' and an 'idiotic-looking youth.'[45] Similarly, the mariner, who should be deserving, is nevertheless included in volume four, which focuses on those who *choose* not to work. Once again 'honesty' inscribes value: the nutmeg grater seller's work, which Mayhew views as honest, places him in the category of deserving, while the mariner's, which is founded on a lie, makes him undeserving. Mayhew therefore reinscribes the

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hierarchy of self-reliance through his own biases and classifications that inform the seemingly impartial text.

Making a Mariner: Disability, Self-Fashioning, and the Stare

Having considered disability, mendicity, self-reliance, and Mayhew's role in perpetuating these discourses, we can better understand the various forms of narrativisation the mariner's body experiences as it is perceived. Martha Stoddard-Holmes argues that, although the 'questions and narrative frames [Mayhew] provides have substantial control over the autobiographies, this control is never absolute.'[46] While Mayhew attempts to relegate the mariner into the category of undeserving, he nevertheless acquires alms, is regarded as deserving by those from whom he receives charity, and is able to relay how he became deserving. Most importantly, we gain insight into how the mariner shaped himself to be viewed by the middle class. As such, I argue that the mariner participates in an act of self-fashioning. I borrow the term self-fashioning, or self-representation, from Rosemarie Garland-Thomson and Natalie Prizel, who use this phrase to describe how people with disabilities, knowing that they will be subjects of the public gaze, intentionally set about presenting themselves.[47] The interaction between a person with a disability and an able-bodied person is, Garland argues, 'inherently relational in that they presume that the representation one creates will be apprehended by someone else.'[48] This term is a particularly useful lens through which to examine Mayhew's mariner given that his begging relies on the looking and apprehension of strangers. As Prizel outlines, the mariner expected others to view his '[performance] of the self,' that is, for his self-fashioning to be witnessed, and for the witnesses to respond by donating money.[49] As its definition outlines, performance is a crucial component of self-fashioning: what does it mean to perform the self? Petra

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Kuppers defines performance as 'the semiconscious alternative experience of one's embodiment when under pressure; and the conscious and artful manipulation of one's narrative of a disabled self, a performance of selfhood in politicized storytelling.'[50] While Kuppers' description points to the involuntary nature of performance, she also draws attention to the fact that it is also often intentional. In these instances of intentional performance, '[p]erformers work with scripts' of 'disability, gender, race,' and 'class,' to 'rewrite and examine' expectations.[51] Therefore, to perform the self when one is disabled is to play with perceptions, to understand how they will be viewed and to work with or against these scripts to regain control of the signification the able-bodied stare places upon them.

As we can see throughout *London Labour,* these performances can take multiple forms. For example, Stoddard-Holmes considers how a blind lace seller deploys a mixture of restraint, emotionality, honesty and theatricality to be 'both the beggar and the child, and yet […] neither,' thus occupying 'multiple positions within the emotional economy of disability, weeping freely and making others weep, receiving alms and passing them on. Rather than resisting the emotional stereotypes of his time, he puts them to work.'[52] The blind lace seller both defies and uses categorisation for his benefit. However, while the blind lace seller plays with affect and classification, the bricklayer/mariner deploys specific oral and visual modes to identify himself as a sailor. Seemingly, the most important aspects of his performance are his 'sailor's jacket and trousers and a straw 'at,' 'some sailors' patter' and a 'painting they spread upon the pavement.'[53] While not immediately convincing to a modern audience, these accoutrements draw on specific signifiers of the nineteenth-century sailor.

To be a sailor, or rather to play a sailor, was no small feat. As Isaac Land points out, '[b]y the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, autobiographers identified themselves *as sailors*, writing almost as if this were a distinct religious or ethnic group.'[54] To be a sailor was not only specific, but also hypervisible since the identity was

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associated with a particular look and mannerism. Land goes on to discuss how 'Jack Tars' – a common nickname afforded to seamen serving in the Royal Navy or Merchant Navy – often 'enjoyed dressing alike,' donning 'outfit[s] for themselves that ensured that they would stand out on shore' even though 'there were no standard-issue uniforms for common seamen in the Royal Navy until the middle of the nineteenth century.'[55] By using a sailor's jacket, the mariner brings himself into that group, therefore aligning himself with other sailors. This is similarly true of 'sea talk.'[56] While this language was '[a]t one level […] the shared language of sails, ropes, yards, masts, and anchors that formed the common work environment,' it '[m]ore broadly […] described a whole world of experience.'[57] Therefore, for the mariner to draw on sailor's language is to similarly ingrain himself within a larger community, to signal to his audience that he can participate in and perpetuate aspects of a naval culture. Even as this language 'delimited the boundaries of the authentic,' the mariner is able claim authenticity through a compelling performance.[58] Therefore, to be a believable sailor the mariner must fit the part: he must walk, talk, and look like a sailor to convince onlookers. These items are significant not only for how they 'make' one a sailor – or rather how they convince others – but also for how they signal a sailor's relationship to nation and people.

To consider the relationship between sailor and nation I turn both to mid-nineteenth-century nautical melodrama and contemporary accounts of British sailors. As Arnold Schmidt notes, 'melodrama', which 'blends comic, dramatic, and tragic elements', is 'identified by its stock characters, incorporation of song and dance, and three-act rather than five-act structure.'[59] Through these characters, '[m]elodrama creates a world of clearly delineated good and evil, with robust conflicts which resolve happily, if implausibly or coincidentally, rewarding virtue and punishing vice.'[60] To establish the boundary between good and evil, the nautical melodrama often focused on British military successes 'from the Napoleonic […] Crimean and Boer Wars,' with the

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Jack Tar as 'the play's moral center.'[61] In these plays, the Jack Tar often acted a kind of 'social corrective,' largely deviating from previous iterations in which the Jack Tar's only interests were women and alcohol.[62] Instead, the Jack Tar of nineteenth-century nautical melodramas was honest, loyal, and ultimately ensured the success of his companions and nation.

The emergence of Jack Tar as a national hero not only occurred on stage but also within the public imagination. As Miles Taylor notes, while 'the hagiography around Nelson remained' in the Victorian era, 'naval heroism became less focused on warfare and more on the manly and moral exemplary virtues of the great admirals and captains.'[63] Not only were low-level naval sailors suddenly heroic, but notions of maritime morality and virtue continued to expand to include those outside the Navy. Much like how 'the line between heroic men at sea in general, and naval icons in particular, became blurred [...] a similar process was underway' with commercial mariners.[64] Through this process 'the rough-hewn stereotype of 'Jack Tar'' became a 'manly character' that emphasised the 'physical prowess of the ordinary sailor.'[65] No longer was a man of maritime commerce potentially someone of disrepute, but one whose physical abilities would aid the nation. This was particularly true due to the emergence of a specific kind of masculine maritime identity that developed in the mid-eighteenth century.[66] Isaac Land argues that the sailor identity became particularly gendered through two virtues: heroism and virility. This British heroism 'differed from simple bravery' in that '[i]t mattered that you knew what you were fighting for.'[67] Additionally, this heroism became connected to the creation of more British heroes. As Land notes, '[p]ronatalists had become convinced by the 1750s that sailors needed to curtail their wandering ways, engage in procreative sex acts more often, move in to model villages built at government expense, and help raise healthy children to

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maturity.'[68] By combining these two concepts, 'Jack Tar could both fight for the nation and foster future seamen,' becoming 'the complete patriot.'[69] Much like the Jack Tar on stage, by the 'mid-eighteenth century,' the Jack Tar of public imagination became 'increasingly domesticated and patriotic.'[70]

In the public imagination, theatre and reality blended, coming to shape an idealised version of the sailor and his experiences: he was masculine, a nationalist, and honest.[71] As Gillian Russell argues, the nautical melodrama and the actions of real-life sailors were mutually informing. The theatricality of the nautical melodrama was similarly found in the 'procession, display, music, ceremonial and choreographed exercise' of the celebrations of military and naval successes.[72] As with the life of the stage actor, the real Jack Tar experienced a 'continuously theatricalized encounter with authority: every aspect of his life, from the mundane duty of attending to uniform and kit, to drill, manoeuvres, and even recreation were all, to a varying degree, performances, patterns of behaviour defined by military rules.'[73] Due to the theatricality of everyday life, Russell argues that '[t]o become a soldier in late Georgian society was therefore to take on the identity of the actor (and vice versa).'[74] For Russell, sailors are actors merely enacting the behaviours and codes to identify themselves as sailors. Similarly, actors playing sailors on stage had to convincingly embody and enact these rituals. In both instances, real or imaginary, these behaviours, clothing, and language come together to identify one as a sailor. The sailor's 'naval costume, shipboard language, and manner' was so distinct that it was enough to '[distinguish] them from the civilian community.'[75] Therefore, when the mariner puts on his jacket, hat, and speaks using sailor's cant, he also engages in the larger practice of maritime theatrics,

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becoming easily recognisable due to the proliferation of the sailor. If '[b]ecoming a soldier was thus, at a fundamental level, a theatrical experience,' then the mariner, like a real sailor, recognises his 'capacity to take on another identity' through performance.'[76] For the mariner, this identity is not necessarily found in reality, but in an ideal which signals his worthiness of charity.

However, this performance was not without risk. That one could incorrectly perform such an identity, and thus signal their inauthenticity, is also found in *London Labour.* The Turnpike Sailor who, like the shipwrecked mariner, 'has seldom been at sea,' begged as a sailor by using 'slang [...] picked up at the lowest public houses in the filthiest slums,' and 'in his gait [...] endeavours to counterfeit the roll of a true seamen.'[77] However, he is caught out when Mayhew's companion notices that the Turnpike Sailor 'spit to wind'ard,' which a 'real sailor' would never do.[78] There is, then, always the risk of exposure. The response to this risk is the cultivation of knowledge – the knowledge of clothes, behaviour, and identity – into an accurate, credible, and believable performance so that he can continue to access charity.

This knowledge, and the performance it produces, has to be witnessed by the middle class in order to produce its intended effect: Mayhew's mariner wants, and needs, to be seen. This encounter between the mariner and his audience of onlookers is thus contingent on the stare and the information that is exchanged through sight. As Rosemarie Garland-Thomson notes, 'stares flare up when we glimpse people who look or act in ways that contradict our expectations.'[79] The act of staring, Garland-Thomson goes on to discuss, is rooted in an attempt to transform the incoherent into the coherent.[80] Viewed through this conceptual lens, the mariner must then occupy a precarious position. He must not only garner stares through his self-fashioning, but he must maintain the stare, fighting the starers' desire to transform the unexpected into the expected. Therefore, the mariner must be unusual enough to garner stares and curious enough to maintain that stare long enough to incite the stranger's identification with his story to receive charity. If '[o]utdoor relief in monetary form was [...] to be

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discouraged except in the most exceptional circumstances' then the mariner had to make himself exceptional.[81] The mariner must exploit the immediate incoherence of the stare, and through his self-fashioning, turn it into a prolonged interaction – that is, he must keep their attention.

It is crucial that the mariner maintain the stares of almsgivers due to the regulations of public urban space. Not only was begging risky due to the Vagrancy Act, but it became increasingly and actively dangerous due to the displacement of beggars, people with disabilities, and disabled beggars from the streets of London. While many disabled people, beggars, and disabled beggars acquired capital through various means, the perception that they were incapable of doing so, and that this incapability subsequently harmed middle-class society, sparked the desire to remove these people from the spaces of London.[82] This notion of protecting the middle class from the poor continued to emerge in discussions surrounding the regulation of space. While the LMS took other charitable action, their removal of beggars highlights that their larger goal was to turn London into a space that they deemed respectable. Similarly, while less coordinated, *London Labour* also evidences that people with disabilities were removed from the city's streets. Even the nutmeg grater seller, who Mayhew presents as superior due to his work ethic, is forced out of a coffee shop by police.[83] Similarly, a disabled street-sweeper recounts being forced from Regent Street by the police after 'a lady, who was a very good customer of [Mr. Cook], refused to come while I was there; my heavy afflictions was such that she didn't like the look of me.'[84] It was therefore not just societies such as the LMS that expelled particular people from these spaces, but the police and citizens also took it upon themselves to participate in this removal. The experiences of the nutmeg grater seller and the street-sweeper expose how nineteenth-century society's acceptance of people with disabilities into the capitalist economy was always limited and conditional.

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Beggars with disabilities experienced a similar kind of conditional acceptance. While beggars with disabilities were the only people who had a 'right' to beg according to Mayhew, they were also described as potentially dangerous. Mayhew reports '[i]nstances' where 'nervous females' were 'seriously frightened, and even injured, by seeing men without legs or arms crawling at their feet.'[85] As Mayhew describes able-bodied people's encounters with people with disabilities as potentially dangerous, the streets of London become spaces of terror and even injury. Such a framing highlights the risks of leaving the house, of entering the streets of London and being 'forced' to encounter people with disabilities. The only way then to alleviate such risk, this example seems to suggest, is removal. Mayhew leaves the reader with the impression that the desire for their removal, which is rooted in a desire to safeguard the middle class and able-bodied, is only natural.

Through the removal of beggars, and specifically disabled beggars, more space is created for the middle class to imagine a future urban space without disability or begging. As Warne argues, this project of removal in *London Labour* 'implicitly [envisions] a new kind of city,' where 'the street […] would become a more definitively middle-class space and would take on the more narrow function of thoroughfare.'[86] Through the removal of 'the ''more hideous' disabled people from London's crowded streets,' the LMS, police, and citizens could 'declutter, modernize, and homogenize street life, transforming streets into traffic arteries and facilitating the circulation of pedestrians, passengers, and goods.'[87] Through this removal, various institutions and individuals could ensure that capital continued to flow throughout the streets of London. The removal of these groups would not only create more space for the middle class, but this was seen as essential for individual and city-wide advancement. Since industrialisation was figured as advancing the nation, and people with disabilities, beggars, and beggars with disabilities were figured as antithetical to this development, their removal was necessary to ensure not only the progress of the middle class, but of London itself. By removing these 'obstacles […] of progress' and 'threats to futurity,' the

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middle class hoped to ensure the advancement of both their community and the city itself.[88]

In contrast, even though the bricklayer/mariner is doubly visible – that is, he is both a beggar and disabled – his performance as a sailor permits him to continue to occupy public space, ultimately remaining in London. Why, then, does a mariner incite more stares, encounters, and sympathy than a bricklayer? While both positions serve the nation – as the bricklayer builds the city and the mariner transports goods – the mariner is deemed of greater value. The man's begging as a bricklayer was 'barely sufficient to procure bread.'[89] The bricklayer, a working-class position disconnected from middle-class life, 'was not sufficiently picturesque [enough] to attract attention, and his story was of too ordinary a kind to excite much interest.'[90] A disabled manual labourer is so commonplace in the streets of London that he almost becomes invisible to the middle-class stare, blending in rather than drawing attention, and thus inciting fewer social interactions from which he can extrapolate charity. He is rendered invisible by expectation. While the bricklayer disappears for a middle-class audience, it is evident that the sailor conversely becomes the focus of the middle-class stare. While he struggles as a begging bricklayer, as a sailor, he and Trafalgar Jack brought in 'two pound and seven shillings' in a week.[91] Unlike the bricklayer, the mariner keeps the attention of the middle classes. But why does a sailor's disability make him visible while a bricklayer's disability makes him *in*visible?

The answer to this lies in the mariner's visibility, which is twofold: it is both national and colonial. As I have previously discussed, the legibility of the sailor ensures that the mariner remains visible, is perceived, and in turn, receives aid. Additionally, not only is a sailor visible, but he similarly comes to represent a masculine, honest, and patriotic figure, which would understandably inspire more profitable encounters. However, I further argue that there is a colonial component to the mariner's visibility. The mariner, while signalling a national figure, additionally facilitates a colonial identity. As the mariner reinforces national discourses through his performance, he also relies

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on colonial scripts that associate the sailor with imports. That is, the sailor's presence reinforces British national identity through imagined continued access to goods.

To understand how the visibility of Mayhew's mariner signals access to such goods, it is important to outline maritime commerce in the nineteenth century. Sailors played a key role in the collection and importation of goods acquired in the colonies and Europe during an increased period of commerce that occurred post 1815. As Taylor notes in the introduction to *The Victorian Empire and Britain's Maritime World,* '[t]he global warfare of the eighteenth century led to the pax Britannica of the nineteenth.'[92] This period of relative peace allowed Britain to use its maritime resources towards establishing and maintaining trade routes.[93] Additionally, Britain's commercial maritime dominance was made possible due to changes in policy, such as the East India Company's loss of their 'exclusive trading rights' and 'the repeal of the Navigation Acts in 1849.'[94] Therefore, the opportunities for individuals to participate in British trade vastly increased during this period.

By the mid-century, millions of pounds worth of goods were imported into Britain, such as live animals, tans and hides, silk, lace, wood, coffee, tea, sugar, alcohol, and spices.[95] As these goods were brought into the country, the British public were kept up to date on imports and exports through sources such as the *Illustrated London News* and *The Colonial Magazine and Maritime Journal.*[96] Access to these goods, particularly those domesticated and in turn deemed 'British,' became increasingly important for structuring a national identity. This is particularly true for tea and sugar. In 'Deeply Indebted to the Tea-Plant': Representations of English National Identity in Victorian Histories of Tea,' Julie E. Fromer charts the birth of tea's Britishness through nineteenth-century tea histories. While tea was originally associated with its Chinese origins, '[t]ea

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was transformed from an exotic luxury consumed primarily by men in coffeehouses to a necessity of everyday life enjoyed by both men and women in the domestic space of the home' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[97] This shift from exotic commodity to 'national beverage,' Fromer argues, was due to tea's role within the domestic and national spheres.[98] As the act of drinking tea became a domestic ritual, it similarly became associated with 'privacy, intimacy, and the nuclear family.'[99] While this increasingly domestic practice was thought to soothe and aid the individual, it was also believed to aid the development of the nation.[100] Since 'the nation' was 'shaped by everyday domestic interactions within the home and among family members,' drinking tea could nourish both the individual and national body.[101]

A similar process of domestication occurred with sugar. Like tea, enormous quantities of sugar were imported into the country. The desire for sugar 'was linked intimately to the rise of British tea consumption.'[102] Sugar and tea were such co-dependent commodities that '[t]he West India lobby – that London-based federation of planters, slave-traders and financial backers – actively promoted tea production, for they realized that expanding tea-drinking meant increased sugar consumption.'[103] As James Walvin notes, 'in the course of the 17th century, Europeans led by the British, transformed tea consumption by adding sugar:' the rise of a British identification with tea is similarly an identification with sugar.[104] Since 'tea and sugar were linked inextricably to British dietary habits' and sugar was necessary to transform tea into a British drink, sugar had to go through a similar process of domestication.[105] Like tea, sugar's incorporation into the home brought the product into the private lives of

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Victorians, leading to a similar process of co-optation and naturalisation through daily consumption. As Victorians consumed sugar in various forms, it was domesticated through its association with other British goods, such as tea and baking ingredients, rather than its colonial roots.

Through these histories of tea and sugar, it becomes evident that an individual's relationship with these imported and foreign commodities was highly mediated through colonial and imperial discourses. While only representing two products, this showcases how nineteenth-century British trade was necessary for establishing and maintaining a British identity. As foreign goods were introduced into the home, the processes of domestication and incorporation into previously established domestic British traditions 'erase [these commodities'] foreign origins and re-present it as purely English.'[106]

To drink tea, and to consume foreign goods more generally, was not apolitical, but a continual process of consumption, domestication, and identification. This identification had to occur at every instance of encounter. Every time an individual used sugar in their baking, they were forced to conceptualise their relationship to this foreign product. However, in the case of nineteenth-century foreign commodities that were already seen as imperially 'British', like tea, it was easier for the individual to assume that they were drinking a more domestically 'British' beverage.

Since these items were necessary for the creation and maintenance of this identity, we can begin to see how the mariner provided greater economic and social value than a bricklayer. Additionally, since this national identity was contingent on consumption, a short-lived activity, the British public required repeated encounters to continually affirm their identity. Therefore, the British public required the perpetual repetition of the mariner's labour to ensure their continued access to colonial goods from which they could mould their identity. If the body is 'a cultural text that is interpreted, inscribed with meaning – indeed *made* – within social relations,' as Garland-Thomson argues, this false fashioning allows the mariner to exploit a previously established social relation to gain charity.[107] The middle-class stare comes to

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inscribe meaning, to impart on to the mariner the particular national and colonial ideals and notions of accessibility that the British public associate with such work.[108] That is, he can only become a mariner through their stare, through the process of looking, recognition, and acknowledgement. Similarly, through their looking, the sailor's body, which becomes imbued with colonial identification, comes to reflect their own ideals back on them. While the mariner has allowed for the middle class to impart meaning onto his body, he has controlled *what* meaning is imparted onto it through his self-fashioning. The mariner has represented himself exactly as the British public wants to see him, shaping himself in the ways that will affirm their own beliefs about their relations to the working class. As the mariner signals his specific national and colonial labour through dress, painting, and patter, he also signals to the starers *how* this labour has already, and can continue to, aid them. That this relation is legible, that the onlookers can read this meaning on the mariner's body, becomes evident, again, through his successful begging. As this self-fashioning makes the body readable, this process not only controls the stares and the narrativisation of the disabled body, but it anticipates and seeks to determine the starers response before the encounter even occurs. When they look, they will see a particular national and colonial identity: a sailor, an identification which, evidently, compels them to provide aid. Therefore, it is as though the mariner has formulated a short-cut to ensuring that stares result in charity, or, rather, he has found an easy means by which to dip into middle-class purses.

This self-fashioning, then, serves multiple functions: first and foremost, it provides the mariner with a means to occupy spaces that seek to remove him. The work of the mariner's usefully 'useless' body thus offers him the means to remain within the spaces of London. Additionally, it allows him to control how he is seen. Through this control, he can continue to exploit the stares of the middle class. Finally, the mariner's performance exposes the conditions and limitations of the middle class's 'generosity,' showcasing the ways in which acknowledging and maintaining colonial identification took precedent over aiding those in need. Mayhew's bricklayer-turned-shipwrecked-mariner may have offered Victorian readers an example of the supposed mendicity of beggars, but in doing so he also illustrates how people with disabilities are able to turn the stare of charity on itself, exposing the limits of self-reliance.

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0&#*', "/1: Megan McLennan is a fourth-year PhD candidate at Western University. Her doctoral thesis entitled, 'The Members May Vary, But the Family Never Goes Away': Victorian Women's Writing, Haunted Houses, and Sites of Care', argues that the haunted house in nineteenth-century women's supernatural fiction facilitates care communities for the female protagonists, their homes, and their living and non-living relations. Her other research interests include gender studies, queer theory, and the Victorian fantastic.

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Romance, Revolution & Reform

‘Body And Soul’ – Emotional Labour in Margaret Harkness’ Fin-De-Siècle Fiction and Journalism

ROSEMARY ARCHER

Abstract: This article seeks to uncover a political reading of Margaret Harkness’ writing by applying late-twentieth-century sociological theories of emotional labour, especially those of Arnie Russell Hochschild, to Harkness’ fin-de-siècle fiction and journalism. I consider the novellas *Connie* (1893-94) and *Roses and Crucifix* (1891-92) as well as a series of investigative articles for the *British Weekly* (later published as a collection, *Toilers in London*), reading them through the critical lens of emotional labour. Using this approach, I argue that Harkness’ protagonists can be seen as belonging to the ‘emotional proletariat’.[1] I examine the various ways in which these texts present the requirement for working-class women to undertake emotional labour which, in turn, subjects them to the intersectional disadvantage of class and gender. I ultimately argue that it is Harkness’ recognition and discussion of this that positions her writing as political activism, giving her a distinctive voice in both contemporary slum fiction and socialist writing.

