

In Search of Self: Wandering in the British Novel, 1860-1910

by

Pamela Wolpert

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Lucy Hartley, Chair
Professor Adela Pinch
Associate Professor Andrea Zemgulys
Associate Professor Claire Zimmerman

Pamela Wolpert

pwolpert@umich.edu

ORCID iD: [0000-0003-0076-5102](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0076-5102)

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Dedication

For Terry, may he rest in peace.

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Table of Contents

Dedication		ii
Acknowledgements		iii
List of Figures		vi
Abstract		vii
Introduction		1
Chapter One	But I Digress	18
Chapter Two	You are Here	41
Chapter Three	A Wall, a Dark Doorway, a Flight of Stairs, a Room: Walking in Charles Dickens's <i>Our Mutual Friend</i>	88
Chapter Four	A Vagabond Life: Wandering in Wilkie Collins's <i>Armadale</i>	143
Chapter Five	The Neverlands: Always More or Less and Island	183
Coda	Are We There Yet?	223
Bibliography		229

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: W. Alfred Johnson, “Table of the Walks,” in <i>Arcadian Walks and Drives in the Northwest Part of London</i> , 1874.	47
Figure 2.2: John Leech, “The Fight,” in <i>Little Walks In London</i> , 1875.	63
Figure 2.3: John Leach, “The Two Sweeps,” in <i>Little Walks in London</i> , 1875.	64
Figure 2.4: J. Gilbert, “Maimed Sailors,” <i>A Picture Storybook of London; or, City Scenes</i> , 1866.	75
Figure 2.5: J. Gilbert, “Railway Carriage,” <i>A Picture Storybook of London; or, City Scenes</i> , 1866.	80
Figure 2.6: J. Gilbert, “Beating the Bounds,” <i>A Picture Storybook of London; or, City Scenes</i> , 1866.	82
Figure 3.1: Name Changes in Charles Dickens’s <i>Our Mutual Friend</i> , 2019.	100
Figure 4.1: Name Changes in Wilkie Collins’s <i>Armada</i> , 2019.	153
Figure 4.2: First edition book cover, London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1866.	164
Figure 5.1: A map of “Peter Pan’s Kensington Gardens,” in <i>Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens</i> , 1906.	193
Figure 5.2: Arthur Rackham, Fairies dance along the Serpentine, in <i>Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens</i> , 1906.	194
Figure 5.3: Front of patient card for the Darling children, MinaLima’s <i>Peter Pan</i> , 2015.	208
Figure 5.4: Interior of the Darling children’s patient card, MinaLima’s <i>Peter Pan</i> , 2015.	209
Figure 5.5: Map of the Neverlands, emerging from the Darling children’s minds, MinaLima’s <i>Peter Pan</i> , 2015.	210
Figure 5.6: The Neverlands’s inhabitants circle the island as silhouettes, MinaLima’s <i>Peter Pan</i> , 2015.	217
Figure 5.7: “Croc O’clock,” MinaLima’s <i>Peter Pan</i> , 2015.	218

Abstract

In Search of Self identifies how problems of getting around in increasingly complicated and changing spaces from 1860 to 1910 in London were taken up by the English novel. Parallel epistemological questions in this period frequently turned established orientations into failure. The adaptability of wandering made it a particularly useful model for maintaining an ongoing and mutable relationship between person and place. The dissertation moves from the local and accurate representations of London toward broader geographies and more fantastic spaces, tracing how the process of wandering reforms in each and serves as an adaptive means of self-exploration and growth.

Chapter one theorizes that the wandering body forms the intersection of physical and psychological orientation, drawing upon the work of Sara Ahmed and Andrew H. Miller. Phenomenological and psychological orientation unite to deploy wandering as an exploratory method of personal growth, as evidenced by Arnold Haultain's 1914 philosophy of walking. Chapter two establishes a baseline of texts and maps that provided practical orientation, codifying an image London as the imperial metropole. This chapter juxtaposes these with texts that co-opt the tour as a narrative structure, scrutinizing its role in shaping British citizenry. Chapter three argues that Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* depicts a city in which bodies, body parts, spaces, and partnerships emerge as integral parts of character development. Self-fashioning is never finished, characters and spaces never whole. Chapter four studies Wilkie Collins's *Armadale*, juxtaposing a firmly embodied roving with problems of shipwreck and drift,

which are spread over a wider global setting. These movements are reflected in the novel's larger epistemic struggle between fate and free will. Chapter five situates J. M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy* within the larger Peter Pan body of works, focusing on the Neverlands as a space of ever-changing geography that responds to the minds and desires of its inhabitants. The Neverlands are thus the opposite of the guidebooks in chapter two; they are a space formed by the subjectivity rather than a representation of space affecting subjectivity.

Introduction

I am a lone wolf, a solitary man, wandering through a world
in which I have no part...I could find no duty to do.
No desire even in my heart.

H.G. Wells, *The Sleeper Awakes*

Isbister, H. G. Wells's fictional walker in the opening scenes of *The Sleeper Awakes* (1910), comes upon Graham, who has not slept in days. This encounter introduces the walker and reader to Graham, who finds himself a perpetual stranger as events unfold. Graham, in an effort to add meaning to his solitary life, has tried to expand what he considers his true life—that of the mind, which he wants to free of bodily demands: “I don't know if *you* feel the heavy inconvenience of the body...we only live in patches...We have to take the air or else our thoughts grow sluggish, run into gulfs and blind alleys.”¹ Mind and body refuse to be severed, and in fact Graham's attempt to do so triggers his mind's utter revolt. In this formulation, a mind not having satisfied its physical needs encounters “gulfs” and “blind alleys,” sites of disorientation or even abrupt blocks to progress, subject to various dead ends. The spatialized nature of this problem is a key feature of this dissertation; the self, an inherent mixing of mind and body, is one that travels, both in the external world and the internal one. It is not a coincidence that the terms in which Graham describes his problem are ones of being lost.

¹ H. G. Wells, *The Sleeper Awakes*, (Open Road Media, 2017), 9. I am following the 1910 revision of *When the Sleeper Wakes* as Wells's preferred version, but the difference on these points is negligible.

Graham's plan backfires—he soon cannot sleep at all, and he tries to wear himself out, walking the coast for days, but to no avail. Graham is a man torn between a mind that wants to quit and cannot, and a body clawing at elusive sleep. At length, he does fall into sleep, but it is the inexplicable and seemingly endless one of a body not to be denied.

Isbister, later comments that the unconscious man “will have much to learn, and much to unlearn, when he wakes.”² This problem learning and unlearning, too, is an integral part of this dissertation. Graham does not wake for over two hundred years, when he finds himself in a city he does not recognize. The sharp contrast between the present at the time of publication (in 1910), and Graham's imagined future is disorienting in the extreme. His sudden emergence into the unknown is understandably confusing, but not all forms of disorientation are so abrupt and extreme. His sleep has in fact masked a long process of change, which the inhabitants of the city in the intervening years have had to travel the slow old-fashioned way of waking up every morning. Wells's plot makes extremely notable a process that was everywhere occurring and therefore not always visible. Graham's waking after so long a sleep to such a change only gives the illusion of an abrupt break between old and new.

Day-to-day London was perpetually changing, becoming something new and estranging its own inhabitants. A maze, a labyrinth, a modern Babylon. I begin this dissertation with London and surrounding areas not despite, but because, London is the most mapped, defined, and regurgitated location in literary studies of the Victorian period. It is ostensibly familiar geographic and critical ground, but of course this is not one London, but many. The means of locating oneself geographically was transforming in the late Victorian period in similarly fast and bewildering ways. Maps and guidebooks, like other texts, proliferated as publishing became cheaper, and as frequent changes to the cityscape justified new editions. Tourism opened up

² Ibid., 16.

beyond the continent, and events like the Great Exhibition attempted to bring the world right into the city and marshal it into some kind of order. With such changes came new settings and subjects for fiction, and also new perspectives on travel itself. This helped produce literature that presented orientation—and especially the processes of getting lost and wandering—in ways that reflect a coming to grips with physically and culturally labyrinthine spaces. My thesis is that the physical and larger cultural experience of disorientation from roughly 1860 to 1910 is taken up by the novel with more variation than we have supposed.

Bodies in Motion

The historical circumstances from which this dissertations are familiar ones: spreading industrialization and its effects on the working class, urbanization, the standardizing of time, greater connections with other people and places via the railroad, increasingly regular connections with and travel to far-flung places on the globe, and the flow of goods, people, and ideas back toward England became central facets of modernity. With it all came a profusion of articles professing to uncover the Truth about the East End, about how the poor live, about how bewildering it is to live now in a city that one man in his lifetime cannot actually map with his own footsteps. Fiction, like reporting, attempted to capture the times in a range of ways, and often the challenges of the time were depicted by those not most affected. The Victorians, faced with such changes, developed methods of navigating and understanding them, and resultantly came upon a type of self-fashioning that explored and incorporated different ways of understanding. Against a backdrop of institutionally driven displacement and dispossession, fictional and non-fictional writings recount journeys deliberately entered into and yet not with any concern for either destination or efficiency. The act of travel produces highly individual

experiences in which space and time, body and self, interact. This is not to say that the individual supersedes the cumulative understanding of space; rather, the individual body and its journey proffer an easily accessible approach to navigating new territories. The singular wanderer carves out a space and a movement across the larger geographic and cultural landscape, opening that territory up to a more subjective change and understanding.

A person's negotiation of space is highly contingent on attention and their affective response to their surroundings. The same place may emerge as vastly different spaces to different people, and this multiplicity is apparent in representations of London specifically, and in representations of travel and accompanying reflection more generally. This results in an unfixed quality to space, that allows for relations with space to be ongoing, changeable, and yet not mutually exclusive. Among other things, this means that a map, ostensibly a practical and accurate guide for navigation—no matter how geographically accurate—does not give the traveler a full sense of routes or locations. Any map is always shaped in some way by its methods (of data gathering and of presentation). The map is always already a partial, static view and thus always already a partial fiction, to be superseded by the next, the newest version. The growing and shifting practice of mapping interacted with fictional portrayals of space in myriad, illuminating ways. The guidebook, which most often and directly supplements a map, is a specifically targeted frame, complete with its own omissions, concealments, and focus. As I discuss in chapter two, guidebooks shape perceptions of place for the reader, whether they are a stranger to the city or a curious inhabitant. The guide is only one such frame available, however; a traveler's use of a map is filtered through a sea of other information gleaned from other sources and personal experience. This layer of representations suggests, among other things, that guidebooks and related documents share with the novel questions about the creation of social and

physical space, and connections between the individual, their body, and their wider social effects. Varieties of individual movement link larger social and cultural forces with specific bodies. The body's movement becomes a means of enacting those forces, changing an individual's direction in response, but the individual also simultaneously alters the vector and territory of those movements.

Given the ongoing play between wider social conditions, the individual, and movement, fiction functions a site of exploration that can trace individual subjectivities in motion. As my first chapter discusses at greater length, the Victorian novel's narratives of subjectivity are exercises in getting to know characters and especially of characters getting to know themselves in relationship to others. Novels examine possible relationships between the supposedly abstract view of a given question and the purely individual one allowing the reader to wander in the mental landscape in between. My argument is that such explorations necessarily also include embodied negotiations of physical spaces and territories that were in considerable flux for similar reasons. The open-ended nature of wandering through space has particular implications for, and representations in, such novels. As part of a larger narrative of self-fashioning, full of encounters and change, navigation can more easily be examined in terms of trajectories of experience. Wandering produces an accrual of general and self-knowledge that constitutes uneven and ongoing growth rather than a pre-determined progression. Crucial to this wandering is that it is temporary in spite of its open-endedness. A sense of disorientation is deliberately entered into or continued in some fashion. This dissertation explores the flexibility and the sometimes problematic ending of wandering journeys on varying scales and in varying degrees of accurate representation along the way to outright fantasy.

Critical Landscape

This dissertation intersects with several clusters of scholarship, including embodiment, scales of travel and communication from the individual walker to nation-building and the space of empire, and urban studies. In doing so, it also deploys wandering as a potential critical method of drawing connections while staying focused on individual subject formation. Working with novels from the 1840s to 1860s, Charlotte Mathieson argues that conceptions of space—particularly at the intersections of national and global scales—underwent rapid change. These new conceptions were accompanied by “a new, highly embodied phenomenology of travel,” in which bodies become “a locus through which novels contend with, respond to, and make sense of the changing place of nation and how it figures within a wider global landscape.”³

Mathieson’s emphasis on the embodiment of travel is a vital one, and this dissertation also centers on the body, with all its pleasures and pains. I focus particularly on movements without a particular geographic destination and those in which the concept of geographic “destination” becomes impossible or otherwise meaningless. That is, “wandering,” first and foremost, eliminates the importance of the end destination, either because no firm one is planned in advance, or because (additionally) the experience of travel matters more than location. This narrows my focus from embodied travel in general to travel that also places the body in a particular relationship to space—an exploratory mode in which in which the subject is predisposed to be open to new experiences while working their way outward from a known location or “home” base. The subject likely seeks out those experiences, without a firm preconceived notion of the benefits.

³ Charlotte Mathieson, *Mobility in the Victorian Novel: Placing the Nation*, Palgrave Studies in Nineteenth-Century Writing and Culture (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 2.

This interest in surroundings and desire for new experiences should be distinguished, however from the idle gaze of the flâneur. The wandering discussed in this dissertation is not, firstly, limited to the boundaries of the city. In fact, one of the important aspects of wandering is that it can cross the borders between city and country, although the process may change as its setting does. For instance, Wilkie Collins's Ozias Midwinter, whom I explore in chapter four, crosses through London, but also to remoter parts of England and into other countries, whereas Charles Dickens's Eugene Wrayburn, whom I discuss in chapter three, has his most defining journeys in London itself, where the character of the city streets plays a vital part in how wandering and subjectivity overlap. Secondly, the interaction between wanderer and space is not the detached and passing gaze that makes the flâneur spectator and stylish spectacle. Wandering requires open psychological engagement with surrounding space.

The relationship between city and body, particularly London and bodies, is its own node of excellent work that informs my thinking. Catherine Gallagher explores discontinuities and, more surprisingly, continuities between political economists and Victorian novelists, particularly in Dickens and Eliot.⁴ Her chapter on *Our Mutual Friend* attends persuasively to connections between waste and wealth. Michelle Allen, focusing on waste and space in the context of London's sanitary reform movement, opens up intersections between cartography, medical science, and fictional space crucial to this dissertation.⁵ Methods for understanding space are themselves moving objects with narratives of their own; they necessitate processes of understanding that accommodate that problem. John Snow's cholera map of the 1854 outbreak in London is a landmark map in and of itself, famous for its *act* of understanding. The method of

⁴ Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

⁵ Michelle Allen, *Cleansing the City: Sanitary Geographies in Victorian London*, (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008).

understanding itself alters the relationships involved, and this dissertation takes wandering, sometimes in conjunction with mapping, as a similar mode. Allen situates Snow's map within a much larger narrative of pollution and purification that emerges in a variety of forms and in which city, medical discourse, and literature shape one another. In both Allen and Gallagher, waste and other products move according to their respective natures, tracing an urban landscape or network with its own arteries, timing, excesses. This movement of filth in particular suggests that bodies themselves do not always move in one piece. Rather waste from one can combine with waste from another, feeding back into other bodies with which they come into contact. I further examine this kind of partial circulation in chapter three.

Wandering, as a mode of understanding and movement that adapts to various circumstances, sometimes crosses into questions of larger scales, including concepts of nationhood and citizenry. Like Mathieson, Ruth Livesey is interested in how travel shapes conceptions of space on several scales, and she argues that mobility plays a key role in nation-building. Her examination of the stage coach and the historical novel located in the "just" past unfolds a model of nationhood that pushes back against the image of a homogenizing modernity. It recovers the sense of local attachment, disjunction, and accident that was a key part of imagining the nation, and for which the stage coach is a key metaphor.⁶ Like the stagecoach, wandering leaves open the possibility of the surprise encounter, whether with another person, an unusual place, or simply a disconnect between expectation and encounter. Livesey demonstrates the way the novel of itself becomes a vehicle that mediates between individual and collective memory, literally circulating that feeling of belonging to the readers. This sense of being "at home" or circulating such a sentiment in transit suggests home itself can be a mobile

⁶ Ruth Livesey, *Writing the Stagecoach Nation: Locality on the Move in Nineteenth-Century British Literature*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

construction. In a way, the novel is also a wanderer; its mediation between reader and a collective culture is often mirrored within the novel itself, which can perform a kind of wandering between the individual perspective and a wider and more detached third-person point of view. Jonathan Grossman, discussing passenger travel, pushes against the assumption that the birth of the railroad was the only relevant means of travel, exploring how other means of transit and communication systems emerge in Dickens's novels.⁷ Richard Menke lays out the influences of nineteenth-century communication changes on realist literature, at the intersection of literary criticism and media studies.⁸ I treat wandering as a specific type of movement that at points intersects with all of these systems of circulation of ideas and people.

Literary criticism about representation of London itself is voluminous and varied, even were we to narrow the focus just to Dickens's work. J. Hillis Miller's *Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels* is still rich, perhaps in part due to its exploration of Dickens's work in more metaphysical quests for identity that do not always adhere to material details of Dickens's time.⁹ London in the late 1800s was changing, but not in even or evenly accessible steps. Inhabitants shifted as well, leaving or gaining access to new spaces, keeping up with changes to the space around them. However, such movements were not entirely free. Who "belongs" in a given neighborhood or street is shaped by various norms and biases which were heavily (and often literally) policed. Here cultural norms directly intersect with the movement of particular bodies, limiting and expanding what spaces were familiar and comfortable for specific people. As Judith Walkowitz has demonstrated, boundaries between classes and genders were blurring, in ways ranging from actual geographic lines to differences in manners and dress. Other women took

⁷ Jonathan H. Grossman, *Charles Dickens's Networks: Public Transport and the Novel*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁸ Richard Menke, *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008).

⁹ J. Hillis Miller, *Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).

advantage of expanding work for women, increasing and normalizing the presence of women in the streets.¹⁰ Deborah Epstein Nord examines the promotion of reforms that depended on the threat of contagion, in which woman of the streets became the symbolic nexus of a variety of social and physical contaminants.¹¹ Lynda Nead's *Victorian Babylon* (2000) examines the Victorian city as a site where perceptions and representations of modernity were in dialog with the past from which they emerged.¹² Others attend to influences between London as the metropole and other sites of imperialism. Marlene Tromp, Maria K. Bachman, and Heidi Kaufman's anthology on Victorian xenophobia takes advantage of the nebulosity of the term to explore just how ideas like "foreignness" function in very different contexts.¹³

Wandering and Walking

The novels under consideration in this dissertation use wandering, especially but not always in the form of walking, as a method of exploring the threatened dissolution and reconstruction of the self, particularly when its edges seem ill-defined and porous. Wandering and walking often overlap but are not synonymous. That is, some walking is wandering but not all—it must be volitional rather than necessary and have no firm destination or purpose in mind. Thus I include Eugene Wrayburn's nightly excursions from *Our Mutual Friend*, but not John Rokesmith's walks to and from work. I do not include any walking that for the poor is the necessary means of travel, and so I pass over Betty Higden's departure which, although open-ended, is driven primarily by her poverty and a system so terrible she refuses to submit to it.

¹⁰ Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992).

¹¹ Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

¹² Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

¹³ *Fear, Loathing, and Victorian Xenophobia*, eds. Marlene Tromp, Maria K. Bachman, and Heidi Kaufman, (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2013).

Some wandering, in turn, is not done on foot, and various vehicles are not necessarily irrelevant. Nevertheless, walking looms large in this dissertation, because walking is particularly useful for examining relationships between body, subject, and space. The rhythm of walking is often described as “hypnotic,” although whether or not this is a positive description varies. That is, the walker settles into their movement and easily turns their thoughts inward, dulling perceptions of their surroundings. On the one hand, this can open the mind to deep self-reflection. On the other hand, it makes inspection or experience of the world around them more difficult. This dual nature is the art of negotiating a balance between engagement and distance, between the possibility of sudden encounter in the walk and the ability to be forever leaving things behind.

The night walker is a prominent subset of aimless walking in the Victorian period, and its centrality in the history of London and literature indicates the breadth of possibilities inherent in pedestrian musings. Matthew Beaumont traces nightwalking, describing how the city changes at night—streets become strange and haunted, those in the streets are the “lost, the lonely...All the city’s internal exiles.”¹⁴ Such figures become strangers in their own city; even those who have a home find themselves distanced from it. This takes the form partly of a defamiliarization of the city—the city at night takes on fresh characteristics, becoming a world much divorced from that of day. The reverse is often also true—those out walking are perceived as strangers, as those who do not belong. Dickens, of course, is the quintessential Victorian night walker. Beaumont characterizes his nightwalking as compulsive and “itself a malady” that “enabled Dickens to orientate himself in the city, to realign the relationship between the metropolis and mental life. But it also offered a release from uncontainable emotions...No doubt his nightwalk conjured up

¹⁴ Matthew Beaumont, *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London, Chaucer to Dickens*, (New York: Verso, 2015), introduction.

other ghosts...which he could not so easily escape or suppress.¹⁵ This description stresses the extent to which Dickens was orientating himself in and in relation to the city. The process is also a mental one of suppressing inner demons or accepting that some cannot be entirely dislodged. Each step carries an echo, and this is another means of expressing the link between the bodily rhythm of walking and the state of mind it makes accessible.

Wandering is a deliberate, open-ended, disruption of habit, and there is a great deal of pleasure and potential in off-course travel. What, after all, is desire but a reaching outward in the direction of some pleasure or want, some goal: it shifts what is in sight for the subject, and what seems possible; and these transitions are also narrational ones. I take physical and epistemic wandering to be a means of reshaping one's horizon: it brings new points into sight and moves the body away from the path behind us, or the ones laid out beneath our feet. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's work, I will argue that wandering is a feature of narrative at the crossroads of physical and epistemic uncertainty. It can also incorporate shifting subjects: the individual and group, the body and the surrounding environment, the historical and imagined future. It is no coincidence, of course, that many studies of walking, orientation, or navigating begin with an authorial anecdote about being lost. Being lost is the point at which we feel most viscerally that we had been following a course of some sort, consciously or not. Lumped under being "lost" are several varieties of difficulty. We may have deviated from our path due to faulty information (our path is not as described); or perhaps we know where we are going but not where we are (or vice versa); or we attempt a short cut or otherwise decline to follow directions. Being lost makes particularly visible the necessity of locating ourselves, our destination, and the most promising course forward. That these permutations of disorientation could as easily be psychological as physical—

¹⁵ Ibid., chapter 12.

and are often both—stems from the fact that straying from the normal course is more difficult than following in others’ footsteps.

Chapter Roadmap

Chapter One, “But I Digress,” maps a site of inquiry where physical and epistemic disorientation overlap. I begin with a common point of departure, the work of sociologist Georg Simmel, in order to locate established late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century understanding of the ways that subjectivity develops in relation to society and urban space. I then defamiliarize these models by drawing upon Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006)¹⁶ and Andrew H. Miller’s *The Burdens of Perfection* (2008).¹⁷ Ahmed’s phenomenological work approaches the body, and the body in space as themselves a form of knowing, one influenced by a given body’s position, past, desires, and inherited surroundings. Miller’s focus is a moral one that unfolds how subjections perfect themselves in relation to other examples, and how the individual maps those examples along axes of alternate possible selves. I find an intersection between them that I turn back on Simmel, arguing that wandering developed as a method of orientation in response to, and in tandem with, shifting late nineteenth-century conceptions of space, movement, and subjectivity. These rapid material and cultural changes necessitated an adaptive means of physical and psychological orientation that allowed for the ability to detour or otherwise adjust to changes without losing a sense of space or self. Chapter one closes by reading Arnold Haultain’s *On Walks and Walking Tours: An Attempt to Find a Philosophy and a Creed* (1914), which positions wandering as a physical and psychological practice for self-reflection and self-fashioning.

¹⁶ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, (Durham: Duke UP, 2006).

¹⁷ Andrew H Miller, *The Burdens of Perfection: On Ethics and Reading in Nineteenth-Century British Literature*, (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2008).

Chapter Two, “You are Here,” positions the Routledge guidebook to London amid a range of texts that blend the tour as a textual structure with fictional elements, or which deploy the tour for purposes other than strictly getting point A to point B. These other texts include an exercise guide, various children’s urban picture books, and literature-focused guidebooks to London. This chapter argues that the tour surfaces across these genres in ways that position the body of the walker at the center of questions of space and citizenship, as well as practical, historical, geographic and, above all, moral education. As itself an educational narrative, the tour lends itself to many kinds of personal growth and education. As a genre that mediates between physical or geographic and socio-cultural orientations, the guidebook defines the relationship between person and city. This chapter unfolds the similarly malleable term “course,” asking how framing the social and subjective questions of the late nineteenth century as narratives of travel and learning affects how the traveler perceives the world and people around them. The city as depicted in these texts becomes an overlapping tapestry of locations, historical events and figures, and a stereotypical assortment of inhabitants. The result is a palimpsestic image of the city that codifies certain places and people as significant sights, and that reflects in its inclusions and absences a number of cultural biases.

