

İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ EDEBİYAT FAKÜLTESİ  
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI BÖLÜMÜ

# LITERA

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EDEBİYAT FAKÜLTESİ BASIMEVİ  
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**ORDER RESTORED : A STUDY OF WILKIE COLLINS'S  
THE MOONSTONE**

Zeynep ERGUN

It is no coincidence that detective fiction began to be written in England during the Mid-Nineteenth Century. The Victorian period is an age in English history when the bourgeoisie was a social and political force very conscious of its own powers and potentials. Having, as Peter Keating notes, «survived [his] own traumatic 'age of transition'»<sup>1</sup>, the middle-class Victorian, aware of the enormous progress he had made both in terms of wealth and of power, was, on the whole, quite satisfied with his life's achievement. He intended to maintain the status quo if he possibly could, the only alterations he had in mind being restricted by a general improvement in living conditions, though the idea of in any way changing the fundamental structure of the society he had created would have horrified him. With that aim in mind, the bourgeoisie began to react forcefully against any movement or endeavour for change which seemed to threaten its quasi-secure position. This conservative reaction is best seen, for example, in the middle-class response to the subversive aspect of literature and arts, fields which particularly tended to question and deviate from conventional norms and values. Thus, one form this fear of change took was Philistinism.

Granted, there were perils looming in the future that the Victorian bourgeois patriarch consistently feared : Carlyle was ominously protesting against

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study : A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1989, p. 5.

All this dire misery...; all this of our poor workhouse workmen, all our Chartism, Trade-strikes, Corn-Laws, Toryisms, and the general downbreak of Laissez-faire in these days...<sup>2</sup>

and prophesying that 'two Sects would one day part England between them'. Disraeli was echoing him when he mentioned the idea of 'the two nations'. 'The condition of England question' was being discussed by middle-class intellectuals all over the country. Moreover, after the French Revolution, and especially in the late 1840's, Europe had become the theatre of strife between social classes. Nationalist, egalitarian, socialist, and liberalist movements gained new impetus in France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Italy. The bourgeois Victorian found himself the anxious spectator of an almost universal upheaval which he feared might quite easily find fertile ground in his own country too.

Due, furthermore, to the wide discrepancy in the distribution of wealth, and to the general ineffectiveness of institutions, such as the Church, which served to curb disorderly impulses, the bourgeoisie was forced to recognize the danger of a possibly vindictive and potentially rebellious working class. The bourgeois Victorian could indeed see that this long-suffering social group had justifiable causes for revolt, but he also rightly feared that, in the event of that revolt, the very edifice he had erected was threatened by demolition. This fear can even be seen in such sensitive writers as Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell, for example, whose respective anger and compassion could not prevent the creation, in their fiction, of a detestable archetype for the trade unionist, whose strident rhetoric leads not only to social chaos, but to the destruction of the more acceptable and less menacing individual working-class character too. On the other hand, wealth and property, themselves the bone of contention between the social classes as far the bourgeoisie could see, constituted the very foundation of the socio-political system. It is not surprising to see that the emphasis was laid on the sanctity of property to which the bourgeoisie owed its social status. Security

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, Oxford University Press, London, 1938, p. 192.

became a key-word. It is astounding to see to what lengths the English judicial system would go to protect society from impending chaos :

[In the first half of the 19th Century] an extraordinary number of crimes were punishable by death. According to [one] estimate, there were as many as 223 of them, four made capital in the reign of the Plantagenets, twenty-six in the reign of the Tudors, thirty-six in the time of the Stuarts and no less than 156 since. Apart from such crimes as treason, murder, piracy, arson, stealing, rape, sodomy and various breaches of the game laws, which had been capital offences for many years, it was an offence punishable by death to send a letter demanding money signed with a fictitious name, to impersonate a Chelsea pensioner<sup>3</sup>, to make a false entry in the books of the Bank of England, to strike a Privy Councillor, to damage Westminster Bridge, to refuse to remain in quarantine, and to commit many other crimes, more or less reprehensible...<sup>4</sup>

The death penalty was widely inflicted, even children as young as eight or nine years-old being its victims.

Until 1829, England had relied on the severity of her judicial system in discouraging would-be criminals, and on

...voluntary associations or armed civilians; trained bands of respectable citizens...; military guards; watchmen and constables, often decrepit and sometimes corrupt; thieftakers who were paid for the convictions they were able to contrive...<sup>5</sup>

It was in 1829, that, as a result of the efforts of the then Home Secretary Robert Peel, the Metropolitan Police Act became law. London thus acquired a security force consisting of paid cons-

<sup>3</sup> The inmates of Chelsea Hospital. They were disabled soldiers.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Hibbert, *The English : A Social History 1066-1945*, Paladin, London, 1988, p. 662. Westminster Bridge, incidentally, had begun to be lit by gas in 1813, in an attempt to ensure safety in the rapidly growing capital.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 663.

tables who were to be commanded by two Justices, later to be called commissioners. Their headquarters were in Whitehall Place, in a building the back of which opened on a courtyard called Scotland Yard. They were almost universally disliked until 1833, when an inquest investigating the killing of one and the wounding of three policemen by the mob during a public demonstration was blatantly mishandled by both the law courts and the government, as a result of which the police gained the sympathy of the public. It was only in 1856, however, that the provinces came under the jurisdiction of a professional police force. The counties now required a more competent law-enforcement institution to counteract the rising crime-rate: criminals, hampered by the London police force, had found themselves obliged to look for new areas to operate in, and set off for the country. By this time, the English police force had acquired the legitimacy which enabled it to find its way into the literature of the age. As Peter Keating points out,

That the police force had a special and urgent role to plan in modern urban society was a mid-Victorian rather than a late Victorian perception: its fictional expression is to be found in Dickens's *Bleak House* and Collins's *The Moonstone*. These detectives are in some respects already the solitary, wide-roaming, tight-lipped unravelers of riddles familiar to twentieth-century readers and film-goers, except that they are also policemen, and, for Dickens especially, their centre of operations is the police station, a spotlessly clean, well-lighted centre of authority and calm in a chaotic urban world<sup>6</sup>.

By the time Wilkie Collins published *The Moonstone*, «the first, longest and best of English detective novels»<sup>7</sup> according to T. S. Eliot, the English bourgeoisie had, for the most part, instituted a relatively organized system to protect its wealth and property. The detective genre, which Eliot goes on to say was «invented by Collins»<sup>8</sup>, flourished in England, producing a type of

<sup>6</sup> Peter Keating, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

<sup>7</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, «Wilkie Collins and Dickens», Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1950, p. 413.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

detective fiction which was to become distinct, in its handling of character and plot, from its equivalents in Europe and America. Crime, as handled by English detective writers from Collins to Agatha Christie, is a much more domestic affair, disturbing the peace and security of a very bourgeois group of people. The house, or estate, for example, plays a very central role in the typical English detective story, the Englishman's home being his castle. The characters under threat are predominantly upper-middle class, and their social status is underscored by the dwelling they inhabit. It is both their own and their house's harmonious order which the law-breaker endangers. The house, moreover, works as a microcosm of the wider societal units, and, in consequence, the danger the individual finds himself in implies a corresponding peril for society. In most instances, the case is solved and order reinstated by a male detective, representative of the reassuring patriarch. It is significant that, as in the case of Sergeant Cuff in the *Moonstone*, the early fictional representatives of the official police force are notoriously clumsy in their attempts to solve criminal mysteries. It is the upperclass world that is threatened, and the unraveling of the puzzle, as well as the restoring of order cannot be left to inferiors. Early twentieth century fiction introduces the occasional female sleuth who happens to be in complete accord with the patriarchal system. Miss Marple's advanced age, for example, serves to emphasize her remoteness and alienation from the 'New Woman' type, and her respectability and ancestry affiliate her to the ruling patriarchal forces. But in general, the plot of the English detective novel is centred around the struggle between the patriarchal forces of law reinforcement, and the descendent of the gothic hero who threatens the prevalent order. T. S. Eliot says, on the subject of fictional English criminal investigators,

Since Collins, the best heroes of English detective fiction have been, like Sergeant Cuff, fallible; they play their part, but never the sole part, in the unraveling. Sherlock Holmes, not altogether a typical English sleuth, is a partial exception; but even Holmes exists, not solely because of his prowess, but largely because he is, in the Jonsonian sense, a humorous character, with his needle, his



boxing, and his violin. But Sergeant Cuff, far more than Holmes, is the ancestor of the healthy generation of amiable, efficient, professional but fallible inspectors of fiction among whom we live today<sup>9</sup>.