Keywords: Margaret Harkness, Emotional Labour, Working-Class Women’s Labour, Emotional Proletariat, Intersectional Disadvantage, Socialist Fiction

‘L , 3&. (!(. . 4 !) #!think that they buy servants body and soul for so much a year’.[2] This servant’s complaint is made during an interview carried out by Margaret Harkness for her *British Weekly* ‘ Tempted London’ articles, a series intended as an investigation into

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the difficulties facing young working-class women employed in London.[3] Whilst the expression 'body and soul' may be a clichéd attempt by the servant to convey emotional intensity, nevertheless she has intuited a deeper truth, one which Harkness would observe and record throughout her journalism and fiction, and one that late-twentieth century sociologists would later theorise: namely, that for some nineteenth-century working-class women the most oppressive aspect of their employment was the requirement for them to undertake emotional labour, a form of paid labour requiring not just outward emotional conformity but the manipulation and commercialisation of their psyche, or soul.

Harkness' representations of working-class women's labour are already ripe ground for fresh scholarly attention, yet I extend this by focusing specifically on Harkness' representation of these women's emotional labour: within this, I use the term 'emotional labour' to refer to the process by which working-class women in the service sectors are expected to manage, display and even experience emotion in the manner required by their employer. Crucially, in this paradigm, the employee's pay depends upon their ability to suppress or evoke the requisite emotion. Coined by Arlie Russell Hochschild in 1983, 'emotional labour' is a late-twentieth century term that is significant in that it describes a type of labour that was previously invisible and unseen and therefore not valued. Reading Harkness' work through the lens of Hochschild's theory enables a form of nineteenth-century intersectional oppression to emerge from the pages of Harkness' texts, furnishing us with a critical vocabulary, unavailable to Harkness, to articulate that oppression. Reading *Toilers in London* and the novellas *Roses and Crucifix* and *Connie* through this lens of emotional labour, I argue that Harkness positions her working-class women as an emotional proletariat, subject to the intersectional disadvantage(s) of class and gender. This interrogation uncovers much about the ideological struggle in which Harkness was engaged during the fin de siècle and positions her writing as both socialist and feminist political activism. At the end of the nineteenth century there was little, if any, understanding of emotional labour as a named concept, much less using this terminology: nevertheless, this methodology positions 'emotional labour' as a useful critical lens in exploring working-class women's

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felt, if unnamed, experience. My methodology seeks not to apply twentieth-century sensibilities to the fin de siècle, therefore, but rather to provide a novel critical framework for understanding working-class women's experiences of labour during this period.

In her major work *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983), Hochschild argued that emotional labour had the same commercial value as physical or intellectual labour.[4] She defined emotional labour as 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange value.*'[5] Although the emphasis in her definition is on the external display of this labour, much of her work explores the necessity for employees to internally experience (as well as externally exhibit) these emotions; an authentic display of emotion is vital if it is to have exchange value. In this way, Hochschild finds equivalence between the psychic harm that results from emotional labour and the physical harms experienced by those in, for example, unregulated factory work.

Hochschild goes on to argue that the growth of late twentieth century service industries, which have employed a predominantly female workforce, has meant that emotional labour is more often required from women than it is from men, and that therefore women are disproportionately impacted by its harms. Although service industries are often considered to be a twentieth-century development, significant numbers of working-class women were employed in this sector at the fin de siècle, literally 'in service', in bars, in the theatre, or in the newly emerging department stores. Roles requiring emotional labour from the employee tended to be low status with few opportunities for collectivism which, in turn, left those undertaking emotional labour more vulnerable to workplace exploitation and job insecurity, as Harkness' writing amply illustrates. Cameron Lynne Macdonald and Carmen Sirianni developed these sociological ideas further in their edited collection of essays, *Working in the Service Society* (1996): here, they define emotional labour as 'the conscious manipulation of the workers' self-presentation either to display feeling states and/or to create feeling states

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in others', building on Hochschild's ideas to coin the term 'emotional proletariat'.[6] Drawing upon Marxist terminology, they finessed this to describe those in the lowest socio-economic classes who, lacking the means of production, must sell their emotional labour instead. Emotional autonomy is removed from the employee, their continued employment being contingent upon their ability to successfully sell their emotional labour. The loss of autonomy is emphasised through explicit instructions, known as feeling rules, that dictate how the employee should speak or act. Adherence to these feeling rules, and the sincerity with which the required emotional labour is carried out, is policed by both manager and customer. Although these theoretical stances were developed almost a hundred years after Harkness was writing, their relevance to the circumstances that she delineated is both striking and compelling. As sociologist and socialist, the one informing the other, Harkness' observation of women undertaking emotional labour, and its accompanying disadvantage, reaches across the century and resolves itself in the theoretical frameworks developed by Hochschild, Macdonald and Sirriani. What Harkness observed, they would later theorise.[7]

Throughout 1888, Harkness wrote intensively: her realist novel *Out Of Work* was published under her pseudonym John Law and, at the same time, a subsequent novel *Capt. Lobe* was being serialised in the *British Weekly* alongside her sociological study of working-class women's labour, *Tempted London*.[8] Each of these texts was characterised by a socialist interrogation of working-class life and employment, with a particular focus on women's experience. This year would mark something of a turning point in Harkness' writing career; not only was more of her work being published, after several years of sporadic journalism, but she was now deploying her fiction and journalism as a form of political activism. By the end of 1888, the name 'John Law' was becoming widely known in both England and Europe, and was associated with a form

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of realist novel underpinned by socialist ideology. Harkness' novelistic and journalistic output encompassed a broad sweep of topics: East End unemployment and unrest, the pernicious effects of poverty, the social action of the Salvation Army but, above all, working-class women's experience of work. These themes were not exclusive to Harkness, and several other writers at this time, such as George Gissing, Walter Besant and Arthur Morrison, were engaged in the developing genre of realist slum fiction. However, most of these slum novels were written by men who privileged an androcentric depiction of poverty: the lives of *women* living in poverty were doubly marginalised, rendered subordinate to narratives focusing on men's experiences of poverty, whilst also being mediated through the gaze of a middle-class male writer. It is perhaps this that Harkness had in mind when, in an interview for *The Evening News and Post*, she opposed these masculine accounts with the self-declared truthfulness of her own writing. She comments: 'Walter Besant had brought out his first book on the East-end and I was so disgusted with its untruthfulness that I conceived the idea of writing a story which should picture the lives of the East-enders in their true colours.'[9] The 'true colours' that Harkness speaks of here entailed the foregrounding of women's experience of poverty within a politicised framework with a particular focus on the requirement for working-class women to undertake emotional labour.

That working-class women were obliged to engage in hard physical labour was already a concern, whether this was pit brow lasses, shop girls standing for seventeen hours a day or the 'slavey' who was the single maid-of-all-work in a modest household.[10] What went unobserved, by legislators and inspectors alike, was the necessity for working-class women in certain employment roles to undertake demanding emotional labour with its requirement to not only present by facial and physical display the appropriate emotions, but to actually internalise and experience these emotions. Employees were effectively 'selling' emotions such as gratitude, loyalty, care and affection, to maximise profit for an employer by flattering the customer.

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Harkness, in a way that was unusual for the period, observed the intersectional disadvantage of class and gender that arose from this requirement to undertake emotional labour. At the time, these struggles were generally seen as separate rather than intersectional. However, as Patricia E. Johnson argues, 'Class and gender are composed dynamically and dialogically', and this dynamic and simultaneous testing of class and gender boundaries by her protagonists becomes a recurring plot device in Harkness' novels, albeit one that often results in wistful defeat.[11] Johnson goes on to argue that there was a 'masculine bias in the construct of the Victorian working class' and a separate, yet linked, disadvantage in that there was 'middle-class bias in [the] construct of femininity.'[12] Harkness is therefore already unusual in turning her attention to working-class women's labour, yet she goes further by focusing her analysis on their intersectional disadvantage. In particular, she demonstrated that this coalesced in a very specific form of exploitation, one that was unique to their class and gender – the exploitation of their emotional labour.[13]

This concern first emerges in her fortnightly articles that appeared from April to December 1888, 'Tempted London: Young Women', in the *British Weekly,* a periodical that combined non-conformist religious views with a liberal political agenda. Harkness explained, in a later 1890 interview with *The Evening News and Post*, that:

> the editor of the *British Weekly* wrote and asked me if I would write a series of papers they were contemplating on young men. He, of course, thought 'John Law' was a man. I called upon him, and we had a great laugh. But I undertook to write the papers on young women.[14]

There was a campaigning mode to these sociological studies and subsequent papers; the style was quasi-fictional, as Harkness frequently quoted her subjects verbatim and at times had recourse to elements of melodrama in order to impart the full horror of the women's employment. In writing these articles, later reprinted in a single volume

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by Hodder and Stoughton as *Toilers in London*, Harkness was adding to a larger corpus of women's social investigation into the experience of working women.[15] Yet Harkness differs from her contemporaries in privileging a discussion of emotional labour which becomes as important to her ideological purpose as the accompanying details about long working hours and poor pay.

One of these articles, 'Barmaids', an inquiry into women's pay and working conditions in the bars of London's theatres, hotels and railway stations, often illustrated by anecdotal evidence, is particularly pertinent to women's experience of emotional labour. MacDonald and Sirianni would later argue that, for women working in service industries, work involves not the production of a product but the creation and maintenance of a relationship through emotional labour whilst, for the emotional proletariat, emotional labour is supervised or policed by both manager and customer. This theoretical stance is evident in Harkness' article: for example, she presents the case of a barmaid who refused to undertake such labour and instead 'ventured to remonstrate with a customer'.[16] Accordingly, the customer complained that 'they had not been treated with sufficient courtesy' and Harkness tells us that 'The following day all of the girls were discharged at a moment's notice'.[17] There is a synergy here between Harkness' nineteenth-century observations and Macdonald and Sirianni's twentieth-century sociological theories of emotional labour, which note that 'at the lower end of the spectrum of service jobs, workers are peripheral and expendable'.[18] Hochschild would go on to argue that emotional labour requires the worker 'to either display feeling states and/or to create feeling states in others': mirroring this, Harkness observes that the barmaids must 'wink at many things and try to keep their customers in good humour'.[19] We are told that the women must 'make themselves agreeable, or they are dismissed' and that managers 'will only have girls that flirt' in order to please their customers.[20] Women's emotional labour becomes the product that is being sold; if business falls off then the girls 'try to look smart; they laugh and chaff' in order to

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increase custom.[21] But Harkness goes further; she not only observes this in her *British Weekly* articles but seeks to politicise it, too, when she writes that 'employers do not seem to have any conscience about barmaids. The public ignore them altogether'.[22] Harkness seems to be making an accusation of neglect by both sides of the political spectrum; government inquiries were concerned only with working-class women's sweated or factory labour whilst socialist organisations such as the Social Democratic Foundation (SDF) excluded women's labour, in all its forms, from their policies and strategies.

Between June and September 1888, Harkness' articles for the *British Weekly* investigated the experiences of women in domestic service through a series of interviews with both servants and mistresses. These, in turn, attracted a lively correspondence, and a selection of the letters was subsequently published in the September 7th edition of the *British Weekly*. Harkness stated that she could 'vouch for the truth of the statements' that the letters contained, again reiterating her written commitment to *truthful* representation of these women's experiences.[23] She prefaced them with the statement 'Readers will find that each of these letters embodies at least one grievance', and indeed the 'one grievance' that implicitly emerges is that of being obliged to undertake emotional labour.[24] The hours, the conditions and the pay may all be poor, but it is this specific form of labour that the servants find most oppressive because of the demands it makes on their psyche. In their later theorising, MacDonald and Sirianni established that the emotional proletariat were obliged to go beyond exhibiting merely superficial performances of emotion: instead, employers' control extended to the workers' inner lives.[25] Applying these theoretical ideas to Harkness' ironically-titled article "A Perfect Servant" reveals the way in which an employer seeks to control the servant's aesthetic choices as part of this tendency by employers to 'oversee and control […] workers' personal and psychic lives too'.[26] Harkness tells us, in

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a sardonic tone, how this servant had her aesthetic tastes managed by her mistress: ‘She is stated to have had a mania for china ornaments […] But she conquered this with the help of her mistress.’[27] The complacency of the mistress in exercising this control is contrasted with the ‘bitter complaints’ from servants who are subject to it.[28] In particular, complaints have reached Harkness about the ‘want of liberty in choosing their “place of worship”’ from servants whose mistresses would seek to dictate their religious belief and its expression.[29] A later letter from A West End Housemaid complains, amongst other things, that ‘What is worse than the work is the whims of my mistress. I am a Dissenter, but am supposed to go to the Established Church as they do.’[30] This objection is telling: for her, the requirement to carry out emotional labour, to allow her inner life to be controlled or managed by her employer, is ‘worse than the work’. Another servant expresses this more concisely in the chapter *Servants versus Mistresses,* noting that ‘Ladies seem to think that they buy servants body *and soul* for so much a year’, a phrase freighted with more meaning than the servant could perhaps have realised.[31]

Conversely, in an almost covert manner, Harkness establishes her ideological argument by also drawing upon accounts from the mistresses of these servants. These accounts enable her to demonstrate that it is the servant’s perceived ability to manipulate her own presentation, to display appropriate feeling-states *and* thereby to generate a positive feeling-state in her employer, that is at the heart of what one mistress deems ‘perfection’. The mistress, who is the wife of a City gentleman and mother of two small children, goes on to say that her servant apparently ‘expresses herself to be “perfectly happy”’ and, to the mistress, she ‘gives satisfaction’, fulfilling her mistress’ emotional needs and expectations by generating positive feelings in her employer .[32] The qualities that the mistress goes on to list – that is, the servant is ‘good-

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tempered, honest, sober, cheerful, affectionate, hard-working' – are qualities that are displayed by the servant but that are designed to bring emotional satisfaction to the employer. It is notable that in this asyndetic listing, the mistress prioritises the emotional labour required by the role over its task-based elements: physical hard work is at the end, not the beginning, of the list.[33] It is as if the mistress has paid close attention to the servant's behaviour and disposition, the outward signifiers of inwardly-felt emotion, whilst her physical labour has remained largely invisible. The mistress claims that 'servants always behave well to me' and 'I have never heard her say a rough word to the children, or anyone else. *She is perfect*'.[34] The servant's perceived perfection, here, is a product of her emotional, more than her physical, labour.

These articles in the *British Weekly* clearly touched a nerve in their readers. Uncollectivised domestic servants saw in Harkness someone who could champion their cause, and a series of letters were delivered to Harkness on condition that she 'would keep the names of the writers secret'.[35] Employers subsequently demanded a right of reply to justify their actions, yet in so doing, some unwittingly reinforced their exploitative expectations of emotional labour from their female servants. Lady Florence, 'a constant reader of THE BRITISH WEEKLY' had, as a result of reading Harkness' papers, 'invited a Commissioner [Harkness] to meet half-a-dozen mistresses at her house [...] to hear what ladies have to say about servants'.[36] There, a mistress asserts that in return for all the material benefits that servants receive from their employers, 'we have a right to expect from them gratitude'.[37] The implication is clear: the expectation of gratitude implies a further expectation of indebtedness, and therefore loyalty. Hochschild would later theorise the importance of this specific form of emotional labour by arguing that 'Gratitude lays the foundation for loyalty'.[38] Applying this theoretical lens to Harkness' article, it becomes apparent that the emphasis in the mistress' assertion on 'the right to expect' underscores the exchange value of emotional labour. Servants exchange gratitude, plus other feelings that are demanded by their employer, for benefits in kind

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such as 'comfortable homes, good food'.[39] Hochschild noted that not only was personal interaction a primary component of service roles such as these (and it is telling that in Harkness' accounts both employer and employee return repeatedly to the relational aspects of their roles) but that in such roles the primary product that was being sold was the creation and maintenance of a relationship: 'Impersonal relations are to be seen *as if* they were personal'.[40] The servant whose anguished complaint prefaces this article, has therefore intuited correctly that her 'soul', her emotional labour emanating from her 'managed heart', has become a commodity that can be bought along with her physical labour.

Harkness' sociological methodology was broadly observational, and her interpretation of these observations was political rather than theoretical. It is especially significant that emotional labour undertaken in someone else's home, domestic service, becomes the locus for this political analysis.[41] In her 2007 essay on working women's homes, Karen Hunt argues that 'the home as a physical space provided a catalyst to women's political action'.[42] Although Hunt is discussing the homes of working women, as opposed to the homes in which women worked, this nevertheless captures the experience of the women whose lives Harkness records in her *British Weekly* articles. Their experience of emotional labour in the home of an employer was becoming a spur to political action precisely because domestic employment as a servant was relational, with emotional labour prized over physical labour. When a mistress frets about the over-education of servants, what lies beneath is a fear that once servants hear 'what is going on in politics' they will become collectivised. This, in turn, will make them less

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willing to undertake the emotional labour required for their roles.[43] Yet it is not the political sphere exterior to the home that the mistress needs to fear, but the political catalyst of the domestic space. The home, with its insistence on servants' emotional labour, reveals intersectional disadvantage to those who work there. Hunt observes that fin-de-siècle Socialism had little to offer women of any class, as 'domestic matters had a marginal place within socialist strategy': at the same time, however, there was an anxiety amongst socialists that feminists sought 'to substitute sex war for class war'.[44] In politicising her observations of women and emotional labour, Harkness is recognising that the twin struggles of class and gender are not mutually exclusive but, for working-class women, compounded into a form of insidious oppression.

Harkness' 1891 novella, *Roses and Crucifix*, with its narrative of Lilian's dismissal as a governess and her subsequent descent into the bars of the East End, revisits this analysis. As the novella is not widely known, I offer a brief summary. The orphaned Lilian, having been brought up in a convent, initially works as a governess but is dismissed for 'flirting' with her employer's son, Mr. Grey, although Lilian is so naïve that she is unclear of what she stands accused. Without a reference, the only work she can obtain is that of a barmaid. Subsequently, they meet again in a chance encounter and Lilian saves Grey from a robbery. Their relationship is resumed and when she later becomes seriously ill from overwork in the bar, she returns to the convent where Grey visits frequently. When Lilian dies, it is with Grey's name on her lips, not that of a saint. Although the novella draws upon the melodramatic mode throughout, much of the text is concerned with a depiction of the oppressive conditions in which Lilian works. Originally published in the *Women's Herald*, Sidney Webb was quick to categorise this work when he wrote to Beatrice Webb in 1892: ''John Law' has a sensational *'Tendenz-Roman'* running in the *Women's Herald* about Barmaids'.[45] The context in which it was published might have suggested this even before a first reading as the *Women's Herald* began life as the *Women's Penny Paper* in 1888, a periodical with an avowedly suffragist

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and feminist purpose, declaring in its opening editorial of October 27th 1888 that 'Our policy is progressive' and its pages 'will be open to [...] to the working woman as freely as to the educated lady'.[46] It would be a newspaper that would 'reflect the thoughts of the best women upon all the subjects that occupy their minds'.[47] This context is significant, as the socialist tendencies of this novella – with its descriptions of long hours, poor pay and exploitative conditions – are evident, but its feminist politics, the interrogation of the oppressive nature of the requirement for emotional labour from female employees, present with more subtlety.

The novella begins *in medias res*, opening upon a rare night-time moment of leisure when the barmaids, Lilian and Mary, are not under the near-constant surveillance of the management, and are therefore at liberty to discuss the appalling conditions in which they work. However, the dialogue is concerned primarily with the emotional demands, rather than the physical hardships, of the job. Mary captures the centrality of this to a barmaid's role: 'She must attract customers and do good business, and if she doesn't, she's sent away.'[48] Lilian's success in 'doing good business' has explicit exchange value; Mary tells her that she saw the Manager 'look at you last time he was here, and nod his head. He'll raise your wages'.[49] Harkness deconstructs exactly how Mary carries out this emotional labour. Just as Hochschild observed that flight attendants in the 1980s must deploy 'two traditionally "feminine" qualities [...] the supportive mother and the sexually desirable mate', so Mary uses a slightly different familial simile – 'I treat the men as if I was their sister' – whilst the customers see her as sexually available as they 'stand at the bar [...] leering'.[50] As Hochschild theorises, it is

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[49] ' !?P%2A!

[50] ! " #(/#(*:!O#(&) * ' ',! *80'*'!#) 2!S(>+%;%T,!S6#J:*(!B!M .)!^) 2*(/(0>) 2!a*2(00 L 4,! *e 0 L *)4'!O*(#$2,!G! c*+* L P*(!B?KB,!J JA!BB!HBD! 6::J'Mnn:6*6#(&%_*'A \ 0(2J(*' 'A+0 L nDEBVnEVnE@n6#(&%_*'H'> L L *(H'*(%#$H (0'*'H#) 2H+(>+%;%TH%) ':#$ L *) :H%n!#++*' '*2!V! " #(+6!DED@A!8*;*(*)+*'!:0! *80'*'!#) 2!S(>+%;%7!#) 2!:0! *S0)) %*!(*;*(!:0!*$*+:(0) %+!:*T:',!#++*' '*2!0) $%) *,! \ 6%+6!#(*!0) $1!#_#%$#P$*!%) !>) J#/%) #:*2!_*('%0) 'A! 56*(*;0(*,!+6#J:*('!#(*!(*;*(*)+*2!%) !J$#+*!0;!J#/*!) > L P*('A!!

[50] ! " #(/#(*:!O#(&) * ' ',! *80'*'!#) 2!S(>+%;%T,!S6#J:*(!B!M .)!^) 2*(/(0>) 2!a*2(00 L 4A!

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Mary and Lilian's apparent success in replicating relational roles for the customers in the bar, offering an emotionally authentic expression of their inner psyche, that results in 'good business' for both employer and employee.

When Lilian first attends for an interview for her role as barmaid, the manager hands her a paper headed "Rules for Barmaids". Hochschild recognises the role of informal feeling rules in dictating appropriate feelings as part of social norms, but she also theorises that where emotion management is sold as part of labour then 'feeling rules' are decreed 'by company manuals' and become part of the employee's contractual obligation.[51] The "Rules for Barmaids", through this conceptual lens, constitute a form of nineteenth-century company manual. The first rule, the need to 'do good business', is glossed for her by the manager: 'It isn't every girl can attract men, and keep them at arm's length, but you must learn the trick'.[52] The rules will require Lilian to 'look smart' and 'have a pleasant manner with customers' in order to 'do good business, and bring customers about the place'.[53] Hochschild would later use the term 'transmutation of an emotional system' to describe the way in which feelings or emotions, usually thought of as private or even unconscious, must be manipulated and engineered to serve 'the profit motive'.[54] In this way, the insistence on the barmaids doing 'good business' becomes a laconic reference to the emotional labour that the barmaids must undertake as part of their employment, as members of the emotional proletariat.

The private and the personal, feelings and emotions, become corporate possessions once they have exchange value. There is some dawning recognition of this in Lilian's declamatory insight: 'I belong to the bar'.[55] As a result, Lilian begins to experience emotional dissonance, Hochschild's transmutation of an emotional system. In reality, Lilian 'hated bar customers and loathed their inane compliments' but

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_%%n!#++*''*2!V! " #(+6!DED@A!

nevertheless she 'listened patiently while customers payed [sic] her compliments…' in order to do 'good business'.[56] As Hochschild observes, 'Maintaining a difference between feeling and feigning […] leads to strain', and it is not long before Lilian begins to exhibit the signs of illness, both physical and psychological, 'a wave of disgust sweeping across her consciousness'.[57] This culminates in her death; she has been compelled to transmute her emotional system in her role as a barmaid, and this is implicated in her demise.