The line between fictional and lived spaces is, unsurprisingly, not an impermeable one. Thus my last three chapters each examine a novel, moving geographically outward from London, and toward increasingly fantastic plots. Chapter Three, “A Wall, a Dark Doorway, a Flight of Stairs, and a Room: Walking in Charles Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend*,” argues that body, location, and person parallel one another in their complicated assemblages of parts and their preoccupations with a wholeness that is perpetually contingent. The self emerges as an ongoing and meandering process that becomes most evident in the split between scenes of characters out

walking the streets and the novel's domestic spaces. Here "home" ranges from Eugene Wrayburn's attempt to cultivate the "domestic virtues" via various kitchen utensils to the apparently cold and unwelcoming "home" in which John Harmon was raised, a space which is only after his father's death reanimated by the loving relationship of the Boffins.

Chapter Four, "A Vagabond Life: Wandering in Wilkie Collins's *Armadale*," stretches wandering to the point where it is a fundamental basis of character rather than an occasional practice. Ozias Midwinter's relationship to the world around him and to other people hinges upon his ability to make himself at home on his feet out in the wind and weather. Yet he and the novel itself are plagued with the danger of being turned adrift, of an unproductive aimlessness seeping outward to envelop everything in its mire. The danger of drift is embodied by a haunting and haunted shipwreck that Midwinter and the narrative repeatedly fail to suppress, and which spreads out into the wider geography of *Armadale*. This chapter argues that Midwinter's ability to be "at home" on the road enables his eventual ability to overcome that more paralyzing sense of drift, and that his sense of home also encompasses his similarly shifting homoerotic relationship with Allan Armadale, the novel's other central male character. Midwinter leverages wandering as an antidote to his epistemic crisis, transforming purposeless movement into a deliberate, centering power.

Chapter Five, "The Neverlands: Always More or Less and Island," argues that J. M. Barrie's collected works on Peter Pan make fantastically visible the idea that place is experienced differently by different people. The islands take communal shape in the imaginations of all its inhabitants; they are a place made and unmade by restless desires and perpetual childhood. The chapter further argues that the Neverlands confront the same problem of the guidebooks I discuss in chapter two—that the page can only capture a static and partial

essence of place, and that the writer's priorities and perception direct how place is unfolded for the reader. Text cannot capture the mobility of Barrie's imagined landscape, which is itself the extreme version of what are always already partially imagined landscapes, a responsive manifestation of the desires of Peter, the Darling children, and the Lost Boys.

This dissertation, in situating wandering as a particularly useful exploration of changing aspects of place and self during the late nineteenth century, is as much about what we do and do not leave behind as what lies in front of us. Peter's refusal to leave childhood behind him is also the source of *Peter and Wendy's* more terrifying images; and it is Midwinter's terrified inability to let his family past go that hamstrings his actions in *Armadale's* present; the Hexams are never quite free of a corpse dragging behind Gaffer's boat. Some things, it seems, act as an anchor point, the home from which we explore, and at some point, what started as a limited exploration may well turn into a one-way trip. This dissertation argues that approaching these novels as spaces of productive straying is useful because it is open-ended and adaptive. I have no doubt left and failed to leave behind some of my own critical preoccupations, but I hope this dissertation moves toward a better sense, firstly, of connections between approaches to a changing city and world confronted by readers of British literature, and, secondly, the ways those readers were likewise adapting their self-fashioning to keep up. Although disorientation is most obvious when triggered by a sudden shift—in location, experience, cultural milieu—its other forms were as important and as confusing, perhaps more so for the way they could creep in with less notice. Although the experience of Wells's sleeper, Graham, is memorable for the strangeness and dismay it provokes, the problem he faced occurred in smaller ways. What is a sharp physical and moral contrast for Graham, is represented in other novels as precisely the ongoing process with which characters and readers had to come to grips. Material changes were

closely linked with cultural and moral ones, and this dissertation explores the processes of dealing with those changes rather than their supposedly static after-effects.

Chapter One

But I Digress

When we are orientated, we might not even notice we are orientated: we might not even think “to think” about this point. When we experience disorientation, we might notice orientation as something we do not have...Familiarity is what is, as it were, given, and which in being given “gives” the body the capacity to be orientated in this way or in that. The question of orientation becomes, then, a question now only about how we “find our way” but how we come to “feel at home.”

Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*

Taking as characteristically modern the condition of wandering— whether between the norms of the past and future or between existential truth and social stereotype— perfectionism attributes to it special epistemological standing. What can you know of the world— and yourself— if your most deeply held, most individual beliefs cannot be expressed in the languages you have inherited? Or if they can be expressed, but only in categories that sap those beliefs of any interest for you? Your capacities for knowledge seem emptied.

Andrew H. Miller, *Burdens of Perfection*

This chapter begins on familiar theoretical ground by examining the work of Georg Simmel as the cornerstone of theory about the modern city. As in this dissertation as a whole, I will branch outward from there to examine how wandering in particular changes a person’s or a group’s relationship to space. I attend particularly to “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903), “The Stranger,” and “The Sociology of Space” (1908) in order to establish turn-of-the-century conceptions of urban space wherein competing understandings of the self in relation to a larger

group or culture meet. Within this framework, the wanderer or traveler is a figure that particularly reveals the shifting psychological boundaries which the individual must constantly negotiate with others; in effect, they are a vehicle that expands the geographical range of a text. In doing so, they also affect individual subjectivity, which forms in relationship to space and to other people. Psychic boundaries form a spatialized meeting of one individual with another, which requires repeated testing and adapting. As a means of reexamining the dynamics and questions raised by Simmel, I shall turn to Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006) and Andrew H. Miller's *The Burdens of Perfection: On Ethics and Reading in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (2008), with a view to constructing an intersection between the two. The chapter closes with a reading of Arnold Haultain's *Walks and Walking Tours: An Attempt to Find a Philosophy and a Creed* (1914). Haultain's meandering collection of essays is quasi-philosophical treatment of walking that here serves as a model for ways that walking can connect one with a more universal sense of humanity, and how and why it so often fails to do so.

Simmel hits upon what I take to be a significant overlapping of embodiment, subjectivity, and the social sphere. He relates an impact on the person at the hands of the surrounding physical and social environment, with a corresponding reaction to and interaction with that pressure. I want to emphasize that these facets of life are inextricable, and that their relationships were in the process of being renegotiated in ways particular to the late Victorian period. Simmel describes the modern city in what have become familiar terms: its constant bombardment of stimuli, its pace, and the nature of social and economic interactions all necessitate a mindset very different from that which develops in smaller rural communities. In the city, people were

negotiating “the body of culture with relation to the soul,”¹ and hence there was a “resistance of the individual to being levelled, swallowed up in the socio-technological mechanism.”² This resistance, Simmel argues, takes the form of a “protective organ”³ that shields the “inner life against the domination of the metropolis” and which produces an apparent remoteness from others, in which the individual responds to stimuli in a mode “furthest removed from the depths of the personality.”⁴ Interactions are thus emptied of personal and individual content, and the interconnected, scheduled, monetary character of interactions presses inward to stamp itself on the individual soul. The money economy is a central example of this tendency, because money can “becom[e] the frightful leveller—it hollows out the core of things, their peculiarities, their specific values and their uniqueness and incomparability in a way which is beyond repair,”⁵ and there is “such a tremendous richness of crystallizing, depersonalized cultural accomplishments that the personality can, so to speak, scarcely maintain itself in the face of it.”⁶ Character, I would add, is in danger of being defined from the outside in, from surrounding space and cultural location, rather from the individual’s inward uniqueness.

The metropolis, in this model, is a stage upon which the tension between a liberation that frees the universal quality of mankind within each individual and that which allows for the expression of the individual’s uniqueness collide with particular visibility. Simmel argues that for (and in) the nineteenth-century city in particular, “No longer was it the ‘general human quality’ in every individual [as in the eighteenth century] but rather his qualitative uniqueness

¹ George Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 325.

² *Ibid.*, 324.

³ *Ibid.*, 326.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 330.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 338.

and irreplaceability that now became the criteria of his value.”⁷ The urban individual, in order to distinguish himself from others, must then fight for and exaggerate his singular qualities, even develop ones that do not necessarily make sense “in order that this most personal element be saved, [or] merely to be brought into the awareness even of the individual himself.”⁸ Most important for my purposes are Simmel’s points that these two impulses—freeing the individual from now meaningless historical, religious or other bonds to demonstrate his universal nature and the impulse to emphasize positive freedom through expressing individual characteristics—are both relational definitions of the individual in and against larger forces. These conflicting but potentially unifiable movements are brought into their fullest encounter in the modern city for physical, social, and economic reasons.

The stranger as a type in turn makes visible the workings of this tension between universal and individual qualities at the level of the individual, embodying it in their relationships and in their spatial interactions. The stranger is a wanderer in the sense of arriving from outside the community and in holding no land or equivalent stake within it. He does have a relationship *to* the community, however. In this relation, the position of the stranger particularly highlights the tension between remoteness and nearness that characterizes all relationships. These poles are another facet of the contrast Simmel develops in “The Metropolis and Mental Life” between the liberation of a universal humanity and the necessity of distinguishing oneself from ones fellow humans. To the extent that the city liberates people from larger limits, it fosters this universal connection to people, but that connection, person to person, is a cooler one. Connections founded upon narrower similarities are tighter and more intense by virtue of being shared by fewer people. As such, the similarities upon which people found a relationship

⁷ Ibid., 339.

⁸ Ibid., 338.

establish an intensity of connection that varies according to how many others share those similarities: “The stranger is close to us insofar as we feel between him and ourselves similarities of nationality or social position, of occupation or of general human nature. He is far from us insofar as these similarities extend beyond him and us, and connect us only because they connect a great many people.”⁹ Simmel’s spatialized understanding of the psychological boundaries of a person’s subjectivity is a key complement to this balance of nearness and distance:

[O]ne must keep clearly in mind how few people know purely from within and through secure instincts where the immovable boundary of their psychological private property is actually located, and what reserves their individual existence demands in order that it remain unscathed. Only through impulses, rejections, disappointments and adaptations, do we tend to learn what we can betray of ourselves to others without risking embarrassing situations, feelings of indiscretion or actual damage.¹⁰

Simmel describes a self whose psychological boundaries are impossible to locate with no help from others. Rather, the individual must press outward, testing via contact with other people and fill in those borders with a process of trial and error, of “impulses, rejections, disappointments and adaptations.” This boundary here is a negative one, relating only to what the individual chooses to reveal or withhold about himself. Simmel continues:

The fact that the inner sphere of the individual cannot at all be so clearly delimited in advance from that of others, as can be the sphere of one’s body; or that this boundary never totally loses its relativity, even after it has overcome the hesitations of its initial formation, all this is easily revealed when we leave our accustomed relationships behind, in which we have staked out a fairly definite area for ourselves through gradually expanding rights and duties, through the understanding of others and being understood, and by testing our powers and our emotional reactions. In this way, we know for certain here what we may say and what we must keep quiet, and through what measure of the two we can produce and maintain the proper image of our personality in others.¹¹

It is the act of *traveling* that makes this questing process most apparent, because it removes an individual from their accustomed relationships, where their psychological boundaries have been

⁹ Ibid., 147.

¹⁰ Georg Simmel, *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings, Theory, Culture and Society*, eds. David Frisby and Mark Featherstone, (London: Sage Publications), 163.

¹¹ Ibid.

more gradually located and securely fixed. The traveler finds themselves having to retest what they reveal and withhold with new people, and in situations where the length of the new relationship or encounter also affects those calculations. I want to emphasize that this is a question of “*producing and maintaining the proper image of our personality in others.*” That is, this process results in an image that represents a partial view of the self which the individual presents to others. The individual testing their own boundaries with other people must do so in relation to similar representations being presented to them by others. Yet, Simmel remains silent here on a question this chapter raises, which whether such negatives testing of boundaries (should I keep this part of myself private?) are accompanied by positive ones (should I emulate or encompass this part of a representation I now encounter?).

Every reader, of course, is a bit of a wanderer, and so encounters a range of purely fictional representations of others. Armchair travel has particular charms, which emerge in part because the reader knows that its end lies at the back cover, and therefore this journey has a finite length and flexible pacing. Narrative has carefully-crafted direction, a line of exploration, moving outward from the first pages on. It is also subject to our preconceptions of character and plot, generic features, any ties we know about the author or a preconceived notion of the text. Such limits guide the reader into seeing the ghostly ship *Demeter* run aground in England with its cargo of Transylvanian dirt without being in any way responsible for Dracula’s lairs. I travel around the world with Phileas Fogg, and sail with Ahab, and risk nothing but a crick in the neck from falling asleep in my chair or a bit of imaginative discomfort I can end whenever I please. It is this shutting of the book that is a necessary precondition of wandering proper, saving the wanderer from simply being *lost*.

Wandering is a mimicry of being lost; it appears to be aimless and undirected, but, at the same time, it must spring from a space of safety to be properly enjoyable or productive. There is a certain thrill about being lost, in spite of—or because of—its potential risk. Encounters with the unknown are intriguing, and exhilarating, but potentially frightening; that “I am lost” thought slips so easily from the physical to the metaphysical sense. To put it another way, when I lose track of what I know, of even the ground beneath my feet, it is easy to also lose track of myself. Disorientation erases the way home, and that home, however defined, is the anchor-point from which we explore. The paradox is that, for the wanderer destinations are unfixed and paths unplotted, but they can trace the way back. That is, the wanderer, although following no distinct plan, has an awareness of where they are moving, allowing them the control to stop and turn around, to close that book whenever they desire. As Sara Ahmed richly explores, departure from the beaten path, whether in the physical or psychological sense, heightens our awareness of where we “should” be. Wandering, then, is a convenient means of reshaping the horizon: it brings new points into sight and moves the body away from the path behind us, or the ones laid out beneath our feet.¹²

The act of wandering become a useful means of attending to the intersections of embodied and epistemic navigation. It develops and adjusts the traveler’s relational connections to places and to people over time. Life necessitates constant adaptation, and unmooring either end of such relationships is disquieting. To wander deliberately is to forge a relationship between the home base—the physical and psychic territory someone hails from and an end they cannot know; the journey itself traces out connections between the familiar and wherever, and whoever, the traveler ends up. Construed as such, wandering also describes a narrative, an unfolding of events and changing relations that shape character as a work in progress. With this in mind, this

¹² Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, (Durham: Duke UP, 2006).

chapter builds upon Andrew H. Miller's exploration of nineteenth-century notions of perfection, which he describes in terms of a moral process that plays out in series of encounters and relations, and which I will expand upon shortly.¹³

The potential departure from accustomed paths is all the more important, because what is conventionally within a person's view carries its own risks. Remaining in line with accustomed—particularly with received--points of view can prevent personal and societal change. Like wandering, which balances fear and enjoyment, the pull of habit has a dual character. Habit can deaden the senses to surroundings, and possibly deaden us to our selves; it can also open up access to spaces in the self that are not easily brought into view. Simmel describes this in terms of the tempting ease with which a city-dweller can allow themselves to be moved along, swallowed by the larger social mechanism. This dual nature of habit is a problem that arises in various ways in this dissertation. The danger of familiarity is part of what makes wandering so alluring and so potentially helpful. It skates the border between the familiar and the unknown. The rhythm of walking, in particular, slides into the background and the hum of thought slows. Courses of habitual thinking proceed similarly: there are habits of thought along which the mind travels easily. Changing course becomes more difficult with each repetition. This means that any number of factors—past orientations, cultural norms, the tendencies of our loved ones, the comforts of home—shape what lies in sight and in reach of a person. What counts as “on course” varies tremendously, chains of habit notwithstanding, and it is partly for this reason that getting off course can take seemingly infinite forms that involve a blend of geographical and affective factors.

¹³ Andrew H Miller, *The Burdens of Perfection: On Ethics and Reading in Nineteenth-Century British Literature*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

The physical landscape of the late 1800s provided a physical version of this tension between change and habit. Alterations to London on varying scales, such as the Thames Embankment, the building of underground rail, and the removal of Temple Bar created a cityscape in which getting around was an ongoing learning process. These changes lent a particular urgency to practical problems of getting around. Yet simultaneously, new habits were forming. Starting in 1864, the Metropolitan Railway began running workmen's trains with very low fares, an option that many competing companies adopted. These fares eliminated for some people long walks from areas with affordable housing to places of work. Repetitive movement was altering in the face of urban change but still existed for many; for others, London remained a place of widespread dislocation and homelessness, where again demolition and new construction changed the form of dispossession rather than eliminating it. Routine paradoxically existed in the face of otherwise constant change, and cumulative changes accrued into a reimagining of the city as a whole. These deeply ambivalent images of rootlessness and placelessness abound, and added to these local figures were the masses of people who relocated from one point in the empire to another, and brought – indeed embodied – influxes from immigration. The overlap of attitudes toward the poor and the foreign is evident in the plethora of essays that cast poor quarters of the city and practices of prostitution as *terra incognita* that were newly “discovered” and mapped by the British. To take a well-known example: William Booth's *In Darkness England and the Way Out* (1890) played upon the explorations of Henry Stanley and others to describe deplorable physical and social conditions that he believed readers will scarcely believe could exist in an idealized Christian England.

Changes in physical movement were accompanied by, and founded upon, larger cultural shifts. Desire for access propelled bodies into new spaces, and their increasing presence in those

spaces generated further desire and an increasing familiarity with the new territory that, in turn, helped deepen the connection between space and people and made it easier for others to follow. Before writing *Darkest England*, Booth had actually familiarized himself with the East End, where he launched the Salvation Army in 1865. The Salvation Army which was one of many charitable organizations that established in East End slums and other poor quarters a range of services and, in some cases, housing. Yet many such philanthropists were women, and these organizations provided authorized reasons for women to enter poorer areas, expanding their spheres of presence and influence. As spaces unfolded before individuals, so did other aspects of the self. Opening up new streets was a means of simultaneously opening up new psychic territories, and discovering new depths of identity. That is to say, remappings of London changed more than demographic access to various neighborhoods; this period saw a much larger reimagination of the city as a space in which men are not assumed to be the only architects or public figures. A tearing down of existing social structures rivaled in impact the physical changes London underwent during this period. These philanthropists, among many others, were like those slumming for entertainment in that they “increasingly traveled into different regions of the city in search of adventure and self discovery.”¹⁴ That is, the appeal of helping the poor was inherently orientated around the self in process—especially when entering previously inaccessible or unapproved spaces.

Turning

¹⁴ Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

I find Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology* and Miller's *The Burdens of Perfection* to be "implicative" (to borrow Miller's term¹⁵); that is, they invite me to respond, although when I first began this project it was unclear to me how to do so. Ahmed and Miller unfold not just their conclusions, but also their thinking for the reader. Each book has lent me a preoccupation with turning, and with the self as an ongoing process that occurs in relationship to spaces and to other people. Take, for example, the epigraphs of this chapter, in which Ahmed and Miller approach parallel problems using a similar metaphor. Ahmed focuses on a moment of dislocation, the point where familiarity with our surroundings disappears, calling our attention to how easily and unconsciously we had been proceeding. Miller likewise describes a moment of disorientation: without knowing how to bridge or even to articulate gaps in our general beliefs and particular circumstances, "wandering" between them becomes a useful step in coming to a new understanding. Whereas Miller argues the Victorian novel is particularly preoccupied with displacement as a moral problem, Ahmed examines displacement as queer and transformative such that the act of moving outward into unfamiliar space is a process that can itself become familiar. Both explore a productive space between familiarity and the unknown, where figuring out what lies within one's horizon or along one's vector of movement necessitates a temporary dwelling in that space of disorientation.

A phenomenological approach helps bridge the gaps between psychological, cultural, and physical spaces that made wandering so key in this period. Because Miller's focus is an epistemic one, his model does not directly address the physical aspects of the challenges facing writers of moral perfectionism. Yet he notes a number of related features specific to the latter half of the century, many of which are grounded in material circumstances and all of which are staples in the assessment of this period, including those by Simmel: "the destabilizing and

¹⁵ Miller, 30.

alienating effects of a market economy; atomization, urbanization, and the development of anonymity and social mobility; the centralization associated with new systems of transportation and communication; the rationalization of time; the expansion of print culture and literacy; the expansion of bureaucracies.”¹⁶ These facets of the time came with their own “instabilities and displacements” that moral perfectionism was particularly well-suited to help writers navigate. Miller sees these as features of the time that require some kind of searching response that I see as fundamentally connected to Simmel’s testing of boundaries.

The subjects of *Queer Phenomenology* likewise require an ongoing, adaptive, self-awareness. That is, movement is a similarly searching process, one in which embodiment and surroundings (including both physical and abstract features) overlap. Ahmed moves outward from the body into wider surroundings, and into how bodies are directed and built by the spaces around us and vice versa. In extending the body outward, she asks what the consequences of disorientation in a broad sense can be. The body and the individual tend in some directions more than others, and these routes are built from where others have been and gone before and where one’s own body has been. As J. Hillis Miller notes of *Our Mutual Friend*, which I discuss in chapter three, a person’s choices are limited by where one has been and what paths the weight of repeated movement has made familiar and accessible. These also include cultural, classed, or gendered assumptions about who belongs where within the city, and how that acceptability varies by time of day. It takes additional work to travel toward desires that lie in less- or untraveled directions. Ahmed traces the body’s extension outward, using embodiment—this body, in this place and time, and no other—to unfold the pressures and possibilities of travel, especially when one finds oneself uprooted or disoriented. The result is that some bodies are already “in

¹⁶ Ibid., 23-24.

line” with the space around them, they are “at home” in a way that other bodies may not be. Here given habits affect who feels most easily “at home.”

Ahmed’s work is especially useful in its particularity, a focus that this dissertation applies to other texts. Its attention to how bodies differ both in and of themselves, and in what they can see, desire, and access, provides a model of orientation and the self that grows and can affect others. She poses many of the same questions as Simmel, providing a means of re-examining relationships between embodiment, subjectivity, and space with closer attention to why and *how* the individual struggling against that leveling mechanism could have done so. What is important for my purposes is that Ahmed moves outward from the body into wider surroundings, and into how desires are affected and built by the spaces around us. This acknowledges that an individual’s personal history has brought some routes and not others into sight. To borrow a key point from Ahmed, I argue that embodiment is inherently epistemological. I therefore center the body as I explore a bodily perception of space, how embodiment in turn affects space, and how both relationships intersect with broader questions of identity.

Miller, although examining a moral problem of self-improvement, describes that improvement as working along axes, wherein encounters with other people and a subject’s reaction to them shape the direction they point their moral compass. This spatial framing is more than convenient figurative speech since nineteenth-century perfectionism is before all else a process of navigating in an ethical and physical landscape that has no fixed relationship to the past. In short, choosing a mental course of action is as exploratory as navigating on the ground or via rail. Much as Ahmed notes that one’s pre-given orientation and position shape what lies within a person’s horizon, Miller notes that a person’s perspective pre-forms their options. We can examine those other options and imagine them leading to other selves. That is, the

individual, in addition to proving their own inner boundaries, is evaluating others as markers of potential directions, images whose facets they may want to emulate or share. In Miller's definition, "perfectionism" applies that imagination to future possible selves, whereas the "optative mode," which complements it, examines the imagination of selves I could have been now but am not:

Both [the perfecting and optative] modes address me as I stand, now, in relation to others. Perfectionism presents the other as a provocation to what I might become; it focuses on the present as it stretches into the future; and its typical affective states extend along an axis from despondency to hope. Perfectionism...studies the relation between my present self and my possible future selves....

The optative mode presents the other, by contrast, as an example of what I might have become and focuses on the present as it stretches back into the past. The characteristic affective states in this mode extend along an axis from resentment to relief. The optative mode leaves me with myself, in my singularity, separate from others, now: this is its concluding emphasis.¹⁷

Both of these modes in Miller, I want to stress, are relational in the same sense as in Simmel's gradual discovery of the individual's psychological boundaries. Miller's perfecting mind engages with some along its route of improvement and disregards others, or, rather, the mind wishes to turn toward some examples and to shun others. Both Ahmed and Miller remain conscious of a choice of some paths over others, and together they can combine embodied desires and ethical ones into an epistemology rooted in wandering as a process. It can take a broad third-person perspective in order to examine itself, as Miller stresses. This process of identifying options and choosing directions, both physical and psychological, is a moral problem. Miller's argument also emphasizes that meaningfully evaluating those options requires an ability for the person to examine its own trajectories and nature. This can take the form of navigating between a broad third-person point of view and a narrower view of particular circumstances, which the nineteenth-century novel is particularly suited to demonstrate.