Eliot, however, is overlooking the fact that Holmes is not a member of the police force, which, moreover, he is socially superior to. The representative of the public police in Conan Doyle's work is usually Mr. Lestrade.

The middle-class English reader was interested in reading about crimes perpetrated by his own kind. On the one hand, the criminal at work functions as his dark louble, an alter ego that he has to suppress for the sake of the system, but that he instinctively knows exists somewhere in his subconscious. This self-destructive impulse has to be quenched for social order to prevail. On the other hand, the law-breaker also represents the unruly son making an abortive attempt to rebel against the predominant value system of the ruling patriarch, only to be reminded, through his ultimate defeat, that such an attempt is doomed to failure. Moreover, it is less menacing to deal with the isolated black sheep of the family than with the uncontrollable rabble, that *bête noire* of the Victorians. Once the mob is turned loose, even if only in fiction, the harmonious system the bourgeoisie has established will be irremediably annihilated, defeating the very purpose of the detective novel. Therefore, in most cases, since it would be too frightening to have a lower-class antagonist, one of the mob, the criminal is a member of the class he threatens, but represents the extreme, in his greed and his vanity. He is motivated, usually, by financial gain, the French motif of *'cherchez la femme'* being much less prominent. His greed differentiates him from the benevolent patriarch whose impulses are normally restrained by rules of propriety, honour, and decorum, and his pride points to his satanic side, bent as he is in destroying the prevailing order of the estate's man-made Garden of Eden. Murder occurs only as a by-product of his fundamental quest, that of violating the sanctity of his victims' worldly security.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

It is through a rational and scientific investigation that the detective, to whom the ultimate power of the patriarchal figure has been relegated, captures the lonely wolf of a culprit successfully, and thus order is ultimately restored. He is helped by the testimonies of the innocent characters, although the latter sometimes mislead him for personal reasons. Speech, and the analysis of speech thus become crucial components of detective fiction, and lack of communication, caused by the fictions created by characters in the novel, results in a chaos of its own making. The detective, however, is equipped with the scientific means to overcome these obstacles. Sherlock Holmes, pure intellect as he is, is the exemplar of the totally scientific-minded English detective. Man's mind, and especially late Victorian middle-class man's mind is the ultimate source of salvation, since man is endowed with all-encompassing potential. It is not without reason that detective fiction has come to be branded as escape literature.

Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* is characterised by the sophistication of the formal technique that the author uses, especially considering the fact that it was written in installments, and appeared in Dickens's *All the Year Round*. In fact, certain critics uphold that Collins's major contribution to the development of the English novel is his concern and success with form, an accomplishment that they affirm Dickens acquired from him<sup>10</sup>. Collins's preoccupation with literary form, which functions to establish order within the novel, is pertinent, since the inherent purpose of the detective novel is to reassert the prevalence of order within the society.

The novel begins with a short, six-page «Prologue», purporting to be giving an extract «from a family paper», found by Franklin Blake, one of the main characters in the novel. This paper, written by an unidentified ancestor of the Herncastle family, relates how the Moonstone was stolen from the shrine of a Hindu deity during the British assault on the Indian city of Seringapatam, in 1799, right at the end of the Eighteenth Century. Both the narrator of the «Prologue» and his cousin Colonel Herncastle

<sup>10</sup> Edith Batho and Professor Bonamy Dobrée, *The Victorians and After: 1830-1914*, The Cresset Press, London, 1950, pp. 75, 81.

«were each attached to a party sent out by the general's orders to prevent the plunder and confusion which followed [the] conquest»<sup>11</sup>. As such, they are both representatives of the imperialistic order of the conquering British army, fighting against chaos in a continent which is essentially disordered and alien as far as the English are concerned. The captain, however, betrays his kind by stealing the Moonstone, and killing the Brahmans whose duty is to guard it. He triggers off, by this action, a wave of chaos and destruction which is going to menace both India, and England, where he transports the diamond.

Colonel Herncastle functions as a disruptive force in the novel. He is deeply interested in chemistry: he spends a fortune on mysterious experiments. In that sense, he is reminiscent of Frankenstein, that other social outcast. It is his fault, as it was in the case of Frankenstein, that chaos and destruction are introduced into the community. He infringes upon the regulations established to create order in India, kills and destroys in order to gain the diamond, which, since he does not sell it, does not represent money, but a certain power as far as he is concerned; its possession gives him a sense of ascendancy over the unattainable and the unknown. He is an outcast as far as society is concerned, since even his own sister does not grant him admittance to her house, and like Rosanna, he dies an outcast. His means of revenge is to bequeath the diamond to Rachel Verinder, because he knows that it will bring chaos and destruction into the lives of this conventional, bourgeois family. If the Englishman's house is his castle, Herncastle is bent on demolishing it.

The Yellow Diamond, stolen from its rightful place in the Indian temple by the plundering imperialist forces of England, is symbolic of the culture and religion of the East. Its transplantation from the forehead of the Indian idol to the bosom of the English virgin, to an alien soil, transforms it into a hostile, malignant power. In India, its presence on the god's forehead is blessed by Vishnu, the Hindu god who restores order in times of crisis. This is disturbed, in England, where its introduction into

11 Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982, p. 4.

the orderly Victorian drawing room disrupts the prevalent harmony. As Betteredge, the steward of the estate, puts it, «The devil (or the Diamond) possessed that dinner-party»<sup>12</sup>. In India, the three Hindu priests, Brahmans, forfeit their caste, or their standing in society because of their attempt to restore the diamond to its rightful place and they have to go through a rite of purification until their deaths. Mr. Murthwaite explains the provenance of the Moonstone:

The god of the moon is represented, in the Hindoo mythology, as a four-armed deity, seated on an antelope, and one of his titles is the regent of the night<sup>13</sup>.

Since the moon is a symbol of change and flux, of eclipses, its connection with the diamond's god is significant. There are certain similarities between the Hindu god of the novel and Shiva:

Originally based on a Vedic storm god... he retained a fierce aspect, connections with death and battle, and with the destructive power of time. He supports the world by the power of meditation, and is the paradigm of the yoga practicing ascetic. One of his titles is *Pasupati*, Lord of the Beasts... He is shown as a man with three eyes, and his extra eye was said to have destructive power. His particular symbol is the *lingam*, a short round pillar of clearly phallic character, expressing a creative function as a fertility deity, and appropriate to his position as a rival to Brahma in supremacy among the gods. He is often worshipped in the form of the *lingam* itself... The Hindu god Shiva is frequently represented in the form of Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance... His dancing, which brought chaos to the universe, has been postponed until Doomsday, when it will be resumed as the dance of universal death<sup>14</sup>.

There is, however, no mention of an antelope in connection with Shiva.

12 Ibid., p. 77.

13 Ibid., p. 320.

14 Michael Senior, *The Illustrated Who's Who in Mythology*, Macdonald and Co., Ltd., London, 1990, p. 185.

The «Prologue» is followed by two further sections, «The Story», and the «Epilogue», the first of which consists of two parts, or «periods». The «First Period» relates the theft of the diamond in Yorkshire, while the «Second Period» covers the one year interval from 1848, when the theft took place, to 1849, when the thief is caught and order is restored in the lives of the protagonists. These two «periods» are both much longer (207 pages and 302 pages respectively), while the «Epilogue» which follows, and which relates the restoring of the diamond to its rightful place, takes only six pages, as did the «Prologue».