Harkness' novella continually returns to the expendable nature of women, for whom emotional labour is their primary task: one of the 'Rules For Barmaids', for example, is that they can be dismissed with a day's notice if they 'don't suit' and 'We never give our reasons for sending girls away'.[58] Lilian has already been dismissed from her previous relational role as a governess for 'flirting with the Squire', and thereby transgressing what Hochschild terms the unspoken Feelings Rules.[59] Macdonald and Sirianni later observed this double disadvantage, noting that roles requiring emotional labour were not only predominantly undertaken by women but also tended to be at the lower end of the pay spectrum where employees were seen as expendable.[60] At the same time, opportunities for collectivisation were limited for women in service roles. This becomes apparent in Chapter IV of *Roses and Crucifix*, titled 'The Waiter's [sic] Union Meeting'; an unlikely topic for a novel but entirely in keeping with the *tendenz-roman* purpose of both this text and the periodical in which it appeared. Harkness satirises the failed attempt to include barmaids in the Union, as both the Conservative MP who attends – and the male waiters who predominate – agree that such a move would be to 'go too fast'.[61] The single dissenting voice is one of the men attending the meeting, with his cry that 'Capital killed my sister' resulting in his ejection from the

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[58] ! " #(/#(*:!O#(&)*' ',!*80'*'!#)2!S(>+#;#T*,!S6#J:*(!$$$!e 61!'6*!a*+#L*!.!a#(L#24!

[59] !?P2!d!$#)!'!>)+$*#(!\6#:!;$(:)/!',!6#_)/!0)$1!(*+*):$1!$*;:!#!+0)_*):!:6*!10>)/!L#)!0;!:6*!60>'*,! " (! f (*1,!6#'!;$(:*2!\:6!6*(!1*:!'6*!'!P$#L*2!#)2!2' L'' *2!

[60] *! " #+20)#$2!#)2!'(#))*,!*e 0(&)/!)!:6*!'*(_+*!'0+#*:1*,!J!BB!

[61] ! " #(/#(*:!O#(&)*' ',!*80'*'!#)2!S(>+#;#T*,!S6#J:*(!$N!56*!e #:*(4'!p'+q!^)0)! " **:)/4!

meeting.[62] Prior to the meeting, Mary has recognised the futility of pursuing collectivism for the emotional proletariat, saying: 'If we girls struck, the manager would get hundreds to fill our places.'[63] Those undertaking emotional labour are exploited by their employers whilst being denied the protection of a union. This speaks to socialism's fear, highlighted previously, that feminism would substitute 'sex war' for 'class war'. Barbara Taylor describes the way in which feminism was viewed by socialists 'not as an essential component of the socialist struggle, but as a disunifying, diversionary force, with no inherent connection to the socialist tradition.'[64] This explains the resistance shown in this union meeting, a fear that extending their collectivism to women will allow a dangerous feminism to somehow dilute or distract from the Waiters' Union's central purpose: class war. The fictional waiters fail to recognise that working-class women are fighting on two fronts: class and sex.

This consideration of emotional labour as a uniquely female form of workplace exploitation is distilled in Harkness' later unfinished novella *Connie,* serialised in the *Labour Elector* between June 1893 and January 1894. The socialist context of this periodical frames the novella as primarily ideological in purpose: the *Labour Elector* had initially flourished under Henry Hyde Champion's editorship in 1888, but with his departure for Australia in 1890, publication ceased and was not resumed until January 1893.[65] Although Harkness had been involved with the periodical previously, John Barnes claims that by 1893 it was likely that 'she supported the *Labour Elector* financially'.[66] What precise form this took is unclear, but it seems that she was not

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%_n!#++*''*2!V! " #(+6!DED@A!

[63] ! " #(/#(*:!O#(&)*' ',!*80'*'!#)2!S(>+#;#T,!S6#J:*(!$N!W56*! e #%:*(4'!^)%0)! " **:%)/4A!

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'6#$$!*!20!e%:6!O%L4!#)2!%)!B?KE!6*(!#(:%+$*!0)!W56*!X>:>(*!0;!:6*!d#P0>(!Z#(:14,!\6%+6!\#'!;%(':!
J>P$%'6*2!%)!:6*!Z#$$!"#$$!f#3*::*,!\#'!:6*)!(*J(%):*2!%)!56*!d#P0>(!['$*+:0(A!a0:6!*(*!J>P$%'6*2!
>)2*(!6*(!J'*>20)1L!g06)!d#\A!

remunerated for the serial *Connie*: rather, a serial by 'John Law' was intended to boost the periodical's circulation alongside the novella's ideological aim of promulgating its socialist values. Commercially, this failed as the periodical folded in 1894 with the novel unfinished.[67]

As *Connie* is so little known, I offer a brief outline of the plot. Connie Ufindel ekes out a precarious living as an actress. A chance meeting and subsequent relationship with Humphrey Munro, the son of a country squire, offers escape, especially from her alcoholic father whom she supports. However, this escape turns into a relationship of dependence upon Munro as she loses her job due to the jealousy of The Boss, her employer, and Munro moves her into a house near Kew. Melodramatic plot twists including Connie's pregnancy, meddling by Munro's sister, and misunderstandings and letters that remain undelivered, result in Connie finding herself homeless in London and reliant on the kindness of two strangers, prostitutes Bess and Flora, who take Connie in. There is no real resolution, and characters and plot lines remain frozen as in a tableau, leaving only the tentative hope of the last line in which the Squire tells Munro: 'Your wife must be my daughter.'[68] There is ideological ambivalence, too. The novella's mode is one of highly-politicised melodrama yet, as Deborah Mutch observes, if Harkness had conformed to socialist ideology, then 'both Humphrey Munro and his father would be positioned as the aristocratic threat'.[69] Instead, in the final pages, the Squire agrees that if Munro can once again find Connie, then he must persuade her to marry him. In this way, Harkness confounds readers' expectations of a conventional socialist melodrama by aligning the aristocracy and working class rather than polarising them.

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[68] (! " #(/#(*:!O#(&)*'',!*S0))#*,!S6#J:*(! N$!%]0>(!e%;*! " >':!a*! " 1!c#>/6:*(4A!
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[69] !%c*P0(#6! " >:+6,!%4S0))%*4Y!L*$02(#L#!#)2!50(1!'0+%#$%'L4,!%)! *" #(/#(*:!IO#(&)*''Y!e(%:%)/!'0+%#$!*[)/#/*L*):!B??EHBKDB,!*2'A!X$0(*!g#)''*)!#)2!d%'#!80P*(:'0)!C " #)+6*':*(Y! " #)+6*':*(!^)%_*('%:1!Z(*'',!DEBKF,!JA!BGGA!!

Harkness adopts this unconventional approach, I argue, because her ideological purpose lies in the intersectionality of class and gender, interrogated through a consideration of emotional labour. In this novella, Connie's performative emotional labour as an actress becomes emblematic of the women, both real and imagined, in Harkness' previous works for whom such labour was *im*plicit. The *ex*plicit emotional labour required by Connie's stage role is apparently uncontroversial for both actor and audience. The audience in the theatre is aware that the emotion displayed on the stage is salaried artifice, but mostly chooses to suspend disbelief. And Connie knows that, as an actress, she 'must prepare for the theatre, and there must smile and dance to amuse the audience' and thereby satisfy her employer.[70] There are echoes here of Mary and Lilian's dawning understanding in *Roses and Crucifix* – that their role is primarily productive through affective performance. There is similarity, too, in that Connie's success depends on the extent to which she can manipulate her own feelings and emotions (and thereby those of the audience) in order to serve not merely artistic but commercial ends. The audience, as customer, indirectly dictates and polices the actors' emotions whilst employers, such as the servant's mistress or the bar manager that Harkness has referenced previously, do so directly.

For an actor such as Connie, there is always some degree of Hochschild's 'transmutation of an emotional system'.[71] When employees are required to undertake emotional labour, a superficial display of fake emotion is insufficient. Instead, what is required is 'deep acting'; the employee must change their felt emotion to match the emotion that they are required to display. Although Hochschild uses the term in a quasi-metaphorical manner – after all, she is discussing flight attendants, not professional actors – this is nevertheless what is expected of Connie. Amy Wharton observes that such deep acting can result in depersonalisation, an idea that Hochschild builds upon by exploring the way in which this can lead to a 'fusion of the 'real' and 'acted' self'.[72] Elsewhere, Hochschild considers the equivalence between the kind of

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deep acting required from those who undertake emotional labour, and the method acting taught by Stanislavski, in which actors are required to not merely exhibit but personally experience emotions required by the role. What Hochschild seeks to demonstrate, therefore, is that where employees are required to undertake emotional labour, mere display is insufficient; it is their inner psyche that is being manipulated and commercialised. So, although Harkness observes that sometimes Connie 'took pleasure' in acting, feeling the emotions she was required to exhibit, on other nights her acting is merely performance. The superficiality of this is emphasised: 'At last the performance was over and she could wash the rouge from her cheeks and take off her gauze petticoats.'[73] However, any failure to engage in deep acting or emotional labour is noted: '"You're not well this evening," remarked the dresser.'[74] The impact of the emotional depersonalisation that Connie is experiencing, as her psyche is hijacked by 'the world of profit-and-loss statements' presents negatively to others.[75]

Connie must, therefore, not simply exhibit the required emotions but, in the interests of Capital, she must experience them too. In this way, Connie is recruited into the ranks of the emotional proletariat, alongside the slaveys and barmaids depicted in *Toilers In London.* However, Connie's emotional labour is not confined to the explicit artifice of the stage. Connie must navigate the demands of The Boss, a Jewish diamond merchant who finances the theatre and who is, by extension, her employer: 'How he leered at her when he stood at the wings with "Master" written on his ugly face.'[76] The realignment of her melodrama enables Harkness to position The Boss as the villain (rather than, as might be expected, Munro or his father the squire), deploying a range of contemporary antisemitic tropes to establish his villainy. Not least of these is his expectation that Connie's emotional labour will serve him both on, and off, the stage. Mutch reads this novella 'through the dual lenses of melodramatic form and Tory socialism' with the former presenting 'the working-class woman's powerless and precarious existence under late nineteenth-century British capitalism.'[77] I would extend

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this analysis by arguing that Mutch's powerless precarity is heightened when women like Connie are obliged by an employer to undertake emotional labour, but choose instead to resist. Harkness frequently conflates Capitalists and Jews and her use of antisemitic tropes here is intended to intensify Connie's exploitation whilst seeking to extend her readers' existing antipathy towards Jews, to Capitalism as well.

As previously noted, MacDonald and Sirianni observed that a defining feature of the economic proletariat is that they are denied both the protection of collectivism and emotional autonomy. Whilst it might be expected that Connie would lack emotional autonomy in her public role as an actress, Harkness also demonstrates how this lack of autonomy extends to the private sphere. The Boss is not only her *de facto* employer, but he also believes that his role as patron of the theatre, and therefore of Connie, extends his reach of power beyond her affective work undertaken in the theatre itself. Like the servant's mistress in *Toilers in London*, he believes that she belongs to him 'body and soul'. The diamonds that 'glistened on his fingers when he ran them through his greasy hair' are metonymic of his economic power over Connie and its reach beyond her place of employment.[78] Connie is all too aware of this; she is fearful, when at supper with Humphrey Munro, that The Boss will see her failing to follow his unwritten 'Feelings Rules' and that, like the barmaids in *Toilers In London,* she will be dismissed as a result. '"The Boss. He'll never forgive me," she said. "I shall loose [sic] my engagement."'[79] Consequently, when Connie refuses to go out to supper with The Boss the following evening, implicitly refusing to undertake emotional labour that has exchange value, she loses her job.

It is Connie's assertion of emotional autonomy which leads to her dismissal; she knows that The Boss 'was master in the theatre with power to have her salary raised or get her dismissed'.[80] As MacDonald and Sirianni observe, when an employee's primary role is to carry out emotional labour, managers then expect 'to control workers' personal and psychic lives too'.[81] The Boss seeks to extend his mastery, and thereby his economic 'ownership' of Connie, to her inner life beyond the theatre, reaching into her domestic or private sphere. This translates what is required from Connie in these

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spheres from emotional use, or emotional management into emotional labour because it has exchange value. Connie's refusal to participate in this exchange signals her innocence in the moral universe of this melodrama, as befits a melodramatic heroine, but simultaneously precipitates her into a precarious existence in London.

Homeless, unemployed, and pregnant, Connie, the actress, is taken in by prostitutes Bess and Flora.[82] Harkness recognises the contingency of these roles; for many Victorians, there was a blurred line of immorality between acting and prostitution. Although Harkness has already established Connie as a moral heroine, she nevertheless positions the morality of this melodrama as more nuanced and less binary than one might expect. Harkness contrasts the kindness of Bess and Flora with the exploitation of the capitalist Boss, a name that signals a generic representation of management and the ownership of capital. Connie's pregnancy protects her from the taint of stage roles, or even sex work, but Bess' comment that 'You won't get any sort of work, depend on that' is ambiguous.[83] It is not solely Connie's physical condition that precludes employment; rather, her advanced pregnancy is a constant reminder to customer and employer alike that any emotional labour she might seek to undertake is perforce flawed and insincere. If emotional labour is to have exchange value it must first be authentically felt by the employee and then perceived by the employer, or customer, as authentic. By interpolating itself into the exchange, Connie's visible pregnancy would be a constant reminder to all the inauthenticity of any emotion she might seek to display, whether as actress or prostitute.

The labour of working-class women, such as those in Harkness' sociological studies who were the real-life counterparts of Mary, Lilian and Connie, has, in the broadest sense, long been marginalised and ignored, elbowed out of fiction and subsequent critical attention by the disruptive novelty of the middle-class New Woman's foray into professional life.[84] Yet, for her part, motivated by ideological and

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political conviction, Harkness was determined to bring working-class women and their labour to the forefront. More than this, I argue that what emerges from this reading of Harkness' work is a specific, unifying thread: the problematic nature of emotional labour for working-class women. Harkness demonstrates that the intersectional oppression of this requirement is layered over the already hostile environments of workplace and marketplace. E. Ann Kaplan observes that nineteenth-century fiction 'manages to articulate woman's oppressive positioning in such a way that their positioning is exposed, even though the text does not usually consciously critique it.'[85] This summarises Harkness' work: she is writing long before emotional labour was theorised and is therefore precluded from offering an explicit critique informed by this theoretical framework but, nevertheless, her writing works to expose this particular expression of class and gender disadvantage. Harkness may not have had the same terminology to critique it, but in her sociological studies and her fictional representations of working-class women, her writing articulates a specific oppression, that of emotional labour, that would elude theoretical and ideological notice for another hundred years.

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Romance, Revolution & Reform

'Reading Girl' to 'Writing Girl': Erotic transactions and philanthropic reactions in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Mary (1916)

GARTH WENMAN-JAMES

P.$$.3%$!)/.!final years of her life,[1] and published posthumously in 1916, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Mary* interrogates various forms of labour: sex work, servitude, and philanthropy intertwine in the text through the focal lens of Braddon's titular protagonist.[2] In this way, Braddon's final novel operates as a post-Poor Law text that dismantles the affective power of the male gaze over poor and labouring female bodies, moving away from the strict surveillance the workhouses and the board of guardians once represented. Specifically, she critiques surveillance strategies that oppress poor and working-class women throughout the novel and argues for the effective power of female-led philanthropic actions in liberating penniless and labouring women from the male gaze.

Braddon penned *Mary* amid major reforms and debates surrounding the Poor Law and, more generally, shifting social attitudes towards poverty. As Michael E. Rose argues, the development of the Charity Organisation Society (COS) in 1868 led to the slow disassembly of the Poor Law's parish and workhouse system.[3] The COS regulated and encouraged charities outside government legalisation, which contributed to the growth of philanthropic labour in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the 1910s, this shift had produced an active debate about the form that slum philanthropy should take: Edward Abbott Parry's 1914 treatise *The Law and the Poor,* for example, interrogates the relationship between poverty and legislation, while Jacob A. Riis's earlier *The Battle with the Slums* utilises the extended metaphor of war throughout the piece to represent the slums as an 'enemy' against which the middle and upper classes

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should 'join forces'.[4] Focusing on impoverished women's experiences under the COS-regulated system of charity, Florence Farr's 1910 text *Modern Women: Her Intentions* argues that women's dependence on men within a patriarchal system directly produces homelessness among women.[5] Farr exclaims that in order to escape this cyclical treatment, women must become 'determined to cry halt and make a fight'.[6] For Farr, the 'battle' is not just with the slum environment – as is argued in Riis's text – but also with unequal gendered structures that entrap female paupers and women generally through the surveillance of their bodies and identities. These structures ultimately lead to a gender gap in the experiences of homelessness that worsened throughout the fin de siècle and early twentieth century.

In *Mary*, Braddon primarily engages with these ideas by problematising and dismantling the philanthropic male gaze. In her pioneering work on the male gaze, Laura Mulvey describes that this form of surveillance is the product of a 'world structured by sexual imbalance' in which 'pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female'.[7] The male gaze, she argues, 'projects its fantasy onto the female figure which is styled accordingly', and their appearance is 'coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness'.[8] Although Mulvey is discussing cinema throughout the late twentieth century, this relationship between the 'Woman as Image' and the 'Man as Bearer of the Look' has been recognised and deployed as a conceptual lens by critics of nineteenth-century art forms.[9] Braddon's *Mary* interrogates the male gaze in a way akin to Mulvey's conceptualisation, but in the case in the novel this is contextualised within post-Poor Law attitudes towards impoverished and labour women alike. By opening the text with Austin Sedgwick 'slumming', a leisure pursuit in which the middle and upper classes walk through the slums to find excitement in the poverty surrounding them, Braddon connects the erotic impact impoverished streets have on Austin with his surveillance of

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the novel's title character. Ultimately, Austin's slumming at the beginning of the text entraps Mary in a series of eroticised transactions where she is traded amongst male members of the Sedgwick family in a pseudosexual fashion. At its core, then, *Mary* is a novel concerned with representing the affective power of the male philanthropic gaze and its primary protagonist's personal journey to evade the gaze of the Sedgwick family.

As the narrative continues, Braddon epitomises the concepts of female labour and the fetishising male gaze in her construction of one central spectacle that appears throughout the novel: Pietro Magni's statue *The Reading Girl* (see Figure 1).

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Popularised in London by its appearance at the 1862 International Exhibition, Magni's statue depicts a young woman in the act of reading. Half undressed and with one bare breast, the figure represents one of Mulvey's 'fantas[ies]' as Magni shapes the young

woman to illicit a 'strong visual and erotic impact'. As I go on to expand, Braddon deploys Magni's *The Reading Girl* in *Mary* itself as a lens through which to critique the male gaze and, more specifically, the power that such erotic surveillance holds over the female labourer. Braddon first introduces the statue as a facsimile owned by Mary's employer, Conway Field, who takes her in to act as his own 'reading girl', one who will recite novels aloud to Field due to his poor sight.[10] Field suggests that Mary should model herself on his facsimile of *The Reading Girl*, which Braddon uses to draw a parallel with Magni's eroticisation of the woman depicted in the statue. Aligned directly with Mary's employment, Braddon likens the general fetishisation of the female body under the male gaze with their exploitation as a source of labour. The statue therefore acts as the crux of a wider discussion Braddon engages throughout the novel involving female homelessness, the sexualising gaze of the male philanthropist, and the transactional nature of relationships between men (with apparently philanthropic intentions) and destitute women.

Critics have long identified Braddon's critique of the male gaze throughout her oeuvre. Lynette Felber highlights Braddon's deconstruction and critique of the male gaze in *Lady Audley's Secret*, particularly through the male response to a pre-Raphaelite portrait of Lady Audley that features in the narrative. Felber argues that Braddon illustrates the 'fetishisation' of the female body under the male gaze, revealing the 'powerlessness of Victorian women subordinated by the male gaze' and exposing the 'dissimulation of those Victorian men who create empty fantasies, unable to confront the real objects of their desires and the true nature of their fears'.[11] In *Lady Audley's Secret,* the male gaze is illustrated by Robert Audley's rejection of Lucy's self-constructions and his desire to gain knowledge of the truth surrounding her ex-husband.[12]

In *Mary*, however, escaping the penetrative male gaze is specifically linked with the post-Poor Law context of the novel due to the increased accessibility for women to engage with each other via philanthropic communities. While the female body is still

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'fetishised', as it is in Field's fascination with *The Reading Girl*, Braddon's argument against the male gaze is rooted strongly in the epoch from which she writes. Following the dismantling of the (primarily male) board of guardians, as Deborah Epstein Nord notes, sisterly communities of women engaged with philanthropic activities from the 1880s onwards, allowing them to 'live outside the sphere of the family' and join women's communities where they were able to actively rewrite and influence the impoverished environments around them.[13] In the second half of *Mary*, Braddon articulates this belief that, by enacting their own professional identities and undertaking philanthropic acts, women can liberate themselves from the male gaze: for example, after Field's death, Mary uses the inheritance she receives from her employer to 'build almshouses for the fishermen's widows'. [14] Mary's creation of a homosocial community thus leads her to form her own sense of agency: it also allows her to re-furnish her own sense of selfhood, referencing back to a time from before she meets Austin Sedgwick out slumming in the East End.[15] Mary's disruption of Austin's male gaze parallels the cultural shift in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of 'invasion of fiction by the feminine' which interrogated and reconstructed the definition of womanhood via narratives which refocussed women's agency and identity.[16] Participating in this moment, Braddon's female aesthetic mode develops during these points of 'invasion'; likewise, by 'authoring' a philanthropic community of her own apart from the Sedgwick family, Mary disrupts her surveillance under the eyes of the male philanthropist.

In this way, Mary creates a new form of female-oriented labour for herself, subverting her identity as a 'Reading Girl'. Braddon intensifies this by representing Mary's professional identity as a philanthropist through her ability to 'write' down of the needs of the women in her community and turn them into action. As such, Braddon uses the act of writing to signify Mary's subversive self-creation of her own self apart from her passive role as a 'reading girl'.[17] Following the death of Conway Field, Braddon

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describes that *The Reading Girl* statue he owns loses its 'soul'.[18] The loss of the statue's 'soul', coupled with Field's death, indicates the male gaze's reduced power over labouring women in the time between the statue's physical creation in 1861 and her penning of the novel in the mid-1910s. In dismantling the affective power of the statue in the novel in this way, Braddon seems to celebrate women's philanthropic efforts and turn away from their restriction under the male gaze while also reflecting Olive Schreiner's closing remarks to her seminal 1911 feminist work *Women and Labour*:

> It is because so wide and gracious to us are the possibilities of the future; so impossible is a return to the past, so deadly is a passive acquiescence in the present, that today we are found everywhere raising our strange new cry – "Labour and the training that fits us for labour!"[19]

Aligning herself with Schreiner's argument for the emancipatory nature of women's labour, Braddon celebrates charitable efforts performed *by* women, *for* women, and argues that philanthropy is a form of labour in itself. This reflects a key shift that occurred at the fin de siècle; by 1893, over half a million women in Britain were 'occupied continuously' or 'professionally' in philanthropic work, and as such it was seen as a labouring identity in and of itself.[20] Breaking the entrapping power of male surveillance, Mary can rebuild herself by creating a decidedly female-only philanthropic community and by crafting a space for her self-defined labour practices.

Braddon's final novel is the culmination of her thoughts and critiques on the male gaze and role of labouring women in a post-Poor Law age; particularly, Braddon illustrates that the androcentric, quasi-erotic transactions Mary experiences can be dismantled via a series of self-defining philanthropic reactions. Tracing Mary's journey from penniless woman subjected to the male philanthropic surveillance through to her self-created philanthropic identity, Braddon emphasises both the entrapment of

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penniless and labouring women as well as their ability to dismantle the male gaze through their own professional agency.