¹⁷ Miller, 199.

A Philosophy and a Creed

“The Droog was purple: not the pellucid purple of a petal, but the misty blue-black purple of the bloom of a plum,”¹⁸ writes (Theodore) Arnold Haultain, whose purple prose did not bar him from becoming a fairly well-known essayist by the turn of the century, and a private secretary to Goldwin Smith. This description of the Droog is predicated upon his enthusiasm for walking, and the range of his travels make him well-placed to discuss journeys in various climes. Born in Cannanore (Kannur) in 1857, he was the son of Major General Francis Mitchell Haultain. His family later moved to Ontario, where Haultain spent most of his adult life. He attended school in England and in Toronto and had a widely varying writing career of his own outside his secretarial duties, with essays and books covering topics ranging from golf to the history of the Riel Rebellions in Canada. He eventually moved permanently to England, where he died at the age of 83.

Haultain’s *Walks and Walking Tours* is a collection of essays which builds upon two of his earlier pieces about walks in Canada. The volume’s approach to a “creed” is an uneven and roving one. It mixes natural description, literary commentary, and philosophical musings, branching out geographically to include walks in Burma, England, and the Alps, and the Blue Mountains of southern India. These walks form the basis of philosophic musings that encompass a wide range of topics. Particular spots remind him of things he has read, he muses on famous literary walkers, or he attempts to describe a sight and the mood it engenders in him. In “The Essence of a Walk,” Haultain lays out his most focused expression of his philosophy of a country walk:

¹⁸ Arnold Haultain, *Walks and Walking Tours: An Attempt to find a Philosophy and a Creed*, (London: T. Werner Laurie, Ltd., 1914), 18.

[M]ark you, the essence of a country walk is that you shall have no object or aim whatsoever. The frame of mind in which one ought to set out upon a rural peregrination should be one of absolute mental vacuity. Almost one ought to rid oneself, if so be possible, even of the categories of time and place: for to start with a determination to cover a certain distance within a specified time is to take, not a walk, but a ‘constitutional’; and of all abortions or monstrosities of country walks, commend me to the constitutional. The proper frame of mind is that of absolute and secure passivity; an openness to impressions; a giving-up of ourselves to the great and guiding influences of benignant Nature; a humble receptivity of soul; a wondering and childlike eagerness—not a restless and too inquisitive eagerness—to learn all that great Nature may like to teach, and to learn it in the way that great Nature would have us learn.¹⁹

Haultain tries to describe the *essence* of this experience, but the act of putting it into words is already a step toward failure. His words meet the same problem of an actual excursion—they are an imperfect and partial approach to something abstract and untouchable. In this formulation, the universe becomes the walker’s guide, both physically and mentally. It demands a surrender that removes all of the walker’s own directives and landmarks in favor of a walk that approaches, although necessarily never reaches, a perfect faith in nature. It demands an abandonment of even the “categories” of time and place, not merely blurring the lines between them; this is a denial of the concepts as frames.

Haultain’s state of perfect openness and “mental vacuity” is aspirational rather than prescriptive. His call for “mental vacuity” rings negatively now, but this lack of preconceptions and intent is vital to the country walk. The instructions here to “rid oneself...of time and place” lack a certain practicality, as other essays in the book acknowledge: he elsewhere discusses what supplies to pack for longer journeys and what food is best to take with you, for instance. At some point, after all, a walker has to consider the general lay of the land, and whether they want to be home by dinner, an injunction to rid themselves of “time and place” notwithstanding. Haultain notes broader problems of perception and scale in regard to mankind’s attempt to understand the universe as a whole. He presents these as an acknowledgement of human being’s small place in

¹⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

the face of the cosmos. This smallness is evidence that human thought cannot compass the immensity and grandeur of nature; people are all essentially alike in the vastness of nature. Instances where that smallness becomes most evident to the walker are ones of quiet awe. He recounts a night walk deep in winter in Canada, in which the silence is overwhelming, punctuated by the Aeolian whistle of the wind in the telegraph lines. The world seems dead, and “to be alive in that shrine of death-like soundlessness seems desecration,” and he comes “soul to soul” with nature.²⁰ “One must visit a wintry clime to experience emotions such as these.”²¹ Each new place brings a new glimpse into a specific facet of a nature too overwhelming to view as a whole, and Haultain prizes these moments, which cannot be planned because the emotion cannot be imagined or anticipated.

The search for an encounter with an all-encompassing Nature founders in ways shaped by Haultain’s historical moment and position. Thus, the *Times of India* remarks that Haultain “declares his conviction that walking for pleasure is as old as the Garden of Eden; and for this he has good scriptural authority, though probably his appreciation of pedestrian exercise in that historic neighborhood is by no means shared by many members of the present expeditionary force.”²² The review responds to Haultain’s gesture at a biblical scale of time, in which mankind’s love of walking stretches from Eden to paradise regained. For the reviewer, the presence of World War I forcibly intrudes, wherein the ground itself is mired in military conflict and any advance is hard-won. In a similar vein, the *Aberdeen Journal* notes that “Accepting [the necessity of ‘mental vacuity’], it is hardly possible to attain the suitable frame of mind during these days, when the anxieties of war cannot be eluded or shaken off.”²³ That ridding oneself of

²⁰ Ibid., 64-66.

²¹ Ibid., 66.

²² “Thoughts by the Way.” *The Times of India*. January 12, 1916.

²³ “On Walking.” *Aberdeen Journal*, September 13, 1915.

space and time requires the particular erasure of military conflict, and, indeed, all other contestations of space. This demand would enable a corresponding erasure of British colonization in India and Canada, among other places. Haultain's "creed" deploys his walking body as a means of walking back history and its accumulated effects.

This desire for erasure is in tension with the book's discussion of England as "home," that is inescapably favored and creates more a lasting and meaningful attachment. The affection for, and familiarity with, England undermines the proposed universality so emergent in other portions of the text. The persistence of reviewers in reinserting their own place and time into *Walks and Walking Tours* indicates how inextricably bound up in time and place even, or especially, a widely-traveled body remains. Haultain's well-traveled perspective only makes his praise of the British Islands seem more authoritative. One review claims:

He has the advantage over less traveled persons in that he has wandered in India, Canada, and other parts of the world, but the final conclusion of all globe-trotters is that the British Islands are unequalled for walking purposes. Man cannot live on scenery alone, and though Nature in other parts may be more impressive, richer in colour, vaster in outline, and possess features which have no counterpart here, yet the human touch is lacking. These places are not home, and the pleasure they give us is qualified by that consideration.²⁴

Because of his having dedicated pages of glorifying prose to India and Canada, Haultain must be reclaimed as a patron of Sussex and Surrey. Even the supposedly encompassing phrase "all globe-trotters" is undone by the assumption that globe-trotters without national and cultural ties to Britain do not count. To the extent that these essays arrest the reader with the stark silence of winter in Ontario and an almost painful beauty of India, they must return to scenes of homey England. Although not born in England, the author returns to it as a site of comfort. His relocation to England later in life is a return to an earlier home. He summarizes: "if I probe my own heart to the core...to me a...scene in pastoral England...rouses more poignant emotions than

²⁴ "On Walking," *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, January 14, 1916, p. 4.

all the plain of Haute Savoie backed by the Chaîne du Mont Blanc...it is the simple scenes, to which associations cling, that call forth our love.”²⁵ He both claims an equal personal connection to other places he has lived and reserves for England a special attachment.

Miller would, I think, find the questions posed in *Of Walks and Walking Tours*, and Haultain’s appreciation for the country walk familiar. The movement between poles, from the individual to the universal, and from the familiar to the strange, is another aspect of wandering. There is something arresting about scenery like the Droog that pulls the walker into a moment that is all contact and no context, as if the awestruck walker briefly steps outside of place and time. Turning his back, as it were, to Mont Blanc is a rejection of the Romantic poet-walker and some of the poetry to which he himself responds. By contrast, “home” is a place of memory, inscribed with signs of human habitation and stamped by personal traces. As with wandering in general, the experience of the sudden and guiding contact with the world or universe must be anchored in this more continuous frame of meaning, be that the “continuity of life” or sense of “home” or sense of self. The safe experience of these brief glimpses is enabled by the possession of a safe ground to which the walker can return. Being “soul to soul” with nature is always fleeting. The inherent limits to our grasp of time and place mean that the present intrudes. we must think of somewhere as familiar, a home. It is not the sublime, but the quieter and more accessible comfort of the familiar hills that beckons.

As with place, there are familiar and unfamiliar poles of the body, movements customary and strange. One review, for instance, opines that “the cycle and the motor-car, not to mention golf and the tram-car, have well-nigh killed in their devotees both the desire and the ability to walk for the sake of walking.”²⁶ It goes on to note that there are nevertheless “a goodly number

²⁵ Haultain, 169-171.

²⁶ “On Walking.” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*. January 14, 1916.

who have bowed the knee to this particular Baal, but find exercise, recreation, and health in going by ‘shanks’s mare.’” “Exercise” and “recreation” feed into “health” in this formulation, a combination of which Dr. W. Alfred Johnson would approve, as I discuss in chapter two. The “Baal” of newfangled transportation contrasts with walking, which is now cast as a traditional, right, and regrettably vanishing practice. This subservient bowing at the knee is offset by the “shanks’s mare,” a phrase that invokes a body part as a horse. The linkage of “desire and ability” is also one of mind and body, wherein the loss of a “proper” (a desirable) desire leads to a decline in the ability to pursue it.

The familiarity of the shanks’s mare is both individual and cultural. The repeated motions of walking shape a body increasingly better suited to walking, and the image of the mare is one of older (and classed) transportation. Haultain’s disdain of the constitutional directly conflicts with the prescription of Johnson, who recommends the country walk outside of London as a means of improving health. Both would likely agree that the country walk, in contrast to the urban, recalibrates the relationship between mind and body and between person and nature. Johnson, however, insisted that walking (or driving) for health should be slotted into a person’s regular schedule. That is, the reader should cultivate a habit of walking, in which variety of route brings pleasure and inducement. The constitutional, Haultain’s monstrosity of a country walk, Johnson argues, can and should be adapted to practical limitations and circumstances—health, time, money—that Haultain would prefer to sidestep; Haultain must envision a more universal type of walker in order to experience the leveling and spiritually elevating excursions that he proposes.

Haultain connects a kind of moral searching and epiphany to wandering itself, and to the sensory experiences that result from it. The body of the walker becomes the site where

phenomenology and epistemology intersect in the face of nature. To sift Haultain's physical description from his philosophic musings would be to hamstring our understanding of the text. Whether employed by real people or fictional characters, wandering is a fruitful process in which to explore the changing relations between body, self, city, and culture. In so doing, the wanderer can connect the known and the unknown, relate their body to the spaces around them, and adapt their acting and thinking to keep up with change. In contrast to the planned routes provided by guidebooks or to total disorientation, wandering embodies another approach to self and space. It comes with no distinct aim or end point, and this deliberate incompleteness echoes Miller's discussion of perfection and Ahmed's sense of the body and individual as also always in progress. Indeed, it carves out a line of motion where psychic and physical movement are mutually constitutive. Moreover, how people dealt with material changes, rerouting, incorporating, revising, influences their methods of exploring psychic changes and displacements.

I have dwelled upon Haultain because, in calling for this state of receptiveness, he engages with a timely problem. *Walks and Walking Tours* falls between two stools. On the one hand, it preaches a philosophy of universal humanism predicated upon the erasure of place and time. Haultain sketches a global picture of how place affects walking and state of mind, wherein bodily effort and the mind's receptiveness are powerful enough to transcend any political or cultural boundaries. The instinct to walk from this angle is fundamentally human and therefore desirable. On the other hand, the book engages deeply with experiences in and responses to specific sights, reserving a special sense of home for England. Haultain's own easy passage in prose between stages in his life and various places is a performance of privilege requiring money, social mobility, and education. This philosophical approach to walking is above all a

leisurely one, not available to everyone. Haultain here runs afoul of the dynamic Simmel notes, that the more general and universal the ties that bind us to others, the less strong those bonds are. If Haultain can be linked to everyone via this philosophy, then he is in a sense connected deeply to no one. Haultain may construct a model to emulate in the sense of Miller's model of perfection, but the wanderer's imagination finds no purchase in the face of the bland universal. Neither his discussions of literature nor his own philosophical musings display a mind the reader could actually imitate or aspire to. With no personal connection or ability to imagine themselves in Haultain's position, the reader skips over him without interest, undermining Haultain's project.

Going Astray

Haultain's injunction to leave behind considerations of time and place reveals his need for a universal walker; it reflects ways in which relationships between space and types of body were intertwined and in flux during this period. In order to forward his approach to walking and its receptiveness, Haultain must erase any specificity of place that stems from human actions. The pressure exerted between people and place prompts a need to get rid of the latter in order to better shape the former. Haultain is unable to conceive of most people recreating his moments of enlightenment without scrubbing the landscape itself of man-made impressions. In the next chapter, I examine how the expected reader and user of guidebooks to London recreates this problem in narrower and more concrete terms. The chapter focuses on a variety of texts loosely grouped under the guidebook genre or otherwise framed as a tour, which lay out routes for those in London who wish to see its most defining features. I use what we may call the typical guidebook to London as the standard from which other texts diverge.

Guidebooks were a rapidly growing genre fulfilling a basic need—keeping up with myriad changes in a bustling metropolis during this period. Yet the tour served as a narrative structure for all kinds of approaches to city and subject, and what is omitted is often as revealing as what is included. Rather than Haultain’s universal walker, children’s urban picture books, for instance, aimed at teaching readers to become very specific types of citizens, who related to the history and inhabitants of the city in specific ways. Even the “standard” guidebook such as those published by Routledge presents possible courses and destinations implicitly aimed at its presumed reader (white, steadily employed or independently wealthy, male, and healthy enough for such a trip), blocking off other sections of the city by suggesting there is nothing there to be seen. In the written descriptions of such tours, the guidebook reinforces the erasure of non-white, female, poor, or disabled bodies. Women and, less commonly, children intrude upon the route descriptions when a passing site or feature is presumed to be of particular interest to them. People who are poor or disabled often arise only as the object of the tourist’s interest; they appear en masse *as* their delimited feature—*the* poor, *the* disabled. The guidebook thus silently separates the implied reader from those bodies which are elided and invisible, or transformed from person to spectacle. Some bodies belong within the city as subjects, including the visiting stranger, but others are instead represented as the tourist site rather than sightseer. Still others are absent entirely.

Chapter Two

You are Here

The rapid city developments of the second half of the nineteenth century led to a spate of accompanying navigational aids. Guides covering London's important sites generally define "must-see" in similar ways, and many common features will be familiar to current travelers. Such guides were shapers of London's global significance and cultural role, and sites chosen for inclusion and exclusion and their presentation mold the city's history in the service of contemporary needs. Routledge's *Popular Guide to London and its Suburbs* (1866), for instance, dubs the city the "political, moral, physical, intellectual, artistic, literary, commercial, and social, centre of the world."¹ *Collins's Guide to London* (1876) refers to London, among other things, as "the richest city in the world," which will "ever be a place which strangers wish to visit."² In spite of such sweeping claims, guides were limited in space and therefore in the amount of information they could include. Guide books purporting to cover the whole of London essentially codify certain spaces and routes as being worthy of attention, and they send steady streams of people to the same points of local and national significance. Some of these, such as the Tower of London, are of historical note. Guidebooks generally attribute the Tower to William the

¹ George Frederick Pardon, *Popular Guide to London and its Suburbs: Comprising Descriptions of All its Points of Interest: with Historical, Literary, Statistical, and Useful Information*, (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1866), 2. This guide was frequently reissued under similar titles, updating local details and making slight changes to front matter.

² William Collins, *Collins' Illustrated Guide to London and Neighborhood: Being a Concise Description of the Chief Places of Interest in the Metropolis, and the Best Modes of Obtaining Access to Them: with Information Relating to Railways, Omnibuses, Steamers, etc.*, (London: William Collins, Sons, and Company, 1876), 9.

Conqueror and then trace changes and additions up to the time of writing.³ Texts introduce St. Paul's in a similar fashion. Chambers notes that a "church is said to have existed here four hundred years before the Norman Conquest,"⁴ and Routledge leads with "This great building rears its noble proportions over the ashes of many churches."⁵ Other sites are of much more recent date. The General Post Office was completed in 1829, and Zoological Gardens were established in 1826. The building of the British Museum commenced in 1823, but its collections are considerably older. Likewise, the National Gallery, had been housed in Trafalgar Square only since 1838. Museums and galleries help bridge the gap between London's storied history and its new developments and innovations. Like curated collections of art and artifacts, guidebooks pick and choose places to show the visitor and acknowledge the fact that a visitor can no more take in and appreciate the whole of the city on a trip than they could see the entirety of the British Museum in a day.

The city presents a problem for the cataloger, in that its points of interest can be organized by type of site on paper, which allows the visitor to easily see the variety of museums or churches without flipping around at length. This conceptual organization produces a city neatly categorized, divided into sites of varying purpose and significance. This abstract London addresses an audience equally abstract and therefore homogenized. Such an organization conflicts sharply with the city as experienced by the visitor. Collins, for instance, includes a section clustered under government and financial institutions, including "the tower, the mint, the custom house, the general post office." Another covers "Palaces and Mansions, Royal and

³ See, for example, George Dodd, *Chambers's Handy Guide to London, Being a Concise Description of the Chief Places of Interest in the Metropolis, and the Best Modes of Obtaining Access to Them: Together with a Mass of Useful Information Relating to the International Exhibition of 1862, and to Railways, Suburban Villages, Cabs, Omnibuses, Steamers, Telegraphs, Postal Arrangements, Free Exhibitions, etc, Illustrated by [John Singer] Sargent, Map by [John George] Bartholomew*, (London and Edinburgh: R. and W. Chambers, 1862). See also Pardon.

⁴ Dodd, 40.

⁵ Pardon, 72.

Noble.” Other guidebooks deemed this approach ineffective. The *New Pocket Guide to London: Arranged in Daily Routes for the Convenience of the Visitor* (1862) summarizes:

[No] existing Guide Book, written for the use of visitors to the Metropolis, is sufficient for its purpose...the everlasting grouping of all Churches, Museums, Picture-galleries, Gardens, Amusements, &c., under separate headings, leaves a want, which it is the intention of the present work to supply...[when] assisted by the elaborate Guide Books I have referred to, the visitor starts off in the morning for the Tower, perhaps, returns to the Zoological Gardens, and faints before he reaches the Brompton Museum, thus wasting his time, money, and exertion very needlessly and uselessly.⁶

Of note here are two related problems. First, separating the Tower, the gardens, and the museums in the text by kind makes it more difficult for the traveler to accurately picture their relative physical locations.⁷ Second, this results in strain on the body. Although the *New Pocket Guide* first cites the time and money the visitor wastes, the exertion is the most direct result of this organizational arrangement. One method of conceptualizing the city conflicts with another, the categorization of places in London does not merge into the sense of the city as a collection of places and connections. It is the body in particular where that divergence is most easily felt. The walker, then, is faced with the same essential problem as the guidebook: they have limited capacity for understanding the city and forming it into a cohesive image. The visitor to or inhabitant of London negotiates a city overwhelming and often unpleasant in stimuli, and the standard city guides treat each person and body alike. This apparent necessity of making no choices masks a set of assumptions about the reader taken as given.

Tensions exerted on body and mind within the city are addressed by W. Alfred Johnson, a doctor and author, who approaches the city from the perspective of the walker. He emphasizes movement over the city as a space. London, to Johnson, is an environment that a body must confront, and his navigation of the area only extends so far as is good for the walker. Johnson

⁶ Aruthur Bailey Thompson, *New Pocket Guide to London: Arranged in Daily Routes for the Convenience of Visitors, Containing Numerous Engravings and a New Map of London*, (York: John Sampson, 1862), iii.

⁷ Navigating mental space poses its own difficulties, which I explore in more detail in chapter five.

had a successful career; he gradually accrued several degrees, beginning with his M.D. in 1852, at St. Andrews. By the time his one-shilling pocket volume, *Arcadian Walks and Drives in the North-West Part of London* (1874),⁸ was published, Johnson had become a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of England, and a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries in London. He had likewise become a member of the General Council of St. Andrews. Johnson's medical education in Scotland and in London allowed him some freedom in choosing where to practice. Johnson specialized in hydropathy, and expanded his practice several times. In conjunction with this practice, he had printed small works on various medical topics for patients and the general public.⁹ *Arcadian Walks and Drives* blends the features of these medical texts with those of the niche guidebook. Not a guide *per se*, the volume has the explicit goal of inducing various inhabitants of the north-west area of London to take more regular exercise by informing them of new places to walk, ride or drive, and how to make the most of such excursions. Apparently Johnson correctly identified the desire for such a combination of information for *Arcadian Walks and Drives* was well-received and sold multiple additions. A notice in *Victoria Magazine* called the text "well worth it" (1874).¹⁰ *The Graphic* dubbed it "better by far...than nine-tenths of our doctors' prescriptions" and longs for "a similar little handbook for the equally pretty bye-ways of south and south-east"¹¹.

Johnson's book attempts to make use of the multiplicity of routes through London as a means of solving the problem of scale and cohesion. Rather than attempting to form an ideal image of the city, or an ideal walker within it, Johnson moves between various rural walks and

⁸ W. Alfred Johnson, *Arcadian Walks and Drives in the Northwest Part of London, for the Pedestrian, Carriage, Horse, and Bicycle*, (London: Emily Faithfull, 1874).

⁹ According to the advertisements in *Arcadian Walks*, these included *Bedside Letters on Hydropathy*, *Plain Words on Medical Subjects*, and *On Feeling Ill*, among others.

¹⁰ "Recent Publication," *The Victoria Magazine*, conducted by Emily Faithfull, 24 (Nov.-April 1874): 94.

¹¹ "The Reader," review of *Arcadian Walks and Drives*, by W. Alfred Johnson, *The Graphic*, November 21, 1874.

the city itself. The dynamic relationship between body and surroundings models a mutually constitutive rhythm that is individual but healthy. Johnson posits that “[t]here are many—very many—persons in London—who would be both bodily and mentally benefited by prescribing for themselves a ‘*course* of walks,’ and who would frequently save themselves ‘a *course* of physic,’ by carrying out the prescription.”¹² This double sense of “course” as a run of prescription doses and as a route for walking replaces the repeated imbibing of medicine at prescribed times with repeated bodily motions. One implication of this is that, unlike doses to treat an illness or symptoms, walking strengthens and renews the body’s own resources. Whether Johnson’s “course of walks” refers to a series of different walks (in a sense of walks as individual doses) or to the route of one specific outing (in the sense of having your course laid out), he intends that such outings become a *matter* of course. Ideally, one walk becomes part of a larger habit, creating a continuity between journeys in both the exerciser’s expectations and the accumulating improvements to the body.

Johnson’s recommendations reflect local and medical knowledge, blending his work with his daily environment, rather than separating the two. His own body becomes a starting point for his thinking, or even an intermediary between abstract medical knowledge and the people around him. Johnson is prompted in part by the dearth of fellow walkers he encounters on many of his walks. His text suggests twenty-two routes and lays out the benefits of them based on his own experiences, hoping his readers will “go and do likewise.”¹³ Accordingly, Johnson also tells his readers not just “Where to Walk,” but first “How to Walk,” and “What to Wear,” this latter section organized by season. His tips are extremely specific: “It is said that goods dyed with aniline are injurious to the health. I do not know how far this is true, but, perhaps it may be

¹² Johnson, xxxix.

¹³ Ibid.

prudent to avoid all socks of any shade of pink,”¹⁴ and a “delicate man” must set their pace guided by their own body, “always recollecting that the slowness of his pace must not be from indolence, but from an inability to walk faster without injurious consequences.”¹⁵ He also comments on common problems and concerns, for instance assuring the reader that when health is at stake, no “false feeling of delicacy” should prevent resting or otherwise adjusting an outing based on how it is affecting the body.¹⁶ *Arcadian Walks* responds to the changefulness of surroundings. The attention to season, for instance, recognizes that the body’s needs vary greatly, and protection from the elements must change accordingly. Johnson’s use of “delicacy” however is mixed. On the one hand, we have “delicate persons,” who must physically guard themselves against over-exertion and remain closely attuned to his body’s needs. On the other hand, we have the “false feeling of delicacy” as assuming that frank discussion of the current state of the body or slowing down the group would be impolite.