The «First Period», subtitled «The Loss of the Diamond», is narrated by Gabriel Betteredge, steward at the house of Lady Julia Verinder. He purports to be writing his narration upon the request of Franklin Blake, Lady Verinder's sister's son, as a record of the events which have already taken place. The «Second Period», subtitled «The Discovery of the Truth», on the other hand, consists of a collection of contributions by eight independent narrators, all of whom are complying with the wishes of Franklin Blake, who, in his functions of compiler and censor, since he allows his contributors only limited freedom of expression, acts as the general editor of the whole novel, and is himself one of the narrators. The «Epilogue» consists of three separate statements submitted to Franklin Blake.

The robbery of the diamond from the Verinder estate constitutes an attack upon the very foundations of the system, based as it is on the sanctity of property and human life. The diamond, that alien element, will bring about the violation of that sanctity, with both property being stolen, and not reclaimed by its rightful owners, the Hindus, and human life taken. The Moonstone introduces temptation into the hitherto orderly, «civilized» community that the Verinder estate represents, and Western men, in the guise of both Franklin Blake, unconsciously, and Godfrey Ablewhite, consciously, succumb to it. The chaos triggered off by the attack upon property also leads to a break in normal human communication, as exhibited by Rachel's refusal to speak with anyone but her mother, since, on the plot level, she surmises Franklin's guilt, or in the way Rosanna forgets herself when she

speaks with Betteredge, who is higher than she is on the social scale. It introduces a foreign force, that of the police, guardians of social order and representatives of the law, into the privacy of the Verinder household, causing confusion among the servants. Even Lady Verinder does not know how to address Sergeant Cuff :

The Sergeant's appearance, or the Sergeant's errand -one or both- seemed to cause my lady some little embarrassment. She was, for the first time in all my experience of her, at a loss what to say at an interview with a stranger<sup>15</sup>.

She also tries to avoid having any conversation with him later on. On the contrary Betteredge admires him, which is in keeping with his wish for order to prevail. The emergence of the detective novel itself reflects people's concern for Victorian social order; it functions as alleviation for their fears for their property and for the retaining of order; it reinforces their belief in rationality, and in their hope that, even in cases of extreme difficulty and ambiguity, the human mind will eventually overcome and bring in the light. The theft, and Rachel's refusal to speak, hence introducing the problem of lack of communication, the introduction into the house of the agents of social order, Rachel's subsequent escape from the house are all causes that force Lady Verinder to leave her house in the country and go to London, where she is unable to survive and dies. Though the author proclaims that the disease had set in before the events, her death is significant, in that it not only points to Rachel's accession from waiting maidenhood to womanhood, but also to the disappearance of the old order, to be replaced by a new generation now experienced in the corruption brought about by imperialism and Utilitarianism. The fact that her death was not initially planned by Collins and that it was an addition to the plot is in itself significant<sup>16</sup>. With the death of Lady Verinder, Rachel's lifestyle changes : the old houses and servants are forsaken and the influences working on her

15 Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, p. 109.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 532 (Notes)



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<sup>15</sup> Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, p. 109.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 532 (Notes)



are now Miss Clack, the indolent Mrs. Ablewhite, her uncle Ablewhite who represents the ruthless greed of the merchant classes on the rise, as well as Godfrey, and the warped conception of marriage that he represents. It is Mr. Bruff, a representative of not only her mother's kind of order, but also of the benevolent patriarch, who restores her resolution not to marry Godfrey and become a part of his kind of life. She also fends a surrogate mother figure in the person of Mrs. Merridew, appointed her guardian after Mr. Ablewhite's unacceptable treatment of her. Mrs. Merridew is an apt replacement for Lady Verinder, since she is after all Sir John Verinder's sister. It is interesting to note that all these elder women, Lady Verinder, Mrs. Ablewhite, Mrs. Merridew, are uniformly extremely passive as mother figures. Their passivity is echoed in the paradoxically active passivity of the younger women.

The narrative of Gabriel Betteredge begins in 1848. He is actually writing two years after the theft was committed. He is, therefore, a recollecting narrator, and not quite a reliable one, because his assessment of events is subjective, based as it is on his own bias and prejudices. For example, he is totally mistaken in his interpretation of Rachel's relationship with her two cousins, and in his evaluation of them as possible suitors, since he favours Godfrey Ablewhite, who eventually turns out to be the culprit. His value judgements are in complete agreement with those of the age he lives in, and so it is on materialistic evidences that he bases his assessment of people:

An elegant little casket in China accompanied [Ablewhite's] note, presented to Miss Rachel, with her cousin's love and best wishes. Mr. Franklin had only given her a plain locket not worth half the money. My daughter Penelope, nevertheless - such is the obstinacy of women - still backed him to win<sup>17</sup>.

Betteredge's own dealings with women are likewise based on materialistic foundations. He is not averse to stealing a kiss from a pretty housemaid, but things are different when it comes to last-

17 Ibid., p. 64.

ing relationships. He marries the woman who keeps house for him before he is promoted to the position of steward, because, he says, «it will be cheaper to marry her than to keep her»<sup>18</sup>. At the last minute, fearing that his routine will be disrupted, he panics and tries to get out of it, offering a feather bed and fifty shillings to his hride-to-be as compensation, which she is, he says, fool enough to refuse.

After that it was all over with me, of course. I got the new coat as cheap as I could, and I went through all the rest of it as cheap as I could. We were not a happy couple, and not a miserable couple. We were six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. How it was I don't understand, but we always seemed to be getting, with the best of motives, in one another's way. When I wanted to go upstairs, there was my wife coming down; or when my wife wanted to go down, there was I coming up. That is married life, according to my experience of it<sup>19</sup>.

In many ways, Betteredge reminds us of Nelly Dean in *Wuthering Heights*. Like her, he sometimes misleads the reader by interpreting events and behaviour in the light of his own rather limited point of view. After the theft, Franklin Blake tells him that the rapid recovery of the diamond is imperative. He is worried about his cousin Rachel who has been, he thinks, extremely upset by the gem's disappearance, and his concern is that her anxiety should be alleviated as quickly as possible. So he says, «It is a more important matter than you may suppose.» Betteredge, concerned as he is primarily with the monetary loss, responds with the words, «It is a matter of twenty thousand pounds, sir», He then interprets for the reader Franklin's disgusted departure, saying:

He left me sudenly, as if he desired to cut short any further talk between us. I thought I understood why. Further talk might have let me into the secret of what Miss Rachel had said to him on the terrace<sup>20</sup>.

18 Ibid., p. 11.

19 Ibid., p. 12.

20 Ibid., p. 104.

The reader whom Betteredge expects will be reading his narrative is quite as conventional and orthodox as he is, though he is aware that he is addressing a higher social class consisting of affluent middle-class males or females. He further assumes that the said reader will share with him his apprehension and dread of chaos.

Here follows the substance of what I have said [Betteredge is narrating the story of Colonel Herncastle to Franklin Blake], written out entirely for your [the reader's] benefit. Pay attention to it, or you will be all abroad, when we get deeper into the story. Clear your mind of the children, or the dinner, or the new bonnet, or what not. Try if you can't forget politics, horses, prices in the City, and grievances at the club. I hope you won't take this freedom on my part amiss; it's only a way I have of appealing to the gentle reader. Lord! haven't I seen you with the greatest authors in your hands, and don't I know how ready your attention is to wander when it's a book that asks for it, instead of a person?<sup>21</sup>

His female reader obviously has leisure time, though she still has to look after the servants, and has the necessary financial means to purchase luxuries, while the male reader exhibits the rising middle-class interest in how the country is run, is gentlemanly, with genteel concerns: his interest in horses, for example, indicates an expensive hobby. The hypothetical male reader Betteredge addresses himself to further shows a tradesman's concern with prices, and appears to have enough leisure time and money to be a member of a club. The upper servant, in his persona of author, behaves rather high-handedly in his dealings with this socially superior reader: authorship presupposes superiority and authority. In this context, it can be argued that it is significant that the bottle containing the ink the Indians pour into the hand of the boy with supernatural faculties in their attempt to learn the truth through prophesy should be subsequently found by Betteredge, since the incident indicates the magical powers of writing. A similar metaphor can be seen in George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, where the authorial voice affirms,

21 Ibid., p. 32.

With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past. This is what I undertake to do for you, reader<sup>22</sup>.