The Erotics of Slumming and the Pauper Woman's Body

Braddon opens *Mary* with a description of Austin Sedgwick slumming in the East End, utilising the practice of slumming to epitomise the objectification of the female labourer under the male gaze. The narrator describes how:

> It may have been a caprice of Austin Sedgwick's which brought him through Sanders Street [...] after a night spent curiously, the first half at a smart card-party, and the later hours in the East End, where this young man varied the monotony of a government office and the banalities of modern society by an occasional descent into nethermost depths, where people who, having known him first as a queer sort of bloke, who came prying about, and asking questions, had gradually learnt to look upon him as a friend and helper.[21]

Although the narrator indicates Austin's philanthropic efforts by describing him as a 'friend and helper', the reader is fully aware that he is partaking in a leisure pursuit. Slumming is conflated with the 'smart card-party': the slums themselves contrast Austin's 'banal' middle-class activities as they are described as a space into which he must 'descen[d]' to escape 'monotony'. In *Mary*, Braddon deliberately encodes Austin's slumming as a sexual and bodily activity, eroticising this particular philanthropic activity as one that provides personal, and aesthetic, excitement. As Seth Koven notes, the 'forbidden pleasures and dangers' experienced by the middle and upper classes during slumming are sexualised through their connections with equally socially forbidden 'queer' sexualities.[22]

This sense of queerness is visible through Braddon's description of Austin's perception of the slums. Braddon's employment of the balanced phrases 'common things strange and ugly things beautiful' illustrates an inversion of concepts of attractiveness, echoing nineteenth-century sexologist Havelock Ellis's positioning of

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homosexuality as a 'sexual inversion'.[23] As Sarah Parker argues, throughout the late nineteenth century a common association was made between synaesthesia, the confusion of senses and impressions, and 'sexual perversity'.[24] By reflecting this association in the conflation of 'common/strange' and 'ugly/beautiful', Braddon presents the space as liminal or between conventional binary categories. As such, Braddon represents Sanders Street as a queered space through her representation of its liminality.

The queerness of Austin's slumming experience is exaggerated by the temporality of the scene, as Braddon indicates that Austin is slumming at a time between nighttime and sunrise. The description of 'dim [...] streetlamps' coexisting with the transitional 'greenish-blue' skyline during Austin's travels places his exploration within a liminal temporal space.[25] Loren March argues that this kind of temporal liminality encourages 'queer ways of thinking through unboundedness, spillage, fluidity, multiplicity, and processes of contingent, non-linear becoming, as well as the relations of power and regulation that seek their stability or closure'.[26] This kind of liminality as a method of presenting queerness is present elsewhere in the nineteenth-century novel, meaning that Braddon's employment of queer liminality partakes in a lively conversation with other writers of the period: Deborah Denenholz Morse, for example, argues that *Jane Eyre* utilises liminal spaces and times to represent Sapphic relationships and queered gender norms.[27] Queer temporalities were also prevalent in decadent fiction of the fin de siècle. As Kate Flint notes, the 'shadowy ambiguities of twilight have an important part to play, albeit a metaphorical one, in the final fifteen years of the nineteenth century' as decadent fiction used the twilight hour as a synecdoche for same-sex desires painted as liminal 'inversions'.[28] Twilight, as a liminal

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temporality between light and dark, thus became an apt metaphor for same-sex desires in literary decadence.[29] In engaging with the twilight hour in this opening section to *Mary*, Braddon further forges a connection between same-sex erotics, decadent art, and Austin's slumming. By sexualising Austin's experience of Sanders Street, Braddon positions his slumming gaze in connection with erotic pleasure.

Braddon constructs the Sanders Street slum in a decadent style through its liminality, representing the evocation of new 'perceptions and emotions' key to literary decadence.[30] Braddon describes the queered temporality of Sanders Street as an 'hour in the twenty-four that has magic in it', indicating a new 'magical' perception of the London cityscape.[31] Referring again to the 'magic [...] hour' between nighttime and sunrise, the narrator describes how

> That strange light lent a certain artistic beauty to the decadence of Sanders Street, which once had dignity and even fashion, but was now a place of tenement houses and squalid shops – a street that had been slowly withering for a century, but had been the pink of respectability, though a little off colour as to fashion, a hundred years ago.[32]

By using the phrase 'artistic beauty' in conjunction with the 'decadence of Sanders Street', Braddon intensifies her allusions to the decadent art movement. The 'magic[al]' and 'enchanted' nature of these slums also conjures decadence: as Jane Desmarais and Alice Condé posit, spiritualism, mysticism, and magic often appear in decadent works as one method that the artist uses to conceptualise the relationship between the subject and their senses.[33] At the same time, the indication that Sanders Street is in a state of decay positions decay itself as another decadent motif that focuses on the 'decompos[ition]' and degeneration of artistic beauty.[34] In this initial passage of the novel, then, Braddon heavily encodes Austin's slumming with sexualised and decadent implications.

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The erotic decadence of Austin's travels comes together in Braddon's explicit and implicit references to a key decadent figure: Oscar Wilde.[35] In 1895, Wilde was found guilty of 'Gross Indecency' in the now-infamous Queensbury Trials. In the immediate years that followed, the trials led to major debates surrounding whether decadent and other innovative artforms might be one of the causes of moral and sexual 'degeneration'.[36] Braddon's reference to both inversion and synaesthesia, in conjunction with the references to decadent art in Austin's sensual experience of Sanders Street, create a connection between Austin's slumming and Wilde as a figure who represented discourses of both sexuality and art. Furthermore, the slippages between 'beauty' and what is perceived to be 'ugly' is evocative of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890): Dorian remains a 'graceful young man' while his portrait becomes 'old and wrinkled and ugly'.[37] In the preface to *Dorian Gray*, Wilde declares that 'those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming' while 'those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated'.[38] In Austin's experience of the slums, 'ugly things [are made] beautiful'; this illustrates a reversal of Wilde's statement on ugly meanings, yet also further connects Wilde and Austin as he 'find[s] beautiful meanings' in Sanders Street. While there is much in the novel to distinguish Austin from Wilde, the perceived perversity of Wilde's decadence following the 1895 trials further connects his slumming with concepts of eroticisation. As such, Austin's decadent slumming is fundamentally presented by Braddon as a pseudo-sexual practice.

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Braddon makes these connections far more explicit after Austin meets Mary following her escape from a brothel, in which Austin asks Mary about her experiences at the home for 'fallen' women. They discuss her sense of entrapment, and Mary states that she

> "Tramp[s] round the yard every morning, and think[s] of the prisoners in Reading Gaol."
> "You know that poem?"
> "I know every heart-breaking word of it. My father knew the man who wrote it."
> "Was your father by way of being literary?"
> "He was steeped to the lips in literature."
> He longed to question her more, but refrained.[39]

This reference to Wilde's poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, written after his release from prison following the Queensbury trials, further connects Austin and Wilde.[40] By intentionally making this connection with Wilde, Braddon allows the connotations of literary decadence with 'sexual perversity' and 'queer[ness]' to cross-pollinate with the pleasure Austin takes in partaking in slumming as a leisure pursuit. As a result, Braddon implies that Austin's travelling through Sanders Street is akin to a practice that is simultaneously pleasurable and artistic – as such, she taps into the aspects of the male gaze which seek a 'strong visual and erotic impact'.[41]

By constructing Austin's slumming as an erotic conduit for the male gaze, Braddon positions his initial meeting with Mary as a sexual transaction. When Austin first meets Mary, he discovers

> A girl [...] sitting on the doorstop, fast asleep, with her head drooping forward upon her knees, and her face hidden. The hand that hung limp and pale by her side was small – a lady's hand, Austin thought. She was not the kind of night-bird he expected to find upon a doorstep. [...] "Fashioned so slenderly, young and so fair." Slender she was assuredly, of a willowy slenderness as she leant against the railings, faint and wan. And she was young; but for the rest there was only the delicate modelling of her features, and the pathetic expression of grey

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> eyes with long black lashes, to promise that under happier conditions she might be beautiful.[42]

Braddon borrows the direct quotation 'Fashioned so slenderly, young and so fair' from Thomas Hood's 1844 poem 'The Bridge of Sighs', which describes the suicide of a homeless woman from Waterloo Bridge.[43] As is stereotypical for the 'fallen woman' genre, Hood passes judgement on the woman, denouncing her suicide as 'weakness' and 'evil behaviour'.[44] The speaker repeatedly iterates a desire to know more about the woman, particularly in the stanza which asks

> Who was her father?
> Who was her mother?
> Had she a sister?
> Had she a brother?
> Or was there a dearer one
> Still, and a nearer one
> Yet, than all others?[45]

By referencing Hood's poem in this way, and particularly through the invasiveness of its speaker into the imagined world of the 'fallen' woman, Braddon further emphasises Austin's desire to gain an intimate knowledge of Mary's life. It also places him within a literary tradition of a male gaze that positions women, in this case particularly poor women and perceived sex workers, under surveillance. Austin and Mary's initial meeting also features repeated instances of bodily imagery: the narrator refers to her 'hand[s]', 'face', 'knees', 'head', 'eyes' and 'long black lashes' while also using the physical descriptors of 'pale', 'slender', and 'wan'. This imagery implies a power relationship between the two. Mary is 'sitting' while Austin stands above her and surveys her body: as such, Austin's observations are absorbed into the narrative perspective, feeding directly into Braddon's textual engagement with the critical male gaze. The erotic language used to construct his slumming practices, and the pleasure he derives from

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[44] !7P2A,!$$A!JJA!BEUHBE@A!!

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discovering more about Mary, characterises their conversations as a pseudo-sexual transaction.

As noted, Braddon further illustrates an awareness of gender inequality in experiences of homelessness and labour. Mary's fetishisation as a passive object, as such, derives both from her poverty and her femininity. In this way, Braddon critiques Austin's male gaze by depicting Mary's aggressive self-policing under his surveillance. Austin uses the imperative 'tell me your story', to which Mary responds with the exclamation that it 'is too horrible to be told' and states that 'there are many such women in London – going about like Satan, seeking whom they may devour. Not like roaring lions, but like creeping snakes. Loathsome, loathsome, loathsome!'[46] Mary is pressured into sex work by a woman who initially treats her kindly: she escapes to the streets, which is where she meets Austin.[47] Her description of 'such women' as 'creeping snakes', and her impassioned repetition of 'loathsome', characterises Mary's self-policing under Austin's gaze. Furthermore, Braddon constructs Mary's direct speech to reflect the language used by William Acton in his 1857 report on women's sex work, demonstrating an internalisation of male judgements and attitudes, further underpinning this self-policing.[48] Acton describes

Such women, ministers of evil passions, [that] not only gratify desire, but also

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> arouse it. Compelled by necessity to seek for customers, they throng our streets and public places, and suggest evil thoughts and desires which might otherwise remain undeveloped.[49]

The phrase 'such women' and the predatory language of them 'suggest[ing] evil thoughts' and 'seek[ing] for customers' are directly reflected in Mary's direct speech, showing both an ideological and textual internalisation of these ideas. Directly after Mary's exclamation, the narrator notes that Austin 'persuaded her to eat, and he persuaded her to talk – to talk of that saddest of all subjects, her own history'.[50] By following Mary's self-policing with Austin 'persuad[ing]' her to reveal more of her history, Braddon parallels Austin's 'long[ing]' for knowledge with a sexual transaction, further likening their communications to Mary's brief period in a brothel.

Braddon initially illustrates this through the sexual and decadent encoding of the slum space, emphasising this further in Austin's use of food as a form of currency that he promises Mary in exchange for knowledge of her background. Later in the text, rumours circulate amongst Austin's social circle regarding his relationship with Mary, and one member states they 'heard they go slumming together'.[51] Through this statement, Braddon suggests their shared slumming also acts as a sexual transaction worthy of secrecy or rumour, further emphasising the erotic nature of Austin's slumming practices and engagement with Mary. Under Austin's knowledge-seeking male gaze, Mary is forced to aggressively self-police her behaviour while also being coerced to enact pseudo-sex work by fulfilling Austin's eroticised desire for knowledge.

Through Austin, Mary comes under the employment of his uncle Conway Field and is also introduced to his cousin, George, whom she eventually marries. The initial meeting between Austin and Mary initiates an ongoing cycle of transactions between Mary and the male members of Austin's family, enabling her body to be repeatedly subjected to an oppressive male gaze throughout the narrative.[52] As the novel

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continues, Mary's containment within patriarchal structures therefore becomes indistinguishable from her engagement in various forms of labour.

Sexual Labour / Sexualised Labour: The Reading Girl

Braddon positions Mary as an item of trade between Austin's male family members, which ultimately entraps her within various forms of domestic labour. Following Mary's introduction to Austin's family, sexualised conceptualisations of literature and reading become integral to how she, and her ability to perform labour, are perceived under the male gaze. Braddon encodes the act of 'Reading' with sexualised connotations through her employment by Conway Field, the oldest male in Austin's and George's family. Austin takes her to view the gallery at the entrance to the house before she meets with Field, causing Mary to note the 'wealth and rank' and 'early Georgian' aesthetic of Field's home, and further embedding the power relations between her and her place of employment.[53] In the middle of the gallery is a statue, described by the narrator as

> the figure of a girl seated on a rush-bottom chair, reading. She was only half dressed, as if she had stopped in the midst of her simple toilet, to read some absorbing book. A long plait of hair hung over her naked shoulder, and her shift and corset suggested the humblest rank of life. The face was thoughtful and sweet, of a pensive beauty, a face in repose, but a living face. The charm of the statue was its reality – a page out of the simple life. The girl, the chair she sat upon, the coarse shift and common stays, the scanty petticoat, all were the things seen every day in humble dwellings. The statue had made a sensation in the International Exhibition of 1862, and had been discovered later in Florence by Conway Field.[54]

Field's statue is a facsimile of Pietro Magni's *The Reading Girl*. The image here is highly sexualised: she is a 'half dressed [...] pensive beauty' with a 'naked shoulder'. The verb 'seated', and the repetition of the adjective 'humble', recall Austin's initial meeting with

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Mary where she is described as a 'girl […] sitting on the doorstop'.[55] The Georgian exterior of Field's home, as well as his ownership of a statue made popular fifty-three years before *Mary*'s publication, emphasises the archaic nature of his gaze. Directly after this description, Austin declares that the piece is his 'uncle's "Reading Girl", one of his most cherished acquisitions'.[56] The statue is sexualised in its depiction of a partially naked woman from a humble background and is also given economic and artistic value as Field's 'acquisition': it is also continuously conflated with Mary as she is repeatedly referred to as Field's 'reading girl' following her employment – that is, via her labour, which Field similarly acquires.[57] After the interview, Field encourages Mary to 'look at [his] reading girl as you go out', and notes that his previously employed women were 'officious, troublesome, [and] stupid' compared to the values embodied in the statue.[58] In suggesting that Mary should model herself on *The Reading Girl*, Field implies that she should continue self-policing in a manner akin to her comments on 'loathsome' sex work. *The Reading Girl*, therefore, represents an objectified, masculine ideal of a working woman that is recycled throughout time and amongst the male members of the Sedgwick family. Through Braddon's deliberate conflation of Mary and Magni's statue, Braddon highlights the patriarchal 'customs' and 'manners' that underly the gendered expectations present in Mary's labour for Field.

The parallels made between Mary and *The Reading Girl* further illustrate the power that the male gaze holds over female bodies and labour, particularly through Field's control over Mary's literary consumption. Mary feels as if she 'could have no secrets from [Field] – no choice of how much of her dismal story to tell or to withhold from him', and notes that Field 'could read her pitiful record as if her mind were an open book'.[59] Mary is surveyed to the extent that she feels her psyche and background is visible to Field, illustrating the power of his gaze in the narrative. The simile of the

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'open book' semantically connects her sense of being scrutinised with the act of reading, again creating a link with Magni's passive, sexualised *Reading Girl*. Through Field's characterisation and his direct speech, discussions of reading, surveillance, and labour appear alongside each other in the novel. Austin promises Mary that in her position with Field she will have to read 'dull books, sometimes perhaps, but never stupid or vulgar books'.[60]

This scrutiny over what is read by Mary continues in Field's interview: he asks Mary if she has ever read 'sensation novels', and responds positively to her statement that she is more familiar with the 'critic[al] and political' literature that was consumed by her father.[61] As a result, Field concludes that she exhibits 'intelligence and refinement' and asks 'will you give me a taste of your quality?' before offering her the position.[62] The verb 'taste' emphasises a sexualised, predatory element to Field's desires. This further contextualises the labour of the reading girl as one filtered through masculine values and gazes, as the sexualisation of *The Reading Girl* sculpture initially indicates. Through the presentation of Field's treatment of Mary, Braddon critiques a male gaze that sexualises a labouring woman, and she connects this with the aggressive subjection of the female worker to patriarchal expectations and norms. *The Reading Girl* statue therefore becomes a central metaphor to the novel, symbolising the objectification of Mary's labour under the gaze of Field and the wider Sedgwick family.

Philanthropic labour and social empowerment: The Writing Girl

Through the key spectacle of the writing girl, Braddon also lays the foundations for the dismantling of Field's and the Sedgwicks' male gaze. Over the course of the text, Mary's relationship with her own labour and self-identity changes alongside the disempowerment of the male gaze. After Field's death partway through the novel, he leaves Mary his estate to thank her for acting as his 'reading girl who saves [his] sight and soothes [his] ear'.[63] The power dynamics here have already shifted: Field refers to his own body, rather than Mary's, and describes her active agency in 'sav[ing]' his sight.

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Although she is still described by Field as 'my reading girl', her conflation with Magni's statue becomes unravelled after his death. The narrator notes that

> All the splendour of the things [Field] had loved, pictures and statues, seemed to look at Mary and Austin with a cruel irony. They had helped him to bear that long disease – his life – and now he was gone it seemed as if the soul had gone out of them. They, too, were dead.[64]

As such, the artworks experience a metaphorical death of the 'soul', removing the 'splendour' these pieces once held. The statues also now 'seem […] to look' rather than being gazed at, indicating a lack of human spectatorship despite the presence of Mary and Austin. *The Reading Girl*, therefore, loses both its 'soul' and the surveillance enacted upon it by Field. The metaphorical death of the statue aligns with Mary's growing agency and removal from the role following her inheritance and the death of Conway Field. The link between this and the scrutinising male gaze is accentuated by Austin's direct speech, where he notes that

> It is the finest private collection in London, perhaps in Europe, […] for it is the knowledge of the man who buys and not just the money he spends, that makes a collection valuable; and I believe my uncle's all-round knowledge of Art was unequalled. He had nothing else to think about for thirty years of his life, poor soul![65]

As noted, a desire for knowledge of Mary's life underlies Austin's slumming earlier in the text. Austin acknowledges that Field's knowledge, though economically valuable as a 'private collection', is not valuable at all in a personal or social sense: his collection is merely the result of having 'nothing else to think about'. This accentuates Mary's movement away from being a 'passive' labourer as a reading girl, undercutting the knowledge-based power system that underlies the gazes of Austin and Field. The uprooting of this system after Field's death in the novel mirrors a dismantling of these similar power relations by 1916, reflecting Farr's contemporaneous suggestion that labouring women should be 'determined to cry halt and make a fight'.[66] Braddon's presentation of *The Reading Girl*'s lost 'soul' thus indicates the male gaze's reduced

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power over labouring women in the time between the statue's physical creation in 1861 and her penning of the novel in 1915.

The deconstruction of the male gaze that occurs following Field's death enables Mary to engage in philanthropic labour while also re-establishing her sense of self. On inheriting Field's estate, Mary is removed from her objectification under his gaze and can reject the three marriage proposals she receives from the men around her.[67] She also shifts fully away from the poor economic status by which she is characterised at the beginning of the text. Rather than curate art and literature like Field, Mary chooses to 'build almshouses for the fishermen's widows, and a home for their fatherless children, on the ground that was well situated for such a purpose' in her birthplace in Cornwall.[68]

Mary's geographical movement from Field's estate near London to Cornwall signifies a return to a self that existed before her impoverishment, and Austin's discovery of her, at the beginning of the text. As Ann C. Colley argues, nostalgic returns to birthplaces and origins appear in the Victorian novel as symbolism for a change in identity or restoration of the authentic self.[69] Colley argues that nostalgia is a longing not only 'for the past but also for the self that was once able, unconsciously, to scramble among the hills and walk in the streets with the people one knew and who, in turn, recognized one'.[70] Nostalgia 'stabilizes and names what had once been familiar so that a picture of a previous moment stands out like a relief from the unshapely and confusing mass of the past'.[71] In line with this conceptual framework, Mary's return to Cornwall marks a return to self and an attempt to break away from her poverty while also enacting philanthropic labour. The sense of relief derived from her return home is symbolised by her literal charitable relief, as Mary desires to provide homes to alleviate these poor women and their children from poverty. The desire to exist 'unconsciously' is present in Mary's return to Cornwall, as she 'refuse[s] to be presented' at London social events while enacting her charitable work. As such, she also rejects the

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suppressive, surveying male gaze in escaping to a space built purely for poor women where she does not have to be 'presented'.[72] Reflecting on her choice to act philanthropically, Mary states that she

> was able to make Field's afflicted life just a little happier, and he flung his riches into my lap; but his death left me a lonely woman. For me a great fortune can be only a great responsibility. I came here because I wanted to see the people I had known when I was a child, and who had been kind to me, for my own sake, when I was a lonely girl, the old servants who took care of me, and some of the fishermen's wives that I knew, and I hope somehow I may be able to make their old age a little easier.[73]

Her nostalgic return to her childhood community in Cornwall signifies an attempt to remedy her loneliness whilst also undertaking charitable acts. In revisiting and remaking spaces from her childhood, Mary reinvents her agency whilst enacting her sense of responsibility by creating a form of philanthropic labour for herself.

In building almshouses for Cornish widows, Mary creates a female-orientated community and promises to 'find room for them all'.[74] The home for 'fallen' women is somewhat evoked in Mary's creation of a space that enacts philanthropy for women, yet Mary's homes are not built to 're-train women on how to fit "appropriately" within society by encouraging [re]marriage' or to mark them as 'depraved'.[75] In returning to her birthplace and rejuvenating the space for the women to 'make their old age a little easier', Mary offers a different charitable model for female homelessness that is not built on a judgmental male gaze. Mary's philanthropic labour thus creates an environment for the protection and care of exclusively-female paupers and their children. Throughout this section of the narrative, Braddon intimately ties Mary's philanthropic agency to the act of writing: the narrator states that Mary 'took little notes in her pocket-book of the things that were wanting in the shabby house and the clothes that were needed for the starved bodies', and describes that a 'day or two afterwards the children thought a fairy had been there, and the weeping mother talked of one of

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God's angels'.[76] Mary's 'little notes' as well as the comparisons between Mary and mythical or religious creatures provide her with a philanthropically-rooted power. This marks a departure from her conflation with *The Reading Girl*, as Mary actively writes and is described as a supernatural surveyor. This newfound power is created through Mary's self-created philanthropic labour. As such, *Mary* illustrates the capacity of female labour to be a liberating force for women, further reflecting Schreiner's sentiment that labour creates 'wide' and 'gracious' possibilities for the future.'[77]

Braddon illustrates this change in Mary's agency via the use of free indirect discourse, which comes to the fore following Mary's inheritance of Field's wealth. Mary wishes to write George a letter, remarking that 'he would know her hand perhaps [...] he had seen letters she had written' as she 'was sometimes writing girl as well as reading girl'.[78] As Lyn Pykett argues, Braddon's heroines can be characterised by their ability to deconstruct masculine surveillance strategies: indeed, Braddon's oeuvre represents the key role that writing played in empowering women during the sensation decade of the 1860s and at the fin de siècle.[79] As such, the mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries act as moments of 'invasion of fiction by the feminine' which interrogated and reconstructed the definition of womanhood.[80] Participating in this moment, Braddon's female aesthetic mode develops during these points of 'invasion', indicating her awareness of the subversive power of writing. The fact that Mary's self-made labour allows her to write, as well as read, further aligns Braddon's aesthetic mode with Schreiner's argument: that female work creates liberating 'possibilities for the future.[81] In allegorising Mary's newfound independence through her active writing in addition to her reading, Braddon plays with concepts of 'life and fiction' to draw her reader's attention to the potential of 'social and cultural empowerment' that can come from labour.[82] Until this point in the text, the narrator and the male characters place a strong

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emphasis on Mary's role as the reading girl, a form of servitude into which she is placed by the male members of the Sedgwick family. By establishing herself as both the writing girl and the reading girl, Mary reconstructs a sense of self beyond the male gaze while asserting a new form of philanthropic labour.