Having explained some precautions to take, how best to hold the body, and how fast and far to walk, *Arcadian Walks* moves on to its main focus: *where* to walk. Unlike the guidebooks already discussed, *Arcadian Walks* derives its “where” from natural scenery rather than from historic, commercial, or cultural import. Although helpful in getting around the areas specified, Johnson’s book takes London only as its point of departure. The guide includes a table of walks (figure 2.1), which lists the twenty-two routes in order of increasing duration, as well as a table of relevant train and omnibus fares. The excursions range from one hour and forty minutes (Kensal and St. Mary’s Cemeteries) to six hours (Edgware and Harrow). I wish to examine this last walk in more detail, because Johnson names this, along with walk 21 at Hornsey, as the “most interesting” route to travel by foot. A bit of a botanist, Johnson notes the wide variety of

¹⁴ Ibid., l.

¹⁵ Ibid., lvi.

¹⁶ Ibid., lix.

TABLE OF THE WALKS.

Nos		Time required	
		rs	Min
1	Kensal and St. Mary's Ceme- teries.	1	40
2	Starch Green and Chiswick...	2	15
3	Willesden Lane & Harlesden Green.	2	30
4	West End and Hampstead ...	2	30
5	Willesden Junc. and Kensal Green.	2	45
6	East Acton and Starch Green	2	50
7	Fortune Gn and Willesden Ln	2	50
8	Neasdon and Harlesden... ..	3	0
9	Hanger Hill and Perivale ...	3	0
10	Twyford Abbey and Acton ...	3	12
11	Child's Hill and Hmpstd Hth.	3	30
12	Stone Bridge and Scrubs ...	3	35
13	Neasdon and Welsh Harp ...	3	40
14	Putney and Chiswick	3	50
15	Finchley Rd and Hmpstd Hill	4	0
16	Village of Willesden and Wem- bley Park.	4	0
17	Alperton and Sudbury	4	30
18	Finchley and Hampstead ...	4	30
19	Welsh Harp and Hendon ...	4	45
20	West End and Finchley Ch.	5	0
21	Highgate and Hornsey... ..	5	30
22	Edgware and Harrow	6	0

B 2

Figure 2.1. W. Alfred Johnson, "Table of the Walks," in *Arcadian Walks and Drives in the Northwest Part of London*, 1874.

plant life visible en route, in addition to the variety of views available.¹⁷ He opens by naming Edgware from the direction of Kilburn as the starting point. The instructions for the walk itself begin as follows:

On the right-hand side you will see the old church. Take the lane opposite to it, along which you walk for two or three hundred yards. When at the bend of the road, you will see on the left a pair of wooden gates, close to a tall, iron pump. Here enter the fields, keeping slightly to the left, and continue onwards, carefully avoiding bearing to the right, when you are about a hundred yards from the gate, by a path which leads to the handsome church, surrounded by trees, in the distance. When you reach the top of the hill, you may enjoy one of the finest views near London.¹⁸

Johnson's specificity is in part a necessary result of the rural area of the walk; the walker is not moving along named roads, and these paths lack the kind of man-made and often storied landmarks used to guide walkers around London proper. This requires enough detail to distinguish one field from another, some wooden gates from others, and so on. The walker will see "the old church" rather than *an* old church, so they begin the excursion with a sense of familiarity. In spite of the given distances, this is not an easily plottable course in the sense of tracing the proposed journey on available maps. Rather the walker must make their way to Kilburn and allow the turning points to materialize as they proceed.

Johnson's style goes beyond precision and invites the walker to feel at home in the area. *The Medical Press & Circular* describes it as a "pleasant chatty" voice,¹⁹ and the walker can readily imagine having stopped Johnson in person for directions along the way. Asides such as "This is, to my mind, by far the prettiest part of the Heath" remind the reader that Johnson's goal is to make these new walks seem pleasant without being so novel that they are uncomfortable or

¹⁷ "Variety" is also a benefit that Johnson stresses throughout, particularly with regard to the differences between walks, and the opportunity to take them in the other direction or otherwise have new walks and drives to bolster interest and thus exercise.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 174-75.

¹⁹ "Literature," review of *Arcadian Walks and Drives*, by W. Alfred Johnson, *The Medical Press and Circular*, October 28, 1874.

intimidating.²⁰ As Johnson continues, he makes various tangential remarks. For instance, that he gathers fourteen types of flower during a small stretch, that at this spot there is a pleasant view of Harrow, that the walker should note the beautiful architecture in town. Others explain how the walker could save time by taking the train some of the distance, or that they can shorten the walk by taking one route over another. This adds to the impression that Johnson is recreating walks of his own; his remarks fall and rise with the landscape in question rather than appearing as an organized or artificially structured treatise. His general tips section includes his “*Latest Discovery*,” which is an alternative route from Harrow to Sudbury through about three miles of “the choicest” fields.²¹ Such sprinkled evidence that Johnson is drawing on his own experiences and still discovering new routes and pleasant sights positions him on an equal footing with his readers, rather than as a doctor writing a traditional prescription.

Even so, Johnson builds on a body of medical literature explaining the benefits of walking for body and mind, as well as his own experience in practice. Johnson uses his range of patients to more specifically envision and enumerate bodies assumed to be irrelevant in more standard guides. Like other medicines, Johnson’s “course” of walks is adjustable, with suggestions for a range of patients who differ in physical abilities, and ones who differ including people with limited days off or limited funds, children, and walkers with varying stamina, stride length, or overall health. His tips, for instance, demonstrate the understanding that not all can afford to keep horses or hire a coach; he suggests that small groups of friends can “*club together*,” splitting the cost and alternating who chooses the course of the drive.²² Johnson likewise names those people who regularly take their constitutional but limit themselves to the city proper because they have no idea they have other options. These include people who ride

²⁰ Johnson, 113.

²¹ *Ibid.*, xvi-xvii.

²² *Ibid.*, xviii-xix.

regularly—say in the fashionable Rotten Row—and those who have time for a half holiday but always take it in one of the same few places.

The tips and comments in *Arcadian Walks* range back and forth over various circumstances potentially faced by its readers, but Johnson attends particularly to class and gender. He “hope[s],” for instance, that his “little work should fall into the hands of some of the working classes...that many of these readers should be induced to make little excursions into the country.”²³ Johnson anticipates his guide reaching the working class only indirectly. Similarly, the author carefully addresses several reasons why people of the working classes may find such trips seemingly impossible. Under the heading of “working classes” Johnson includes people who might have the leisure for a few hours’ excursion without having access to extensive time or funds for a full weekend in the country: schoolmistresses, artisans, laundresses and the like. He continues, “At present persons of the class I speak of go perhaps once a year for a day into the country—perhaps to Margate... [but a]ll has been (especially to the mother), bustle and excitement—not unmixed with worry; the next similar ‘outing’ may take place the following year.”²⁴ The day must start early and end late in order for a family to have a full day to spend at their destination, undermining the supposed relaxation with effort. This risks transforming the pleasure itself into work. Moreover, the burdens of organizing such a trip and herding the children fall disproportionately upon the shoulders of the wife. Although *Arcadian Walks* of course gives its tips to the hypothetical walker in masculine pronouns, it notably includes women as readily as men. Johnson’s preface refers to “young men and young women whose health would...be much refreshed” by his recommendations,²⁵ and even when speaking of a male worker, includes his wife and children as automatically included in the walk or drive. Although

²³ Ibid., xl.

²⁴ Ibid., xl-xli.

²⁵ Ibid., xlii.

women and children later largely fall out of his directions and descriptions, they may be implicit in Johnson's attention to varying bodies. Johnson does not address an ideal reader or walker.

In terms of organization, *Arcadian Walks and Drives* shares features with other guidebooks, particularly with ones targeted toward narrow interests; it lays out a variety of paths through the area, it includes information about relevant transportation, and its preface gives the reader general advice on how best to make the journeys included. Its focus on rural walks and a narrower purpose (encouraging exercise for the sake of exercise), limits its project to a relatively small area (north and west of London). This geographical focus is itself a possible limit in class, given that the residential area skewed toward the middle- and upper-middle classes. It more expansively includes information for women, children, and "delicate persons," possibly also synonymous with women and children. Viewed through the lens of health, *Arcadian Walks and Drives* creates a sharp contrast to many actual guidebooks, in which women and children are most notable in their absence. If a guide mentions them, it is only to warn them way from certain streets, odorous locales, or to note specific hotels and places to eat that are deemed appropriate for their needs.

Johnson's perspective as a casual fellow walker guides his professional gaze, noting others' pace, posture, their vitality; estimating ages and length of stride; building a catalog of problems and symptoms. This helps him to prioritize his routes from the human body outward, rather than from one famous site to another. That is, *Arcadian Walks and Drives* is meant to create a route based upon the walker's needs and means, and where the walker ends up is flexible. According to the walker's body, walks can be shortened or adjusted, even once underway—the reader can and, as Johnson points out, should monitor the state their body as they progress, so that they exercise in the best way possible in their condition. Proposed courses

originate in an awareness of the walker's particularity and then take shape moving outward into the suburbs and country surrounding northwest London. This leverages the availability of numerous walks only in service of a healthier self, rather than attempting to guide any body through a culturally-created London for cachet. If this is a consumption of the city, it is one more directly attuned to, and sourced from, the body. Thus, the relationship between body and surroundings, and between city and country, is flexible in a way impossible according to the guides of Routledge, et al.

In a seemingly Arcadian countryside, a person must devote recurring, embodied time for sustaining a healthy body and mind. Since Johnson "assume[s] that [the] reader is desirous of obtaining the full benefit of his excursion, in a psychological or medical point of view, as well as in a pleasurable point of view,"²⁶ he emphasizes the joint physical and emotional benefits of exercise. Although Johnson separately lists the psychological or medical advantages from the "pleasurable point of view," his model makes the latter a necessary ingredient in the former. One of the goals of *Arcadian Walks and Drives* is to leave behind the worries of work or household, an object best served by removing oneself to the country, where the sights that meet the eye are untroubling and combine with the rhythm of the body to allow one's attention to rest: "Now the many charming objects of nature encountered in a *country walk* very much tend to dissipate the mind from worldly cares and troubles, riveting the attention of the pedestrian on themselves."²⁷ The rhythm of walking can be a comforting and effective habit that unites the body and mind even when excursions taken vary each time. Each bodily rhythm incorporates (literally) the freshness and peace of mind gained by successive trips. This attention to the self is not one of

²⁶ Ibid., li.

²⁷ Ibid., liii.

ego or self-absorption. Rather, it is an investment of time in body and mind. The body borrows a bit of Arcadian time and returns to the metropolis to invest in the city itself.

Exercise for the sake of exercise is “irksome” to most people, Johnson acknowledges, and the longer the exercise itself, the more irksome people find it. This antipathy can be lessened if novelty adds its charm to the scene. Johnson uses the pleasure and novelty of the country walk, rather than health per se, as the motivating force for exercise. “Health” is a nebulous goal, its definition endlessly malleable, so Johnson is utilizing the more identifiable pleasures of nature to induce readers to exercise. This is particularly effective in that Johnson contrasts the image of the country walk very sharply with what he imagines is the London resident’s typical walk. The text’s image of walkers in the city is one of individuals who have lost touch with their inner selves, and for whom the city’s barrage of impressions and bleak alleyways do not allow for renewing that connection. Unlike the country, the social and physical fabric of the city is stifling:

London, with its monotonous array of shops, and the endless miles of blackened brick houses, with nothing more attractive to the ear than the rattle of wheels, mixing with the hum of voices, and discordant cries of many hucksters prosecuting their useful but somewhat inharmonious calling; with nothing more refreshing to their olfactory nerves than the gaseous emanations from the underground sewers.²⁸

Johnson appeals to every sense but touch to evoke a city that presses in on the body of the walker with aggressive unpleasantness. This type of environment, in spite of its national importance, Johnson attests, has no tangible pleasure to supply. People walk through the city out of necessity.

The London of *Arcadian Walks* is defined by a need to escape into the country as an Arcadia of pastoral and past perfection. Unlike in the standard guidebook, the metropole is flattened by its intrusiveness. Specific places become irrelevant, as does the historical significance of the city. In this formulation, the setting of the proposed walks must fundamentally differ from the city and yet be easily accessible. The country walk constitutes a

²⁸ Ibid., xxi-xxii.

return to an embodiment in harmony with the world. The walker can pass through the land and remain focused on or centered in himself, whereas the city impinges upon the pedestrian. This apparent differentiation is undermined by the fact that these excursions, from suburb to “country” rely precisely upon the distance between London and the country being bridgeable. The body and self range outward for a day or half day, soaks in the positive changes made in the country; and folds back into the city, taking the benefits with it. This invocation also folds an idealized past into the present. Johnson’s country is a fundamentally ancient one. As many before and after him have done, his country is idyllic precisely because it is located in the past. London, in its sprawling and chaotic nature, is most importantly *present*. The stimuli of the city impinge not only on the mind but on the moment. They are not shelvable; they demand addressing in the moment, and it is their presence—in the sense of location and time—that is so invasive. By drawing the walker outward from London, Johnson’s walks draw them into a space that can only be idyllic by being located in the past. This is a stark contrast to guides like Routledge that struggle to integrate London’s distant past into the present city and with it an idealized history or importance.

Johnson’s retreat from an increasingly multi-faceted London is one response the larger problems of a city its inhabitants can no longer walk or know in its entirety. Other responses, in the form of variously imagined and organized representations, struggle to articulate productive ways of inhabiting or visiting the city. As *Arcadian Walks* demonstrates, many guides gestured toward more specific and more local readerships, such as *The Surrey Tourist* (1868),²⁹ *Sydenham, Dulwich, and Norwood* (1882?),³⁰ and *Saturday Afternoon Rambles Round London:*

²⁹ Round-About, *The Surrey Tourist; Or, Rambles and Reflections South of London, a Complete Guide for Visitors and Pedestrians*, (London: Elliot Stock, 1868).

³⁰ *Sydenham, Dulwich, and Norwood: A Handy Guide to Rambles in the District, with a Map, Illustrations, and Bicycle Routes*. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, [1882?]).

Rural and Geological Sketches (1871).³¹ The publication of this sort of subject guide to the city opened a window onto very different maps of London. The distance assumed between audience and represented space consequently varied widely. Since standard walks and sites of London presented in guidebook form tended to reinscribe received images of the city, we must look to their margins and absences to gauge how specific readers and bodies may have undermined these norms. The remainder of this chapter uses Johnson's attention to the bodies of London's citizenry as a basis against which to better understand how London—as space, city, metropole—was presented to visitors foreign and domestic and to its inhabitants. *Arcadian Walks* reaches out to a usually unseen set of walkers, and its attention to variations in ability, time, money, and inclination makes apparent the absences in related conversations. Guides by Routledge and others assume a specific, homogenous readership, which controls who can navigate London and who must be silent or themselves become a sight for tourism. Simpler incarnations of the guidebook serve as early methods of geographic and Christian moral education for children of varying ages. Thus children are gradually interpolated into London as future citizens expecting and embodying particular values and movements. Areas and sites of London are gradually associated with urban “types.” Exploration of the city, either armchair or physical, is a means of laying claim to the area, and by extension laying claim to the project of imperialism and identity at the heart of which London lies. Yet, in spite of claims to real world accuracy, threads of imagination and even of fairy tales haunt the guidebooks discussed here. Literary guidebooks explore a particular corner of the cultural import of London and further complicate the image of London, a thread I pick up again in chapter three.

³¹Henry Walker, *Saturday Afternoon Rambles Round London: Rural and Geological Sketches*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1871).

Little Walks and Big Boots:

Little Walks in London (1875),³² which traces the excursions of two children into the city of London, descends from a long line of urban picture books that use the urban encounter as a didactic tool.³³ They help their readers learn and retain social distinctions by presenting them in the context of urban encounters. In some cases, the city is merely the convenient site of sudden and fleeting meetings that lends itself to noting a variety of persons. In other cases, the reader effectively “meets” parts of the city as they meet other people. They also guide the reader toward moral behavior, as well as respect for, and expectations of, fellow Londoners. For example, readers learn about a range of city workers that included civil servants (the Policeman, the Fireman, the Postman), people doing the city’s dirty work (the Dustman, the Chimney Sweep), those eking out a living as street vendors (the Flower Girl, the Watercress Girl). By sorting others by profession or other benefit they give to society, *Little Walks* and similar books have implications for how readers value others as part of the city.

Written by Yveling Rambdaud (Frédéric Gilbert), *Little Walks* centers on two young children stereotypical of the genre. Fanny is ten, and her brother Henry is somewhat older. *Little Walks* invites the reader to identify with Fanny and Henry, in age, wealth, and education. This framing also renders the gender of the reader irrelevant—boy or girl will find a child easily recognizable as “like them.” A passing mention of the children as equally upright adults strolling through a park suggests the text is looking backwards to see how these siblings grew up into their respectable adult selves.³⁴ Fanny is an exemplar of physical and behavioral goodness, who mediate between the varied inhabitants of they encounter and the reader: “There was once upon a

³² Yveling Rambdaud [Frederick Gilbert], *Little Walks in London*, ill. John Leech, (London: Green Longmans, and Co., 1875).

³³ See Katie Trumpener, “City Scenes: Commerce, Utopia, and the Birth of the Picture Book,” in *The Victorian Illustrated Book*, ed. Richard Maxwell (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2002), 332-384.

³⁴ Rambdaud, vii-ix.

time a little girl, whose name was Fanny. No little girl could be prettier or better mannered.” Her brother Henry is “a worthy rival of his sister.”³⁵ The family is well-off enough to afford a tutor. The sole mention of labor within the family is Fanny’s sewing of her own doll clothes, which are somewhat coquettish; this is presented as a minor vice rather than work per se. The journeys the siblings take into London are intended as courses of moral education. Thus the urban picture book is shaped by the structure of the guidebook, while sidestepping Johnson’s preoccupation with actual movement. The journeys recounted are aimed only at improving the inner self, detached from the body.

The narrator introduces the children’s tutor, Mr. Dickson, who offers to guide them through a series of life lessons that take the form of six walks in various parts of London. The children encounter a number of other citizens, each of whom they can watch, hence Dickson aims his tour at a space he perceives between narrative and “reality”: “The morality which you find in books is good to read, but it often chooses its personages from the region of the Fairies and Prince Charming. I wish to show you a different world, more real, and less flattering, which, nevertheless, will amuse you while it gives you some instructive lessons.”³⁶ Without condemning children’s stories such as fairy tales, Dickson names a void in them. The fairy tale is too black and white—the children can enjoy such stories but not map them neatly onto their daily lives, or onto the world around them. Where Johnson’s walker reaches for an ideal but fading Arcadia, Dickson discards the fantasies of childhood. The London in between the child reader and the adult escapee gradually becomes one that is too real, or at least incapable of being experienced without some kind of idealized leavening. The emphasis on flattery notes a particular type of identification failure. The fairy tale warps the world into an attractive place, and the evil in such

³⁵ Ibid., vii.

³⁶ Ibid., ix.

stories is overcome. Flattery distorts the image of character and place, confusing where the child should identify with where they will *want* to identify. Thus, Fanny and Henry must learn to make more subtle distinctions.

The use of “little walks” as a framework for moral education transforms abstract qualities or principles into characters whose actions can be examined and evaluated. This approach blends didactic children’s literature with a kind of guidebook in the service of moral, cultural, and local education; moral lessons can be embodied and encountered, and associated with various locales in the city of London. Mr. Dickson, promises the children a week’s worth of excursions in London, during each of which he will tell them a story in the presence of the “actors in flesh and blood.”³⁷ He frames the people of London as both more real than Prince Charming (“flesh and blood”), and yet as character-like (“actors”). This sets up an interaction between the children and those they meet that muddles the boundaries between unscripted encounters and organized narrative. The flesh and blood bodies of London are nevertheless part of, and subject to, the map laid out by Dickson. By leading the children, Dickson interpolates their bodies into the streets, where they have roles to fill and effects on others. These excursions also place Franny and Henry (and occasionally Franny’s dog) as bodies that may be seen by others and serve as stand-ins for the book’s child readers.

The focus on moral lessons means that, like Johnson, the walks are tied to a reader rather than a place. Unlike with Johnson, however, the habits being instilled are ones of judgment and integration with other citizens of the city. Mr. Dickson presents this excursion as a step forward on a clear developmental and educational path to adulthood, “the life which [they] have now begun to enter upon.”³⁸ To “enter upon” here marks a slippage between figure and literality. The

³⁷ Ibid., xiii.

³⁸ Ibid., ix.

children's approach to maturity is a continuum rather than a threshold, of course, but the use of small adventures into the streets of the city lends it a sense of control and direction. Some of the encounters are planned and others happenstance, including people passing by the poor without helping (Belgrave Square), two boys engaged in a fight and surrounded by an eager throng (Islington), a woman risen from humble origins to elegance to a position in a clothing shop (Oxford Street), an art collector (Manchester Square), and two chimney sweeps, who are proved "useful for something" by a fire down the street (Albany Street and Portland Road).³⁹

Little Walks locates these social tensions, connections, and aversions in name only, however. The sense that the children's educational and moral development can be neatly subdivided or located, is everywhere undermined. Although Franny and Henry's experiences are brief and heavily guided, *Little Walks* does not consistently name specific locations, because they are less relevant than the human interaction that will occur. Rather, Dickson names a direction or area of the city as the goal of the excursion. For instance, the first excursion is taken vaguely "towards Pimlico" although it eventually stops at Belgrave Square, where they meet three starving children.⁴⁰ On the second day, the trip "to Islington" reaches the corner of City Road and Colebrook Row,⁴¹ where the party's attention is drawn by a large crowd watching a fist fight, which is apparently as good a destination as any. The following day, Franny asks to go into "the parts of town not so full of people."⁴² In the one specific case, Dickson proposes a trip to the home of an amateur art collector with a private gallery in Manchester Square. Dickson and the children arrive, however, before a letter of introduction from a mutual acquaintance has reached the collector's house, and Dickson and the children find themselves waiting in front of the gate.

³⁹ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 3-5.

⁴¹ Ibid., 11.

⁴² Ibid., 17.

This excursion, titled “The Page Embarrassed,” is interrupted by the servant’s arrival to the square with the promised letter. Unfamiliar with the house, the servant asks directions of a crossing sweep and confectioner’s boy who amuse themselves by refusing to direct him and insulting his ignorance. Here, although the journey has reached its intended location, the walkers have erred in timing, and the interaction described is one of literal disorientation.

In spite of the local extant of the journeys, Fanny and Henry imagine themselves as much larger in scale, and the process of local and moral orientation extends much farther than Manchester Square. The children conceive of London as a space unknown but discoverable; they “put on their thick boots as if they were about to take a trip to Palestine; a little more and Henry would have protected himself with a helmet, for it seemed to them both that they were going at least to make a very distant expedition.”⁴³ The slippage from street in the metropolis to Palestine creates a malleable scale of influence, and the potential ease of moving outward into Palestine instills a sense of possibility. A vast physical distance may separate them, but the imaginative distance is easily overcome. The boots are precursor to adventure; they figure the excitement of a long expedition. The boots, along with the helmet are precautionary, but the source of danger remains unclear. In fact, the articles of clothing, along with the helmet, blend into the walks themselves, so that for Henry and Fanny these excursions are liberating. A helmeted journey to Palestine, however, suggests the ‘liberation’ of the Holy Land. That is to say, as the children are being liberated from the bonds of childhood and learning to become adults, they are also practicing imaginary imperialism in the service of a Christian nation.

While the book imagines a metaphorical journey of particular scale, the book’s reception suggests that it was perceived as small and enfeebled by its fantasies and portrayal of London.

Little Walks’ appearance was marked in the popular press almost solely by virtue of its

⁴³ Ibid., 3.

incorporating etchings by John Leech; the little attention it drew in terms of a guide was negative. Based on the text's English and French versions on facing pages, the *Saturday Review* admits that Rambaud "professes, and doubtless feels, a sincere admiration for Leech and a sincere desire to introduce him to French admirers of caricature," but goes on to state that these "inedited drawings...as illustrations to a kind of cock-and bull, pillar-to-post *fantasie* about nothing in particular" are not the way to go about it.⁴⁴ The *Saturday Review* was not the only paper to cite Leech's drawings as a primary motivation for the book, or to point out that the illustrations in question were from early in his career rather than the height of his talent. *The Athenaeum* also notes that most of the images had been seen before, but that they are the "chief attractions of the publication."⁴⁵ The review accordingly makes no comment on the text itself, other than that the illustrations portray "children of the mobility and nobility." The irony of Dickson's challenge to flattery apparently escapes Rambaud. Dickson may object to the misleading flattery of the fairy tale, but Rambaud bases *Little Walks* upon his admiration for Leech's work, and that admiration is not enough to carry the book. Nor, according to reviewers, are the chosen images substantive.