Betteredge manipulates people when he can, and gives seemingly well-meant advice that ultimately turns out to be detrimental to all concerned. At one point in the novel, when Sergeant Cuff's suspicion of Rosanna Spearman is at its strongest, he takes the policeman to the house of her only friend, Mrs. Yolland, because he erroneously believes that she would give a good account of the maid, only to have Cuff discover, taking advantage of the woman's volubility, that Rosanna is planning to leave, that she has bought a case and chains, and that she has written a mysterious letter, and this information only serves to incriminate her even further<sup>23</sup>.

Like Nelly Dean, Betteredge responds with practical realism when faced by forces he cannot understand. In fact, one of his characteristics is his pragmatism. Sitting in the summer sun on his beehive chair with his pipe in his mouth, he is, actually, quite a *bon vivant* too. It is interesting that both he and Nelly should be of the serving orders: they are socially inferior to the protagonists, and their place within the social structure is clearly delineated by their profession. Safe within the shelter provided by their specified role in society, they are intent upon preserving the status quo, which implies a reaffirmation of their sense of confidence in their security. In spite of occasional outbursts against the upper middle classes, whom he criticizes for their idleness and frivolous leisure activities, Betteredge is quite ready to acknowledge the necessity of class distinction, and practices it himself in his relationships with the other servants in the house. Through his function as house steward, he represents and endeavours for social order within the house, as opposed to the impending chaos menacing the Verinder estate from the outside.

22 George Eliot, *Adam Bede*, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1973, p. 7.

23 Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, pp. 142-143.

Gabriel Betteredge is undoubtedly quite happy in the age and country he lives in :

If [Mr. Franklin] was right, here was our quiet English house suddenly invaded by a devilish Indian Diamond - bringing after it a conspiracy of living rogues, set loose on us by the vengeance of a dead man. There was our situation as revealed to me in Mr. Franklin's last words! Who ever heard the like of it - in the nineteenth century, mind; in an age of progress, and in a country which rejoices in the blessings of the British constitution?<sup>24</sup>

A similar assurance as to the superiority and rationality of the age can be seen in the upper classes too, as in the case of Mr. Blake Sr., who agrees to act as the executor of Colonel Herncastle's will, because, he believes,

... this was the nineteenth century, and any man in his right sense only had to apply to the police [in case of danger]... No sensible person, in a similar position, could have viewed the matter in any other way<sup>25</sup>.

Gabriel Betteredge is not only very typical of his age in his appraisal of the world and the society he lives in, but he also functions as one of the metaphorical guardians of that universe. It is not a coincidence that he should be named after the angel who acts as the chief of the angelic guards in Christian mythology. Like his heavenly namesake, he serves an omnipotent patriarch, Victorian society, and acts as a sentinel for the defense of that patriarch's world, his house. When the diamond is stolen and the family dispersed, Betteredge is left in custody of the house, patiently waiting and watching until order is restored, and the house regains its *raison d'être*. As steward, he provides for the needs and ministers to the wants of his employers, the representatives of the ruling classes, *edging* his betters within the secure enclosure of both the house and his solicitude. He knows, however, his place in the scheme of things, as he is *edged*, or limited within the boundaries of his social standing, a status he has at-

24 Ibid., pp. 36-37.

25 Ibid., p. 39.

tained by *bettering*, or improving himself, His identification with the family is so strong that he is as afflicted as they are by the chaos that ensues the discovery of the theft, and by the subsequent breaking up of the house's customary orderliness :

I saw the pony harnessed myself [for Mr. Franklin to send his telegraph to London for additional police help]. In the infernal network of mysteries and uncertainties that now surrounded us, I declare it was a relief to observe how well the buckles and straps understood each other! When you had seen the pony backed into the shafts of the chaise, you had seen something there was no doubt about. And that, let me tell you, was becoming a treat of the rarest kind in our household<sup>26</sup>.

Betteredge is no rebel. His adaptation to and alliance with the Victorian way of life is best illustrated by the fact that he has made *Robinson Crusoe* into his personal Bible: read as a celebration of middle-class ideology and way of life, Defoe's novel functions as a source of consolation in times of trouble, and as a guide to consult in times of doubt. Betteredge's blind faith in *Robinson Crusoe* is also reminiscent of the faith in prophecy that the Indian Brahmans searching for the Moonstone exhibit.

When, however, chaos is at peak, even *Robinson Crusoe* loses its soothing influence. When Sergeant Cuff tells him that his prime suspect is Rachel, his whole world collapses :

This was the first trouble I remember for many a long year which wasn't to be blown off by a whiff of tobacco, and which was even beyond the reach of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Being restless and miserable, and having no particular room to go to, I took a turn on the terrace, and thought it over in peace and quietness by myself... I felt wretchedly old, and worn out, and unfit for my place - and began to wonder, for the first time in my life, when it would please God to take me<sup>27</sup>.

26 Ibid., p. 103.

27 Ibid., p. 150.



The confusion and consequent despair that Betteredge finds himself in are echoed by a similar disorder in nature itself, since these words are immediately followed by a change in the weather :

...I heard the dogs uneasy, and the wind moaning low. Looking up at the sky, I saw the rack of clouds getting blacker and blacker, and hurrying faster and faster over a watery moon. Wild weather coming...<sup>28</sup>

In fact, confusion spreads all through the house, as a similar perturbation can be seen in his daughter Penelope, the maid, whom he finds hanging around in the passage leading to Rachel's room, «in wretchedly low spirits»<sup>29</sup>. The chaos which is the result of the theft of the diamond also comprises a lack of communication between the characters. This is not only seen in the case of characters keeping secrets from one another, but also, for example, in instances of loss of speech, as in the case of Betteredge's inability to speak after the death of Rosanna.

For Betteredge, the result of the introduction into the house of the Moonstone, and its subsequent theft, is the complete dismantling of the house, in which he is left as custodian, until the final *dénouement*, when order is restored, and the legitimate inhabitants of the estate return.

The next «period», subtitled «The Discovery of the Truth», is related in the form of eight narratives, each a contribution by one of the characters in the novel. In his preface to *The Woman in White*, Collins justifies his usage of multiple narrators, saying :

It has forced me to keep the story constantly moving forward; and it has afforded my characters a new opportunity of expressing themselves, through the medium of the written contributions which they are supposed to make to the progress of the narrative<sup>30</sup>.

28 Ibid., p. 151.

29 Ibid., p. 153.

30 Elke Platz-Waury, (Ed.) *English Theories of the Novel*, V. III, *Nineteenth Century*, Max Niemeyer Verlag Tübingen, 1972, p. 62.

All the narrators are writing in 1850, looking back on events that happened in the past; they therefore are comparable to omniscient narrators, in that they know more about the events than does the reader, but they are hampered by the fact that their 'editor', Franklin Blake, does not permit them to relate events to which they were not direct witnesses. The usage of multiple narrators not only allows Collins to give his reader a better insight into the personalities and motives of his characters, but it also fits in with detective novel conventions, since ultimate order will follow the confusion caused by the disparate testimonies and points of view of the numerous voices heard. As in the case of Betteredge, all these narrators have different motives and personalities of their own, which influence, to a great extent, the story they have to tell.

The narrator who succeeds Betteredge is Miss Drusilla Clack, the niece of Sir John Verinder. We see how *orderliness* has artificially been imposed upon her :

I am indebted to my dear parents (both now in heaven) for having had habits of order and regularity instilled into me at a very early age.

In that happy bygone time, I was taught to keep my hair tidy at all hours of the day and night, and to fold up every article of my clothing carefully, in the same order, on the same chair, in the same place at the foot of the bed, before retiring to rest<sup>31</sup>.

Her inner chaos is lurking beneath the veneer.

It is noteworthy that Drusilla Clack should be the only female narrator in the novel, since the other female characters are denied the assertiveness that authorship implies. Rosanna Spearman's past pursues her to the end :

I won't trouble you with much about myself, or my life, before you came to my lady's house. Lady Verinder took me out of a reformatory. I had gone to the reformatory from the prison. I was put in the prison, because I was a

31 Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, p. 214.



thief. I was a thief, because my mother went on the streets when I was quite a little girl. My mother went on the streets, because the gentleman who was my father deserted her. There is no need to tell such a common story as this, at any length. It is told quite often enough in the newspapers<sup>32</sup>.