Mary's more positive experiences of urban environments at the end of the narrative result partially from her change in social class. Her inherited wealth means that, at this point, she has become a member of the upper-middle classes. At first glance, this seems to restore the class-based power dynamics of slumming, as she shifts from being gazed *at* during her poverty to being the middle-class spectator, gazing at others. Yet, by presenting her creation of almshouses for female widows as the antithesis of the house for 'fallen' women, the reader is reminded of her initial animalisation as a 'night-bird' and her internalised belief that she is 'loathsome'.[83] As such, Braddon highlights the inequality occurring between the treatment of female homelessness and the activity of the middle classes. As Grace Wetzel notes, Braddon's works often engage with concepts of 'homelessness ranging from literal dispossession to metaphorical disconnection from the domestic spaces that house them' and highlight the additional threat posed to homeless women by masculine gazes.[84] Braddon emphasises that Mary has reconfigured herself as a surveyor of her philanthropic community rather than an eroticised object passively existing under the male gaze, symbolising a dramatic shift from her 'sitting' position under Austin's surveillance at the beginning of the text. In addition, Braddon also illustrates the potential for women to act philanthropically and to contribute to making the lives of other women a 'little easier' if given the chance to climb the social scale.

At the dénouement of the narrative, Braddon illustrates Mary's agency over her body as well as her subsequent disassembly of the male gaze. George's second proposal to Mary takes place after he journeys to Mary's home in Cornwall:[85] Mary agrees, and the narrator notes that

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> The wedding was to be very quiet – so quiet, indeed, that most people would only hear of it afterwards – no fuss or frills of any kind, by special request of the bridegroom.[86]

While Mary agrees to the marriage, she has control over the extent to which the wedding is surveyed. Braddon again emphasises Mary's desire to avoid the public gaze and her successful fulfilment of evading surveillance: the phrase 'no fuss or frills' indicates a desire to negate aesthetic pleasures from the wedding. Braddon explicitly aligns this with a shift in George's male gaze when the narrator indicates that

> Beauty was no longer paramount in his estimation of a woman. It was no longer beauty that could hold him. He had known a charm more subtle, an attraction not to be defined in words.[87]

This statement rejects the emphasis placed on aesthetic beauty seen in Austin's earlier visit to the slums and in Field's pleasure in gazing at *The Reading Girl*. Empowered by her philanthropic labour that allows her to work 'unconsciously', Mary negotiates the relationship to move away from surveying gazes as evidenced in the 'no fuss' wedding. The final paragraph of the text indicates that 'Mary felt an exquisite thrill of pleasure' as the 'change in George had begun', and the narrator describes that 'life had for her a new purpose […] the days of fear and doubt were over'.[88] The beginning of the narrative fixates intensely on Austin's pleasures as he travels the slums; the ending changes this to focus on Mary's own 'thrill' as she escapes hostile male surveillance and takes agency over her body.

Conclusion

Braddon begins *Mary*'s narrative by directly critiquing the erotic and decadent surveillance strategies of male philanthropists, subsequently developing her criticisms to encompass artistic and literary gazes. The male gaze attempts to construct Mary through Victorian archetypes of poor women and women's labour: *The Reading Girl* and the early reference to Hood's 'The Bridge of Sighs' all illustrate examples of the novel's male characters attempting to place Mary within their preconceived

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understandings of poor women. Yet, Mary breaks these constructions by creating a philanthropic role for herself, taking pleasure in evading surveillance and opening up 'possibilities of the future' in the process.[89] Braddon thus emphasises the potential for poor women to succeed in developing their agency and to make philanthropic changes themselves if given the chance. Throughout the novel, Braddon further argues that the frameworks of male surveillance that aim to possess the female labourer's body, either sexually, artistically, or as a financial 'product', are archaic remnants from the mid-nineteenth century that must be deconstructed for poor women to be liberated. Braddon's *Mary* therefore operates as a post-Poor Law text that dismantles the affective power of the male gaze over labouring female bodies, moving away from the strict surveillance that the workhouses and the board of guardians once represented. Braddon post-Poor-Law titular heroine utilises her newfound wealth to negotiate her marriage, take control over her body, and to create a new form of philanthropic labour that supports widowed, pauper women: in this way, surveillance appears in Braddon's novel as a system of power in need of subversion and change, but unlike her earlier works, this subversion is not reversed, and the previous social order is left unrestored.

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0&#*',"/1: Dr Garth Wenman-James completed his AHRC-TECHNE funded PhD project at the University of Surrey in 2022. His thesis, entitled *Poverty Porn in Nineteenth-Century Fiction: Spectacle, Space, Surveillance, and the Victorian Imagination*, interrogates the representation of the East End slums in the works of Charles Dickens, Arthur Morrison, Margaret Harkness, Israel Zangwill, Vernon Lee, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Garth is currently the Senior Research Development Manager for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Southampton.

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Romance, Revolution & Reform

Working/Not Working: Labour, Un/Employment and the Deserving/Underserving Poor in Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth (1905) and Arnold Bennett's The Card (1911)

JOHN D. ATTRIDGE

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Abstract

Literary constructions of labour in the long nineteenth century frequently rely on popular conceptions of the 'deserving/undeserving poor', which were utilised by politicians and welfare providers of the era to justify punitive measures against those who were unable to obtain or sustain traditional modes of full-time employment. By the turn of the century such conceptions were proving fiercely resilient, impacting not only representations of urban manual labour and the rural toil of the working classes, but literary depictions of other kinds of work altogether. In this article, I argue that Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905) and Arnold Bennett's *The Card* (1911) are emblematic examples of this representational shift. Published just six years apart, both novels feature protagonists who struggle financially and awkwardly navigate non-traditional modes of work, labour and un/employment at the turn of the twentieth century. In clearly recognising the physical, social and emotional efforts required of their protagonists, however, Wharton and Bennett complicate social hierarchies, expose upper-class moral hypocrisies, and advocate for new kinds of social mobility and/or welfare reform which deviate from the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate. In doing so, each author offers a similar – but ultimately alternative – model for rethinking the enduring mythos of the 'deserving/undeserving poor', each of which are keenly informed by the idiosyncrasies of their own nationalities, genders, and contrasting social backgrounds.

Keywords

Labour, unemployment, class, deserving poor, undeserving poor.

#$!) / .!%, - . of it, Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905) and Arnold Bennett's *The Card* (1911) appear to have little in common. The former is a wryly satirical take on questions of philanthropy, moral and social hypocrisy and female agency in the twilight years of America's Gilded Age; the latter a playful and mischievous dissection of working-class social mobility set in, or around, Bennett's fictionalised version of Stoke-on-Trent. Where *The House of Mirth*, an enduring and popular text, stylistically draws on the Henry James school of late nineteenth century American realist fiction, *The Card* (much less widely taught in universities today) follows in the British picaresque tradition of Fielding and Dickens, leaning heavily into its idiosyncratic and carnivalesque elements.

It therefore seems unsurprising that there has been little critical commentary comparing or contrasting these two texts (or their authors) over the past century. Where it does exist, such examples are usually brief and limited. In a 1915 review of Bennett's novel *These Twain*, for instance, the Irish-American author and critic Francis Hackett makes just a passing reference to Wharton, commending Bennett for effectively capturing 'provincial urban usualness' in a way other authors – including Wharton – hadn't quite managed.[1] Both novelists also feature in 'Naomi Jacob's List of Novels for Writers', first published in 1939 – but there is no direct comparison between the two.[2] More recently, Robin Peel suggests that Wharton and Bennett 'were both social realists more interested in the functioning of society and the material world than the world of the spirit and the mind', but he sees Wharton as having more in common with writers such as D. H. Lawrence and Ford Madox Ford than someone like Bennett.[3] Randi Saloman briefly brings up Wharton in her analysis of 'Arnold Bennett's Hotels' (2012),[4] but only Aileen Riberio, in her article entitled 'Arnold Bennett, Edith Wharton, and the 'Minotaur of Time'' (2010), offers a direct and

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extended contrast between the authors and their works, via a deconstruction of the semiotics of dress between *The Old Wives' Tale* and *The Age of Innocence*.[5]

Peel's remark nevertheless comes closest to identifying the overlapping concerns that do emerge from two texts apparently so unlike one another as *The House of Mirth* and *The Card*. Having been published just six years apart, both novels reflect on the changing social landscape of the fin de siècle, as well as the evolving attitudes towards class, wealth, poverty, labour and social mobility at the turn of the twentieth century – including, in Peel's words, 'the functioning of society' and the 'material world' that so clearly impact both Wharton and Bennett's protagonists and their lifestyles. In particular, questions of moral hypocrisy, mental wellbeing and economic survival are framed around each main character's ability (or inability) to navigate nineteenth-century notions of fate and circumstance which, in turn, are heavily underpinned by the 'deserving/undeserving poor' dichotomy that prevailed among political thinkers and social reformers at the time – both in the UK and across the pond.

Taking into account important distinctions between each author's gender, nationality and class background, this article consequently posits that a critical comparison of the representation of work, labour and un/employment between *The House of Mirth* and *The Card* offers useful insights into contemporaneous reactions to the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as an opportunity to reconsider how changing representations of labour at the turn of the twentieth century functioned as imaginative reactions against the moralistic lessons of the popular Victorian social/social protest novel. While, on the surface, neither text appears to directly nor robustly engage with social and/or political conversations surrounding poverty and welfare reform, both narratives do widen the debate around what constitutes acceptable forms of labour by situating upper- and lower-middle class characters in a societal schema somewhat resembling the 'deserving/undeserving poor' framework. Despite facing the perpetual and threatening prospect of poverty for their majority of their narratives, Lily Bart and Denry Machin are two characters who exemplify a steadfast resistance to traditional modes of fixed or full-time employment and who, through their apparent and

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recurrent aversion to 'honest' hard work, should theoretically be categorised as 'undeserving' of the typical reader's sympathy. Both protagonists, however, frequently rely on their wit, good humour and affability (and at least in Lily's case, her youth and beauty) to get by, and are repeatedly forced to think and act creatively – and thus exercise some form of labour – in order to avoid the daily grind of consistent work. Bennett and Wharton thus clearly recognise the physical, social and emotional efforts which result from their main characters' inability and/or refusal to obtain full-time employment, complicating the more commonly accepted understandings of what constitutes 'deserving' and 'undeserving' behaviour at the time in which they were writing. Both novels consequently offer similar – but alternative – models for rethinking the enduring mythos of the 'deserving/undeserving poor'.

The 'Deserving/Undeserving Poor'

In both the UK and America, assumptions and/or conclusions about how to look after or treat the poor throughout the long nineteenth century were regularly framed, structured and disseminated around the narrative of the 'deserving/undeserving poor'. In Britain, according to Maureen Moran, this ideology was heavily informed by the rise of Evangelicalism in the early Victorian period, which saw parishioners across the country distinguishing 'harshly between the 'deserving' poor (gainfully employed, dutiful and righteous) and the 'undeserving' (unemployed, idle and morally suspect).[6] This dualism was further extolled in popular newspapers, magazines, and periodicals,[7] as well as in a variety of Victorian social novels (particularly by Dickens) and non-fiction publications (such as Samuel Smiles' popular conduct book *Self-Help* (1859)). At the same time, politicians and social reformers in Britain espoused the ideology of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' in parliament, pamphlets, and other public addresses,[8] while organisations like the British Charity Organisation Society (COS, est. 1869) urged reformers to look for 'signs of thrift and temperance' before directing individuals 'to the appropriate specialised charity' – leaving the 'drunken [and]

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improvident' to fill up the workhouses.[9] According to Gareth Stedman-Jones, 'control of charitable outlets allied to strict poor law administration would, it was hoped, effectively demonstrate to the poor that there could be no practicable alternative to 'incessant self-discipline' – a mantra that proved more powerful and enduring in the UK than any rallying against capitalism proposed by more revolutionary reformers such as Marx and Engels.[10]

By the turn of the century, such thinking continued to prevail among those in positions of authority and influence. Stefan Collini highlights how even liberal Edwardian politicians like Leonard Hobhouse subscribed to the overarching elements of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' framework in their treatment of what were often referred to as ''the idle', 'the unemployable' or 'the residuum' – those whom Hobhouse revealingly labels 'the morally uncontrolled''.[11] By the time Bennett was writing *The Card* 'in the first two months of 1909',[12] there were some limited attempts to ameliorate the condition of the poor in the UK via reformative legislation, but the fundamental ethos of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' still directed social policy. As Jocelyn Hunt contends, 'the notion of personal responsibility was by no means abandoned [at the close of the Edwardian era]. The Poor Law remained in place and the distinction between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor was maintained by all engaged in both the discussion and the implementation of the new social legislation'.[13]

According to Frank Christianson, similarities between the British and US economies from the mid-nineteenth century onwards helps to explain the concurrent proliferation of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' dichotomy in America during the same period, as both societies 'generate[d] comparable philanthropic institutions

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which [...] exhibited an expressly cosmopolitan sensibility'.[14] While Christianson doesn't recall the 'deserving/undeserving poor' dichotomy explicitly, his reference to 'comparable philanthropic institutions' positions the British-borne YMCA and COS alongside later American counterparts such as the Russell Sage Foundation (est. 1907), the Carnegie Corporation of New York (est. 1911), and the various Working Girls' Societies of America scattered throughout the Northeast and Midwest. According to Laura R. Fisher, many of these societies strived toward an 'institutional commitment to friendship across the boundaries of class and station', despite often 'support[ing] and entrench[ing] social distinctions' between the classes through their somewhat naïve attempts at reform.[15] Indeed, while Gavin Jones suggests that *The House of Mirth* was published at a time when 'individualistic and moral theories of poverty were [being] replaced by social and environmental explanations of need', he attests that poverty in the Progressive Era was still 'a pervasive crisis that provoked a range of responses' – including the founding of 'so-called charities and settlement houses' which frequently sought to 'sanction the superiority of genteel values against the threat of [the] 'uncivilised' masses'.[16] He goes on to cite Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), John Hay's *The Breadwinners* (1883), Martha Louise Clark's *The Arena* (1894) and Edward W. Townsend's *A Daughter of the Tenements* (1895) as examples of turn-of-the-century America's fascination with – and often simultaneous hostility towards – the various gradations of poverty that could be found on the other side of the class divide.[17] While Jones himself and other critics such as Laura Rattray have convincingly suggested that Wharton frequently wrote 'against' many of the 'philanthropic assumptions' that underpinned some of these institutions,[18] it is important to stress

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the pervasive impact and longevity of the ‘deserving/undeserving poor’ dichotomy in both the UK and the US at the time in which Bennett and Wharton were writing.

Indeed, although Wharton and Bennett *are* writing in and about different countries, there is clearly a distinct overlap in how the ‘relatively poor’ in both of their home nations are critiqued from middle-class and ostensibly charitable/philanthropic perspectives during this period. Across several of these aforementioned institutions, the moral character of the working-classes is frequently judged and regulated by politicians, observers and so-called ‘reformers’ who continuously and uncritically deploy language which positions poverty as a choice which only the ‘deserving poor’ might prove fit to overcome. Although elements of the ‘deserving/undeserving poor’ narrative certainly began to be challenged and undermined in some fictional texts at the turn of the century (particularly in the works of George Gissing, Arthur Morrison and Thomas Hardy in Britain, and by Edward Bellamy, Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser in the US), it is clear that both *The House of Mirth* and *The Card* were written in similar contexts in which both work and poverty (and representations thereof) were defined, influenced and informed by preexisting notions of the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor – a framework that proves to be of acute interest to both Wharton and Bennett in their dissection of work, labour and modes of un/employment within their respective texts.

Unpaid Labour in *The House of Mirth*

In *The House of Mirth*, questions around acceptable or unacceptable forms of labour arise in how the impoverished but well-born Lily Bart is frequently shown trying to avoid falling into the social class immediately below wherever she finds herself – usually by aligning herself with, spending time in the company of, and essentially working for her most well-regarded and well-off friends and relations. Lily covets being rich and sees only dishonour, disgrace and a lifetime of what Wharton repeatedly labels as ‘dinginess’ in accepting the reality of her somewhat desperate financial situation,[19] – a perception that Jones recognises as the ‘governing irony’ of the novel.[20] Although Lily fails to truly comprehend ‘the value of money’,[21] she is

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confidently affirmed as a character 'not made for mean and shabby surroundings, [nor] for the squalid compromises of poverty'.[22] In fact, she is frequently able to provide just the right touch to a number of material scenes in which she appears, including when she looks 'so pleasant' at Selden's apartment fingering an item 'so unsuggestive' as a book,[23] and later when she appears in the Wellington Bry's *tableaux vivants*, looking 'as though she had stepped, not out of, but into' a vision of Joshua Reynolds' *Mrs Lloyd* with 'unassisted beauty'.[24] Unlike some of her richer friends, Lily seems destined not necessarily to possess money, but to engage with it artfully and tastefully as and when the occasion demands.

To avoid the 'squalid compromise of poverty', however, Lily must work to assimilate herself into New York high society, and it is in these attempts at imparting her better taste to her friends that we begin to see how Wharton frames Lily's exploits via the vocabulary of hard work and labour. To 'escape from routine' and the dingy monotony it threatens, Lily is forced to 'pay dearly' for her leisure and maintain a constant 'structure of artifice',[25] acting as a smiling, pretty and distracting companion to those who are willing to take her in. Throughout the text, she is assigned various roles by her exploitative and often shameless companions, including when helping Judy Trenor to entertain guests and respond to letters and telegrams in exchange for a season at her friends' country estate; acting as Bertha Dorset's lady's maid in all but name, as they cruise around the Mediterranean with both Bertha's husband and *paramour*, Ned Silverton, in tow; modelling for the *tableaux vivants* at the Wellington Brys; and enduring sexual and romantic advances from the equally disagreeable Gus Trenor and Simon Rosedale, offering up potential social capital by being seen on each man's arm in public in exchange for promises of relatively meagre financial rewards.

In his seminal text *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Thorstein Veblen divided work acts into two distinct categories along class lines, and would probably have discounted Lily's various labours as examples of the 'inert exploit[s]' typically displayed by the upper-middle classes, and which most often 'result in an outcome useful to the agent' – rather than acts of 'industry' carried out by the working poor,

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which involve 'effort that goes into the creation of a [brand] new thing'.[26] While some critics have drawn on Veblen's work to dissect Lily's plight in the context of late-Victorian consumer culture and conspicuous consumption,[27] others have foregrounded how the economic backdrop to *The House of Mirth* plays a critical role in Wharton's dissection of ideas around work, un/employment and labour at the turn of the twentieth century. For Jones, for instance, Wharton's goal is to overcome stereotypes and 'assumptions' about the reality of lower-class lives 'not by displacing the poor [...] but by revealing poverty in a radically different environment'.[28] He suggests that Wharton showcases a 'remarkably developed psychological language of poverty' in her depiction of the unpaid and exploitative labour performed by Lily and that this, in turn, permits the novel to '[respond] discursively to the social and political debates surrounding it'.[29] Such debates include not only what he characterises as the Progressive Era shift away from 'individualistic and moral theories of poverty' such as, indeed, the 'deserving/undeserving poor' framework, and the move towards more sympathetic and understanding 'social and *environmental* explanations of need' that began to characterise charitable endeavours in the US in the early 1900s, but also 'the heightened impoverisation of working women' and the consequent redefinitions of work, labour and un/employment more generally.[30] Indeed, for American sociologists Charles and Chris Tilley, work in the age of capitalism constitutes 'any human effort adding use value to goods and services',[31] and according to this definition, Lily's labours clearly qualify as work by granting external and measurable 'use value' to the social lives of her friends.

While Lily's efforts cannot fairly be compared with the horrors and hunger experienced by those living in 'overcrowded tenements' and 'squalid urban'

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conditions in the US from the 1870s through the 1900s,[32] there is no doubting how Wharton sets up Lily as a long-suffering and hardworking attendant to those on whom she financially depends.[33] The protagonist confesses, for instance, to feeling a 'sense of servitude' when remaining overnight at the Trenors,[34] and Wharton concedes that Lily's 'naturally good temper had been disciplined by years of enforced compliance' during her stays at Bellomont.[35] Mrs Fisher too recognises that Lily 'works like a slave' to keep herself afloat,[36] and after being rejected by the Trenors and left at the mercy of Bertha, Lily inwardly acknowledges how it would be wise to 'work undividedly in her friend's interests'.[37] In her continuous attempts to avoid a life of destitution, Lily thus spends a fair amount of time 'working' for and 'serving' her companions as well as 'complying' with their unceasing demands, and Wharton repeatedly and increasingly deploys an accompanying sense of laboriousness to Lily's actions as she remains tied and indebted to these supposed social superiors. While the narrative opens with isolated moments in which Lily can make tea on a train with 'careless ease' or flirt with Percy Gryce with 'smiling attention',[38] these light-hearted diversions are reduced to a scarcity as she must cope with the constant 'buffeting of chances, which kept her in an attitude of uneasy alertness toward every possibility of life'.[39] As Lily herself concedes to Lawrence Selden, 'I have to calculate and contrive, and retreat and advance, as if I were going through an intricate dance, when one misstep would throw me hopelessly out of time'.[40] Here, Wharton's excessive use of commas and reliance on a multitude of synonymous verbs imbues the language with a kinetic energy that contorts the pleasure of an 'intricate dance' into the monotony of mindless and numbing factory work. Lily thus proves all too aware of the

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arduousness of her chosen path, and of the effort required to keep her falling 'out of step' with the fashions and flippancies of the upper classes whom she otherwise so ardently admires.

Despite the challenges of such work, Wharton takes pains to emphasise how Lily sees the value in the duty, self-discipline and industriousness typically expected of the 'deserving poor' – particularly from her somewhat vulnerable position as an unmarried (and relatively older) woman flitting among the leisure classes of the New York social scene at the turn of the twentieth century. Critics such as Fisher, for example, have suggested that Lily's precarious class/unwed status lends her a 'fluctuating relation to an asymmetrical social world',[41] and requires of her both additional work and canny instincts to navigate potential pitfalls that arise from her awkward social status. After Lily is ejected from her rooms at her Aunt Julia's, for example, the author uses an intensely focalised third-person narrative voice to communicate how Lily immediately 'knew it was not by explanations and counter-charges that she could ever hope to recover her lost standing',[42] and that 'to linger on in town out of season was a fatal admission of defeat'.[43] Just as Wharton earlier acknowledges how it takes 'a mother's unerring vigilance and foresight to land her daughters safely in the arms of wealth and suitability',[44] here she instils in Lily an astute and perceptive recognition of the need, as a woman, to sensitively and meticulously work her way back into the company of her wealthier friends – not through pleading and enforced immobility, but via continuous and exerting plotting and machinations. Once again, then, Lily is forced to 'calculate and contrive, and retreat and advance' in line with the whims of her richer peers, her commitment to working hard being thus framed by Wharton via both classed and gendered perspectives.

While historians such as Jan Lucassen (and Veblen, among others) have attested how 'women's work' such as Lily's 'is often overlooked compared to men's',[45]

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Wharton also depicts her protagonist as admiring the social efforts of aspirational men in similar circumstances to her own. Bumping into Simon Rosedale (whom Wharton portrays as an ambitious Jewish outcast) midway through the narrative, for example, Lily admirably observes how her once unappealing suitor 'was gradually attaining his object in life, and that, to Lily, was always less despicable than to miss it'.[46] Here Lily proves impressed by Rosedale's ability to work and stick the course which he has set out for himself; like the patronising administrators of US settlement houses who valued 'practical skills training' and methods of 'cultural engagement' for working women seeking financial support,[47] she is taken in by Rosedale's 'reformation of character', and consequently sees him as increasingly 'deserving' of her attention. For someone not keen on the shame and 'squalid compromise' of full or even part-time employment, Lily thus spends a large portion of the text working hard and appreciating the hard work of others – all so she can barely tread water in the high society to which she so earnestly wants to belong.