A particularly eviscerating response notes that the seven illustrations are few in number and add nothing to the general knowledge of Leech's work. Passing along the reviewer's sense of boredom, part of the review runs as follows: "Here, as of old, are [Leech's] town children...Here is his errand boy: here is his page: here is his coachman, with the magnificence of hammer-cloth: his footman with the carriage-umbrella."⁴⁶ The verdict is clear; *Little Walks* portrays not the variety of people in London, but well-established types. Thus, all errand boys or

⁴⁴ "French Literature," review of *Little Walks in London*, by Yveling Rambaud, *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art*, September 3, 1881.

⁴⁵ "Fine Arts," review of *Little Walks in London*, by Yveling Rambaud, *The Athenaeum*, February 26, 1876.

⁴⁶ "Notes and News," review of *Little Walks in London*, by Yveling Rambaud, *The Academy*, January 29, 1876.

pages collapse into the one portrayed repeatedly by Leech and consumed by his audience even after his death. The plot is just as tired, for having followed the characters around, the reviewer declares, “when we seize an occasion for bidding adieu to them, it is with the feeling that the covers of a book have rarely, since bookmaking began, held matter so slight and feeble. And that this feebleness may be widely extended, the thing is printed both in English and in French.” This viewpoint draws attention to *Little Walks* as a material object and a cultural product. As a step in the history of bookmaking, *Little Walks* stands out only in its paucity, and its doubling of material to encompass two languages is another instance of empty repetition.

Repetition is in fact the central problem with *Little Walks*: repetition of the late John Leech’s images, repetition of the genre, repetition of actual text. Rather than experiencing surprise encounters with various Londoners, the reader only re-encounters familiar figures. This undermines the basis of the urban picture book—if the audience learns nothing, and merely rereads old ground, the city becomes much more uniform than the genre itself had presupposed. A vagueness of location in the text adds to this impression. Although the children are supposedly taken in different directions for each excursion, the lack of description of the streets and sites evokes more the foggy London that smudges neighborhoods and people together. The fleeting image of the adult Fanny and Henry is another kind of repetition, that of the self. Ideally, the adult siblings form what becomes an afterimage; the narrator will show the children in the process of becoming their adult selves and in doing so creates an image the reader is meant to imitate. This glimpse, however, is not detailed enough to depict a reachable goal. The sketchiness of Leech’s illustrations mean that the London here remains ill defined. They clearly suggest, for example, the emotions of the fighting boys and the crowd eagerly watching, yet the figures and background look unfinished (figures 2.2 and 2.3). Indeed, the lines draw attention to

SECONDE JOURNÉE.

SECOND DAY.



LA BATAILLE.

THE FIGHT.

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Figure 2.2. John Leech, “The Fight,” in *Little Walks In London*, 1875.

QUATRIÈME JOURNÉE.

FOURTH DAY.



LES DEUX RAMONEURS.

THE TWO SWEEPS.

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Figure 2.3. John Leach, “The Two Sweeps,” in *Little Walks in London*, 1875.

the lack of place: these people are anywhere and nowhere. In conjunction with the text's vagueness, this negative space folds London into its infamous fog rather than familiarizing the children with the city's neighborhoods.

The peculiar void of *Little Walks* suggests both the tiredness of the genre and a saturation of London with all its varied Londons. In this city of copies, the reader is neither in the past, as in Johnson, or among remnants of the past, as in Routledge. By 1875, London was changing face so often that guide books and maps could scarcely keep pace. Tracing the rise of slums and suburbs, H. R. Dyos and D. A. Reeder dub Victorian London "a land of fragments."⁴⁷ They note the conversion of housing in the City into offices, warehouses, and other commercial spaces, as well as slum clearance, and demolitions for (often competing) railway lines in the 1860s and 70s. Relatedly, suburbs were stretching outward, particularly to the north and west. Although of course anything fixed in print could become outdated by the time it hits the streets, Victorian London spawned rapid change and an abundance of paper. Authors praised or lamented various demolitions and additions. The preface of the *Handbook to London as it is* (1879), for instance, notes:

In no part of the Old World do changes occur so rapidly as in London. An improvement mooted one year is carried into execution the next. The Editor of a Guide-book needs consequently to be ever on the watch, if he desires to place his readers *au courant* with the actual state of things.⁴⁸

Here the editor works in a competitive market, keeping constant tabs on the city in the service of his presumably appreciative readers. In that London had long since ceased to be a stable image, the urban and literary void of *Little Walks* is as accurate a portrayal as any. Yet as with Franny and Henry's vague understanding of the scale of their adventure, this emptying out of the

⁴⁷ H. J. Dyos, and D. A. Reeder, "Slums and Suburbs," *The Victorian City: Images and Reality* vol. 1, ed. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 359-386. 359.

⁴⁸ *Handbook to London as It Is, New Edition Revised*, (London: John Murray, 1879).

metropole makes room for suggestions of empire. For instance, Franny and Henry heading to the edge of London is also the same as heading to Palestine, suggesting both kinds of ‘discoveries’ share a framework.

Simon Joyce notes that the late nineteenth century saw a wave of “discoveries” of already-known places like the East End, “reprising the themes of ‘darkest England.’”⁴⁹ Such mappings and remappings were necessitated by “successive waves of political unrest, poverty, economic depression, patterns of immigration and the forging of an empire.” Authors and readers renegotiated a sense of realism or authorial accuracy versus a critical distance between the safety of home and the supposed distance or foreignness of sites of unrest. Joyce continues:

The forgetting, I would argue, is just as important as the discovery, and offers a clue to why social space had to be constantly remapped, in both literal and figurative forms, throughout the nineteenth century. It explains why the role of cultural mediator, which Dickens so brilliantly fashioned, remained an open one, and also why each subsequent author who filled it needed a similar repertoire of self-authorizing gestures and reality effects.

Spaces become contested ground in a wider discourse of London, British identity, and imperialism. In this context, the anticipation Fanny and Henry experience as they await Dickson and their first venture into London is not only a childhood imagination and ignorance of scale, but also part of a wider cycle of erasure and occupation.

Although the book otherwise softens the effects of fantasy or imagination on its lessons, the children’s exaggerated expectations of Dickson’s walks are given a comedic but affectionate spin. The later Dickson is for their appointment, the more eagerly the children equip themselves for the outing. The elasticity of time and space in the children’s imagination is eventually imposed upon the streets they travel. The absence of any real travel time or specific route leaves

⁴⁹ Simon Joyce, “Maps and Metaphors: Topographical Representation and the Sense of Place in Late-Victorian Fiction,” in *The Victorian Illustrated Book*, ed. Richard Maxwell (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2002): 129-162. 135-136.

each encounter a free-floating vignette, and each person of the street becomes a personification rather than an embodied and identifiable person:

The whole of life is there, my dear Henry, my dear Fanny; misery jostles against happiness; they weep in the house next door to that where they dance; one child is brought into the world, while another is going out of it; there are people who leave on their table dainty viands of which they have taken too much, while others have nor a morsel of bread nor a potato to their mouths.⁵⁰

The personification of misery and happiness gives way to anonymity, which spans from one pole to another: a birth, a death, gluttony and starvation. The description gestures to all the life in between, and therefore covers areas of class or other disparity. Yet this gesture of inclusiveness rapidly breaks down. Ostensibly the range described is supposed to help Fanny and Henry position themselves in this larger London citizenry, but the description becomes so broad as to be useless. Dickson goes on to exhort Fanny and Henry “always to think of those who suffer” and “to respect the misery of others even if you cannot relieve it.”⁵¹ This invocation of an abstract respect enables a shirking of the possible relief. Before the trio head back home, Dickson quietly hires a nearby Punch and Judy show to perform at the children’s house the following day. This move from the misery of others to their own entertainment is also a move from the city back into the children’s domestic space, and it performs a similar function as Dickson’s move from distinct differences to a homogenous group of all Londoners.

The end of the book is a similarly unsettling withdrawal. Dickson, having delivered a final, pat summary of his lessons “took a last pinch of snuff and retired, walking backwards and bowing.” The narrator likewise backs out, commenting, “This is what I do myself, dear little

⁵⁰ Rambaud, 45.

⁵¹ Ibid.

readers, happy if these stories, which are more the work of John Leech than mine, have contributed a little to your amusement.”⁵²

Rural Perspectives: the Clodpoles Come to London

The curious emptiness of *Little Walks* cannot continue being the image of London and its people as readers age. But the homogenizing—albeit supposedly leveling—effects of space occur in other forms and other descriptions of London. The line between people and place continues to move and with it lines between visible and invisible bodies. The title of *A Picture Story Book of London; or, City Scenes* (1866)⁵³ encompasses various types of scene, static or not. Rather than “scenes” as the *location* of an event, the use of “scenes” includes people and actions as part of a larger view. The text opens with a familiar sight: an illustration of St. Paul’s Cathedral as the frontispiece. Set below the title is the epigraph

Come, peep at London’s famous town,
Nor need you travel there;
But view the things of most renown,
Whilst sitting in your chair.⁵⁴

This poem is reproduced in full as the book’s introduction, launching the book with a listing of various city types, including the milk-maid, gossip, chimney-sweep, pick-pocket, post-boy, lady gay, beggar, river boatman, and gardener. Intermingled with these figures are sights such as Saint Paul’s, the Monument to the Great Fire of London, cobbler’s stall, shop, ship, “And very near a hundred more / Of London’s City Scenes.”⁵⁵ The few buildings listed rapidly give way to a large number of people and activities. The result is that the actual locations and features of the city are sandwiched between the inhabitants at the end of the poem, and the possible circumstances of

⁵² Ibid., 57.

⁵³ J. Gilbert, *A Picture Story Book of London; or, City Scenes*, (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1866).

⁵⁴ Gilbert, 13.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 14.

reading at the beginning. The slippage between the site of reading and the scenes of the city is an easy one, and coalesces in the epigraph itself. That the epigraph and introduction explicitly note armchair reading makes the book's moralizing undercurrent a simpler task. It is also simpler to shape a carefully controlled and age-appropriately sanitized representation of the city than to introduce a reader to the potential surprises and problems of an actual walk. As in *Little Walks*, the framing in *City Scenes* leverages the apparently haphazard nature of traveling in the city to create a wide variety of scenes, but the armchair nature of the travel allows the text a great deal of control over the material presented. In some ways, then, this type of children's book attempts to control more of the reader's response than similar materials aimed at adults. The intent is to create a safe and tidy guide to the city as a means of expanding the child's exposure to people of other classes and backgrounds, without necessarily inviting the ethical discomfort that can arise when two such people meet face to face.

City Scenes filters these walks through the supposed experience of "young farmer Clodpole" and his son Robert and daughter Lucy, who journey to London to see the city. The trip is a generational excursion for the family, with Clodpole taking his children "to see the wondrous City Scenes of which he had heard so much,"⁵⁶ following in the footsteps of his own father. In this way, they help produce a lasting if tenuous connection between their rural home and the city. This need for each to see the city in person undermines the adequacy of the print version of the city; it is a placeholder for, and lure to the actual city. Like the glimpse of an adult Fanny and Henry in *Little Walks*, the elder adult Clodpole appears as a future incarnation of the child character, and thus the child reader. The book figures an early and incorporeal London that can later be supplanted by an actual journey. The family mediates between the reader and the walkers, facilitating armchair reading.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 15.

Unlike Henry and Fanny, the Clodpoles arrive from outside the city, and their first experience of it is one of approach. They see the city from outside it, and only with gradually diminishing distance does London take on specific features. They experience an impression of the city as whole and separate, only to later find that this unity is misleading. From the train, they see “a great cloud toward which they were rapidly advancing [on their first trip by train],” which they mistake at first for “a smother of dust.”⁵⁷ Eventually, a dome becomes visible through the dust, and this, the dome of St. Paul’s, is instantly recognizable. The cathedral is so synecdochic with London that it, as much as the closing distance, renders other parts of the city distinguishable as “innumerable church spires and towers, tall chimneys and houses.”⁵⁸ In *Little Walks*, Fanny and Henry move outward from their small domestic space into a city that seems amorphous and infinite; their walks must pull London back into a more definite size and shape. The Clodpoles, by contrast, are traveling from outside in to a large and clouded city that is nevertheless finite in extent; they swiftly locate St. Paul’s as one landmark among many.

The children experience an ostensibly representative range of reactions to the city’s sights, escorted and narrated by the urbane Mr. Norton. As in *Little Walks*, *City Scenes* is divided into six walks over six days.⁵⁹ Unlike *Little Walks*, the excursions in *City Scenes* are somewhat mappable. The courses plotted are just that: courses. Rather than nebulous movements occasionally interrupted and thus clarified into specific scenes, the walks here follow routes through particular sections of the city, plotted along a series of landmarks. These walks vary greatly in distance and focus; some keep to a relatively small area, and others seem to range back and forth. Walk one, for instance, hugs close to the river; it covers the journey to London, the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ This is not the case with earlier editions, which included Farmer Clodpole, but were merely organized as a succession of largely disconnected scenes.

Monument, Billingsgate, the custom-house and wharf, a collier and barge, and various parts of the Tower of London. Like *Little Walks*, however, some of the scenes in *City Scenes* are formed primarily of people rather than places. Place instead becomes loosely associated with the type of person presented, as the person is at home along this particular route. For example, seamen line the river and docks, and businessmen (and pickpockets) near the Royal Exchange.

The Clodpoles' other walks demonstrate a similar assortment of people and places. Walk two opens with street sellers such as a flower girl and watercress seller, and includes other workers in London like the post-boy, lamp-lighters and a knife-grinder. It haphazardly circles near St. Paul's to visit the church itself, the Bank of England, and Mansion House before swinging north to Bartholomew Hospital and back south to Blackfriars' Bridge and along the river to Westminster. Walk three, which I describe in more detail below, forms a rough loop from the East India House in Leadenhall Street, eventually wending its way west to Nelson's Monument and the Admiralty and heading back east via steamboat past Waterloo and Southwark Bridges. The eclectic city encounters in walk four include giving a penny to a crossing sweeper, seeing a funeral (this one for a mother of two), and charity children; and places include the General Post Office, the County Fire-Office, and British Museum, among others. On the fifth day, the Clodpoles take the train to Greenwich to see the hospitals and a man-of-war. They return by steam boat and get off at the Thames Tunnel. (The excursion to Greenwich is also a common route in guides for adults by Routledge and others). The book's final walk begins with the sight of a turn cock (an excuse to talk at length about the plumbing of London and the time a stoppage was caused by a large salmon), and moves on to skating in winter, the Police Prisoners' Van, a group of boys beating the bounds (also discussed below), and eventually ends at the Houses of

Parliament. In a total departure from the actual walking tour, it veers to the south bank of the Thames to discuss Lambeth Palace without mentioning how the walkers cross the river.

As a representative example, I want to examine the third walk of *City Scenes* in greater detail. The walk opens with the appearance of the milkmaid at the door as the Clodpoles are preparing to have breakfast. Her labor becomes a model of industry: “Whoever wishes to be as healthy and merry as Betty, must work hard, and rise early in the morning, instead of lying in bed, while everyone else is about his business.”⁶⁰ The fact that Norton and the Clodpoles can have a leisurely breakfast is elided beneath the general call for hard work, and Betty as an individual models good character rather than representing a class of workers who are required to rise early and begin laboring. The people encompassed by this route also include the flowerpot man, maimed sailors, the “Queen going in state to Parliament,” and a boy drowning in the Thames. Like the milkmaid, the flowerpot man is laboring “merrily,” a “pleasant sight in the crowded city.”⁶¹ The London of *City Scenes* is peopled by the individual and exceptional, such as the queen, and by figures like the flowerpot man and milkmaid who represent many others similarly circumstanced. It is all the more important, then, for the flowerpot man and others to be working happily. That this also results in him being a “pleasant sight” transforms his labor into an attractive spectacle, disguising the labor itself beneath apparent happiness.

It is in the third walk that the imperialism implicit in other guide books becomes more explicit as the children arrive at the East India House. *City Scenes* supplies a brief history of the East India Company and notes that although it started as a trading company, it grew into a “conquero[r] of the natives” that “usurped the sovereignty” of large territories and “too often”

⁶⁰ Ibid., 90.

⁶¹ Ibid.

visited war and oppression on the “harmless natives.”⁶² Implicit are the ideas that some amount of war is in fact satisfactory, and that some natives are not “harmless” and therefore deserve the kind of oppression that enables the success of the East India Company and many similar ventures. Indeed, the passage is immediately followed by unaffectedly noting that the “India ships bring home tea, coffee, silks, both raw and manufactured, cottons, muslins, calicos, drugs, china-ware, rice, sago, saltpeter, pepper, indigo, &c., &c.” The description displays a frank awareness of the imperialism accompanying and driving trade, and yet it opens and closes only with the mercantile aspects of the East India Company and specifically the “handsome[ness]” of the House itself.⁶³ The passage similarly slips from the past tense into the present, moving from the company’s founding in 1600 into its present benefits to Britain. This results in their “having obtained a footing” with which they “usurped sovereignty over considerable districts.” The usurpation is presented as over and done, and appears unalterable. Separated by a semi-colon in the same sentence is the assertion that “war, with oppression, have too often befallen the harmless natives.” The link between this and actions of the East India Company is therefore a tenuous one. The lapse into passive voice completes a move that buries the imperialist actions, leaving the reader only with the products traded as a result. The “&c., &c.” emphasizes the multitude of imports and casts them as unquestioned because well known. If, in *Little Walks*, the past experienced by the walker is a generic and revitalizing rural one, the past in *City Scenes* is often within living memory and easily located. The very closeness of the past creates a much more mixed relationship between it and the walker; it is harder to neatly idealize a violence still being done, and the guide responds by partially erasing the source of violence and insisting upon its detachment from the present.

⁶² Ibid., 92-93.

⁶³ Ibid., 91.

From the East India House, the guide passes into Cannon Street with a brief stop at the London Stone at St. Swithins and toward St. Paul's. Here a group of people interrupt the tour's progress: "But see! here are a company of poor MAIMED SAILORS, trying to earn a few pence by exhibiting a fine model of a man-of-war."⁶⁴ As with the "Hark!" that directs the reader's attention to the milk maid, the "But see!" that introduces the three maimed sailors is an interruption that turns people into objects of attention. The description that follows focuses mostly on a boy named Tom Hazard and his thoughtlessness, which leads him to work on a privateer called the *Desperate*. "And now, poor fellow, when it is too late, he sorely laments his situation; for, having lost his leg, he wanders with some of his companions, and joins their mournful ditty."⁶⁵ The accompanying image depicts three lame and bedraggled men towing a large model ship on wheels (figure 2.4). The man-of-war figuratively and literally hobbles them, and their "mournful ditty" functions, along with other chants in the text, to inculcate empathy and charity. The middle two stanzas emphasize the hardships the sailors have endured and, more importantly, the material benefits for those at home:

Where the stormy billows roar,
Many a year we plowed the main:
Far to the east or western shore,
Luxuries for you to gain.

Far from friends and houses warm,
(Comforts such as you can boast,)
We have braved the howling storm,
Shipwreck'd on a desert coast.⁶⁶

The arresting sailors, with their model ship, threaten to take the place of the luxuries their labor has brought back to England. Their presence troubles the Clodpoles' ability to locate themselves among other city-goers and citizens. The text paints the Clodpoles as dually richer; those passing

⁶⁴ Ibid., 94.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 95.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 96.



Maimed Sailors.

Figure 2.4. J. Gilbert, "Maimed Sailors," *A Picture Storybook of London; or, City Scenes*, 1866.

have material comforts the sailors have lacked, and they have obtained additional luxuries from the sailors' work. Giving the sailors their pence, then, is a means of offsetting labor already done. The donation likewise removes the sailors' reason for staying and drawing their attention; the moment of arrest passes, and the Clodpoles and their guide can resume their journey.

Like the motion of the river itself, the presence and movements of those encountered by the Clodpoles fit into the hubbub of the city around them. Unlike in *Little Walks*, many of the encounters in *City Scenes* emerge from, and are subsumed into, specific places in the city. The Clodpoles visit specific places rather than proceeding through undescribed space, and their movements through the city can be roughly charted from one destination to the next. This results in an image of "London" that includes people rather than a formless space in which walkers sometimes encounter people. For instance, in spite of the sudden appearance of the sailors and the disruption to the city description, the poem and people remain thoroughly connected to the physical space of the city. The maimed sailors' appearance is in keeping with the neighborhood through which the walkers are passing, and is followed by a description of Somerset House. The walk continues near the river to, among other things, the National Gallery, Nelson's Monument, and Whitehall before traveling via steam boat as far east as the Southwark Bridge. The narrator later takes care to emphasize the carelessness of a second boy, who knowingly goes into the Thames further than his swimming skills allow. This furnishes a reason to describe the work of the Humane Society, which worked to revive victims of drowning.⁶⁷ In its early days, the society offered rewards to those involved with attempts to revive the drowned and published first aid information on how to do so.

⁶⁷ The first post for the Humane Society was located next to the Serpentine in Hyde Park; for an examination of Hyde Park and the Serpentine more broadly, see chapter 5.

In spite of such tight connections between people and place within London, guides wrestle with the problem of scale, which arises at various moments. It plays out in discussion of country or country-like spaces enumerated in the guide. For instance, a passage about Covent Garden Market notes:

Londoners cannot take a country walk whenever they please, and enjoy the green fields and wild hedge-flowers, in the open air; but they may supply the themselves here with every kind of beautiful plants, for a garden within doors; and to those who have a little knowledge of botany, it must not only be entertaining, but even a useful amusement.⁶⁸

Where writers like Johnson attempt to expand sites for exercise outward into the country places abutting the city, *City Scenes* confines itself to gardens within London itself. Johnson effectively sees the country outskirts of London as too little known, and *City Scenes* considers the parks and gardens within London to be country *enough*. The city's parks and other green spaces (Covent Garden Market had been enclosed by this point), were also oft-cited as living oases in an ever-growing urban landscape, but they were planned and organized in a way that Johnson would have found lacking. *Arcadian Walks* instead celebrates fields of wild flowers and spaces in which people could take much more extended walks or drives. Johnson, indeed, would have insisted that Londoners *can* take a country walk whenever they please, or at least far more often than they do; he also praises variety, and the parks within the city would, in his opinion, quickly have lost their charm. That the speaker of *City Scenes* cites Covent Garden as the next best thing to a country walk shrinks the idea of a walk for exercise into the space of a building, as if increasing the concentration of flowers can offset a decrease in distance. This translation of the countryside into an urban experience is one example of the genre's attempts to bring the countryside into the city and vice versa.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 119.

Clodpole's name continually evokes his roots as a rural inhabitant and a relative stranger to urban bustle, but that his rural perspective is paradoxically the most alien point of view the book incorporates has the effect of excluding strangers and foreign tourists from it. In contrast to actual guidebooks like the Routledge series, this suggest limits to the breadth of perspectives with which such literature familiarized British children. One could sympathize across the urban/rural chasm, across the class divide, and—to a very limited extent—across gender distinctions, but reference to non-white races or to foreign nationalities are few and far between. The inside of the Royal Exchange, for example, contains the most diverse crowd in the tour, and it suggests a reason for this limitation. The narrator describes the Exchange to us as a “busy scene”:

Englishmen, Dutchmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Russians, Turks, Americans, and Jews. How intent everyone appears to be on business, and what a general buzz and din we hear! In a few years, every one of these active merchants will be as motionless as the marble statues which adorn the building. It may be of service to the busy Englishman, sprightly Frenchman, lazy Spaniard, plodding Dutchman, rough Russian, proud Turk, and rich Jew, to reflect on this; and to endeavour, with all their gettings, to get understanding.⁶⁹

The initial image, of men of various nationalities joined in business and economic ventures, is a leveling one, further emphasized by the idea that each of these merchants will eventually be united in death. The narrator immediately goes on to note, with no evident irony, the bronze statue of the Duke of Wellington adorning the west end of the building. Capitalism is represented as drawing all nationalities together. But the list of nationalities undermines this move by reverting to national stereotypes—the Englishman is notably “busy,” and the adjectives applied to other nationalities are, even generously interpreted, double-edged. Despite the “general buzz and din,” the crowd is easily divisible along stereotypical lines. Even as the speaker enjoins the reader to gather understanding alongside their capital, he conveys a very flat image of other

⁶⁹ Ibid., 49-51.

peoples to them. The Royal Exchange, as a site of commerce, necessarily hosts a range of foreigners who help support the economy. Guide books function partly as a means of making London more accessible to strangers involved in trade, whereas *City Scenes*, aimed at future citizens, can afford to distance itself from foreign people.