Not only is she the passive victim of circumstances she cannot withstand, she is also denied a voice, except for the letter she writes before her suicide, and which Franklin, to whom it is addressed, refuses even to look at.

Notwithstanding the social statement of her short account of herself, it is also significant that she should have been a thief in the past, since the novel's pivotal point rests on the event of a theft, and since she is consciously shielding a presumed thief. It is also interesting that she should be the deformed fruit of an illicit union, in which the male, or patriarchal figure, fails to fulfill his duty when he abandons her mother, thus causing both the mother and his daughter to become marginal members of society, threatening the order of the same society, her mother as a prostitute, the enemy of that fundamental social unit, the family, and Rosanna as a thief, endangering the sacred principle of possession. Her fascination with «The Shivering Sand», the area of quicksand on the coast, not only foreshadows her future death, but also shows the way she sees herself. It represents her past transgression which constantly follows her, and finally engulfs her. It also represents society's collective memory and unrelenting judgement: a woman with a past is the first to be suspected. Her love for Franklin shows, at least for Betteredge, that she does not know her place and limitations. But, further, her obsession with him is an example of insane, irrational passion, a theme frequently taken up by Collins<sup>33</sup>. Her physical unattractiveness and the deformity of her shoulder are additional brands constricting any attempt on her part to change her destiny. With her past, and with her inability to fit into the accepted female

32 Ibid., p. 348.

33 Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, p. 60.

norms, she is chaotic in herself. But her passivity bars her from taking up the pen, just as the relentless haunting of her past makes it impossible for her to survive in the society she cannot become a member of.

Rosanna is associated with the quicksands, and that in itself adds to the hopelessness of her situation. Sergeant Cuff's words to the effect that the beach where the Shivering Sand is, and the marine landscape, seem to be propitious for crime, also serve to remind the reader of the danger inherent in nature, since nature, especially in the form of quicksand, will refuse to comply with the order imposed upon it by society. Thus, as Betteredge describes the beach and the Shivering Sand, he says:

The last of the evening light was fading away; and over all the desolate place there hung a still and awful calm. The heave of the main ocean on the great sand-bank out in the bay, was a heave that made no sound. The inner sea lay lost and dim, without a breath of wind to stir it. Patches of nasty ooze floated, yellow-white, on the dead surface of the water. Scum and slime shone faintly in certain places, where the last of the light still caught them on the two great spits of rock jutting out, north and south, into the sea. It was now the time of the turn of the tide: and even as I stood there waiting, the broad brown face of the quicksand began to dimple and quiver - the only moving thing in all the horrid place<sup>34</sup>.

The nasty ooze floating on the surface of the water is significantly of the same colour as the diamond.

Betteredge has already remarked that the place is shunned by both children and birds, representatives of innocence and freedom. His description presents the beach as a metaphor for death, corruption, sterility, and sin. Civilization and order have not touched the place, and a sort of primeval, elemental chaos prevails here. Furthermore, the quicksand engulfs and causes all material things, including the human body, to disappear. As such, it is a hostile natural force working in direct opposition to

34 Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, p. 136.

the preferences of society. Nature, on the other hand, functions as an impersonal, non-compassionate force, as in the case of Rosanna's footsteps being discovered on the sand although she had obviously tried to obliterate their marks.

There are certain similarities between Rosanna and Rachel. Rachel's name is significant in that she is named after the Biblical Rachel, the second wife and cousin of Jacob and his first and most important love. Jacob stole his elder brother Esau's birthright and his father's blessing, and usurped his place, although in fact he was the most worthy of the two. Like Rosanna, Rachel is in love with Franklin, although, due to her acceptable position in society and to her beauty, her love is returned. Franklin not only does not return Rosanna's love, but he is totally oblivious of it, since for him, she is one of a throng of anonymous servants, moreover an ugly one. Physical appearance in a woman is crucial for the character, since he does condescend to kiss the better looking Penelope, although she too is a member of the domestic class. In fact, his total indifference to Rosanna, his refusal to communicate with her in any way, ultimately leads to her death. Even after she is dead, it is interesting to note that his attitude remains the same: he even refuses to read the letter she has left him, and makes Betteredge read it instead. There is, therefore, something in Rosanna's chaotic nature which awakes, not disdain, but very strong feelings such as fear and dread in Franklin. She appeals to a hidden side of his own nature which horrifies him.

Although, unlike Rosanna, Rachel has a family and friends, she is as remote, isolated, and self-dependent as the servant girl. They both make their own decisions. On the plot level, they both witness things that they should not see: Rachel sees Franklin stealing her diamond, and Rosanna discovers the paint smear on Franklin's nightgown. They both misinterpret and hide what they have witnessed, which results in Rosanna's death, because she has no approving patriarch to look after her, and Rachel's nearly fatal decision to marry Godfrey, a decision revoked because of the timely intervention of Mr. Bruff, the father replacement figure. Their loyalty to Franklin, and their tacit acquiescence of

the fact that he is a thief constitute the central element of suspense on which the detective novel is based. As such, they are both passive figures, ready to be carried in the tide of the male's actions. But, on the other hand, it is their decision not to speak, not to communicate, and to consequently remain totally passive, that gives rise to the chaos that ensues.

Drusilla Clack is, unlike these two female characters, endowed with a voice, and a pen to express herself with. Due to her imperfections, both as a female, and as a woman who has to struggle to be accepted by the society *and* her author, however, she fails to use both her pen, and the authority it conveys, properly. As she functions as a bridge between the total chaos of the first period, «The Loss of the Diamond», and the *dénouement* where order will gradually be restored, it is fitting that she should, like Betteredge, be unreliable. Moreover, her testimony, following as it does immediately after the Steward's, is significant as far as the novel's construction is concerned, because her animosity against the Verinders is in direct contrast to Betteredge's unconditional loyalty. Like Betteredge, who, although relatively free in his narrative, is forbidden to relate what falls beyond his own experience, Miss Clack is under the persistent editorship of Franklin Blake, as best illustrated by the exchange of letters between them when, while commenting on Lady Verinder's death, she attempts to include, in her narrative, extracts from various religious publications, and is summarily repulsed<sup>35</sup>.

With Drusilla Clack, the reader is once again faced by a relatively lower-class narrator pitted against the upper middle class protagonists. Unlike Betteredge, she is bitter in her estimate of them, because, basically, she is a rejected member of the same class. She does not quite belong, because she lacks the necessary qualities expected by society: she has no wealth, and she is a spinster - as such, she has no identity, a problem that she tries to overcome by creating her own identity through her religious devotion and her enthusiasm for charity work.

35 Ibid., pp. 267-269.

As a narrator, she is, like Betteredge, unreliable, biased as she is for Godfrey, with whom she shares her religiosity and interests in charity, and against Franklin, whom she sees as a debauched reprobate. As in the case of Betteredge, her judgement is not to be trusted by the reader, though, unlike him, her evaluation of events is misguided, not by materialistic concerns, but by her religiosity. Her fixation on religion is a result of her status, as Betteredge's pragmatism had been related to his.

In his depiction of Miss Clack, Collins uses all the stereotypical attributes of an old maid. Drusilla Clack is hysterically religious. She feels a ridiculous crush for Godfrey. She meddles in other people's affairs: she prowls, for example, through Lady Verinder's London house on the pretext of planting her religious tracts<sup>36</sup>. She eavesdrops on conversations she has no business to hear. She exhibits a contemptible sexual aggressiveness towards young males, as in the case of young Samuel, the footman, who takes to his heels when she tries to detain him<sup>37</sup>. Creating her as he does, Collins refuses to grant her even the pathos she might have had in the hands of a more esympathetic creator. Her extreme enthusiasm in charity work serves as an excuse for nosiness and meddlesomeness. Her encroachment on Rachel is reminiscent of Miss Kilman in *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Collins's treatment of her likewise resembles the unsympathetic way Woolf deals with Kilman, though Collins's animosity does not spring from snob-bishness, but from a male fear of the unmarried, and therefore unsubdued, placeless female. Actually, both Rosanna and Rachel witness, as she does, things that they should not, although their transgression is a result of coincidence, a redeeming difference which allows them to remain passive. The consequences, however, for Rachel and Rosanna, are tragic, whereas Miss Clack's indiscretion is only allowed to be ridiculous. As she exhibits a covert but active curiosity, her prying is treated with contempt on the part of the author. As a spinster, she is endowed with all the repulsive traits that Collins can think of: her ugliness and bitterness, her inquisitiveness are only examples of these traits. Col-

36 Ibid., pp. 251-252.

37 Ibid., pp. 252-253.

lins also emphasizes her sexual starvation by hinting at sexual deviations, such as her voyeuristic titillation as she coyly refrains from going into the details of how Godfrey was searched by the Indians,

... a third rifled his pockets, and - if, as a lady, I may venture to use such an expression - searched him, without ceremony, through and through his skin<sup>38</sup>.