Lily's ongoing commitment to working hard – and valuing hard work in others – implies that Wharton at least partially indulges in the 'deserving/undeserving poor' dichotomy prevalent at the time. Considering that Wharton was 'deeply attuned to the intricacies of [a] high society […] characterised by social rites of acceptance and inclusion',[48] and that she would go on to explore rural poverty in more detail in her novellas *Ethan Frome* (1911) and *Bunner Sisters* (1916), it becomes difficult to doubt her probable familiarity with the gist of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate – if not the specific details surrounding its formal application. While the depiction of the poor in *Ethan Frome* has been criticised by many critics and reviewers for lacking appropriate authenticity and insight,[49] Rattray insists that 'the poor, underprivileged, exploited and those generally leading lives of hardship [have been] at the bedrock of Wharton's creative vision from the very beginning' of her literary career, [50] – and Lily's

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material and economic struggles (and her status as the 'relatively poor') in *The House of Mirth* appears no exception to this rule.

It might therefore appear that Lily's willingness to work, and her admiration of work more generally, is a shrewd attempt by Wharton to mitigate the possibility that her heroine is prematurely judged for her avoidance of more traditional forms of employment; positioning Lily as an affable, spirited and proactive social climber who at least demonstrates a willingness to 'pay' for her room and board in the form of unpaid labour helps to ward off accusations of idleness that many other American authors at the end of the nineteenth century saw as a kind of 'cultural degeneration' typical of the urban poor.[51] Instead, Lily works hard to maintain the illusion of an upper-class social status, and even bequeaths 'three hundred dollars' to Gerty Farish's Girls' Club,[52] quite literally 'investing' in the notion of the 'deserving poor' herself. While Fisher stresses that 'Lily does not join her friend [...] in fully committing herself to philanthropy',[53] this benevolent and unexpected act of charity has the capacity to endear Lily to those middle- and upper-middle class readers whose unerring judgement Wharton so carefully anticipates – and who were likely to be engaged with similar contemporaneous charities themselves.

That is not to say, however, that Wharton celebrates unending toil for its own sake; on the contrary, she continuously and increasingly emphasises the physical and spiritual toll of this constant and repetitive hard work on Lily, upsetting the traditional parameters of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate by lamenting the more noticeable signs of ageing and exhaustion that overcome her protagonist before the novel's close. Games of bridge at the Trenors she can hardly afford, for example, leave Lily's head 'throbbing with fatigue', while innocuous conversation with the dull but wealthy Percy Gryce see 'her face look[ing] hollow and pale', with 'two littles lines [appearing] near her mouth'.[54] An admonishment from Judy also sees her 'drop to the level of familiar routine', where she must endure 'long hours of subjection' answering letters to placate even her closest friend.[55] Even when Lily is succumbing to

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Rosedale's romantic advances, her decision-making skills are reduced to next-to-nothing: she merely 'had a sense of acquiescing in this plan with the passiveness of a sufferer resigned to the surgeon's touch'.[56] The staid and repetitive register of persistent hard work thus evolves into a cold and unfeeling medical simile that sees Lily subsumed beneath a 'state of tranced subservience into which she had insensibly slipped',[57] foreshadowing the 'immense weariness' that envelops her as she passes away in the novel's final pages.[58]

By exposing the taxing and ultimately irreversible effects of unceasing work and monotony – a monotony that she would go on to warn against more explicitly in *The Age of Innocence* (1920),[59] – Wharton critiques the notions that incessant attempts at 'self-reform' and 'self-improvement' (as extolled by working girls' clubs) would lead the 'deserving' poor to physical, spiritual and material success.[60] Instead, Lily's commitment to working for others sees her forced into a series of increasingly perilous situations that put her in constant danger and discomfort, particularly at the hands of predatory men whose money and influence helps them to wield unchecked power. When resisting Gus Trenor's unwanted sexual advances, for instance, Lily finds herself out in the Manhattan streets at night, cast as a weak and helpless 'prisoner', and threatened by a 'shuddering darkness' and eerily 'familiar alien streets'; even the rooms at her Aunt Julia's offer only 'ugliness, impersonality and the fact that nothing in it was really hers'.[61] The bedroom at Gerty's (where she eventually rests) is similarly haunting, inculcating Lily with both 'a sense of physical discomfort' and a 'langour of horror' at the reality of her economic and material situation.[62] Once again 'her body ached with fatigue', and 'all through her troubled sleep she had been conscious of no space to toss in'.[63] As Lily's situation becomes desperate and she goes on to gain actual employment at a milliners, where the reality of poorly-paid manual labour once

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more demands a 'vigorous exertion of her will',[64] Wharton describes her heroine's descent into poverty in spatially and chromatically recognisable terms that foreground the tragedy of a woman of Lily's class and social background falling so far below her expected station in life. Indeed, Lily joins an 'underworld of toilers' as 'an object of criticism and amusement',[65] and looks forward only to a 'future stretched out before her grey, interminable and desolate'.[66] Lily is thus abandoned to the inevitably 'dingy' trappings of poverty that she was earlier so keen to avoid, and her inability to engage in traditional modes of manual work see her scorned by a class of women she would have previously seen as beneath her. Despite the unpaid labour she has consistently exerted in an effort to live comfortably alongside her wealthier friends and acquaintances, Lily ultimately proves unprepared for her relegation from Veblen's turn-of-the-century leisure classes.

Such dire conclusions are foreshadowed in Wharton's shrewdly ironic tone and the dexterous handling of interactions between Lily and other characters from the novel's opening scenes. When Lily asks Lawrence Selden 'having to work – do you mind that?',[67] for example, Wharton clearly anticipates Lily's own fate as a future worker while simultaneously drawing the reader's attention to her protagonist's innocent outlook, as Lily does not even consider her own current exertions as a form of recognisable labour – nor acknowledge the limited opportunities available to her as an untrained and unmarried woman. Similarly, Judy Trenor fails to see the irony when she informs Lily of another guest's misrecognition of her husband; 'fancy treating Gus as if he were the gardener!',[68] she cries, without even a momentary flicker of acknowledgement that she herself treats her closest friend as if she were her very own private secretary. Gus too betrays a flippancy towards his workers when he complains to Lily that 'it takes a devilish lot of hard work to keep the machinery running' in business.[69] Here, Wharton's unsympathetic, industrial language again foreshadows Lily's fate to work at the milliners, as well as her protagonist's final

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epiphanic realisation that she was always 'just a screw or a cog in the great machine called life',[70] – a remorseless observation adorned with the mechanical language of modernity, but rooted in Lily's growing comprehension that any worker might be easily dismissed as 'undeserving' if it suits the more powerful parties who stand to benefit in their stead. Wharton's satire is thus squarely directed at the privileged upper-classes and their apparent incapacity for recognising not just the value of 'deserving' hard work, but for the various forms of unpaid or exploitative – i.e. 'undeserving' – labour that also go unrewarded in their vicinity.

It thus proves unsurprising that a character like Lily – so eager to belong to that class so wilfully ignorant of the true source of their success – is only briefly able to see the stark reality of her station in life, such as when 'it sometimes shocked her that she and her maid were in the same position, except that the latter received her wages more regularly'.[71] This kind of humorous but discerning aside becomes less frequent as the narrative progresses, and instead, Lily repeatedly represses what she knows about herself and her financial situation to be true. Nowhere is this more marked than when 'she was beginning to feel the strain' of staying with her Aunt Julia,[72] but takes out her frustrations at the charwoman working outside her room rather than confront the matter directly:

> The stairs were still carpetless, and on the way up to her room she was arrested on the landing by an encroaching tide of soapsuds. Gathering up her skirts, she drew aside with an impatient gesture; and as she did so she had the odd sensation of having already found herself in the same situation but in different surroundings. It seemed to her that she was again descending the staircase from Selden's rooms; and looking down to remonstrate with the dispenser of the soapy flood, she found herself met by a lifted stare which had once before confronted her under similar circumstances. It was the char-woman of the Benedick who, resting on crimson elbows, examined her with the same unflinching curiosity, the same apparent reluctance to let her pass. On this occasion, however, Miss Bart was on her own ground.

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> 'Don't you see that I wish to go by? Please move your pail,' she said sharply. The woman at first seemed not hear; then, without a word of excuse, she pushed back her pail and dragged a wet floor-cloth across the landing, keeping her eyes fixed on Lily while the latter swept by. It was insufferable that Mrs Peniston should have such creatures about the house; and Lily entered her room resolved that the woman should be dismissed that evening.[73]

Like Gus Trenor, Lily momentarily considers the 'devilish lot of hard work' she puts into enduring her Aunt Julia's uncomfortable rooms as more taxing, more demanding and more 'deserving' of warranted sympathy than the endless (and demonstrably thankless) cleaning undertaken by Mrs Peniston's hired charwoman. Unlike at Selden's earlier in the text, she makes a point of haughtily gathering up her finer clothes to step across to her room, and 'sharply remonstrate[s]' a figure she perceives as her social inferior. Yet at the same time, Lily's 'impatience' with the charwoman betrays a subconscious awareness of how her own increasingly precarious financial situation mirrors the economic realities faced by Mrs Peniston's hired help. So fearful does Lily prove of the charwoman's 'crimson elbows', unmistakeable physical markers of manual labour, and her 'unflinching stare' that threatens Lily's already unstable sense-of-self, she even settles on 'dismissing' this unwelcome vision of her potential future before she has time to consciously reckon with it. Like her wealthier companions, then, even the vulnerable and hardworking Lily is framed by Wharton as an uncritical participant in the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate – even though by the close of the novel, she fatally succumbs to its injustices and inconsistencies as well.

For Patrick Mullen, 'the seeming weaknesses of Lily's character' are actually 'key strengths which allow Wharton to frame possibilities for critical thinking from within the forces of capitalism'.[74] Lily's 'weaknesses' – her vanity, her naivety, her indecisiveness – are thus conduits by which Wharton is able to expose the fallacies of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' dichotomy that persisted at the time in which she was writing. While the author utilises the debate's existence to justify various characters' drives and motivations, and to protect her protagonists against readers' early judgements, Lily's constant deferral of recognising the practical reality (rather

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than the pervasive mythos) of her situation is what ultimately puts her in harms' way; her propensity for working hard – minus her poor hat-making abilities – has little to do with her demise. Wharton details how to eventually 'find some means of earning her living' proves a 'severe shock to [Lily's] self-confidence',[75] but in the novel's conclusion, Lily also lambasts the society which fails to recognise her worth or the hard work she has been performing all along: 'what debt did she owe to a social order which had condemned and banished her without trial?'.[76] As the voices of protagonist and author begin to coalesce, Wharton rallies against the stereotypes underpinning the schema of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' that might leave her heroine otherwise wanting. In her critique of New York high society and Progressive Era philanthropy, the author is instead eager to expose the inconsistent application of the popular notions of (or attitudes toward) work, un/employment, and the 'deserving/undeserving poor' that see Lily mortally succumb to economic destitution, despite working hard throughout the narrative. Such an ending suggests that, at the very least, Wharton believes some form of alternate social order and almsgiving is both possible and desirable, if not clearly essential – particularly for those workers in even more dire financial straits than a character so fortunate as Lily Bart.

Insecure Employment in *The Card*

In *The Card*, Arnold Bennett offers a similar – albeit more light-hearted – critique of Edwardian notions of work, labour and un/employment through the endeavours and misadventures of his working-class hero, Henry 'Denry' Machin. Described by Frank Swinnerton as 'an extravaganza portraying a typical Five Towns adventurer',[77] *The Card* introduces the reader to Denry by candidly describing him as 'not intellectual, [nor] industrious',[78] yet Denry's exploits throughout the text are rooted in what might easily be viewed as his 'intellectual' manipulation of those around him and his 'industrious' pursuit of a supposedly 'workless' life. After undertaking dancing lessons at the start of the narrative to win around a local Countess, Denry successively

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assumes a variety of roles and occupations that dwarfs even Lily's impressive résumé; in rapid succession, he works as a rent collector, shipwreck tour operator, chocolatier, Thrift Club President, newspaper magnate, town councillor and football club owner, and eventually becomes the Mayor of his hometown of Bursley. Such a list hardly qualifies as the flippant undertakings of a work-averse or 'undeserving' scrounger, and although early on Bennett does concede that 'Denry would have maintained the average dignity of labour on a potbank had he not […] won a scholarship from the Board School to the Endowed School',[79] he also insists that 'the thrill of being magnificent seized' his protagonist, and Denry was 'determined to be as sublime as anyone'.[80]

From the outset, Bennett thus neatly introduces an ongoing tension between privilege and hard work that underpins several narrative outcomes in the text, in addition to a number of narratorial asides. While Denry – like Lily – is clearly meant to be viewed as an individual unsuited to traditional notions of full-time employment, Bennett – like Wharton – repeatedly describes his protagonist's activities in the vocabulary of hard work, asserting that while Denry may be considered 'undeserving' by some, 'chiefly, [it was] his poverty [that] was against him'.[81] These descriptions of hard work are evident not only in early scenes where Denry must overcome some obvious markers of poverty – including his 'neat and shabby' attire and his inability to 'say […] things naturally',[82] – but in almost every pursuit he undertakes. This suggests not only that insecure and constantly revolving forms of employment do little to dampen Denry's appetite for ongoing mental and physical engagement, but that the consistency with which he applies himself to his work refutes the very notion that he – and others like him – are somehow 'undeserving' of a middle class reader's sympathy, either by virtue of his birth, his social background, or his un/employment status.

Problems faced by those who suffer from a (relatively) impoverished birth are confronted by Bennett in the novel's very first chapter. Tricking his way into a scholarship 'by audacity rather than learning, and [through] chance rather than

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design',[83] Denry is depicted as exercising a natural but non-academic 'curiosity' when he surreptitiously adjusts his entrance grades for the Endowed School, the author subtly indicating how more advantageous opportunities are beyond Denry's reach due to the 'design' of a society so heavily contingent on class, income and social background.[84] Unsurprisingly, Bennett's outspoken narrator refuses to pass judgement: 'Of course it was dishonest [...] but I will not agree that Denry was uncommonly vicious. Every schoolboy is dishonest, by the adult standard'.[85] Bennett's unnamed narrator thus exhibits an open-minded and even-handed moral outlook that clearly contrasts with the more damning views of those supposedly philanthropic advocates of the Poor Law Reforms and members of the COS who insist upon distinguishing between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor even into the early years of the twentieth century. By deploying an authoritative tone and confident first-person declarative so early in the text, Bennett signals a clear but drastic break with the prevalent opinions around labour and social justice of the era; instead of instantly capitulating to the idea that we as readers must beware of 'being hoodwinked by the cunning poor' – to borrow Robert Humphreys' expression,[86] – we are invited to consider how 'it was inconceivable' that an individual as audacious and wily as Denry 'should work in clay with his hands'.[87] From the very start of *The Card*, Bennett therefore dismantles the overarching philosophy underpinning the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate, breaching the usually causal links between deceitful behaviour and punishment, and between honest hard work and success.

The language of labour nonetheless imbues nearly all Denry's efforts in business, suggesting that – having set out on such an unorthodox and potentially offensive start – Bennett recognises the importance of cajoling his middle-class audience by yielding to some of their more conventional perspectives around work and un/employment. Initially, such coaxing is playful rather than severe, with the narrator situating Denry's behaviour squarely in the anti-heroic picaresque tradition, teasingly describing how 'nothing was easier' for Denry than to insert his own name

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'inconspicuously' onto the list of invitations for the Countess's upcoming Ball; how 'nothing was easier' for Denry 'than to lose the original lists, inadvertently'.[88] While Bennett courts the risk of outraging readers who would contest that such a socially advantageous invitation should be so 'easily' come by, the humorous tone belies the subsequent efforts that Denry will eventually have to go to secure a dance with the Countess, including being forced to attend 'Miss Earp's evening [dance] classes' to bring him up to speed,[89] and his difficulties in acquiring the appropriate clothing for a ball that goes beyond Denry's budget: 'He now knew that acquiring a dress-suit was merely the beginning of anxiety. Shirt! Collar! Tie! Studs! Cufflinks! Gloves! Handkerchief!'.[90] Here, Bennett's exclamatory list of material objects highlights the cumulative effort undertaken by Denry in addition to the initially 'easy' acquirement of his ticket. Indeed, in lieu of a new purchase he can ill afford, Denry decides 'that his church boots must [also] be dazzled up' for the occasion, but even this seemingly innocuous task is fraught with unforeseen difficulties: 'The pity was that […] he forgot to dazzle them up until after he had fairly put his collar on and his necktie in a bow. It is imprudent to touch blacking in a dress-shirt, so Denry had to undo the past and begin again. This hurried him'.[91] Actions are repeated in a frenzied cycle of activity, culminating in the internalised admission that Denry 'had lavished an enormous amount of brains and energy to the end of displaying himself in this refined and novel attire'.[92] In these initial scenes, at least, Bennett thus conforms to middle-class notions of work and social justice, humorously demonstrating how deceitful actions often come with unexpected consequences. If they are to ever warrant a chance at redemption, the 'undeserving' poor such as Denry are expected to atone for their 'crimes' through 'enormous' hard work and continuous exertion – in spite of (or alongside) their ability to otherwise mildly amuse.

Later depictions of Denry 'working hard' see the protagonist himself adhering to the very values and ideals that underpin the 'deserving/undeserving poor' framework. When acting as the tour guide of a Llandudno shipwreck, for instance, his

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actions take on a frantic and hyperactive demeanour, suggesting that he experiences genuine but isolated moments of joy in putting himself to ostensibly 'good' use. Over the course of a single morning he goes about hiring crewmen, organising a trip schedule, producing handbill copy, and advertising across town. Bennett describes how, 'instead of waiting for the nine o'clock boarding-house breakfast, [Denry] hurried energetically into the streets' to get started,[93] emphasising the character's boundless spirit in the face of a potentially lucrative capitalist enterprise. When 'his first idea was to make that income larger and larger still', Denry's 'fertility of invention' also sees him '[reprinting] his article from the *Staffordshire Signal* descriptive of the night of the wreck, with a photograph of the lifeboat and its crew, and [presenting] a copy to every client of his photographic department' in a bid to increase his profits.[94]

By the time he is working as a chocolatier, Denry's penchant for hard work goes even further, with Bennett substituting unceasing kinetic energy with the more thoughtful and sensitive deliberations of an astute business acumen: the protagonist admonishes himself for 'preparing the [chocolate] himself in his bedroom', and for failing to see that the situation 'needed the close attention of half a dozen men of business'.[95] Despite earlier considering his own good fortune a result of 'magic' or something akin to a 'miracle',[96] Denry is depicted here as a naturally evolving capitalist, learning from his earlier mistakes all so he might gain greater financial rewards. He stops veering wildly from one scheming enterprise to another, and recognises when undertaking the labour 'of half a dozen men of business' sees him exhausted to the point of making 'silly' mistakes and working harder than had he been engaged in full-time employment.[97] Such a development is foreshadowed when Bennett earlier concedes that Denry was 'always his finest in a crisis',[98] – hardly a phrase to describe the inactivity and idleness so often associated with the 'undeserving' poor.

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Like many members of the business and merchant classes of turn-of-the-century England, Denry considers himself 'unequal' to or 'undeserving' of fruitful economic opportunities if he finds himself working harder than is absolutely necessary, and Bennett utilises this epiphany to begin satirising and unravelling the bedrock of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate otherwise lurking at the fringes of the text. Seemingly adhering to John Stuart Mill's philosophy that investing capital is still just as 'deserving of reward as […] productive labour',[99] Denry abandons his confectionary racket, and goes on to manipulate the Countess of Chell into financing his 'Five Towns Universal Thrift Club' so that 'he acquired wealth mechanically now'.[100] The thrift club proves to be his greatest success to date. Hard work is no longer required of him, and yet Bennett still depicts Denry as 'simply tingling with pride' at his apparent accomplishments.[101] Like Gus Trenor, whose work is also described in the language of automation, Denry comes to (temporarily) believe in his own 'deserving' status by virtue of the wealth that now surrounds him; he bags himself a motorcar – which Bennett calls the 'supreme symbol of swagger' in the Edwardian age,[102] – marries the beautiful Nellie Cotterill, and decides to honeymoon abroad based on the advice of his now more affluent and sophisticated companions: 'The destination, it need hardly be said, was Switzerland. After Mrs Capron-Smith's remarks on the necessity of going to Switzerland in winter if one wished to respect one's self, there was really no alternative to Switzerland'.[103] Here, Bennett explicitly ties notions of self-respect with the kind of lavish expenditure Denry was previously unfamiliar with, repeating the European destination no less than three times to spotlight its innate foreignness to – and incredible distance from – the more modest and provincial Five Towns. Somewhat paradoxically, Denry becomes symbolic of several conflicting attitudes towards wealth and work at once: he is a shining example of a successful and humorously appealing – yet so far, unpunished – grifter; a model for social mobility, demonstrative of how hard work might eventually lead to economic

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prosperity; and an affluent businessman who now uncritically accepts typical Victorian attitudes around pride and self-respect that underpin the 'deserving/undeserving poor' dichotomy.

Upon arriving in Switzerland, however, it quickly becomes clear that Denry and Nellie's social backgrounds work to their disadvantage. In the Alps the pair prove 'outclassed by the world which travels', and 'try as they might [...they remained] morally intimidated'.[104] Despite having 'ten times plenty of money' for their trip, husband and wife find that 'the [present] company was imposing', and that these new companions 'were constantly saying the strangest things with an air of perfect calm'.[105] Here, Bennett's awkward, hyperbolic description of Denry's newly-acquired wealth clearly anticipates the atmosphere of 'strangeness' which the lower-class married couple struggle to translate abroad, betraying how hopelessly out of place they are among their wealthier peers – a fact emphasised later in Nellie's humorous but undeniably awkward attempts at skiing.[106] After being caught-out lying about the length of their marriage, the couple are also forced to endure the 'insinuation, disdain, and lofty amusement' of their fellow hotel guests, and while Bennett concedes that 'the fault was utterly Denry's', the protagonist's repeated attempts at humiliating the snobbish Captain Deverax see him treated with 'a haughty and icy ceremoniousness' in return.[107] Before Nellie can admonish her husband, Denry quickly responds with his own haughty and somewhat defensive rebuttal of the pride and self-respect he was earlier craving: 'I can't stand uppishness, and I won't. I'm from the Five Towns, I am'.[108] Just as Lily reaches a final state of indignance towards New York society at the end of *The House of Mirth*, Denry proves insulted by 'a social order which had condemned and banished' him on the basis of his inexperience and social ineptitude.[109] At the close of his trip, he thus refutes the apparent hard work and unquestionably 'deserving' status of the Captain and the other, wealthier guests whose company he has attempted to infiltrate. Instead, through repetition of the first-

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person pronoun, he reclaims his working-class background and impoverished birth, and wears his modest social origins as a badge of honour.