Occasional addresses to the readers, such as “Come, little boys and girls!”⁷⁰ and “You...little children,”⁷¹ indicate that the book is intended for children of both genders, but the book actually limits the appearance of girls within the city. Likewise, the mother, Mrs. Clodpole, is notable only in her exclusion from the text (as having to stay and run the farm in her husband’s absence), and the only other evident mother is the center of a passing funeral, giving the narrator opportunity to enjoin his young charges to obey their mothers while they yet live. The one engraving that clearly depicts the Clodpole family—upon their arrival at the train station in London—shows a white man pointing into the city, with a boy and a girl, her face covered by her bonnet, and a set of bags scattered around him (figure 2.5). Even these gestures at empathy are limited. Lucy, for instance is most distinguishable from her brother when at Billingsgate, commenting “I do not like this dirty street at all,” while “shrinking away from the men and women who bustled past with baskets of fish, or chests of oranges on their heads.”⁷² Norton tells her, “Whoever comes to Billingsgate at market-time, must expect to be pushed about and dirtied.” Lucy is thus most distinguished by her aversion to the smell and dirt of the fish market. She likewise objects to the build-up of dirt at a street crossing, saying she thinks that the crossing is overdue for a sweeping. This contrasts oddly with the early-morning labor performed by the only other girl characters encountered in their walk, such as the watercress sellers and the flower girls, whose images are heavily romanticized. Yet descriptions of other, non-feminized, forms of

⁷⁰ Ibid., 112.

⁷¹ Ibid., 130-31.

⁷² Ibid., 22.

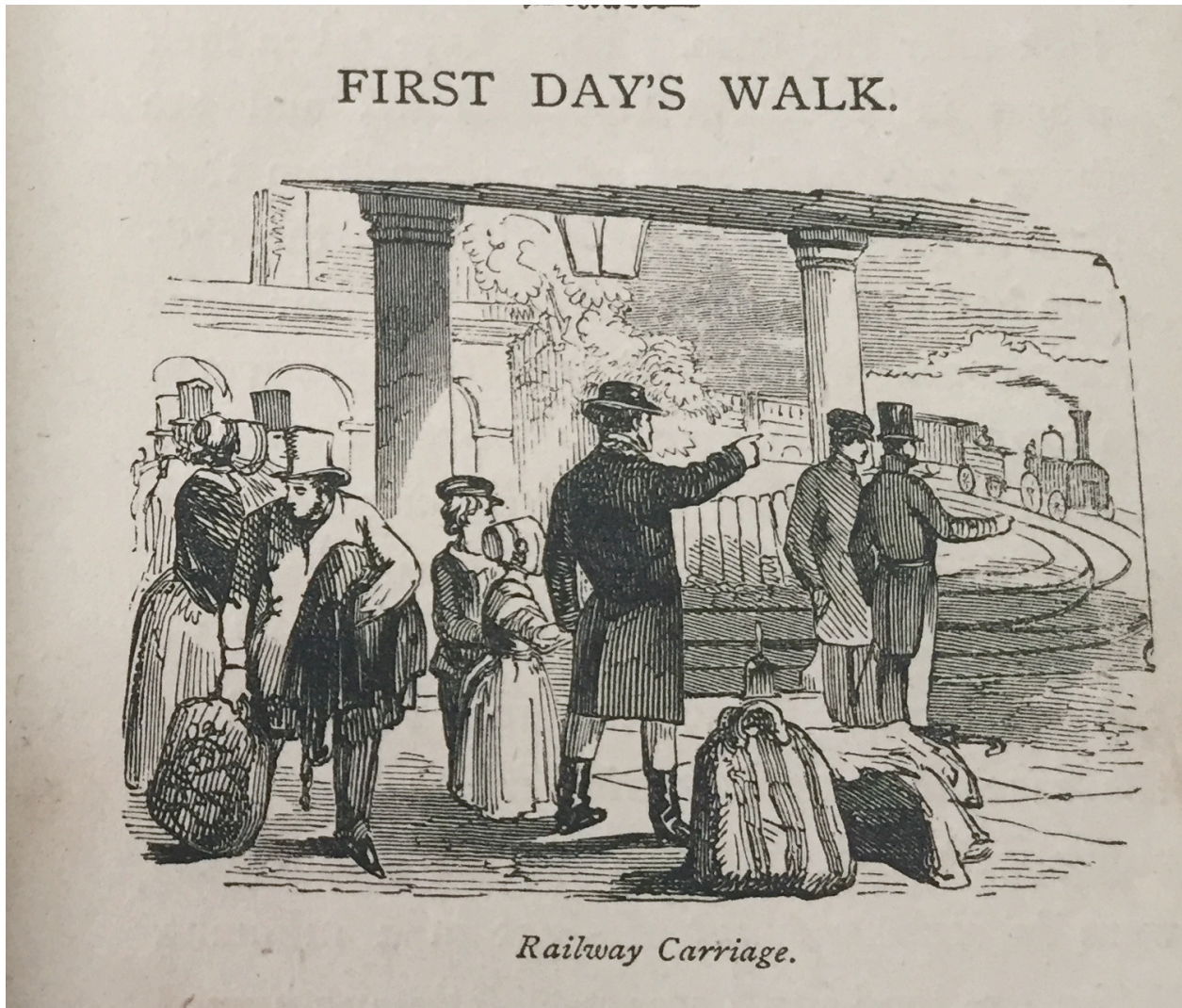


Figure 2.5. J. Gilbert, “Railway Carriage,” *A Picture Storybook of London; or, City Scenes*, 1866.

labor hint at the dangers and poor working conditions faced by many in the streets. In winter, the lamp-lighters “often fall and are maimed, by the ladders sliding out from under them,” and one is reported to have been blown into the river, where he drowned in front of his young son.⁷³

Just before the end of the volume, Norton and the Clodpoles are interrupted by the passing of a group of boys, a beadle, and various gentlemen out beating the bounds. An image likewise interrupts the prose, depicting the boys with an arresting array of wands and nosegays

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 86.

(figure 2.6). Like the maimed sailors and others before, the people of the scene create a paradoxical moment of arrest. Winding in between various buildings in the city and in the text itself, they pause the narrative. Their impact on the Clodpoles and reader is ostensibly a passing one, but they are re-inscribing very old parish boundaries. In many ways, this is in keeping with other scenes in the text in that it describes a folk custom that had been fading over the years. The narrator, as at other points, switches to poetry as he explains that “they are going the rounds / to ‘beat the bounds’” and so memorize the parish boundaries.⁷⁴ Their work is intergenerational, passing down knowledge that was becoming less easily disputed as paper maps became common. The poem speaks disapprovingly, however, about prior repetitions in which men and boys would be “bumped down” onto the ground or the boundary marker:

‘Twas once the plan
To seize any man
Or little boy they could find,
And bump him down,
Upon the hard stone,
To fix the said spot in his mind.⁷⁵

In the absence of other cues, we must presume that “the plan” was carried out by the beadles leading such processions, but the poem speaks in the impersonal “they,” which turns the bumper into a seemingly ubiquitous authority. That “any” man or boy will do emphasizes the social nature of the knowledge, and its transmission via a kind of roving violence lingers in *City Scenes* as a history that, like imperialism, has been glossed over rather than wholly abandoned.

The guided walk is a similar beating of the bounds. A relatively small portion of the population participates, but it contributes to the formation and transmission of social memory.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 139.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 140.



Beating the Bounds.

Figure 2.6. J. Gilbert, "Beating the Bounds," *A Picture Storybook of London; or, City Scenes*, 1866.

Walking serves as a means of reaffirming not so much the geographical boundaries of London, but the course of its history and its national and global position. In the case of the urban picture book, texts mold children's moral perceptions while sketching a broad map of the city itself.

No Mean City

Aimed at still older children, Jonathan Badgley's *Walks in and Around London* (1889)⁷⁶ dispenses with the fiction of guiding around a family of stand-ins as it describes the city. Rather, the narrator addresses the reader directly. Divided into sixteen chapters, *Walks* covers many of the routes and sites described in *City Scenes*. To these it adds less commonly included sights like frost fairs on the Thames and the zoo. *Walks* opens, however, with a brief description of the importance of London that would be at home in any number of books:

‘I am a citizen of no mean city.’ So said St. Paul, when the rabble of Jerusalem were following him, with the cry, ‘away with him,’ and he thought it best to put the chief captain right as to his standing and position in life. And the young people who live in this great London of ours may well adopt the apostle’s phrase and say, ‘We are citizens of no mean city.’⁷⁷

Here being born in London, like “no mean city,” accords on the same respect and defense demanded by St. Paul. The comparison here is much more direct than in the fantasy journey to Palestine in *Little Walks*. Rather than imagining the ease of stepping from home to Palestine, this opening replaces Jerusalem with London as the center of a Christian world. Its notable sites are stamped by historical associations, and the ancient city continually “casts off her dingier and dirtier streets and alleys, and arrays herself in a fresher and cleaner dress; so that she bids fair to take her place amongst the brightest and handsomest of all large cities.”⁷⁸ Historical progress,

⁷⁶ Uncle Jonathan [Jonathan Badgley], *Walks in and Around London, with Numerous Illustrations*, 2nd ed. (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1889).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

then, is akin to transitioning to upper-class femininity from a less affluent station. The first pages of *Walks in and around London* makes a virtue of what are often cited as ugly, successive changes to the face of London. The narrator showcases modern developments as distinct improvements and casts the dingy and the dirty as having done their duties but being now in need of amendment. The tone of friendliness and pride continues throughout the book, even when its content turns to darker events in London's history, or to its current blemishes. *Walks* wreaths its journeys in London's best, and when it mentions the city's worst features, it does so in the service of displaying the city residents' skills when confronted with the city's failings.

The narrator and his readers first step into the streets of the city as if immersing themselves in a thrilling and dangerous river. The London introduced to us is one in which the business and chaos of life necessitate an imposition of order, both literal and figurative, from above. The guide warns his fellow walkers to be "careful" crossing the streets and their "lines of omnibuses and cabs and carts and vans."⁷⁹ The *and, and, and* echoes the rhythm of traffic, as vehicle after vehicle passes in the street in front of the narrator. The solution is "a good strong policeman," one of many "stationed here and there." This trust in the police is an early marker of readership. The police man's presence is a "happ[y]" one, and he will give his help to pedestrians "kindly."⁸⁰ *Walks* here draws a strong line between the expected readership and those who are policed, rather than those helped by police. In spite of the passing traffic in "these bewildering streams of motion," the walker is a carefully protected inhabitant of the city.

Walks blends the physical sites of London with its people. This text, like *Little Walks* and *City Scenes*, includes among its sights various people, generally sorted by type or profession: the postman, the chimney sweep, the policeman. However, a focus on the people of London has

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

given way to more concrete and thoroughly described famous features. The stream of people begin losing distinction as the sites of the city come into sharper focus. The narrator positions himself and his readers as part of the cityscape, in danger of disrupting other pedestrians by gawking at interesting sights while walking and so “brought back to [their] senses by an awkward bumping from the shoulders or elbows of some bustling clerk or merchant who is rushing along at full walking speed, and who expects every one to be as sharp of sight and quick of movement as he himself is.”⁸¹ The narrator and readers stand out by not properly immersing themselves in the traffic around them, and risk being pulled back into their bodies as a result. The persistent need to be grounded in their senses and to focus solely on their direction of movement differs greatly from the *Little Walks*, and more closely reflects the problematic immersion of bodies in the city to which Johnson’s text responds. The London of *Walks* is a city that, when experienced carelessly or unexamined, tends to sweep the walker into themselves. The walker’s attention straying to passing scenes leads back to self-absorption, as the mind eventually stops flitting and turns its attention inward. The danger of lack of awareness here overlaps with Johnson’s example of a city businessman who walks with his eyes only on his feet. For, *Arcadian Walks and Drives* responds in part to the way that the city allows for a disconnect between bodily sensations and self.

Walks offsets the busied streets with views from high places. Unlike the policemen and other guiding forces of the street, these bird’s-eye views suggest a desire to define the city as a whole. Yet they encounter the same problems of space as the Routledge guide does. From the top of St. Paul’s, for instance, and the top of the clock tower, the city sweeps out. From here the narrator points out places of note in the area. His areas of “interest” cover a mix of sites typical for a guide to London: “Yonder is the Crystal Palace, glittering in the sunlight. There are St.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Thomas's Hospital, the Houses of Parliament, the Embankment, the Strand, Fleet Street, the Post Office, the Royal Exchange; and there we can just see a small portion of City Road Chapel."⁸²

The eye is drawn to the already recognizable. These cultural and historical landmarks, places of government, business, and worship had long since become bywords for London. Away to the east, the "Thames towards Greenwich is hidden by the mist that has settled upon it just beyond the Tower. A dull buzzing sound reaches us as we watch the busy multitudes in the streets."

London's first highway disappears into the mists, taking the city's edges with it, and the noise of the streets has faded to an unparsible buzz. Far from changing the reader's view of the city, these perspectives seemingly solidify it into an already known shape.

In spite of this gesture toward unity, the narrator proceeds to point out particular people walking below. Unlike from the level of the street, the crowd from above is more encompassing and seemingly less dangerous. Here "that boy with the parcel under his arm is making his way down the street. And there is our well-known blind friend, using his stick as he slowly creeps along. We could almost fancy we hear his well-known cry, 'Buy the boot-laces.'"⁸³ Notable here is the industry of the boy, which makes the idea of useful or industrious children a large part of the text's moral landscape quite like those of *Little Walks* and *City Scenes*. The subsequent gesture of inclusion of the blind man immediately founders on his singularity. He is one of a kind, we spot him easily because of his blindness, and then we must imagine his speech. He is then folded back into the crowd: "Yes, there they go, old and young, rich and poor, strong and weak. How many, we wonder, amidst their business, are laying up for themselves 'treasure in heaven?'"⁸⁴ The narrator maps onto London below a Christian moral landscape. As at the close of *Little Walks*, the text in drawing together various persons of the city elides very real

⁸² Ibid., 14.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 14-16.

differences and spaces of privilege within the city. As in *City Scenes*, this elision of differences sets up a move toward humanity's communal struggle against the sin of greed. The later view from the top of Clock Tower is more curious. The narrator describes a

dizzy glimpse of roofs and tops of lofty buildings, with the mighty city, half hidden in its smoke, spread like a map far down beneath [the visitor]. A short ladder leads from this place to the lantern gallery, where you seem suddenly to enter fairy-land, and are dazzled with the brilliancy of gold and colour around.⁸⁵

Here again the city threatens to vanish, albeit this time beneath London's smog. The partial image of the city unfolded like a map beneath transforms the ostensibly whole and objective map into something faintly alluring. And as if to continue the atmosphere of magic, the next leg of the ascent leads into a quasi-magical land, in which the person inside is as dazzled as those outside who look upon the light of the Elizabeth Tower. This bit of magic contrasts with Dickson's criticism of the fairy tale as unreal and idealized. The older reader has perhaps traveled too far in the direction of the real, and so this London needs a leavening gloss to strengthen its appeal.

Walks in and Around London everywhere reaches for a kind of fairy-tale London, one of harmony and good works, and yet every time it reaches for those ideals, it undercuts them. For example, the Lord Mayor's duties include funding and promoting acts of charity. These include aid for famines in Ireland or East Indies, widows and orphans of men killed in accidents, victims of natural disasters in places like Hungary, South Italy, or Jamaica. Trouble in Ireland or the East Indies is neatly subsumed into acts of nature. "[A]ll these calls," the narrator boasts, "find his lordship ready to give time and money and influence to help the unfortunate, whether their skin be black, brown, or white, and without asking them whether they love us Englishmen or not."⁸⁶ The specification that skin color is irrelevant and only draws attention to it, and the text presents "whether they love us Englishmen or not" as a kind of failure of character. It also, of course,

⁸⁵ Ibid., 79.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 6.

presumes that the readers are English and white. *Walks*, like *A Picture Story Book of London*, also includes casual anti-Semitism at places such as the Tower of London, with its dark dungeons in which “rebels, pirates, and Jews” were imprisoned. Although the discussion of the Tower of London goes to great lengths to sympathize with past prisoners in both punishment and justification, it leaves Jews here imprisoned in the Tower unexamined and unlamented alongside criminal rebels and pirates.

In addition to sites preserved as a part of the city’s histories, the text showcases spaces that have since been improved for the enjoyment of the general public or good of the poor. For instance, the Victoria Embankment at night becomes a spot where “poor, outcast little ones...perhaps find some place here for their homeless rest.”⁸⁷ The narrator and fellow fortunate travelers can look back at it and take a satisfaction in knowing that others will need it after they have left it behind. Similarly, vacant ground in the East End has been transformed by “wise and kind-hearted people” into a “garden and playground for the little ones.”⁸⁸ An idyllic description of the park closes with a hope that children can there “forget the hardness of their life in the beauty and merriment of the playground.”⁸⁹ Pathos-laden descriptions of how little such children have, and how much they treasure the scraps thrown away by young people like the readers simultaneously create sympathy for the poor, and give the impression that castoffs are enough to soften the effects of poverty. Of course, this interest in the poor and representation of the upper classes as benevolent is hardly limited to *Walks*, but the urban picture book, while verging on the form of the guidebook for adult visitors, creates a space that, while purporting to inculcate Christian acts of charity depicts a city and metropole where signs of imperialism and disparity are noted but easily ignorable.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 168.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

En Zigzag: Roving Between Fact and Fiction

“When found, make a note of” is the epigraph of a guide called *London Rambles “En Zigzag,” with Charles Dickens*.⁹⁰ Captain Cuttle’s advice sets the tone of a volume that with genial warmth undertakes the project of mapping the major characters and scenes of Dickens onto an actually walkable London. Dropped from later editions, the “En zigzag” of the first edition’s title signals the wandering structure and authorial voice of the volume. Although divided into rambles that resemble daily tours of other guides to London, *London Rambles* is attempting to map a space between the daily use and fictional sites. Allbut speaks of Dickens’s characters as not “the airy nothings of imaginative fiction, but...as familiar friends, having ‘a local habitation and a name.’” He intends *London Rambles* as a “valuable practical guide for those who may desire to visit the haunts and homes of these old friends.”⁹¹ Ramble II, for instance, passes through some locations in *Our Mutual Friend*. But the walker steps briskly from site to site, novel to novel, from a scene between Magwitch and Pip, around the corner to the chambers where Tom Pinch worked. We enter the landscape of *Our Mutual Friend* from Fleet Street past the “dismal churchyard” near Wrayburn and Lightwood’s offices. The guide even identifies the window as “the last window on the left (second floor) nearest the west wing, lately rebuilt.”⁹² This unremarked passage from book to book and from fictional events to the actual features of London weaves Dickens’s characters into the city so thoroughly that fictional characters appear as naturally in the guide as Lord Nelson might in Trafalgar Square.

Allbut’s affective attachment to fictional characters is of course a familiar one, as is the notion of a Dickensian London that plays in the space between “real” urban locations and more

⁹⁰ Robert Allbut, *London and Country Rambles with Charles Dickens*, (London: Sheppard and St. John, 1899).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, iii.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 21.

invented ones. Allbut himself acknowledges the unknowability of such spaces, citing a number of reasons for the exclusion of various sites, including that sometimes the author deliberately remains vague. As with many guides, *London Rambles* notes the rapid changes to London, citing “considerable alteration and construction” that has left many sites from the novels “improved off the face of the city.”⁹³ At the end of the preface, Allbut gestures at Thomas Babbington Macaulay’s hypothetical future artist looking over the ruins of London, so hauntingly illustrated by Gustave Doré.⁹⁴ He hopes that his book will serve as a helpful guide “previous to the coming time when the New Zealander shall meditate over the ruins of the City.”⁹⁵ At the end of this preface, Allbut references another imagined version of London, which itself had recently been illustrated in another kind of guide to London, *London, a Pilgrimage* (1872). This gesture toward other texts further enmeshes the London of Dickens with a layered concept of the city. Nor is Allbut’s guide the only literary mapping of the time. It is not even the only Dickensian mapping of the period.

Rather than mapping literary events and persons onto London, Laurence Hutton’s *Literary Landmarks of London* (1889)⁹⁶ proposes “to follow the literary worthies of England to the spots they have known and loved in London as they have journeyed from the cradle to the grave.”⁹⁷ Space in the text is given to authors who spent extended time in London, which means that figures like Samuel Johnson and Dickens himself loom large, whereas other writers, although famous, who did not spend extensive time in the city are omitted or only briefly mentioned. Hutton’s preface sketches out an interesting, though brief, history of the London Directory that underscores the enormous difficulty of tracing locations across the city’s history.

⁹³ Ibid., iv.

⁹⁴ Jerrold Blanchard and Gustave Doré, *London, a Pilgrimage*, (London: Grant & Co., 1872).

⁹⁵ Allbut, iv.

⁹⁶ Laurence Hutton, *Literary Landmarks of London*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889).

⁹⁷ Ibid., vi.

The sources consulted to assemble this overview range from insurance surveys to partial early directories. “It is easier to-day,” Hutton comments, “to discover the house of a man who died two hundred years ago, before streets were numbered at all, than to identify the houses of men who have died within a few years, and since the mania for changing the names and numbers of streets began.”⁹⁸ As disappointing and problematic to Hutton is that “the most interesting of the old buildings in London have been removed or—what is often worse—restored, while adjacent buildings about which no tradition or association lingers are left intact.”⁹⁹ Hutton’s sense of loss underscores that urban change is also often a de facto historical and cultural erasure, but his scorn for “restoration” expresses a more complicated relationship with the past. It suggests that some ways of holding onto the past are more effective or more aesthetically pleasing than others.

Allbut and Hutton share a love of literature but also an inescapable problem. Allbut speaks of the mapping of the Dickens’s novels onto the text of the city, facing the fact that the city is a fundamentally partial text. The physical city constantly changes around him, and even if Dickens had as closely as possible set his novels the London of his day, that city would likewise have vanished by the time Allbut seeks it out. On a larger scale, Allbut’s London is itself a small moment on the way to a city that will one day be unrecognizable in comparison. His reference to Dore’s *New Zealander* is a rich one. Gazing upon a future London, the *New Zealander* sees a city long since come to ruin. He faces an extreme incarnation of the problems of this chapter: London changes face more quickly than mapmakers or authors could follow, and some day the city will have left them, too, behind. Both Allbut and Hutton, in describing the difficulties of their projects, capture a sense of the history of the city as history being saved inconsistently. When they decry the construction and improvement, they implicitly omit any acknowledgment

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, ix.

that these new faces might themselves become historical sites worthy of preservation. Perhaps, like London's preservation of artifacts of Londinium, those gazing on London's history will have saved fragments of Allbut's and Hutton's Londons in a tantalizing and partial fashion.

Guidebooks as a genre are another method of cultural pruning and preserving, and the need for frequent updating and editing often worked against this cultural work. Suffice to say, the relationship between daily navigation in the city and the flight of fancy the city becomes in leisure is messy. London's much vaunted history was fairly obviously overlapping with its sore spots, and in the midst of this cultural quandary, the sense of a stable city was hard to hold onto. Like the London Stone, supposed to be a central Roman milestone, London's landmarks were changing significantly. Now only visible with a peek in the wall of St. Swithin's, the stone has been layered over by newer sights. Paradoxically, the guidebook as a site of city-packaging, and hence nation- and empire-packaging, was engaged in the same process, in a swifter form. Constant updating meant that the guidebook's assertions of lasting national significance were undermined by the sense that no stone in the metropole would remain unchanged.

In this context, the novels discussed in this dissertation participate in the same dynamic as guidebooks, images, and other representations of London. Certainly, the novels I discuss are themselves notoriously labyrinthine. The next chapter will examine Dickens's late novel *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65), wherein the murky and ominous Thames threads through a novel preoccupied with identity. I consider how John Harmon's and Eugene Wrayburn's navigation of the city becomes a task freighted with import. Although only Harmon becomes physically lost, navigation is imbued with a sense of purpose. Thus I will suggest read Wrayburn's sadistic leading of Bradley Headstone around by the nose can serve to better understand the key scene in

which John Harmon confronts the gaps in his memory, wandering in circles in the attempt to recreate the night of his supposed murder.