This can be contrasted with the perfunctory way she glosses over Mr. Luker, the diamond dealer, undergoing a similar humiliation: «He too was thrown prostrate, and searched to the skin»<sup>39</sup>. She is attracted to Godfrey, as he represents everything that seems right for her, and this in itself shows the reader how unreliable and blind she is. Her attitude to the novel's heroine serves to further arouse the reader's hostility:

I never see Rachel myself without wondering how it can be that so insignificant a person should be the child of such distinguished parents as Sir John and Lady Verinder. On this occasion, however, she not only disappointed - she really shocked me. There was an absence of all lady-like restraint in her language and manner most painful to see. She was possessed by some feverish excitement which made her distressingly loud when she laughed, and sinfully wasteful and capricious in what she ate and drunk at lunch<sup>40</sup>.

The near total decomposition of Rachel is here seen through the unsympathetic and antagonistic eyes of Miss Clack. The feeling of jealousy is clearly rendered, since Rachel is all that Miss Clack would have liked to be and is not.

Whereas for Betteredge, the diamond meant its monetary value, for Miss Clack, Oriental artifacts are symbols of paganism. Betteredge, of course, with his identity as steward and member of a definite social class, is much better in tune with the society

38 Ibid., p. 220.

39 Ibid., p. 223.

40 Ibid., p. 224.



he lives in, whereas Miss Clack, relegated as she is to the margin of the class she feels she belongs to, has to find refuge in the certainties that religion offers. The otherness, the exotic nature of the diamond only reinforces her distrust of everything it stands for. Where Betteredge represents the order in the house, in private life, she represents an order imposed by religion, and the diamond, a symbol of a foreign and alien theology, threatens her whole world.

The next narrator, Mr. Mathew Bruff, representing as he does the law, is one of the guardians of order in society. As a professional man, he has to be rational and realistic. His loyalty is with the higher orders, that is Lady Verinder and Rachel. As patriarch, he aims to defend vulnerable females from potential enemies. But his attitude changes when confronted with females of the lower orders who do not know their places, such as Miss Clack, whom he ruthlessly mocks and humiliates. He asserts his belief in Godfrey's guilt, whereas Miss Clack's own prejudices and weaknesses lead her to malign Franklin. It is significant that the fanatic spinster should see Mr. Bruff as her chief enemy - as a lawyer, he represents order, reason, the law, rationality. So her narrative is fittingly followed by Bruff's - a reliable narrator at last, though a little full of his own importance :

My fair friend, Miss Clack, having laid down the pen, there are two reasons for my taking it up next, in my turn.

In the first place, I am in a position to throw the necessary light on certain points of interest which have thus far been left in the dark... In the second place, it was my good or ill fortune, I hardly know which, to find myself personally involved...<sup>41</sup>

From this point on, Collins's narrators are going to be relatively reliable. Bruff's narrative includes within it Mr. Murthwaite's narrative : the expert in law and order is assisted by the expert in Indian culture. Murthwaite is as rational and reliable as Bruff

is. They share, for example a strong suspicion about the reliability of clairvoyance :

...the theory of clairvoyance was an explanation which would carry no conviction whatever with it, to my mind.

'Nor to mine either', said Mr. Murthwaite. The clairvoyance in this case is simply a development of the romantic side of the Indian character. It would be a refreshment and an encouragement to those men - quite inconceivable, I grant you, to the English mind - to surround their wearisome and perilous errand in this country with a certain halo of the marvellous and the supernatural<sup>42</sup>.

Murthwaite has the advantage in that he is less insular, and has a better insight into the human heart, whereas for Bruff, the Indians are merely foreigners and adversaries. Their different reactions to the alien element represented by the Indians indicate the points of view and personalities of the characters. Betteredge, for example, who personifies John Bull's prejudices, Murthwaite, who has firsthand knowledge of the foreigners, and Franklin, who is totally in the dark, give three such diverging judgements :

I [Betteredge] expressed my opinion upon this, that they were a set of murdering thieves. Mr. Murthwaite expressed *his* opinion that they were a wonderful people. Mr. Franklin, expressing no opinion at all, brought us back to the matter in hand<sup>43</sup>.

Bruff's significance as representative of order is also revealed in the way he conservatively refuses to acknowledge the feasibility of Jennings's experiment. He persistently continues reading his legal documents, ignoring the experiment until he sees the result himself and accepts its success. He represents order, frightened of and negating the unknown, reason rejecting the inexplicable, and custom, resisting innovation and the mysteries of science,

42 Ibid., p. 317.

43 Ibid., p. 81.



until that unknown is exhibited materially to him and becomes explicable.

Bruff's narrative is followed by that of Franklin Blake, who seems to be the most problematic character in the novel. As compiler of the narratives, he functions as a kind of editor, or order-restorer. He brings together these disparate characters and acts as bridge between them. On the other hand, he is as unreliable as any of the narrators, in that for the most crucial period in the story of the diamond, that is, its theft, he is unconscious, being under the influence of opium, and thus he cannot remember his own actions. It is interesting to note that opium itself is a drug of Oriental origin, brought to England from the Far East. Franklin is not depicted as an addict; his only addiction is to tobacco, which is acceptable, but he suffers severe withdrawal symptoms when Rachel complains that he smells bad and he decides to give up smoking. It is in fact as a result of this addiction that Mr. Candy, the doctor, administers a dose of opium to him, leading to the theft of the diamond. Opium, removing as it does rationality, consciousness, and perceptiveness, is a cause of chaos in itself. It leads to the complete disintegration of Franklin's personality, and although his unconscious action is explained away as an attempt to defend Rachel from danger, it reveals a side of his character which is normally repressed: he would not, otherwise, dare to enter the bedroom of a respectable maiden in the middle of the night.

Furthermore, there is a certain element of dissolution and chaos inherent in the character of Franklin Blake, a fact that justifies his self-division into the conscious, and therefore rational, English gentleman, and the drugged, and therefore distraught young man who secretly enters a virgin's bedroom to appropriate the diamond. As Betteredge points out in his narrative,

At the age when we are all of us most apt to take our colouring, in the form of a reflection from the colouring of other people, he had been sent abroad, and had been passed on from one nation to another, before there was time for any one colouring more than another to settle on him firmly. As a consequence of this, he had come

back with so many different sides to his character, all more or less jarring with each other, that he seemed to pass his life in a state of perpetual contradiction with himself.... He had his French side, and his German side, and his Italian side - the original English foundation showing through every now and then..."

Hence, conflicting foreign influences are at work on the English mind in the case of Franklin Blake: he has his «subjective side» (German idealism), his «objective side» (French/Cartesian), and a general Italian indecisiveness. This conflict within his self is further reinforced by Collins's choice of name for him, since he amalgamates his 'frank', open, Enlightenment side, and as *Franklin*, his establishment side, with the name of the notoriously visionary Romantic poet. It should further be noticed that, phonetically, the word *blake* is very similar to *black*.

At the time when Franklin Blake begins his narrative, his father has died, the news of which he receives from Bruff in the spring of 1849, months before July when the thief of the diamond is expected to redeem it from Mr. Luker, the pawnbroker to whom it was handed by Godfrey in return for a loan. Franklin Blake thus inherits a fortune and estate, and becomes a patriarch in his own right. This makes him return to England, making him seem suspect again, since he will be on the scene of action in the month of July.