In *The Card*, Bennett thus exposes the malleability and hypocrisy of an economic and moral philosophy that is, in reality, founded on and fuelled by class-based prejudice and discrimination. Despite initially exemplifying the 'unemployed' and 'morally suspect' figure who Moran believes constitute the 'undeserving poor',[110] Denry goes on to achieve the economic success that both the YMCA and books such as *Self-Help* posit as only attainable through honest hard work and righteous self-discipline – two attributes the protagonist additionally complicates by working hard *dishonestly* and enacting self-discipline *without* excessive moralising. At the same time, Denry's social background frequently mars him as 'undeserving' in the eyes of the rich and socially 'superior', even in the eyes of someone as destitute as the newly-bankrupt Mr Cotterill. Despite Denry proving himself 'dutiful' and 'gainfully employed' and therefore 'deserving', as outlined by Moran,[111] Bennett depicts how his working-class hero's financial success does little to permanently endear him to his richer peers. As historian Paul Thompson explains, 'in the early [years of the] twentieth-century, the open display of wealth was an essential element in the upper-class style of life', but 'class was [also] the backbone of social organisation', and 'to be upper-class was to wield social authority'.[112] While others, such as K. W. W. Aitken, observe how in the final years of the Edwardian era the 'belief in self-reliance was [slowly] being displaced by a belief in collective action for the relief of the less fortunate',[113] Denry's awkward interactions with the upper-classes explicitly demonstrate how flourishing his newly-acquired wealth and finally abiding by the rules which govern the 'deserving' poor still fail to see him accepted into the upper echelons of English society. It doesn't really matter how much money he has made, how hard he has worked, or how 'deserving' he has proven himself – the rich will never accept him. Although the 'famous Royal Commission [on the Poor Law and Unemployed] of 1905' began 'calling for the

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destruction of the old system and [for] an extensive overhaul of the nation's welfare administration',[114] prevailing attitudes of social snobbery were clearly, in Bennett's eyes, much more difficult to overthrow. As Kinley E. Roby details, 'Bennett felt intense compassion for the poor and disenfranchised', and it was 'probable' that the author's 'growing sympathy with the Labour Party and his initial support of the Worker's Revolution in Russia were products of his early life in the Potteries'.[115] Having originated from a class-background not so dissimilar to Denry, Bennett complicates and distorts attitudes around the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor which are governed by middle-class propriety and prejudice. Within *The Card*, questions over who exactly might be considered 'un/deserving' and what activity constitutes proper 'employment' and/or 'hard work' are consequently called into question.

The final, most outrageous contortion of conventional attitudes towards work occurs on the final page of the text, when Denry not only takes up ownership of the local football team in his role as Mayor of Bursley, but is positively celebrated by the local community for his 'adventurous spirit' and unlikely social ascent – celebrated for 'the great cause of cheering us all up'.[116] Described as drawing on the English 'picaresque' tradition in *The Card* by multiple critics, including Walter Ernest Allen,[117] Reginald Pound,[118] and Jonathan Duke-Evans,[119] Bennett imbues Denry with the mischievous charm and roguish appeal of earlier literary picaros (such as Tom Jones or Tristram Shandy) in an attempt to win over his middle-class readership. As Duke-Evans asserts, there has 'always [been] a space' in English culture 'to celebrate the skills of the trickster',[120] and for Bennett, it is the very *unlikeliness* of someone of Denry's modest background making it to the top that sees the novel become a celebration of social mobility – regardless of how such an ascent was obtained, or

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what unorthodox or even unscrupulous methods were deployed to propel him there. Overcoming the status quo and defying his Edwardian betters proves 'cheer' enough, and in this conclusion, Bennett diverges from Wharton's more tragic approach to non-traditional modes of work and un/employment at the turn-of-the-twentieth century. Whereas Lily's hard work goes unrewarded (ostensibly for being non-traditional, but partly due to her precarious status as an unmarried woman among the American leisure-classes), Denry's unexpected success (buoyed by the advantages of his masculinity) makes for a joyful, unruly conclusion to his misadventures. 'Undeserving' as he might be considered by the average, middle-class Edwardian reader, such a conclusion undercuts and disavows the legitimacy of 'deserving/undeserving poor' dichotomy which Wharton partially indulges, and suggests that Bennett, in a more radical manner, sees at least some limited but promising potential for shifting attitudes around debates on social, political, and economic reform towards the end of the Edwardian period – at least for young men as wily, charming and fortunate as Edward Henry Machin.

Conclusion

Throughout *The House of Mirth* and *The Card*, both Lily and Denry's attempts at avoiding, redefining and/or adapting to proper modes of employment are frequently described in the language of labour and hard work that categorised individuals as 'deserving' at the close of the nineteenth century – both in the US, in which charity was dispensed by a plethora of settlement houses and working girls' societies, and in the UK, which was still in thrall of the Poor Law Reforms and the strictures of the COS. Despite some Edwardian and Progressive Era shifts in attitudes toward work and poverty (as defined by Jones and Aitken above), the non-traditional nature of both Lily and Denry's un/employment nevertheless sees them struggling to obtain the respect and admiration of their peers, especially when they are at the most economically vulnerable. Within their respective texts, Wharton and Bennett thus complicate the boundaries between what constitutes 'deserving' and 'undeserving' labour in the early years of the twentieth century, particularly by viewing the monotonous drudgery of work and its accompanying financial hardships from new and unexpected perspectives – perspectives situated outside the working-classes and beyond traditional forms of employment.

Yet in their vastly differing conclusions for their protagonists, these authors also betray contrasting perspectives on the strength and durability of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' dichotomy. While the question of intent is left deliberately vague and ambiguous by Wharton, Lily's death by overdosing on a sleeping draught, for example, sees the author capitulate to some of the common prejudices about the poor that were pervasive at the time of writing (including, as Jennie A. Kassanoff asserts, that 'the sale or abuse of drugs [was] usually a sign of class inferiority').[121] Despite critics such as Carol J. Singley and Hermione Lee defending Wharton's critique of Gilded Age New York and her own family background,[122] Lily's fate is undeniably depicted using the conventional vocabulary of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate – particularly when she is cast out into the streets by her judgemental and domineering Aunt Julia. When Lily herself insightfully confesses to Selden that 'one of the conditions of citizenship [among the higher classes] is not to think too much about money, and the only way not to think about money is to have a great deal of it',[123] Wharton both outlines the hypocrisy of her peers and emphasises the solidity of the status quo, failing to imagine an alternate social order in which Lily might genuinely thrive, and feeding 'directly' into what Wai-Chee Dimmock sees as the 'the mechanisms of the marketplace'.[124] Instead, Lily's 'sense of servitude' is described as a 'tax she had to pay',[125] and while Wharton does recognise the effort Lily pours into her continuous exploits among the rich, and is not completely unsympathetic to her protagonist's plight, she proves content merely to critique the 'deserving/undeserving poor' dichotomy – rather than dismantle and reconfigure it altogether.

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In contrast, critics such as Arlene Young find that Denry's adventures in *The Card* challenge 'class stereotypes more directly'.[126] While others, such as Roby and John Lucas, are more guarded in their assessments of the novel – the latter even labelling it a 'vulgar and complacent' and 'boorish and philistinic' text only suited for the 'magazine public',[127] – Bennett's jocular refusal to indulge in the prejudices and unyielding parameters of the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate reconfigures the beguiling picaro for a brand new century in an effort to recontextualise debates around un/acceptable notions of labour and un/employment that had been stifled by the Poor Law Reforms and the activities of the COS for far too long. Although 'Bennett's father [...] was a man of drive and ambition who had raised himself and his family above their impoverished origins before Arnold had reached his teens',[128] in *The Card* Bennett avoids the pitfall of considering characters like his father or his own family as somehow more 'deserving' than the less successful friends and neighbours he grew up around. Whereas, in *The House of Mirth*, Wharton's tragic ending and moral ambivalence imply a subconscious and somewhat reluctant investment in popular and prejudiced notions of work, poverty and un/employment that would have been pervasive among her social milieu, Bennett's *The Card* possesses an objective willingness to celebrate the exploits of an anti-hero with no real moral quandary or debate about his 'deserving' or 'undeserving' status. As a result, the humour and warmth of the latter text proves more subversive than the sharp and insightful social satire for which Wharton is so well known. Where Wharton proves constrained by social and moral convention, Bennett opts for a kind of anarchic transcendence in response to the 'deserving/undeserving poor' debate, exhibiting a readiness to discard the prejudices around work and poverty that were pervasive through the long nineteenth century.

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RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: 'The Rossettis' (London: Tate Britain, 6 April-24 September 2023).

CRISTINA SANTAEMILIA!

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'W.!-,$')!.(-,".!the Pre-Raphaelites', conceded *The Guardian* art critic Jonathan Jones on the occasion of Tate Britain's 2007 exhibition on John Everett Millais.[1] Yet, much to Jones' dismay, the Pre-Raphaelites made their comeback at the Tate in 2023.[2] On display between 6 April to 24 September 2023, the exhibition showcased the radical life and art of the Rossetti family in an attempt to reframe the birth of Pre-Raphaelitism within a context of familial collaboration, thus bringing attention to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's closest, but most overlooked, fellow artists. As the Tate's first retrospective of Dante Gabriel Rossetti – and the most complete exhibition of Elizabeth Siddal's work – in decades, 'The Rossettis' was bound to be a blockbuster, despite Jones' reservations.

Curated by Carol Jacobi and James Finch, the exhibition boasted a variety of paintings, drawings, books, manuscripts, home furnishings, and even jewellery. This impressive combination of literary, pictorial and decorative arts – a testament to the heterogeneity of the Pre-Raphaelite oeuvre – was loaned via the Delaware Art Museum and a number of public and private art collections. However, the curators made some telling decisions by excluding key pieces, such as the Tate favourite *Ophelia* (1851-2), reflecting the exhibition's attempt to emancipate Elizabeth Siddal from the role of tragic muse. The decision to exclude Siddal's forceful *Self-Portrait* (1853-54), which would have made an apt foil for Dante Gabriel's depictions positioning her as a languid maiden, strikes me as a less prudent choice.

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The exhibition started on a high note, with Christina Rossetti's poetry printed on the walls and projected from speakers around the room. In the centre of the room, however, stood Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The Annunciation* (1849-50), a painting which, featuring his siblings William Michael and Christina as models, was meant to represent the artistic synergy of the Rossettis. From that point onwards, Dante Gabriel Rossetti was the unrivalled centre of attention. An exhibition intended to explore the intertwined lives and works of the Rossettis through a perspective that emphasised the confluence of kith and kin over the influence of the individual genius, from this point on, became exclusively a retrospective of Dante Gabriel's work as the standard-bearer of both Pre-Raphaelitism and Aestheticism. 'The Rossettis' thus fell flat in its attempt to respond to the scholarly reorientation towards community and collaboration and to effectively convey that, beyond homosocial ties and patriarchal relationships, 'Pre-Raphaelitism is, at heart, a communal endeavour'.[3]

Further into the exhibition, Christina and Elizabeth Siddal were quickly demoted to supporting characters, making one wonder – as did *The Telegraph*'s Alastair Sooke – whether they were simply shoehorned into what was essentially an exhibition about Dante Gabriel Rossetti in an attempt to purport a narrative of inclusivity.[4] As for the remaining Rossettis, they were as good as background characters. Reference to William Michael's writings beyond *The Germ* were limited to passing remarks, while the work of his sister, Maria Francesca, and wife, Lucy Madox Brown, barely featured. Unlike the National Portrait Gallery's comparatively successful 2019-20 'Pre-Raphaelite Sisters' exhibition, with its associated conference and edited collection, 'The Rossettis' failed to contribute to the endeavour of contemporary scholarship to recover the life and work of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's unsung artists and collaborators.[5] The exhibition

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catalogue for 'The Rossettis', a collection featuring essays by some of the scholars – such as Jan Marsh or Wendy Parkins – who have significantly advanced this recuperative endeavour, did a better job at foregrounding some of the 'other' Rossettis (especially the women), to the point that, at times, the catalogue felt more ambitious than, or even unrelated to, the exhibition itself. Although the Pre-Raphaelite enthusiast was seemingly the target audience, the exhibition would have benefitted from either a sharper critical edge or a narrower focus that allowed it to expand on some of the aspects at which it only timidly hinted (e.g. the relationships between the women of the Rossetti clan).

The dissonance between the actual exhibition and the narrative spun around it made the whole project feel inconsistent and hesitant in its attempt to reframe the Rossettis – a fault reflected in the design and layout of the exhibition. One could not help but get the impression that the curators were aware of this dissonance and that they tried, unsuccessfully, to tell a story that did not trace the trajectory of Rossetti's career too evidently. This was especially apparent in the room bearing the title 'Poetic Portraits', a space overstuffed with Dante Gabriel's lavish later paintings (*Lady Lilith* (1866-8), *Venus Verticordia* (1868) and *La Ghirlandata* (1873), for example) which, as other reviewers have noted, came too late in the exhibition and were displayed overwhelmingly en masse.[6] This points to an attempt at limiting the space accorded to Dante Gabriel Rossetti throughout the exhibition without daring to leave out some of his major works – a risk which, considering the quantity and quality of the collection, the Tate could have well afforded. Subtitled 'Radical Romantics', the aim of the exhibition as a whole was to (re)present the Rossettis to contemporary audiences as trailblazing revolutionaries who spearheaded Britain's first avant-garde art movement and an associated bohemian counterculture. But, as critics of every stripe did not fail to point out, the political claims the exhibition made for the Rossettis were at times overblown, stretched, and, worst of all, unsubstantiated.[7] While the Rossettis were

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indeed the children of revolution in more ways than one, the exhibition selectively glossed over some aspects of their lives while reading too much into others. It, for instance, overplayed Dante Gabriel's and Christina's open mindedness vis-à-vis the Woman Question, whitewashing the former's womanising and omitting the latter's opposition to women's suffrage. Geared towards popular appeal, the exhibition sanitised the Rossettis' life stories in pursuit of a narrative that conformed to a demand for relevance.

On the matter of the Rossettis' radicalism, the exhibition ended on a low note. Once the viewer reached the last room, titled 'Radical Legacies', they found themselves in a magenta-coloured room with just four items on display and a film projection of Ken Russell's *Dante's Inferno* (1967). This room had no seating available to watch the film, missing a valuable opportunity to make this a space in which to reflect upon the exhibition as a coherent whole. From an anarchist journal produced by William Michael Rossetti's teenage children to a photograph from Sunil Gupta's series on queer experience in India, called *The New Pre-Raphaelites*, the works were, as refreshing examples of the Rossettis' subversive influence, excellent curatorial choices. The section was, however, too sparse and cursory to effectively restate the exhibition's aim of representing the Rossettis to contemporary audiences as radicals whose legacies are still very much alive.

Overall, and despite these criticisms, 'The Rossettis' was an extensive exhibition that brought together a wide array of artworks and documents, to the delight of Pre-Raphaelite enthusiasts. But organising a rich exhibition was never a challenge for the Tate Britain; the challenge, instead, lay in adopting a forthright critical position that catered both for the Rossetti enthusiast and the Rossetti scholar alike. The curation appeared to somewhat sit on the fence regarding the Rossettis' legacy, particularly their not-so-radical ideological alignment vis-à-vis questions of race, gender and class, both in their context and in ours. As a consequence, they avoided uncomfortable choices and questions, trying instead to harmonise conflicting aspects of the exhibition's subjects and, like the proverbial jack-of-all-trades, mastering none.

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To be fair, 'The Rossettis' was in for criticism from the start. Aside from the grand claims and great expectations which burdened the exhibition, the fact of the matter is that Pre-Raphaelitism – a backward-looking but forward-thinking movement, described by William Gaunt in *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* as 'a misunderstanding they all misunderstood' – never fails to attract criticism.[8] Maligned and misunderstood in life and death, the Pre-Raphaelites seem doomed to be perpetually out of favour, with their work, now adorning a variety of trinkets and souvenirs, dismissed as sentimental old tosh. And while the exhibition's strongest point was perhaps the Tate's choice of focus on the (lived) process behind the works, which neatly aligns with the concern with *poesis* (or acts of making) that underpinned the 2020 collection *Defining Pre-Raphaelite Poetics*, it sets the Rossettis (especially Dante Gabriel) up for criticism on various fronts – as pioneer artists, as biographic/biographilic subjects, and as historical figures.[9] To curate a fresh perspective on 'The Rossettis' was, in conclusion, a tall order. But ultimately, and despite the criticism and condemnation they periodically face, the ubiquity and frequency of exhibitions on their life and work prove that the Pre-Raphaelites are here to stay.[10]

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RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: Danielle Dove, Victorian Dress in Contemporary Historical Fiction: Materiality, Agency and Narrative (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023) 210pp. ISBN 9781350294684, £85.00.

SYDNI ZASTRE!

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'M2'3.'.((!&(! ,! strong word to have attached to you,' muses Grace Marks, the protagonist of Margaret Atwood's 1996 neo-Victorian novel *Alias Grace*. 'Sometimes at night I whisper it over to myself: Murderess, Murderess. It rustles, like a taffeta skirt across the floor'.[1] This quotation is deployed to great effect in the opening chapter of Danielle Dove's first monograph, *Victorian Dress in Contemporary Historical Fiction: Materiality, Agency and Narrative*. The seamless interweaving of the sartorial with the potently personal strikes at the heart of Dove's book, which argues for the power of textual clothing to both illuminate and obscure fictional characters' identities and motivations; disrupt normative paradigms of gender, class, and status; and trouble our relationship with the Victorian past. Dove joins Kate Mitchell, Rosario Arias, and Patricia Pulham, among others, in calling for 'a form of neo-Victorian literary criticism that foregrounds memory, materiality and phenomenological and sensory matters.'[2] In so doing, she crafts an engaging and well-argued study which will appeal to scholars of literature, dress history, and material culture alike.[3]

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Alongside Atwood's *Alias Grace*, Dove investigates Colm Tóibín's *The Master* (2004); Sarah Waters's *Tipping the Velvet* (1998), *Affinity* (1999), and *Fingersmith* (2002); John Harwood's *The Ghost Writer* (2004); Belinda Starling's *The Journal of Dora Damage* (2007); A.S. Byatt's *Possession* (1990); Ronald Frame's *Havisham: A Novel* (2012); and Diana Souhami's *Gwendolen: A Novel* (2014). Whilst some of these are already well-researched, notably Atwood's, Byatt's, and Waters's now-canonical neo-Victorian texts, Dove also turns her attention to examples of the genre – such as the novels by Starling, Frame, and Souhami – which have received little or no scholarly attention. The majority of these novels have female protagonists, but it is not only for this reason that Dove concentrates her study upon women's clothing. 'Since women's rapidly changing silhouettes functioned as barometers of social change in the Victorian period', she reasons, 'mapping such sartorial developments also provides a kind of shorthand for contemporary authors, enabling them to draw upon and efficiently rehearse the complex gendered and sociocultural implications of dress'.[4] With this in mind, Dove focuses her analysis on four types of feminine garment: gowns, gloves, veils and jewellery, with a chapter devoted to each.[5]

For her theoretical framework, Dove turns to new materialism, taking up Roland Barthes's attention to 'written dress' and making persuasive use of Jane Bennett's concept of 'thing-power', with its emphasis upon the 'liveliness of matter' and 'the strange ability of ordinary, man-made items to exceed their status as objects and to manifest traces of independence or aliveness'.[6] Dove situates her book alongside other studies which have considered textiles in/and/as texts, including Lou Taylor's *The Study of Dress History* (2002), Clair Hughes's *Dressed in Fiction* (2005), and Cynthia Kuhn and Cindy Carlson's *Styling Texts: Dress and Fashion in Literature* (2007).[7] A particularly useful concept in this sphere is Christine Bayles Kortsch's 'dual literacy': Victorian women's need and ability to 'read' dress culture as well as print, to 'write in ink and

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thread, and to interpret clothing, textiles and decorative furnishings as correlatives to other more textual forms'.[8] Dove convincingly extends this proposition to include both fictional characters' interactions with clothing and the contemporary reader's interactions with these characters, their clothing, and the (neo-) Victorian world(s) they inhabit.

In the first chapter, Dove's reading of *Alias Grace* positions the sartorial as an instrument of identity-fashioning, concealment, and the (re)writing of memory, through comparisons between Grace's work as a seamstress and her fabrication of an ambiguous narrative in which the question of her criminality is never resolved. In this, Dove joins a robust body of existing scholarship, but her argument – that Grace's use of dress obfuscates her identit(ies) and troubles the stereotypical categories into which others would place her ('angel, whore, muse or monster') remains potent and persuasive, shored up by clear and cogent prose.[9] Alongside *Alias Grace*, Dove discusses *The Master*, Tóibín's 'bio-fictional' novel of Henry James. A particular scene, based on an apocryphal anecdote in which the novelist attempts to 'drown' the dresses of his recently deceased friend Constance Fenimore Woolson in a Venetian lagoon, is the starting point for Dove's thoughtful discussion of the 'mysterious liveliness and haunting power' of fictional clothes in the text.[10] As the dresses 'break through the surface of the lagoon', refusing to be drowned, Dove argues that 'they disrupt and trouble the protagonists in the same way that their historical presence haunts the contemporary narrative.'[11] Here is Bennett's thing-power at work, successfully employed to attest to the importance of the textural in the textual.

Dove's chapter on gloves is the strongest and most exciting. Focusing on Waters's neo-Victorian trilogy, Dove argues that 'Victorian gloves evoke and materialize queer desire [...] Operating as sartorial substitutes for and surrogates of the female body, gloves work to both disrupt and mediate the sense of touch.'[12] The most striking illustration of this point comes via her analysis of *Fingersmith*, whose co-protagonists,

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an upper-class lady and a criminal, were swapped at birth and whose narrative arcs culminate in one taking the other's place. Gloves, a garment worn in pairs, assume particular importance to this intricate tale of doubling. The uncle of Maud, one of the novel's protagonists, collects pornographic books and enlists his niece in their care, stipulating that she wear pristine white gloves when handling them. Dove draws a compelling parallel between the restrictive function of corsets and that of Maud's gloves, arguing convincingly that

> The encasing of Maud's hands is deeply symbolic and problematic: though the corset might contain her waist, it is the gloves that cut off both her creativity and sexuality. Not only do they keep her hands soft and clean for the safe handling of her uncle's pornographic books, but they simultaneously "keep her from further mischief," that is, from experiencing onanistic pleasure or from sexual contact with Sue.[13]

When Maud leaves her uncle's home, Dove argues, she 'measures out her life as a prisoner through the synecdoche of gloved time, asking: "How many gloves, have I outgrown or outworn?"'[14] This is an astute insight, elegantly phrased by Dove.

In her third chapter, Dove makes a strong case for attending to veils, which the Victorians 'associated with both domestic simplicity and spirituality, mundanity and oriental exoticism.'[15] She distinguishes usefully between 'the literary veil, a distinctly fictional invention that is drawn from and embedded within wider gothic and spiritualist narratives, and the garment itself, which was a familiar, ordinary and useful item of Victorian dress', to argue that whilst veils in Victorian fiction function as mechanisms of concealment, in neo-Victorian texts they are 'icons of revelation'.[16] Her case studies are John Harwood's *The Ghost Writer*, in which metaphorical veils, including mirrors and blank canvases, recur before the narrative's culmination in the falling-away of a literal veil; and Belinda Starling's *The Journal of Dora Damage*, in which the mourning veil worn by the eponymous protagonist and the fabric covers she creates for pornographic books both 'call into question the transformative power of the Victorian veil to conceal

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and disguise'.[17] Questions of gender, (in)visibility, and deception recur throughout both texts, aptly paired by Dove.[18]

The fourth chapter – which focuses on jewellery – opens by examining the now-classic *Possession*, then turns to address the newer novels *Havisham* and *Gwendolen* (re-imaginings of Dickens's *Great Expectations* and Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* respectively). The oldest text in Dove's corpus, *Possession*, has firmly attained canonical status and accrued corresponding scholarly attention. To her credit, Dove successfully provides a fresh and intriguing take. Although, she argues, the text may seem to be primarily or only concerned with literary traces, in fact 'the progression of Byatt's novel stages an increasingly object-oriented approach to historical recovery in which the primacy of the written word is repeatedly challenged.'[19] Material objects, namely a jet brooch and a hair bracelet, 'gesture to complex familial networks and recall hidden human histories' – and in so doing, Dove argues, they 'promise richer, more immediate and evocative forms of engagement with the past' than those derived from text alone.[20] Jewels, then, can have as much to say as words, if not more.