Chapter Three

A Wall, a Dark Doorway, a Flight of Stairs, and a Room:

Walking in *Our Mutual Friend*

In chapter two, I argued that readers learned their way around late 1800s London via various types of text, and that such texts spatialized and codified assumptions regarding axes of identity. Subjectivity was entwined with methods of orientation, and efforts to gather the areas, history, and people of the city into a coherent whole. This supposed whole was itself mobile and changeable, relying on desire and narrative along with other tools to retain its shape. This chapter examines how Dickens's final completed novel—*Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65)—engages similar questions of space and self. The crux of the chapter is the relationship between the central plot of the novel—the courtship and marriage of John Harmon, alias Julius Handford, alias John Rokesmith, to Bella Wilfer—with the secondary plot in which Lizzie Hexam is literally and figuratively pursued by rivals, Eugene Wrayburn and Bradley Headstone. Specifically, I re-examine what are arguably the novel's two most memorable scenes: John Harmon's monologue as he retraces his path the night of the murder, and the night chase in which Bradley pursues Eugene across London in a violent rage.

As is the case in Wilkie Collins's *Armadale* (which I discuss in chapter four), the central plot of *Our Mutual Friend* begins with a death and consequent inheritance that generates potential wealth and a wealth of problems for John Harmon, who is returning home from abroad.

The will of Harmon's father leaves John Harmon a house and fortune, contingent upon his marrying Bella Wilfer, a woman he has never met. Harmon attempts to evaluate Bella's character before committing himself by coming ashore disguised as third mate George Radfoot, who shares the same build and agrees to switch places with him. This, combined with misfortune and encounters with roguish characters on the night of his return, leaves John presumed dead. Deciding not to reveal himself, John takes on the name of John Rokesmith, and becomes secretary and man of business for Noddy Boffin. The Harmon estate falls to the Boffins, a dustman and his wife catapulted into relative wealth. The execution of Harmon senior's will falls to Mortimer Lightwood, a young lawyer, and, by extension, ropes in Mortimer's friend Eugene Wrayburn, an aimless barrister. Wrayburn, a perpetual drifter, tags along with Mortimer when the latter is summoned to view Harmon's body on the night of the murder; he thereby meets Lizzie Hexam, daughter of Gaffer Hexam, the man accused of Harmon's murder. To add a further twist, Eugene aggressively pursues and eventually marries Lizzie.

Harmon is the most notable, but hardly the only, character to move under other names or in other people's clothes. For the sake of clarity, I am including a diagram of name changes and key events within the novel (figure 3.1). At the beginning of the novel, John's doppelganger Radfoot is nothing but a body. He agrees to swap places with John briefly so that John can meet Bella in disguise, but the disguise becomes semi-permanent when Radfoot is murdered and his corpse is taken to be that of Harmon. Harmon briefly takes the name of Julius Handford to falsely identify Radfoot's body as his own, and Radfoot forcibly relieves John Harmon's body of its identity. The ease with which bodies and names change hands is the basis for a novel in which no property is secure. Even more importantly, such transits and disguises of identity exploit the porous gap between the external world and inner subjectivity. Harmon's later disguise

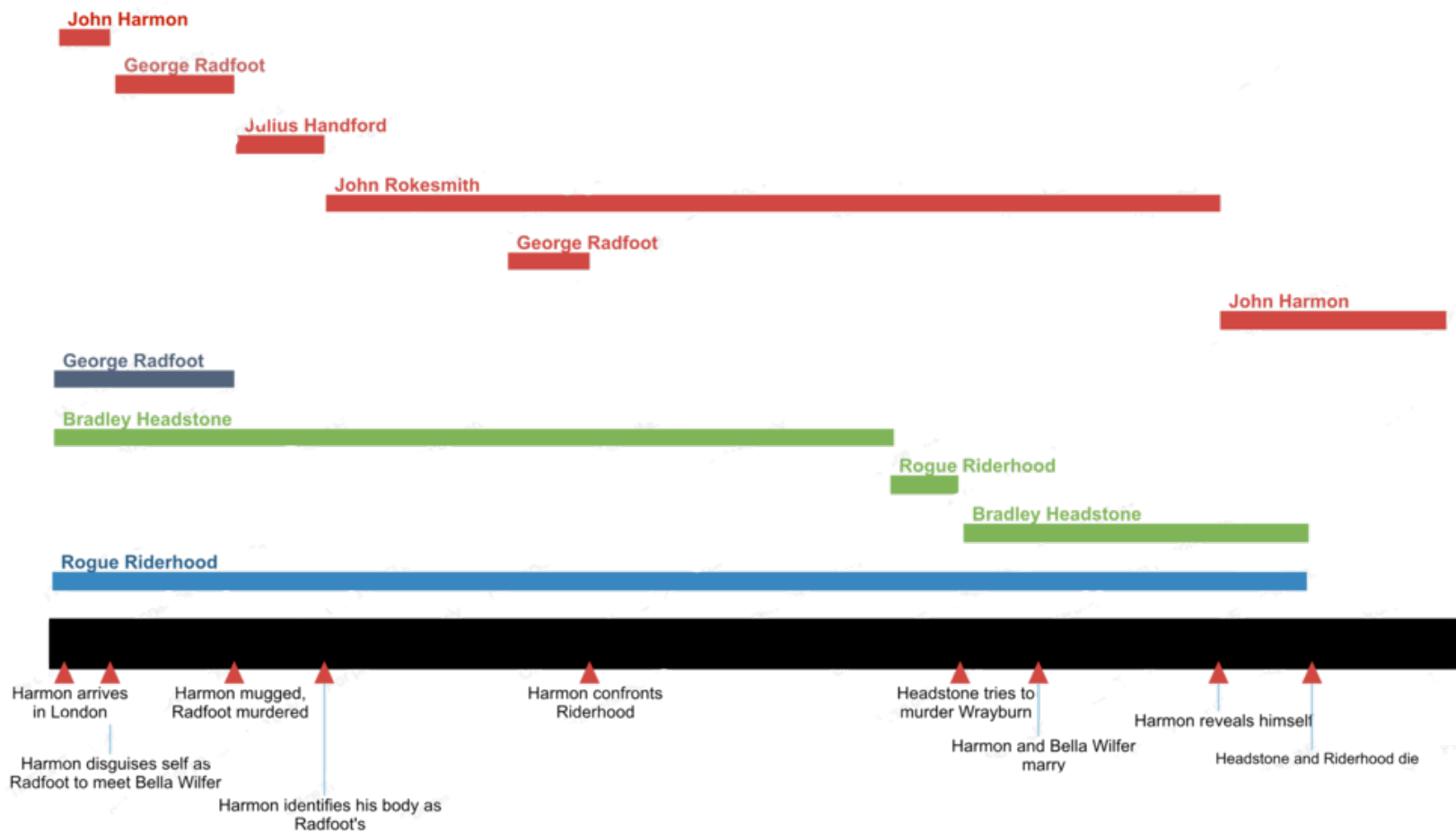


Figure 3.1: Name Changes in Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, 2019.

as Radfoot and Bradley Headstone's impersonation of Rogue Riderhood project false subjectivities to the world, but they also acknowledge the extent to which the self, and the perception of it, are malleable and often mismatch. This malleability is a key feature of the oft-marked ongoing process of identity in general within the novel. Rather than trying to mold himself over and against other characters, for instance, Harmon's own ability to *have* a distinct self that he could shape diminishes. Henry and Franny, in *Little Walks in London*, walk the city in order to understand their own places among a city full of people in other walks of life. Their supposed growth in maturity and moral values is presented as part of an organized process that will end with them as respectable adults, but the reader sees only the children in the present of the book and a glimpse of their future selves, with nothing in between. Harmon's self is more fluid; rather than having a settled and secure sense of self, finds himself at loose ends. No family, no profession, no *body* or history is even fully under his own name and control. More than in the children's books already discussed, Harmon and others in *Our Mutual Friend* are selves in process, and the novel is particularly suited to unfold this process.

Across a series of spatial difficulties, *Our Mutual Friend* depicts a world in which ill-defined bodies, selves, and desires lead characters astray. Desire functions as a fixed direction that helps to draw the self together. Even negative desires perform this function, so that Bradley's obsessive stalking of Eugene guides him, and Lizzie "draws"¹ him on in spite of himself. As characters struggle to identify others and even themselves, they similarly struggle to locate their bodies and minds in the city. Unlike in Johnson's *Arcadian Walks and Drives*, walkers in *Our Mutual Friend* cannot leverage walking in the service of bettering their health, or of re-grounding the mind in the body. The dark and damaging landscape of the city cannot be easily escaped, and what movement occurs is by turns aimless, disoriented, aggressive, and

¹ Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 389.

obsessive. Characters often have a vague sense of the area around them, though they lack a stable enough character to which to restore themselves. The space thus becomes restrictive, and the plot and structure reinforce a suffocating desire for escape without being able to identify the place from which characters wish to flee.

Much criticism explores the novel's obsessions with identity, including discussions of its plethora of deaths, near deaths, and the relationship between human and city or river. I am particularly indebted to Pamela K. Gilbert's study of intersections between medical mapping, sanitary narratives, and literature,² and to J. Hillis Miller's still rich study of Dickens's imaginative landscape,³ as I examine intersections of the city as a historical and imagined place and identity. My discussion of the city in *Our Mutual Friend* is a dynamic one. Although I make connections to other representations of London (particularly those in variations on the guide book that I discuss in chapter two), my reading of *Our Mutual Friend* arises from the streets as rapidly changing fields of play within the novel itself, subject to the desires of characters yet also an external boundary that such desires meet. Critics have mined the novel's blurred lines between scene and character, life and death, generating readings of specific scenes that are key to this chapter. The excursion in which John attempts to piece together the night of his supposed murder is impeded by his partial and confused memories. I am indebted to John Farrell, who in a compelling reading that aligns John, Eugene, and Bradley along a spectrum of self-seeking, argues that John's "narration constitutes a resurfacing of his identity, a deliberate recreation of his harrowing experience in the river which functions as a recreation of himself in the text."⁴ His

² Pamela K. Gilbert, *Mapping the Victorian Social Body*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004). For a study of the influence of the sanitary movement more generally, see Michelle Allen, *Cleansing the City: Sanitary Geographies in Victorian London*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007). Allen locates *Our Mutual Friend* in its immediate context of sanitary reform.

³ J. Hillis Miller, *Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).

⁴ John P. Farrell, "The Partner's Tale: Dickens and *Our Mutual Friend*," *ELH* 66, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 775.

larger discussion of echoing voices, doubled characters, and dialogues between consciousness and “the otherness of brute matter”⁵ has greatly influenced my readings, particularly those of Old Gruff and Glum and Silas Wegg, as has the field of disability studies. Rosemarie Bodenheimer similarly explores Harmon’s narration as a “soliloquy” that “recovers a recent memory of trauma and dissociation” and serves as “an investigation of the splits that occur when memory is transformed into autobiographical narrative.”⁶ Gilbert argues of Harmon that “[r]etracing his steps and remapping his body’s (and London’s) location in relation to the river is part of the process of consolidating his new self.”⁷

This chapter focuses primarily on Harmon’s struggle and failure to assimilate the violence of the mugging he experiences upon his return to London, and how Harmon circumnavigates this chunk of missing time and unrecognizable streets. As a related process, I examine Eugene Wrayburn’s and Bradley Headstone’s duet of nighttime hunting, which divides the engagement of the city between two characters, rather than between Harmon and a past self. Broadly, I examine the problem of bodily and psycho-social completion, which is written along the streets of London. Embodiment itself ceases to be definitive for various characters, and identity thus becomes entangled with property in ways that render the self and the city strange. Conversely, aspects of the city become scaffolds for the adaptation of selves that are always in process. I argue that the prevalence of fragments in *Our Mutual Friend*—including fragments of London—forms part of a larger assemblage, in which characters experiment with ideas of body, self, and partnership. Thus Wegg attaches special bodily and class importance to his missing leg, and Bradley and Eugene between them construct a city built on class anger and pointless

⁵ Ibid., 771.

⁶ Rosemarie Bodenheimer, “Dickens and the Identical Man: *Our Mutual Friend* Doubled,” *Dickens Studies Annual: Essays on Victorian Fiction* 31, (2002): 170.

⁷ Gilbert, 128.

confrontation. The Wilfers build an imperfect but functional family, and John seeks and fails to find a part of himself by retracing his steps in the streets.

The General Panoramic View

Absences of varying kinds thread through *Our Mutual Friend*, and characters adopt varying methods of bridging those gaps. A more corporeal instance of this occurs in the character of Silas Wegg, who is trying to reacquire his lost limb. Wegg enters the novel assembling his corner-street stall, by a house he thinks of as “Our house,” although his connection to it is of the most tenuous and fabricated kind. He imaginatively populates this house with a family and sketches out for himself a floor plan of the house, just as (in)accurate as the family history he writes. Farrell calls this an “embodiment of corrupted authoritative discourse,”⁸ in which Wegg imposes his own “knowledge” onto the house and onto other people, claiming an authority that refuses any dialogue with others. Wegg’s usurpation of the house is only one insistence of a larger desire to manufacture wholeness, which finds other guises as well. Wegg takes advantage of the border between location (the house), social ties (the family supposed to be inside), and the self (interior and exterior) to impose his own desires onto the world around him. So, while conniving and clumping around on his wooden leg, Wegg wants to find amongst the dust mounds a means to wealth, but also to collect the remains of his amputated limb. These goals are one and the same to him; having his severed limb missing somehow undermines his desire for social climbing. There is something uncouth about the limb floating around the world on its own:

Wegg was a knotty man, and a close-grained, with a face carved out of very hard material, that had just as much play of expression as a watchman’s rattle. When he laughed, certain jerks occurred in it, and the rattle sprung. Sooth to say, he was so wooden a man that he seemed to have taken his wooden leg naturally, and rather suggested to the fanciful observer, that he might be expected—if his development

⁸ Farrell, 786.

received no untimely check—to be completely set up with a pair of wooden legs in about six months.⁹

At once Wegg's "knotty" leg slips into a more general and figurative knottiness, and "close-grained" collapses into a sense of just "close" and secretive. Wegg is, indeed, a hard man and a puzzling one. That his laugh would produce a sound of a warning is perfectly in keeping with his constant conniving; anything that pleases Wegg spells bad news for those around him. This knotty description gives an impression of a man slowly turning to wood from the feet upward, and if his wooden leg does not stand out as a sign of the previous leg's amputation, it is only because Wegg is wooden everywhere; its absence threatens to interfere somehow with his plans for social climbing. His first conversation with Boffin establishes the unavoidable interruption of his leg into the social sphere:

“How did you get your wooden leg?”

Mr. Wegg replied (tartly to this personal inquiry), “In an accident.”

“Do you like it?”

“Well! I haven't got to keep it warm,” Mr. Wegg made answer, in a sort of desperation occasioned by the singularity of the question.¹⁰

This meeting between Mr. Boffin and Silas Wegg is a singular one in many ways, but this inquiry about Wegg's wooden leg stands out, although it is difficult to say what about Boffin's question seems oddest. Is it the horribly personal and impertinent nature of it, given that Boffin and Wegg are strangers? The visibility of Wegg's prosthesis is the sort that passersby take as frequent invitation to comment, as if the wooden leg, being so prominent, has somehow become fair conversational game. Or is it the question itself: “Do you like it?” Could Wegg actually *like* his wooden leg? The idea of “liking” a mark of injury or disfigurement contradicts stigma against disability. Such injuries are, as discussed in chapter two, viewed more often as to be pitied and possibly learned from, than to celebrate or accept without notice.

⁹ Dickens, 53-54.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

Our Mutual Friend features another man equipped with two wooden legs. Old Gruff and Glum is a sailor now pensioned in Greenwich. The narrator refers to Old Gruff and Glum only by this nickname, a name that seemingly paints the sailor as a dour man, but which also establishes a familiarity with him. We meet not Gruff and Glum, a rough retired sailor, but *Old* Gruff and Glum, who is perhaps a neighborhood figure. His appearance and attitude soften, a transformation borne out by the passage that follows. He gets pulled along in the wake of Bella and the parental cherub (her father) to serve as a witness for Bella and Harmon's wedding in what appears to be a moment of blissful liberation. As he follows along with Bella and John to the church to witness their marriage, the couple bring a bit of vitality and interest back into the seaman's life. Upon a second sighting, Old Gruff and Glum wishes Bella joy and "the fairest of fair wind and weather...and scrambling up on his two wooden legs to salute, hat in hand, ship-shape, with the gallantry of a man-of-warsman and a heart of oak."¹¹ Here wooden legs, accompanied by an oaken heart, are a sign of stoutness, service, and gallantry, whereas Wegg's similar features are only signs of hard-heartedness. In spite of the kindness of his description, Old Gruff and Glum's real name remains a mystery. He exists as a character reduced to that description, apparently without a deeper purpose. Old Gruff and Glum seems, as it were, always already relieved of his gruffness and gloom. Bella's arrival with her father tugs the sailor out of his figurative mire: "For years, the wings of his mind had gone to look after the legs of his body; but Bella had brought them back for him per steamer, and they were spread again."¹² Here the sailor's mind, previously unable to overcome the loss of his legs, is finally able to let them go and focus on the present moment, shaped by Bella's love for John, which she gets to share with her father. The mind re-inhabits the rest of Old Gruff and Glum's body, who then lets go of his

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 652.

¹² *Ibid.*, 650.

desire for his former legs. He accepts the wooden ones as an ample substitute for the flesh and blood ones he has been longing for.

Our Mutual Friend is, according to Farrell, a novel that “stages...the sheer dialogic drama of human consciousness confronting the otherness of brute matter.”¹³ Dickens is always interested by the line between self and the material world, but Farrell views *Our Mutual Friend* as a text Dickens laden with such encounters. Thus: “[O]ld Gruff and Glum’s timber toes, are simultaneously literal and figurative....if the body is for Dickens the self’s figurative projection of identity in the material world, the props are acquisitions *from* the material world that supplement the self’s expressiveness.”¹⁴ Gruff and Glum’s wooden legs, in this astute interpretation, are at the intersection of individual, embodied, self and a socially located self, functioning as a link working from each to the other. Indeed, Farrell argues that “Gruff and Glum enacts a transformation that reverses his calcification, socializes his sentience, and liberates his marooned humanity.”¹⁵ This escape from a solitary, stranded humanity and sense of self marks the success of what Farrell establishes as a pervasive search to make one’s independent self and their social self align.

As with Wegg, Gruff and Glum’s wooden legs mediate a relationship between his subjectivity and the surrounding world; they display the history of his misfortune while also allowing him the ability to uproot himself and redirect his steps toward Bella’s wedding. Farrell’s explanation of the prevalence of wooden appendages and props in *Our Mutual Friend* is placed in the context of how partnership functions within the novel—and in Dickens’s fiction more broadly. Yet it is also worth contextualizing Gruff and Glum’s liberatory moment in terms of place and prevailing images of disabled seamen. Gruff and Glum functions as the index of

¹³ Farrell, 771.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 790-91.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 792.

partnership and the dialogical self noted by Farrell, but also as a landmark to confirm that we are indeed in Greenwich. Unlike the maimed sailors in *A Picture Story Book or City Scenes* (1866), previously discussed, Gruff and Glum is not a figure of pity or an example of the consequences of bad behavior. There is no “poor fellow” suing for charity, rather a pensioner in need of emotional rather than monetary help.¹⁶ By the publication of *Walks in and Around London* (1889), the Greenwich Hospital buildings had become the Royal Navel College. *Walks in and Around London* instead focuses on the architectural history and beauty of the building and picture gallery. The sailors formerly there feature as social memory; we are asked to imagine groups of “merry-eyed, bronze-faced, patched-up old sailors, spinning yarns of their seafaring life” who used to be there.¹⁷ This description more closely matches that of Gruff and Glum, but the way he stands in for the hospital and Greenwich in general (in spite of the novel making no mention of the hospital itself) interests me most. The reader knows they are in Greenwich in part because Greenwich is associated so strongly with injured and disabled sailors. Moreover, reinforcing that association has the added effect of seemingly confining disability to certain spaces in the London area.

Gruff and Glum first appears at the pier, “in a harbor of everlasting mud,” being unstuck and floated along after Bella and her father by their “ethereal air of happiness.”¹⁸ This mire of “everlasting mud” at the shore is one instance of the Thames creeping outward to engulf characters. It is, too, an instance of the river’s apparent timelessness; Gruff and Glum has somehow always been stuck there, and would have continued to be so, if not for the interruption of Bella’s happiness. He is released from his trap in the Greenwich soil. When the wedding party

¹⁶ William Darton, *A Picture Story Book of London, or, City Scenes*, (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1866), 95.

¹⁷ Uncle Jonathan [Jonathan Badgley], *Walks in and Around London, with numerous illustrations*, 2nd ed. (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1889), 121.

¹⁸ Dickens, 649.

sees him again later, Gruff and Glum is depicted with his shovel hat in an extended maritime metaphor. The marriage has apparently healed the sailor, overcoming the loss of his legs via a secondhand happiness. There is no equivalent of this for Wegg, whose injury is unexplained and unchanged.

When Wegg gets his foot under the table at Boffin's Bower, he decides to reclaim his missing limb, with a vague belief that someone moving up in the world should not have his pieces scattered willy-nilly across London, nor mixed in with the spare parts of other people. He has linked his desire for wealth with his desire for his missing leg. In order to achieve his class aspirations, Wegg believes he must regain his bodily wholeness. His leg has fallen into the hands of Mr. Venus, purveyor miscellaneous parts of all sorts, and of various taxidermic masterpieces. So, as Wegg explains, "I shouldn't like...to be what I may call dispersed, a part of me here, and a part of me there, but should wish to collect myself like a genteel person."¹⁹ Wegg's desire to "collect himself" refers to a literal body part, but he might also mean composing himself in a mental or psychological state. His use of "genteel" associates his desire to acquire the bones of his leg in response to his deal with Mr. Boffin, through which Wegg anticipates reaping a considerable amount of easy money (not to mention perks of food and drink while at the Boffin's). That Wegg associates bodily wholeness with a higher class suggests that the body is an integral but mutable aspect of self. The danger of dispersal is upsetting, not necessarily due to the image it might present (liking or disliking Wegg's wooden leg, for instance), but because it could interfere with a more abstract completion. Wegg fears, even if he cannot articulate it, that his various methods of making himself indispensable to Boffin will not wholly overcome a preexisting lack in himself. He requires the entire body in order to make his projected self cohesive.

¹⁹ Ibid., 88.

At the same time, Wegg leverages the fact of his wooden leg as an excuse for avoiding the literal leg-work necessary for his scheme of searching the mounds of dust for valuables. He tells Venus that his leg has “a want of adaptation...to ladders and such like airy perches.”²⁰ The image of Wegg, balancing at the top of a ladder with any grace is absurd. The ladder itself is a kind of wooden prop, akin to the leg and yet incompatible with it. Wegg goes on to “[hint] at an inherent tendency in that timber fiction, when called into action for the purposes of a promenade on an ashey slope, to stick itself into the yielding foothold, and peg its owner to one spot.”²¹ Silas Wegg is here the reverse image of old Gruff and Glum. Wegg’s penchant for idiosyncratic language paradoxically compares this jaunt among the mounds as a prospective “promenade,” suggesting walking around with the intention of being seen even in the midst of his searching and scheming. Rather than being set free of the mire, he pictures himself in danger of being forever fixed to the dust mounds, leaving him, as it were, trapped at the scene of the crime and in a rather unpleasant setting on the whole. He insists that Venus, by both profession and physical qualities, is more suited to doing the leg-work of searching old Harmon’s mounds for any remaining valuables or papers.

By contrast, Venus, with all his skill in taxidermy and articulation, has found that Wegg’s original leg is valueless. Purchased by Venus as one item in a miscellaneous collection of body parts, the leg cannot be fitted to any other skeleton. He argues that this is due to some kind of inherent twisting in Wegg’s legs, which causes them to match each other but is too anomalous to blend in with other skeletons. Wegg’s leg is thus a useless oddity. Venus’s shop is a cluttered home to spare human and animal parts of all kinds, most of which he will combine into various skeletons or other objects. His inventory seems haphazard but promises to assemble itself into

²⁰ Ibid., 300.

²¹ Ibid., 300-301.

specific wholes regardless of how disarticulated the pieces seem as others look around the shop. Showing Wegg around, Venus has only a small candle, that passes around the room, briefly lighting a preserved baby here, a box of glass eyes there, and moving on so that they fade back into darkness. Even the shop as a space has become disarticulated, only to be revealed in pieces. Hence Venus's stock is composed variously:

Bones, various. Skulls, various. Preserved Indian baby. African ditto. Bottled preparations, various. Everything within reach of your hand, in good preservation. The mouldy ones a-top. What's in those hampers over them again, I don't quite remember. Say, human, various. Cats. Articulated English baby. Dogs. Ducks. Glass eyes, various. Mummied bird. Dried cuticle, various. Oh, dear me! That's the general panoramic view.²²

Even to Venus, the items have become generalized rather than specific. "Say, human, various." The guess can stand in for whatever is actually in the hampers on this tour, the miscellaneous human somethings serving as a collection of possible rebuilding. His approximation to an inventory is reminiscent of Harmon's failed attempt to trace his own footsteps—the impressions take on an indistinguishable quality. Here people are broken down into things, cluttered together to shape a place, and are re-identified with place as a means of sorting them. The only items Venus can list singly are an Indian, an African, and an English baby. Wegg likewise "acquires an imperfect impression" of a "Hindoo baby in a bottle" over the mantle.²³ These bodies stand out by virtue of being named as individual wholes amidst a collection of parts, but the English baby is further specified as "articulated," reserving a wholeness and singularity for the English. The Indian and African babies, by contrast, acquire their distinction as identifiable objects of empire. Their particularity is notable because exotic, less than articulate because the names India and Africa paper over any possible differentiation within their inhabitants. "African ditto" is a particularly negligent gesture that brushes aside the whole continent in already dead sameness

²² Ibid., 86-88.