Franklin Blake begins his narrative by criticizing the contribution of Betteredge, declaring that the latter has misrepresented him, and that the French, German, and Italian sides of his character simply do not exist. This is significant, not only in that it emphasizes his role as editor, but also because it is an indication of his reluctance to consciously accept the idea of a divided self. It is ironic that the editor, who usually functions as an order imposing, form giving authority, should in reality be the most complex, confused character in the novel. It is also ironic that he should be trying to find the perpetrator of a crime he is himself unknowingly guilty of. Both points work to indicate the artificiality and duplicity of socially imposed order.

Blake acts as a foil to Godfrey, as they are cousins, the sons of two sisters, and they are both suitors of Rachel. Their physical appearances, however, are contrasted, and they are diametrically opposed to one another in terms of character. Whereas Godfrey is the son of a conventional banker, Franklin's father is notorious for his unsuccessful suit of legitimacy against a Duke, he is a vociferous member of parliament and is very wealthy, though the source of his wealth is not specified. Whereas the first, in his role of philanthropist and devout Christian, seems to be wholly adapted to society, and an integral part of it, the latter is a wanderer, a dilettante who does not appear to have a defined role within the social order. It is, therefore, not surprising that Franklin should be the unconscious, disturbed instigator of a crime consciously brought to its consummation by his more conventional cousin.

Godfrey (*God-free*) Ablewhite hides his real self underneath a mask. It is not coincidental that when he is found dead in an inn aptly named «The Wheel of Fortune», at the end of the novel, he is in disguise, with a wig covering his hair, and a beard to hide his painted face. His disguise reminds the reader of young Tom Gradgrind, the epitome of Victorian Utilitarianism, who also steals, is found out, and has to paint his face black to escape the forces of social order in Dickens's *Hard Times*. Godfrey's hypocrisy, exhibited when he tells Miss Clack that he was on the point of breaking up with Rachel and that she only anticipated him, and his double life, since he has a public side as opposed to his private life as a man of pleasure with a mistress hidden away in a suburban villa, make him a representative of the worst kind of Victorian gentleman. His involvement in charity work reinforces his worth in Miss Clack's eyes but makes him seem effeminate in the reader's eyes, and, consequently, contemptible, a trait reinforced by the author's choice of associating him with the rather ridiculous Mothers'-Small-Clothes Committee. Both Miss Clack and he use religion for purposes of their own, Clack to vent her surplus energy, Godfrey to ingratiate himself with ladies of wealth, to seem morally superior, to attain a semblance of power, and to manipulate the feelings of others. It is also significant that God-

frey should be an orator as he illustrates the perils of language when used in an unscrupulous manner. Godfrey's crime differs from the Colonel's in that it is covert, cold-blooded, and has the motive of personal advantage and gain.

The stimuli working on Franklin Blake are of a different quality. The fact that Rachel and he spend days engrossed with a painting on the door of the girl's bedchamber is significant. It shows that he is continuously forcing the same door, which represents respectability, but not daring to go through it when he is consciously his social self. The painting itself disturbs the conventional Betteredge :

Mr. Franklin scraped off all the nice varnish with pumice-stone, and made what he described as a surface to work on. Miss Rachel then covered the surface, under his direction and with his help, with patterns and devices - griffins, birds, flowers, cupids, and such like - copied from designs made by a famous Italian painter, whose name escapes/me...<sup>45</sup>

The order and civilized decorum, the veneer of Betteredge's domain is spoilt by Franklin's endeavours, passively helped as he is by Rachel. Irrational figures, griffins and cupids are introduced into his rational universe, and it is fitting that the description of the painting should be followed by a diatribe against the idleness and foolish leisure activities of the higher classes. Betteredge's reaction is reminiscent of Dickens's Mr. Gradgrind's admonishments against horses and flowers on wallpaper. The painting also reinforces the idea that although he is unconscious at the time of the theft, there is a hidden force working on Franklin Blake, a suppressed dark double who enjoys destroying order and scraping off the veneer of respectability.

Ezra Jennings's narrative follows Franklin Blake's. As a doctor's assistant, Jennings's contribution is diametrically opposed to Blake's, which is more discursive. Since he is a representative of science, his narrative is in the form of a Journal, with dated entries.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

Blake acts as a foil to Godfrey, as they are cousins, the sons of two sisters, and they are both suitors of Rachel. Their physical appearances, however, are contrasted, and they are diametrically opposed to one another in terms of character. Whereas Godfrey is the son of a conventional banker, Franklin's father is notorious for his unsuccessful suit of legitimacy against a Duke, he is a vociferous member of parliament and is very wealthy, though the source of his wealth is not specified. Whereas the first, in his role of philanthropist and devout Christian, seems to be wholly adapted to society, and an integral part of it, the latter is a wanderer, a dilettante who does not appear to have a defined role within the social order. It is, therefore, not surprising that Franklin should be the unconscious, disturbed instigator of a crime consciously brought to its consummation by his more conventional cousin.

Godfrey (*God-free*) Ablewhite hides his real self underneath a mask. It is not coincidental that when he is found dead in an inn aptly named «The Wheel of Fortune», at the end of the novel, he is in disguise, with a wig covering his hair, and a beard to hide his painted face. His disguise reminds the reader of young Tom Gradgrind, the epitome of Victorian Utilitarianism, who also steals, is found out, and has to paint his face black to escape the forces of social order in Dickens's *Hard Times*. Godfrey's hypocrisy, exhibited when he tells Miss Clack that he was on the point of breaking up with Rachel and that she only anticipated him, and his double life, since he has a public side as opposed to his private life as a man of pleasure with a mistress hidden away in a suburban villa, make him a representative of the worst kind of Victorian gentleman. His involvement in charity work reinforces his worth in Miss Clack's eyes but makes him seem effeminate in the reader's eyes, and, consequently, contemptible, a trait reinforced by the author's choice of associating him with the rather ridiculous Mothers'-Small-Clothes Committee. Both Miss Clack and he use religion for purposes of their own, Clack to vent her surplus energy, Godfrey to ingratiate himself with ladies of wealth, to seem morally superior, to attain a semblance of power, and to manipulate the feelings of others. It is also significant that God-

frey should be an orator as he illustrates the perils of language when used in an unscrupulous manner. Godfrey's crime differs from the Colonel's in that it is covert, cold-blooded, and has the motive of personal advantage and gain.

The stimuli working on Franklin Blake are of a different quality. The fact that Rachel and he spend days engrossed with a painting on the door of the girl's bedchamber is significant. It shows that he is continuously forcing the same door, which represents respectability, but not daring to go through it when he is consciously his social self. The painting itself disturbs the conventional Betteredge :

Mr. Franklin scraped off all the nice varnish with pumice-stone, and made what he described as a surface to work on. Miss Rachel then covered the surface, under his direction and with his help, with patterns and devices - griffins, birds, flowers, cupids, and such like - copied from designs made by a famous Italian painter, whose name escapes/me...<sup>45</sup>

The order and civilized decorum, the veneer of Betteredge's domain is spoilt by Franklin's endeavours, passively helped as he is by Rachel. Irrational figures, griffins and cupids are introduced into his rational universe, and it is fitting that the description of the painting should be followed by a diatribe against the idleness and foolish leisure activities of the higher classes. Betteredge's reaction is reminiscent of Dickens's Mr. Gradgrind's admonishments against horses and flowers on wallpaper. The painting also reinforces the idea that although he is unconscious at the time of the theft, there is a hidden force working on Franklin Blake, a suppressed dark double who enjoys destroying order and scraping off the veneer of respectability.

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45 Ibid., p. 56.