Dove's reading of *Gwendolen* attends to the 'colonial inflections' of Gwendolen Harleth's 'poisoned diamonds', arguing that 'the[ir] physical restraint of Gwendolen [...] metonymically stages their imperial heritage.'[21] However, she offers no similar insight into Gwendolen's 'talisman turquoise' necklace, beyond noting its 'Etruscan' style.[22] Turquoise is no more native to Britain than diamonds are, and some attention to its provenance and materiality as an imported commodity could have added further nuance to Dove's critique. Finally, Dove's reading of *Havisham*, in which the family jewels 'forge and reinforce a tangible and enduring sense of familial and individual identity for Catherine [Havisham]', is more self-evident and less interesting than her contention, following Wendy Doniger, that if the wedding ring 'signifies the vagina [...] then Miss Havisham's bare finger metonymically represents her empty marital bed and childless state'.[23] Indeed, marital status remains one of the few attributes which we look

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to jewellery to divine. In fiction, as in life, jewellery signifies by its presence and perhaps even more by its absence.

In all, Dove successfully demonstrates the usefulness of literary clothes in exploring themes of materiality, (in)visibility, gendered embodiment and the contingencies of memory and history. Further research may build upon Dove's corpus to address sartorial themes in newer novels, and perhaps also integrate a commodity-history perspective to further attend to the 'thingness' of literary clothing. 'Clothes, whether actual or mediated through language, accumulate, contain and evoke narrative', Dove asserts. 'Deeply encoded with symbolic and material meaning, clothes tell stories to others and to ourselves about our identities, tastes, places and roles within society.'[24] *Victorian Dress in Contemporary Historical Fiction* will be an asset to all those striving to interpret the stories clothes tell.

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RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: Irene Cheng, The Shape of Utopia: The Architecture of Radical Reform in Nineteenth-Century America (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2023) 349pp. ISBN 978-30-343-0772-7, $35.00.

KELSEY PAIGE MASON!

I ' . $. !C / . $ * ' (! *T / . !Shape of Utopia: The Architecture of Radical Reform in Nineteenth-Century America* examines the nineteenth-century American fascination with geometric urban planning and architectural diagrams, each of which were motivated by an undercurrent of utopianism. Cheng's monograph covers the period of radical reform movements in America from 1840 until 1873. Whilst she references utopians and their residential planning across the country, much of her focus includes New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, which she argues were the origin for utopian philosophies that inspired and guided many of the nineteenth-century, geometric utopians.[1] Geometric utopians were social theorists and residential planners who designed and built private homes and city arrangements in what they considered ideally spiritual and mathematical shapes. Cheng defines these built utopias as: 'architectural and urban-scale plans set apart by their distinct shapes and promoted by creators who believed that such communities would help bring about individual and social regeneration.'[2]

The book's title, whilst being descriptive of Cheng's analytical focus, somewhat obscures her captivating arguments about visual rhetoric and how many nineteenth-century architectural blueprints of utopia weren't, in the traditional sense of the term, blueprints at all. Most nineteenth-century Americanists would likely have heard of

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literary utopians, such as Edward Bellamy (*Looking Backward,* 1888) or Mary Bradley Lane (*Mizora,* 1880-1881), or utopians who founded intentional communities, such as John Humphrey Noyes (Oneida, 1848) or Robert Owen (New Harmony, 1825). However, geometric utopians such as Orson Fowler and Josiah Warren, who created visual representations of ideal communities and residential homes built into ideologically, spiritually, or economically acute shapes, are less recognised and studied. As Cheng argues, the geometric utopians' various building schematics and city diagrams were leveraged rhetorically, rather than architecturally, because of the subjective and emotional qualities evoked by those diagrams: for example, 'their association with clarity and proof' and 'their simultaneous legibility and abstraction'.[3] Cheng supports this argument with three claims, the first being the role of these nineteenth-century diagrams as a kind of 'visual spectacle'.[4] Contradicting the assumption that diagrams connote a form of objectivity, Cheng's claim is that the impact of these diagrams came from their dual presence as both grounded in their contemporary moment, and fluid in their adoption of new connotations within different contexts.[5] Second, Cheng notes that these geometric diagrams were more akin to political cartoons and abolitionist prints, rather than engineering or architectural schematics.[6] In this way, Cheng articulates the utopian aesthetic of these diagrams, which simultaneously served as critique and speculation of the present and the future.[7] Finally, Cheng's third claim – one echoed by new materialist rhetoricians, such as Laurie Gries' work in *Still Life with Rhetoric* – is that while geometric utopians might have deployed their own motivations and purposes in their speculative diagrams, these rhetorical objects 'generate[d] effects and readings that exceed[ed] their creators' intentions'.[8] As Cheng illustrates throughout *The Shape of Utopia*, the abstraction of these diagrams and print media certainly did not discourage founders of intentional communities and ambitious dreamers from trying to put those plans into practice. Rather, the lingering evidence of these experiments in architecture, in archival documents and in the buildings and towns

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still standing today, is proof of the efficacy of these architectural speculations and their rhetoric of radical reform.[9]

In Chapter One, 'Antinomies of American Utopia', Cheng begins her analysis of Thomas Jefferson's organisation of individuals and the collective through the construction of octagonal houses, such as Jefferson's Monticello, and Jefferson's proposal of land grid systems. In Chapter Two, 'The Visual Rhetoric of Equality', Cheng continues her initial discussion of land distribution and acquisition grids, expanding it into an analysis of frontier rhetoric, Indigenous displacement, and the reimagining of square or rectangular grids into octagon city plans. In Chapter Three, 'Cultivating the Liberal Self', Cheng neatly moves between an analysis of Orson Fowler's Octagon House and nineteenth-century theories of phrenology and health. In Chapter Four, 'Picturing Sociality without Socialism', Cheng introduces the history of the Kansas Vegetarian Octagon Colony while addressing connections between the visual rhetoric of printed diagrams of houses and speculative communities and anti-slavery messaging by white abolitionists. The only moment of brief disorientation in a cover-to-cover reading of *The Shape of Utopia* is the transition from Chapter Four to Chapter Five, which can be attributed to the sudden introduction of two new 'ideal' shapes – the hexagon and the circle – after the preceding chapters' intense focus on octagons and grids. However, the treatment of Josiah Warren's anarchist, freedom hexagons in Chapter Five ('Toward More Transparent Representation')[10] and the Spiritualists' rejection of angles, which cause spiritual and mental damage, analysed in Chapter Six ('Models, Machines, and Manifestations') are necessary examples in Cheng's comprehensive discussion of geometric utopianism.[11] Finally, in the epilogue, 'The Afterlife of Geometric Utopianism', Cheng expands the initial scope of her research to include Ebenezer Howard's *fin de siècle* work, *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898). She also ties her previous discussions of archival texts and philosophical

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treatises to utopian literature and pairs her nineteenth-century analysis of geometric utopians to modern examples, including an example of protest encampments at Standing Rock.[12]

A principal strength of Cheng's work lies in the interdisciplinarity of her primary and secondary sources, exhibiting a lively diversity of scholarship for readers of nineteenth-century American history and utopian studies. Although Cheng's focus is the analysis of geometric diagrams and architectural construction informed by nineteenth-century radical reform, she also showcases exciting treatments of abolitionist print media, colonialism and displacement, universal languages, socialism and capitalism, musicology, and phrenology. Cheng does not linger over or reproduce others' academic arguments, choosing instead to acknowledge scholarship in her endnotes, which contributes to the text feeling more like a gallery of primary sources rather than a conference room filled with academics. As a result, *The Shape of Utopia* is also a delightfully visual book, with a great deal of care invested in the inclusion of visual representations of primary source materials, and the originality of *The Shape of Utopia*'s construction and argument therefore cannot be overstated. Although Cheng reveals that 'for historians, the geometric utopias are too speculative and marginal; for architectural scholars, they're too unsophisticated', *The Shape of Utopia* demonstrates the short-sightedness of disregarding these significant examples where architecture, utopian speculation, visual rhetoric, and sociopolitical reform meet.[13] While there are more obvious ways scholars could continue Cheng's work, such as the treatment of other examples of geometric utopians or the expansion of this research into non-American sites, my personal reading of *The Shape of Utopia* led me to consider two more specific potentials for future research: first, additional attention to movement and bodies, and second, the integration of literary analysis.

Cheng addresses the movement and restriction of bodies through geometric houses and communities, such as in her analysis of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in 'Antinomies of American Utopia' or in Orson Fowler's condemnation of the

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conventional labyrinthine house.[14] However, Cheng's discussion of the navigation of these architectural spaces is more limited than her other topics of analysis. As a reader, the omission of discussions of physical movement through these spaces felt stark in comparison to Cheng's detailed analysis and research throughout the text. Almost as justification for this omission, Cheng does clarify that 'without exception, all of the designs were ephemeral or never realized', which explains the lack of physical evidence of how bodies moved through, or would be guided through, these houses and civil orientations.[15] Additionally, Cheng reinforces her emphasis on an analysis of the rhetorical, rather than the physical, impact of these geometric utopias: 'how these utopians spoke to audiences was as important as what they were proposing.'[16] Therefore, what initially might feel like an omission to a reader is instead justified by Cheng's rhetorical focus and choice of unbuilt utopian diagrams.

On the other hand, Cheng is more forthright in her discussion of another unbuilt architectural plan: Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. Cheng addresses the Panopticon's intended impact on bodies moving or being restricted in space, and part of her argument is that 'both the geometric utopias that purported to offer greater freedom and the carceral spaces intended to do just the opposite relied on similar ideas about the power of architecture and urban design to produce different effects on human subjects.'[17] The Panopticon provides an example of an non-actualised architectural plan which Cheng analyses in the realm of both the theoretical and the rhetorical. Therefore, Cheng's analysis of Bentham's Panopticon and its architectural and ideological impact demonstrates that there is an opportunity for future researchers to apply this same approach to the geometric utopians' plans. Scholars, then, could build on Cheng's work in *The Space of Utopia* in considering the rhetorical intention of the geometric utopians alongside the ideological and architectural constriction and freedom or restriction of movement in those same spaces.

As a scholar of utopianism, I was impressed by Cheng's comfortable treatment of nineteenth-century utopianism and intentional communities, but I also felt that the intersections between geometric utopianism and utopian literature were mostly

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relegated to the epilogue. Cheng justifies the inclusion of utopian works at the end of the book by arguing that there is a historical shifting of scale and focus in geometric utopians – in part motivated by utopian literature – at the fin de siècle.[18] However, I also see an opportunity for an analysis of earlier nineteenth-century literary works, such as *Equality, a History of Lithconia* (1802), *Three Hundred Years Hence* (1836), and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) alongside *The Shape of Utopia*, to draw the connection between literature, utopian practice and utopianism even closer. Additionally, outside of Cheng's more notable references like *Looking Backward* (1888), *The Human Drift* (1894) and *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898), there are literary works like *The Diothas; or, A Far Look* Ahead (1883), *The Republic of the Future; or, Socialism a Reality* (1887), and *Earth Revisited* (1893) which also demonstrate dramatically different orientations of residences and towns, and which present a further opportunity to further Cheng's illustrative applications. Nineteenth-century utopian literature, as a comparison to Cheng's print media, also held the same kind of rhetorical impact: while utopian works were often criticised and called blueprints, in many cases, the significance of the works was not in the replication of their community planning, but rather their expression of possibilities of reform. As Cheng writes, 'utopian plans were not simply technical blueprints to be executed; they were also, and perhaps more importantly, rhetorical images transmitted within a public sphere (or a dissenting counterpublic sphere) of print.'[19] The same holds true for utopian literature.

Irene Cheng's argument is ambitious and traces interdisciplinary threads throughout the book's eight chapters, telling the story of how a group of nineteenth-century speculative architects thought that 'by designing a better house or city they could help strengthen individual bodies or usher in a more equitable society.'[20] As Cheng offers compelling discussions of her own research questions in *The Shape of Utopia*, the book simultaneously opens up possibilities for readers to make their own connections, becoming an invitation to apply Cheng's analysis to future work. Beyond

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Cheng's historical and visual analysis, *The Shape of Utopia* is an essential text for utopian and nineteenth-century scholars seeking elucidation on this fascinating period of print history and intentional communities, and Cheng's work brings light to the understudied rhetorical leveraging of diagrams and city planning towards utopian aims.

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RRR
Romance, Revolution & Reform

Review: Kevin A. Morrison, The Provincial Fiction of Mitford, Gaskell and Eliot (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2023) 308pp. ISBN 978-1-3995-1608-2, £90.

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K.5&$!M#'''&(#$'(!$.6!monograph, *The Provincial Fiction of Mitford, Gaskell and Eliot*, delivers an entertaining and thought-provoking examination of the interrelated careers of these three renowned women writers. Morrison traces the works of Mary Russell Mitford through to Elizabeth Gaskell and then George Eliot, arguing that they challenged the traditional constraints of women's writing and publication to champion what is – and has been – the historically undervalued genre of provincial fiction. Morrison's central argument is that, for all three writers, a sense of place drives cultural, social, and political thought. By reconsidering the provincial genre as one in which modernity is explored in a familiar environment, Morrison argues that Mitford, Gaskell and Eliot challenge preconceptions of rural and provincial areas as inherently conservative.

Morrison's study is the first of its kind to link these three writers together in what he terms a 'chain of influence', with Mitford's literary career beginning in the late 1810s, Gaskell's in the 1830s, and Eliot's in the 1850s. Morrison traces the evolution of their writing and demonstrates the intertextuality between the three authors. For instance, he notes that although Eliot was a toddler when Mitford first came into the public eye, Gaskell was ten years older. His question is then, 'not, therefore, 'Did Elizabeth Gaskell read *Our Village* [by Mitford]' but 'When did she first encounter it?''.[1] Additionally, he argues that, in turn, Eliot draws on thematic and formal techniques used by Mitford and Gaskell, as well as gaining an 'essential insight' from her reading of Gaskell that 'one

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could both long for rural community and be aware of that longing', which allowed space for critical reflection.[2] Morrison deftly explores a wide range of subjects throughout this monograph: sketch writing, intertextuality, print cultures, liberalism, national identity and the emotional attachment to land are all treated with a nuanced approach and operate in dynamic interplay to form a complete and strong contextual background to his argument. He also uses a comprehensive and interdisciplinary selection of critics as support: Franco Moretti and John Plotz's works on the geographies of the provincial novel, McDonagh's essays on the modernity of provincialism and Karen Chase's work on ageing studies are amongst those featured.[3] Perhaps the most important theoretical framing to Morrison's central argument is the work of cultural theorist Svetlana Boym, whose concepts of restorative and reflective nostalgia (as set out in her 2001 work, *The Future of Nostalgia*) Morrison routinely returns to as he builds his case on Mitford, Gaskell, and Eliot.[4] Proponents of restorative nostalgia desire to reconstruct the past, and, as Morrison explains, they 'recognise in their longing an outcome to be realised: the eradication of the pain that comes with change and loss'.[5] Those who engage in reflective nostalgia use this wistfulness to think critically about constructive change for the future. Principally, Morrison argues that, contrary to established belief, Mitford, Gaskell and Eliot's works have 'always resisted the impulse to deny change or to reconstruct lost worlds.'[6] His aim is to pull discourses of regionalism away from a traditional reading of conservatism and into a contemporary understanding of the economic, social and political challenges faced by these writers. By tracing the 'chain of influence' between the three, Morrison identifies how liberal thought evolved throughout the nineteenth century, which in turn allows him to trace Eliot's own liberalism as an emotional response to landscape. It is surprising then that, despite such a varied bibliography, Morrison does not draw on the work of

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Dominic Head, in particular his monograph *Modernity and the English Rural Novel* (2017), for cultural context. Head's examination of the modern nature of rurality is pertinent to Morrison's own argument about the progressive possibilities of rurality and provincialism, and would have helped reinforce his case for the long-lasting influences of Mitford, Gaskell, and Eliot's work through to the twentieth century.

Chapter One focuses on the economic and professional challenges that Mitford faced as a woman writer in the periodical culture of the 1820s to argue that voice, a combination of 'direct address, detailed commentary and exhaustive description', is an 'intrinsic element' of provincial fiction.[7] Chapter Two moves to those of Mitford's sketches which are concerned with a wider rural setting. Through an examination that stretches from their original publishing context through to the later editions from the latter half of the nineteenth century, Morrison shows the importance of their connection to a specific place in time, arguing against critical works that read Mitford's work as a 'portrayal of a provincial village that exists outside of history.'[8] The third chapter links all three writers' use of voice within their texts. It begins with Gaskell's engagement with Mitford, demonstrating the ways in which Mitford's use of voice directly influenced Gaskell's development of her own textual voice, and then proceeds to show how Eliot was influenced by the narrative discourse of *Cranford*. Morrison's fourth chapter engages with Eliot's liberalism, and sets out an argument on nationhood that ties the provincial village's community functionality with cultivating a sense of citizenship. Eliot's *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (1871-72) forms the basis of Morrison's final chapter. In this section, he argues that the novel is concerned with how a sense of self is cultivated through the relationship between citizenship and a movement towards representative government.

The clear strength of Morrison's monograph is his section on Mary Russell Mitford. He draws on the important context of the threat of poverty in her life due to her father's penchant for gambling. By reading Mitford in the context of the publishing environment of the time – initially a 'patronage' system which eventually gave way in the late eighteenth century to allow the fostering of relationships between authors, editors, and publishers, and which, for the first time, made the idea of being a literary celebrity possible – Morrison identifies the ways in which Mitford fashioned herself as

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an author and assembled her following.[9] Morrison writes that 'in the case of Mitford's periodical sketches, her contributions to the *Lady's Magazine* [...] were often melded into a house style', as editorial teams attempted to bind together a naturally fragmentary collection.[10] Mitford, Morrison tells us, rebelled against this. With literary sketching 'seen as a particularly appropriate genre for women writers because it was considered a less ambitious literary form', she cultivated a 'distinctive rhetorical style' that utilised her fondness for letter writing. Morrison tracks her use of direct address within narrative through to Gaskell and Eliot and argues that these narrative devices allow the writers to acknowledge the rural in order to differentiate their work from it.[11]

Another insightful chapter explores the commercial aspects of Mitford's fiction as she attempted to become a professional writer with, crucially, a steady stream of income. Morrison notes that Virginia Woolf had called Mitford a 'hack who, driven by the need for "money", "scarcely knew what tragedy to spin, what annual to edit"', and claimed that her work was of 'marginal literary value', yet Morrison's examination suggests a rather different characterisation.[12] As the only surviving child of the heiress Mary Russell and the financially reckless George Mitford, Mary was under an immense amount of strain to support her family, yet, as a woman, had limited options. This led Mitford to publish prolifically over her literary career and to 'work across genres to maximise financial gain', whilst also battling with editors to be paid what she felt she deserved.[13] It would be easy, as Woolf did, to deem this a characteristic of a demanding personality, but Morrison treats it with an empathetic understanding of the writer's familial situation.

For Morrison, Mitford is evidently the binding force between the three writers. His connections between Gaskell and Eliot as a pair are convincing enough, but perhaps slightly less enthusiastic. Of the three, it is Gaskell who seems to figure the least in Morrison's argument. This is not through a lack of analytical strength, but rather that his interest in Mitford and Eliot is so apparent, that the Gaskell section is comparatively weaker. Morrison does identify similarities in narrative techniques between Gaskell, Eliot

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and Mitford – ironic disjunction, direct address, and descriptive detail, for example – and reminds us that 'the material aspects of publication and their modes of circulation engender different textual meanings [...] Thus, establishing which version or versions Gaskell read has significant implications for understanding how *Our Village* informs *Cranford*.[14] This attentiveness towards the importance of para- and inter-textuality between the author and reader of serial publications further highlights the influential lineage originating with Mitford.

Overall, Morrison's monograph is a pleasurable and thought-provoking read that successfully links Mary Russell Mitford, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot together for the first time in a chain of influence. Morrison tackles a varied and robust set of ideas and does so in a lively and readable manner. His application of Boym's differentiation of restorative and reflective nostalgias allows him to reframe the provincial fiction of these three women writers in a way that reveals their progressive nature. It is a wholly refreshing take on Mitford, Gaskell, and Eliot, and stands as another superb addition to Kevin A. Morrison's existing output.

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'%()"*+,-: Rebecca Shipp is a second-year doctoral researcher at the University of Lincoln, whose thesis focusses upon how the walking habits of rural communities and inhabitants are demonstrated throughout literature of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and questions what these representations can tell us about both the formation of personal identity and the inheritance of cultural heritage/memory. She is the editor of the Thomas Hardy Journal and the Thomas Hardy Society Journal, and is a board member for the Thomas Hardy Society and the University of Lincoln's Nineteenth Century Research Group.

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Romance, Revolution & Reform

Afterword

JOHANNA HARRISON-ORAM
(EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)

A!%. 6!6 . .7(!before my tenure as Editor-in-Chief of *Romance, Revolution and Reform* started, I was quite literally in labour. This seventh issue of the Journal has therefore grown up alongside my twins, and now that they are all one year old, I am pleased to say that they have plenty to show from their endeavours in 2024. It has been a pleasure to spend this year of maternity leave heading up the Journal, and I return to my own research refreshed, revived, and inspired by the stimulating scholarship I have had the pleasure to edit over the past twelve months.

January 2024's launch conference for Labour in the Long Nineteenth Century took place in the Journal's institutional home of Southampton, and speakers rose magnificently to the request of the Call for Papers 'to question the thinking by which we identify forms of labour in the first place: who, both in the nineteenth century and now, is allowed to decide what counts as labour? Which voices of the long nineteenth century emerge if we diversify our definition(s) of labour? And, how can the scholarship of labour – or the labour of scholarship – help us navigate the nature, purpose, and value of labour in a mid- and post-Covid era?' We were delighted to welcome speakers from the UK, Germany, Sweden, the US, India, and Canada, testament to RRR's growing reach and vibrant academic community. Some of the research on display in this Issue was initially shared with us in nascent form at the Labour conference, and it has been wonderful to see the evolution of these pieces over the course of the year.

The subsequent Call for Submissions garnered a fantastic range of responses, and it was a personal and professional pleasure to navigate the subsequent peer review process with the six article authors you will find in this year's special issue on Labour in the Long Nineteenth Century. My thanks go to the community of academics who provided peer review support for their unanimously constructive, intellectually generous, and detailed feedback which has allowed the authors' initial

pieces of scholarship to grow and develop towards the final iterations you have read in this issue. Many thanks, and heartfelt congratulations, go to the authors whose work we are pleased to publish today: Cal Sutherland, Calyx Palmer, Megan McLennan, Rosemary Archer, Garth Wenman-James, John D. Attridge, Cristina Santaemilia, Sydni Zastre, Kelsey Paige Mason, and Rebecca Shipp. I am delighted that these authors have been able to join our growing and vibrant community.

Even more thanks must go to the journal board, whose expertise and generosity of feedback has made my job a very easy one this year. A further vote of thanks, therefore, to Natasha Bharucha, Daniel Breeze, David Brown, Aude Campmas, Trish Ferguson, Marion Tempest Grant, Ellie Hibbert, Pauline Hortolland, Will Kitchen, Andrea Lloyd, Katie MacLean (our incoming Deputy Editor), Megan McInerney, Beth Mills, Cleo O'Callaghan Yeoman, Stephanie O'Rourke, Michelle Reynolds, Fraser Riddell, Claudia Sterbini, Benedict Taylor, Chelsea Wallis, and Clare Walker Gore for their ongoing and generous provision of time and expertise. I offer particular gratitude to Chris Prior, the Journal's Lead Academic Editor, for his personal and professional support this year.

My last vote of thanks must go to Sophie Thompson, who has excelled as this issue's Deputy Editor. She goes into her new role as Editor-in-Chief with the particularly valuable experience as having been a review author for issue 5, meaning that her editing and guidance is underpinned with a real empathy for the broad PGR community the Journal is designed to support. Her incisive editing skill will stand her in excellent stead for this year, and I am really looking forward to seeing how she steers our community in the months ahead: I myself will be stepping back into my role as a postgraduate editor, and look forward to seeing where 'Play' takes us, a welcome change from – and complement to – 'Labour'. Sophie, I wish you all the best of playful luck for Issue 8!

The editorial of 'Labour in the Long Nineteenth Century', alongside my own doctoral thesis, is dedicated to Howard Harrison and his lifelong love, and labours, of learning.