The veiled information we get about Jennings suggests that there is a mystery in his past, that he has been wrongly suspected of a crime, as a consequence of which he has lost the woman he loves, his reputation, his place in the social order, and the acceptance of society, making a near outcast of him. As such, he resembles Rosanna, especially since he is as unattractive physically as she is. His case is also similar to Blake's, who is also wrongly suspected and, hence, rejected by Rachel. His experience indicates what Franklin Blake's could have been, if he had not been cleared of the suspicion hanging over him. It is significant that he should feel unaccountably attracted to Franklin:

What is the secret of the attraction that there is for me in this man? Does it only mean that I feel the contrast between the frankly kind manner in which he has allowed me to become acquainted with him, and the merciless dislike and distrust with which I am met by other people? Or is there really something in him which answers to the yearning that I have for a little human sympathy - the yearning, which has survived the solitude and persecution of many years; which seems to grow keener and keener, as the time comes nearer and nearer when I shall endure and feel no more?<sup>46</sup>

It is also significant that Franklin should feel instinctively that he can trust Jennings. Jennings himself draws the parallel, when he compares his own sad life, devoid as it is of all expectation and rapidly approaching its end, and Blake's future, which still holds the possibility of redemption and exoneration.

His scientific skill, by which he recreates the exact circumstances, and reconstructs the scene of the night of the theft of the diamond, enables society, in the guise of the witnesses, Mr. Bruff, Betteredge, and Rachel, to discover the truth and to exonerate Franklin. The chance of a new lease in life, denied to the less wealthy and less handsome Jennings is granted to the upper-class young man, who thus is reinstated into his rightful place, as legitimate patriarch of the Verinder estate.

46 Ibid., p. 441.

The universe of the novel having now regained a semblance of order, Jennings fulfills his function, and the narrative is taken up by another professional, Sergeant Cuff. He is interesting as a character because he represents the newly instituted public police force based in London. In contrast to him, the local policeman, Superintendent Seegrave, is much less intelligent, but more acceptable for the family. Lady Verinder, for example, who cannot bring herself to talk with the outsider, the force of public intervention that Cuff is, feels much more comfortable with the Superintendent, since she can place him with more certainty, and since his standing in society is clearly inferior to her own, nearer to that of her servants. The Superintendent, on the other hand, confirms her view of him, when he refuses to even suspect guilt on the part of the higher orders, and concentrates his investigation exclusively on the servants.

Although Cuff is more astute than his local counterpart, he is equally unable to solve the mystery. As Eliot points out, he only plays a restricted part in the unraveling<sup>47</sup>. It takes the combined efforts of the separate components of society to reach the final solution and to restore the necessary order. Cuff himself is not too comfortable in his position. As Anthea Trodd points out in her «Introduction» to the novel, «in his preference for his rural leisure activities, he more nearly resembles Mr. Wemmick in *Great Expectations*»<sup>48</sup>. Indeed, like Mr. Wemmick, he is constantly yearning to disassociate himself from the social chaos he meets in his professional life, and to find refuge outside it, in a world of roses and peace he creates for himself in the country. Nature, as he reconstructs it, however, is a tame, artificially ordered, civilized, man-created Garden of Eden. He himself is a counterfeit rustic:

...so far as dress can alter a man, the great Cuff was changed beyond all recognition. He wore a broad-brimmed white hat, a light shooting jacket, white trousers, and drab gaiters. He carried a stout oak stick. His whole aim and object seemed to be to look as if he had lived

47 T. S. Eliot, op. cit., p. 413.

48 Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, p. xv.



in the country all his life. When I complimented him on his Metamorphosis, he declined to take it as a joke. He complained, quite gravely, of the noises and the smells of London. I declare I am far from sure that he did not speak with a slightly rustic accent!<sup>49</sup>

After having been dismissed by Lady Verinder, and after the revelations which follow Jennings's experiment, Cuff comes back to help solve the mystery, not in the role of public sentinel he previously fulfilled, but as a private detective with a personal commitment, and as an individual owing allegiance to the upper class, since he is repaying the wages given by Lady Verinder. The culprit is found, but the forces of civilization are unable to appropriate the diamond itself, as it clearly does not belong in the society they represent.

Mr. Candy's narrative, in the form of a letter written to Franklin, follows Cuff's narrative. Mr. Candy is the socially recognized medical force in the novel, as opposed to Jennings who is only tolerated because he works for the doctor. It is Mr. Candy, however, who triggers the theft by secretly giving Franklin the dose of opium that makes the latter unconscious. Thus, it seems to be one of the pillars of society who in fact undermines the foundations of the order necessary for its survival. Mr. Candy's motive is innocent enough: he plans to prove to Franklin that the medical profession can help him cure his withdrawal symptoms, and thus he administers the opium to him without telling him. This is a case of the medical profession, represented by a flawed member of its ranks, taking on more authority than it should, exhibiting the chaos lurking in human nature, since Mr. Candy is rather drunk at the time, and transgressing its proscribed limits. One should also remember that Franklin himself causes Candy's transgression by denying the authority of medicine.

It is significant that the first thing that happens to Candy after he commits his infringement is his loss of memory due to a severe illness. It therefore becomes impossible for him to communicate his knowledge in any way, not only serving the purposes

49 Ibid., p. 486.

of the detective convention by creating suspense on the plot level, but also reiterating the theme of lack of communication both causing and resulting from the chaos the diamond brings about.

This is aptly followed by a short contribution by Betteredge, who jubilantly relates that order has been reinstalled in the Verinder house, his own domain, that Franklin and Rachel are married, as they should be, that this second generation has replaced the former so successfully and so aptly that an heir is expected. Everything therefore, is as it should be, now that the diamond has been taken out of England, where it only served to bring chaos and destruction.

The novel ends with an «Epilogue» consisting of short contributions from various persons, the purpose of which is to reach *dénouement*, and to rack down what finally happened to the diamond. None of the social forces working to restore it to Rachel (Cuff, Cuff's man, the Captain of the boat on which the Indians travel to Bombay, all contributors to the narrative) succeeds in getting hold of it, and it is finally restored to its rightful place on the forehead of the Hindu god. The last scene, which takes place where the novel actually began, in India, shows us that peace has been restored, not only in England, but in India as well. Aptly, the narrator is the expert on Oriental lore, Mr. Murthwaite, a man who belongs to, and is at home in, both cultures. The only victims are the outcasts, Jennings and Rosanna in England, and the three Brahmans in India. Thus the novel comes full cycle to where it began, as if the whole episode had never taken place. In fact, Mr. Murthwaite finishes his narrative with the words, «So the years pass, and repeat each other; so the same events revolve in the cycle of time»<sup>50</sup>. As a citizen of the world, he has had the prerogative of witnessing the grander, more universal and elemental reality against which Victorian English society is blinded by its petty concerns for imperialistic gain, property, propriety, and order. He says:

Looking back down the hill, the view presented the grandest spectacle of Nature and Man, in combination, that

50 Ibid., p. 522.

I have ever seen. The lower slopes of the eminence melted imperceptibly into a grassy plain, the place of the meeting of three rivers. On one side, the graceful winding of the waters stretched away, now visible, now hidden by trees, as far as the eye could see. On the other, the waveless ocean slept in the calm of the night. People, all dressed in white, stretching down the sides of the hill, overflowing into the plain, and fringing the nearer banks of the winding rivers. Light this halt of the pilgrims by the wild red flames of cressets and torches, streaming up at intervals from every part of the innumerable throng. Imagine the moonlight of the East, pouring in unclouded glory over all - and you will form some idea of the view that met me when I looked forth from the summit of the hill<sup>51</sup>.

He himself is reminiscent of Jesus Christ's temptation by the devil who «... taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them» (Matthew 4. 8), while the scene itself reminds us of Milton's depiction of the armies of fallen angels crowding up around Satan in *Paradise Lost*. The elemental forces of nature, therefore, both good and evil, the universal realities of life, both human and natural, have assembled here, in a scene which is both chaotic and orderly, or perhaps beyond chaos and order, and Murthwaite, who can transcend the artificially boundaries of citizenship and culture, is allowed to witness it, along with the moon itself which looks on from the unclouded sky, and the moonstone, encrusted as it is on the forehead of the deity and looking down from its pedestal onto the crowds that have come to worship it. Murthwaite himself draws attention to the irreverence, depravity, and petty materialism exhibited by the Victorian bourgeoisie, when he says :

And there, on the forehead of the deity, gleamed the yellow Diamond, whose splendour had last shone on me in England, from the bosom of a woman's dress!<sup>52</sup>.

51 Ibid., p. 520.

52 Ibid., p. 521.

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