²³ Ibid., 84.

that undermines the baby's recognizability. By the end of the chapter, the items have taken on a kind of incantatory quality in their familiarity: "so shakes a momentary flare out of the candles, as that the babies—Hindoo, African, and British—the 'human various', the French gentleman, the green glass-eyed cats, the dogs, the ducks, and all the rest of the collection, show for an instant as if paralytically animated."²⁴ The pieces are caught in a flash, lending them the look of life caught in a strobe light rather than inanimate objects lying around. I am suggesting that this state of objects dead-yet-alive, disarticulated-yet-whole, in Venus's shop is part of a much larger pattern of places. As J. H. Miller notes, "[Venus's] shop is not static and complete. His world is not finished. It is in process... And the Harmon dust-heaps... have been thrown up bit by bit as a kind of projection of their maker."²⁵ Because *Our Mutual Friend* is built up of such fluctuating spaces, the boundaries between place, object, part, and person are extremely porous. Thus I am also suggesting that the porous boundaries make orientation particularly hazardous for characters—potentially creative and transformative.

Keeping Step

The pervasive interest in wholeness and parts adapted for articulation extends to motion in the novel. The candle or lantern might reveal slices of place that the watcher assembles into an image of the whole, and a similar impression is created with regard to travel and partnership. This dynamic is clearly apparent in the scene in which Bella and her father, Rumty Wilfer take their first trip by steamer to Greenwich. Their conversation turns on the compatibility of companions. Rumty comments, "Supposing, for instance, that a man wanted to be always marching, he would find your mother an inestimable companion. But if he had any taste for

²⁴ Ibid., 91.

²⁵ Miller, 281.

walking, or should wish at any time to break into a trot, he might sometimes find it a little difficult to keep step with your mother.”²⁶ He compares his wife as walking to the tune of the “Dead March” from Saul, claiming that marching to that tune is inherently unsuited to the “ordinary run of domestic transactions.”²⁷ This need for “keeping step” with another is an intimate concern that characterizes walking in general in the novel. This question of pace forms the intersection of embodiment and partnerships of all kinds, where two bodies work in unison or fail to. The partnership between Rumty and his wife is that of two people yoked together for life, requiring not just suitability, but also adaptability. “Adaptable,” he calls his daughter, wishing that his wife could bend a little as occasion requires.²⁸ In this way, adaptability becomes, indeed composes, a kind of wholeness in and of itself, bringing pieces into harmony to form a healthy couple. Rumty and his wife match no better than Wegg’s leg with does that of the Frenchman gentleman in Venus’s shop. Conversely, Bella and Rumty’s day in Greenwich is harmonized in literal as well as in mental travel.

Bella demonstrates this mental adaptability as she and her father eat and gaze down to the river. She indulges in an extended fit of whimsy, imagining a series of alternate lives—“voyages”—for her father and herself, each a brief sketch of prosperity and, often, exoticism: “Now, Pa, in the character of owner of a lumbering square-sailed collier, was tacking away to Newcastle, to fetch black diamonds to make his fortune with.”²⁹ Then her Pa is sailing to China to get opium, “with which he would for ever cut out Chicksey Veneering and Stobbles, and to bring home silks and shawls without end for the decoration of his charming daughter.”³⁰ Thus Wilfer takes over from Veneering, who has recently bought out Chicksey and Stobbles. The

²⁶ Dickens, 314.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 315.

³⁰ Ibid.

endlessness of silks and shawls is an integral part of the fantasy; distant lands can be imagined as having endless resources to reap, endless profit to produce, endless potential for story telling as an act. The clothing arrives, itself too endless to wear. Gradually, the fantasy transfers emphasis from Pa Wilfer to the mysterious John Harmon, who becomes the object of various alternative lives, as he had been an object of his father's will. Bella's other lives flick past, one after another, just as bits and bobs in Venus's shop:

Now, John Harmon's disastrous fate was all a dream, and he had come home and found the lovely woman just the article for him, and the lovely woman had found him just the article for her, and they were going away on a trip, in their gallant bark, to look after their vines, with streamers flying at all points, a band playing on deck and Pa established in the great cabin.³¹

This fate as "all a dream" is a fascinating inversion of what the passage as a whole is performing. It also plays upon the plot of the book. Harmon *does not* drown, he *does* fall in love with Bella, albeit after reforming her to suit his tastes. Bella being "just the article" for Harmon, then, is double-edged. The idea of her as an "article" at all is problematic, and it is most problematic that Bella is *not* the one "for him." This is what spurs Harmon on in his great deception as Rokesmith. It also plays on article as clause in a will, for it is only in this buoyant daydream that the conditions of the will play out successfully. Stereotypically poetic language like taking the "gallant bark" to the "vines" gently mocks the fantasy, as Bella treats the terms of the will as likewise absurd.

The passage continues in the same vein. Bella marries a nameless man (two of them, in fact). She is "like a modern Cleopatra,"³² or the "idol of all the red coats and blue jackets."³³ The fantasy closes with a more extended version:

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 316.

[That ship] was going among the coral reefs and cocoa-nuts and all that sort of thing, and she was chartered for a fortunate individual of the name of Pa...and she was going, for his sole profit and advantage, to fetch a cargo of sweet-smelling woods, the most beautiful that ever were seen, and the most profitable that ever were heard of; and her cargo would be a great fortune, as indeed it ought to be: the lovely woman who had purchased her and fitted her expressly for this voyage, being married to an Indian Prince, who was a Something-or-Other, and who wore Cashmere shawls all over himself and diamonds and emeralds blazing in his turban, and was beautifully coffee-coloured and excessively devoted, though a little too jealous.³⁴

“And all that sort of thing” is another hand wave. As with body parts dubbed “humans, various,” “all that sort of thing” encompasses and stands in for a range of fantasy details (and fantasies, for that matter) that blend into one another enough to form a coherent whole. The “coral reefs,” the “cocoa-nuts,” and the “sweet-smelling woods” are pleasantly stereotypical and generic, expectedly superlative. The “she” of the ship gives way to the lovely woman. The Indian Prince is also nameless; moreover, his job or being is waved off as an irrelevant “Something-or-Other” so that his identity is formed out of India and luxurious goods, his skin color, and his attitude toward Bella. Rumty proves a supportive listener, accompanying Bella on her imaginative voyages as they eat and gaze at the river. The journeys wind outward from the river itself, their paths deliberately obscure. Rumty asks after the meal, “I suppose, my dear, . . . we may come to the conclusion at home, that we have lost you for good?”³⁵ Bella’s fantasies of various escapes from her life prompt thoughts of loss closer to home for her father. It is as if the act of travel, devoid of its specificity in place or time, has taken Bella beyond his reach even as she sits across from him.

On Leaving

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Examinations of *Our Mutual Friend* largely and productively focus on the nature of character within the novel and the various themes of life, rebirth, and doubling that accompany it. The problem John faces, it seems, is that his body is an unhelpful marker of identity because it is detached from any meaningful sense of place. In place of the body, the river becomes the site of rebirth and reorientation but only because it destroys his sense of place. Upon his return to London, John is set upon, drugged, robbed, and tossed into the river. The city itself, already defamiliarized by his absence, further warps as his own memory and sense of self become equally estranged from him. This estrangement prompts his later attempt to retrace his steps and fill the gaps in his memory. The novel refuses a direct first-hand accounting of the book's largest plot point: it provides only a fractured memory thereof and some partial glimpses by tangentially-related characters. It is this refusal of linear narrative – and of fixed identity – that embodies and launches the novel's endless near misses and misrecognitions. The physical disorientation induced by the drug, which still lingers, parallels a pervasive psychological disorientation. John's father's will, which ties his inheritance to marriage to a total stranger, produces a textual parallel to the drug's effects. With no knowledge of Bella Wilfer that exists prior to and independent of the will, the document makes John's first impressions of her all but impossible to distinguish from his feelings about the estate itself. His thoughts are yoked via the will to the Harmon property. If John's thoughts and desires are inherently tainted by the will, he cannot access or articulate desires that are purely his own, outside of or prior to the question of inheritance.

The extreme disorientation faced by John and others is tightly linked to the Thames. Miller characterizes the Thames as a natural other, capable of “transmut[ing]” other things “into its own formlessness,” an encounter with nature necessary for John and Eugene to reshape

themselves.³⁶ Miller notes that other characters, such as Bradley Headstone, attempt this process and fail while Farrell notes that John's monologue "constitutes a resurfacing of his identity, a deliberate recreation of his harrowing experience in the river which function as a recreation of himself in the text."³⁷ Gilbert suggests something similar: "Retracing his [Harmon's] steps and remapping his body's (and London's) location in relation to the river is part of the process of consolidating his new self."³⁸ The extent to which critics describe John's identity formation as overlapping with those of other characters varies, but most connect physical disorientation to psychological and observe the deep connection between movement, the city, and subjectivity. However, Gilbert astutely argues that the disorientation experienced by various characters in the novel does not stem from an unclear mapping of urban space:

If *Our Mutual Friend* is disorienting, it is because of this Gothic interiority in which each character seems isolated from a working society, not because of spatial vagueness. Dickens's mapping of the characters onto the city is precise, but the polluted cityscape comes to represent the incontinence of the characters' selves in their dangerous abjection. The entropic city faithfully maps subjectivity out of control, the flooding, filthy river bodies forth the desires that erode the boundaries of the embodied middle-class self.³⁹

Struggles to retain subjective control and the way those struggles become mapped outward onto London create pervasive confusion. Enlarging on this, a closer inspection of scenes such as John's central monologue, and at a smaller scale, reveals ways the city and disorientation manifest additional changes in how Victorians conceived of space and their own relation to it. John examines and reinscribes his identity and memory, mapping them (or failing to) on the city streets. John's attempt plays out on foot in ways that contrast sharply with Eugene Wrayburn's repeated walks in the novel. Eugene's journeys remap the city more clearly and add a spatial

³⁶ Miller, 312.

³⁷ Farrell, 775.

³⁸ Gilbert, 128.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 133-34.

dimension to crises of identity and desire that help clarify the novel's extensive description of John's disorientated yet methodical blundering.

In the midst of wrestling with his untenable position toward Bella and others, John attempts to re-center himself by recreating the night of his "murder." He retraces his steps from the docks up to Rogue Riderhood's⁴⁰ door before reaching the point in the evening where or when his own memories become drug-ridden and thus suspect. Even the narrative perspective plays out this confusion: this episode begins in a chapter focused on Pleasant Riderhood, to whom John appears first in the strange character of an anonymous yet specific "certain man."⁴¹ Pleasant mistakes him for—or perhaps more accurately *wishes* him to be a generic "seafaring man"⁴² who may provide business for her leaving shop and lodging house. Not until the opening of the following chapter do we see John's own perspective. His ambiguous appearance, so useful for deceiving Pleasant (Is he a sailor? Isn't he? Is there anything to be got out of him in the way of business?) becomes more ominous when Riderhood returns home to find him waiting. That John has for his visit to Riderhood's establishment donned the clothes of a sailor known to be dead—George Radfoot—adds to the confused impression he leaves on the Riderhoods. The conversation that ensues acts as a catechism that invokes Radfoot's ghost over and over again: "Tell me again whose knife was this?...Tell me again whose coat was this?"⁴³ With very little prompting, Riderhood takes the items of clothing as proof that his visitor has killed Radfoot and then returned for reasons of his own. Of course, the reader views this anonymous sailor as one more guise donned by the protagonist. It is, too, an inversion of John's own "death," in which the

⁴⁰ That allusions to the story of Little Red Riding Hood abound in *Our Mutual Friend* is another incarnation of its preoccupation with straying from one's path, and the moral dilemmas thereby created.

⁴¹ Dickens, 346.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 348.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 354.

outer guise masquerades as absolute identity—the body discovered in John’s clothing must *be* Harmon. It is precisely this interchangeability of persons that enables the plot as a whole.

John’s interview with Riderhood strategically deploys the piecemeal nature of the novel/city/people to form a misleading mask of wholeness. If the self is a process, John—already leading his new life as Rokesmith—can form an even more temporary persona, taking on the guise of Radfoot. The leaving shop is, like Venus’s, a place of scattered pieces, floating around in what is also a temporary boarding house for sailors. It rings the changes on “leaving”: items left in pawn, sailors come and gone, the coat and knife as things left behind after Radfoot’s death. Bits and bobs

had a general dim resemblance to human listeners; especially where a shiny black sou’wester suit and hat hung, looking very like a clumsy mariner with his back to the company, who was so curious to overhear, that he paused for the purpose with his coat half pulled on, his shoulders up to his ears in the uncompleted action.⁴⁴

This is another assemblage caught in a flash of process, a parody of expectant wholeness, and, in contrast John’s disguise, it is thoroughly complete. John’s insistence that Riderhood will get nothing from him in the way of business is a refusal to allow Rogue or Pleasant Riderhood to participate meaningfully in such an assemblage. He arrives pre-assembled and determined to limit the types of subjective and material exchange in which the place by nature engages. Yet John is adaptable in Rumty Wilfer’s sense: he responds fluidly to the situations he encounters, and all his disguises are recognizable as coherent and as John. Indeed, Radfoot himself takes a more active part in spite of his being dead. His character re-emerges here in the shape of his things and the impression he leaves upon the Riderhoods. This John Harmon-as-Rokesmith-as-Radfoot sets up the self-exploration that will determine if Harmon-as-Harmon will stay buried. Thus a resurrection and a premature death are set against one another, in one body and in one

⁴⁴ Ibid., 352.

suit of clothes. As Patricia McKee explains, this ongoing mixture of parts is central to self-fashioning:

Persons come apart and pieces of them get relocated in other persons, to allow the partial character of the self to be recognized: the self as a kind of collection, with parts changeable and exchangeable, transferable to others, taking the parts of others. This means the self cannot be assumed to be finished or complete as it appears: there are always, or potentially always, missing parts, unknown parts, parts not yet acquired.⁴⁵

Disarticulation and assemblage allow for the process of self-making in a way that is or is not productive for each character. This ongoing finishing, however, does not stop at aspects of character that encounter one another; each place itself is a also potential piece for incorporation, with other places and for various people.

As deliberately as John has picked up pieces of clothing and personality, he has unintentionally left some behind for others. From the possessions recovered with Radfoot's corpse to his father's fortune, parts of John Harmon's life have left his hands with unforeseen consequences. John's ostensibly temporary plan to meet Bella in the guise of someone other than her suitor has by this point become a quasi-permanent deception, which he finds himself unable to end when he falls steadily in love with Bella despite her avarice and his own misgivings. This leaves John in the added ethical dilemma of paying romantic attentions to a member of the household in which he is employed. The chapter following Radfoot's resurrection famously walks through John's attempt at self-assemblage. The retracing of his steps through London allows Harmon not only to go in search of his own memories and sense of self, but to symbolically backtrack and undo an unintended side-effect of his death and rebirth as Rokesmith. Quite aside from the direct results of his own continued life as Rokesmith, John's

⁴⁵ Patricia McKee, "London Looking Backward: *Our Mutual Friend*," in *Reading Constellations: Urban Modernity in Victorian Fiction*, (New York: Oxford UP, 2014), 96.

deception has spawned a series of ripple effects, in which people he had never considered as connected to him bear the consequences of his actions.

The fluid nature of subjectivity in *Our Mutual Friend* enables a number of creative feats and character development. One downside of a self-in-process, however, is that it is possible that an awareness of missing key pieces comes to the forefront with disturbing results. John is not missing pieces in the sense of being aware that future encounters and changes await. Rather, he experiences the terrifying sense that his self is in danger of losing cohesion or its ability to keep pace. John's gap in memory is an inescapable signal that an important part of his being has been forcibly removed or suppressed, leading him into paralyzing self-doubt. His attempt to replace the memory with at least the path he walked at the time fails in the face of the homogeneity of the area. This problem is an inversion of that faced by Wegg; the sameness John faces is the barrier to his wholeness, whereas that of Wegg's leg in relation to Venus's French gentleman is its peculiarity. Radfoot's coat and knife serve as specific markers of identity that John can don as a makeshift self as he searches for his missing pieces; they are the pieces with which he started his mental disorientation. In this sense they are not a disguise but a prosthesis.

John's attempt to assert some control over himself is precipitated by his desire to know—and control his getting to know of—Bella. His father's will has thrust him into a relationship with her in the absence of any actual familiarity. As in Rumty and Bella's relationship, some things can be shared, some relationships result in the wholeness and fulfillment of both people, but John balks at the will's attempt to dictate how that fulfillment is to be achieved. In struggling to know and even mold Bella as a prospective wife, John ironically loses track of the man she would be marrying. John believes that mapping out the missing piece of his past will let him properly manage his relationship with Bella going forward, but in his desire to map out the

former, he begins to substitute carefully mapped trajectories for Bella's development and for his relationship with her. In spite of all his introspection, this is an attempt to keep pace with her founded upon his making her change. In this, at least, he behaves like Eugene, whose interactions with the streets of the city take on a very different hue.

Abstruse No Thoroughfares

The relations between Lizzie, Eugene, and Bradley are dark, both in the sense of tension and emotional states, for key scenes play out at night, in a brooding cityscape. The scene in which Bradley proposes to Lizzie is full of motion and force of varying kinds. In spite of Bradley's determined outsourcing of his emotions to Lizzie, Lizzie herself is the object of force from both Bradley and her brother Charley, who insists that Lizzie accompany him "by quiet backways"⁴⁶ to a churchyard. This movement into silent and empty streets presents a desire rather for lack of witnesses than for peace. When Lizzie objects to this detour, Charley replies, "It's in my way and my way is yours."⁴⁷ Charley's insistence that their ways be the same forces a grotesque parody of companionable walking that ought to be a harmonious one. Yet Lizzie's walk with Charley, and the walk with Bradley that immediately follows, no matter how in step physically, are divisive, even frightening. Indeed, it is the compulsory nature of the walk that creates its divisiveness. Bradley leads Lizzie around the church yard three times, pausing each at the same spot, insisting all the while that some power from Lizzie is to blame: "You draw me to you. If I were shut up in a strong prison, you would draw me out. I should break through the wall to come to you. If I were lying on a sick bed, you would draw me up—to stagger at your feet and

⁴⁶ Dickens, 386.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

fall there.”⁴⁸ Given that Bradley is absent-mindedly crumbling part of a stone wall in his hands each time he and Lizzie stop walking, the image of him breaking through a prison wall is particularly frightening; it differs from the currently walk more in degree than in kind. In this image, Bradley will have already committed some crime, the dark future rendering the violence toward Eugene that so harshly frames his marriage proposal. The idea of Bradley staggering away from his sick bed in a final charge at the object of his desire is no more appealing. His body becomes a puppet, wholly subject to the force of his want.

Bradley’s emphasis shifts from his violent desire for Lizzie to his fixation on Eugene, and his pride and body become subject to similar figurative contortions:

“And [my self-respect] lies under [Wrayburn’s] feet,” said Bradley, unfolding his hands in spite of himself, and fiercely motioning with them towards the stones of the pavement. “Remember that! It lies under that fellow’s feet, and he treads upon it and exults above...I have stood before him face to face, and he crushed me down in the dirt of his contempt, and walked all over me”⁴⁹

The scene to which Bradley refers is his visit with Charley to Eugene’s and Mortimer’s office to confront Eugene. There he is met with considerable contempt and classism. In the church yard, as Bradley looks back on this moment, he imagines the body flattening, his standing “face to face” becomes falling, to be crushed, with his ego, under Eugene’s feet. The contempt, on the other hand, becomes one with the ground, a dirt that can spread, a dirt that can cling to Bradley long after he has left. Bradley, breaking out of his self-imposed control, starts pressing his hands down as he imagines Eugene crushing him. Much as he would like to blame Eugene or Lizzie for his difficulties, Bradley’s hands reveal the larger problem. In imitating Eugene, Bradley takes on the crushing himself.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 389.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 392.

The confrontation between Bradley, Charley, and Eugene is characteristic of Eugene, in that he turns readily from contemplating his own murky intentions to an arrogant and disdainful dismissal of his visitors. Charley and Bradley's arrival interrupts a discussion between Eugene and Mortimer about his enigmatic character. The background of this scene is a comic debate over Eugene's newly-acquired kitchen utensils, which he refers to as a "moral influence" meant to instill in him the "domestic virtues"⁵⁰ by their very presence. This joke about cookware imbuing Eugene by its mere collective presence in turn imbues the relationship between the two men with the intimacy and ease of domestic tranquility. It is also akin to acquiring character from the outside in. Eugene collects himself in a manner quite different from Wegg, who at least knows what part he seeks. Eugene imagines the coffee-mill, rolling-pin, the rest as at least giving the appearance of (quite vague) virtues. When Mortimer presses for insight into a recent change of character, Eugene insists, "You know that when I became enough of a man to find myself an embodied conundrum, I bored myself to the last degree by trying to find out what I meant."⁵¹ Professing not to understand himself at all, he soon diverts attention to Charley and Bradley, who arrive as "two belated wanderers in the mazes of the law."⁵² Charley and Bradley intrude into the intimate space shaped by Mortimer and Eugene and bring with them their anger and class anxieties. Eugene, however, is safe from any impact, because he has the power—money, class, education—to offensively take no interest in Charley (whom he does not look at) and Bradley (to whose name, business, and speech he responds only with a performative wall of boredom).

Eugene's boredom springs peculiarly from himself and produces in him a listlessness that makes discerning his desires, when he has them, difficult. Boredom functions as the flip side of desire; his inability to identify his desires, leads Eugene back into boredom and vice versa. This

⁵⁰ Ibid., 282.

⁵¹ Ibid., 283.

⁵² Ibid., 284.

dynamic makes Eugene particularly susceptible to drifting to and fro as others dictate, unable or unwilling for the bulk of the novel to direct his own actions. He enters the narrative being towed around in Mortimer's wake, first to a party and then out to view the body supposed to be Harmon's (in reality Radfoot's). He trails along right into the details of the murder and into Lizzie Hexam's presence, a meeting that further upsets his father's matrimonial plans for him. Like Harmon, Eugene is less than pleased by his father's choice of bride for him. In fact, he has already refused to go meet the lady, commenting to Mortimer, "Could I possibly support [matrimony]? I, so soon bored, so constantly, so fatally?" Mortimer rejoins, "But you are not a consistent fellow, Eugene," only to be told "In susceptibility to boredom, I assure you I am the most consistent of mankind."⁵³ Eugene's only consistent character trait is inconsistency.

Eugene and Mortimer know each other very well. These men, at least, have no problem staying in step right up until Eugene's injuries and desire for marriage make him unintelligible to Mortimer. The competing forces of boredom and desire in Eugene are expressed in an odd lighthouse fantasy, in which he and Mortimer live together, a kind of merger of their rowing trip and their domestic arrangements. "Don't you think it would bore us?" Mortimer asks him.⁵⁴ As the fantasy progresses, Eugene wishes away the Circuit, and Mortimer the arrival of clients. Eugene more explicitly imagines Lady Tippins setting off and "get[ting] swamped" en route.⁵⁵ This is the image of the two men, alone and undisturbed on a rock at sea, emitting a beacon for the navigation of others. But that warning light is aimed outward. Together in its center sit Eugene and Mortimer, paradoxically surrounded by the light and untouched by it. They have the power of directing others and do not need it for themselves. "It would be exciting to look out for

⁵³ Ibid., 150.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 148.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

wrecks,”⁵⁶ comments Eugene, ambiguously. Poised between action and passivity, he imagines himself watching to prevent wrecks or perhaps looking forward to seeing some. When Mortimer suggests that such a setup could be boring, Eugene replies that “it would be a defined and limited monotony. It would not extend beyond two people. Now it’s a question with me, Mortimer, whether a monotony defined with that precision and limited to that extent, might not be more endurable than the unlimited monotony of one’s fellow-creatures.”⁵⁷ Eugene’s boredom of two would be encircled by the lighthouse itself—the monotony is circumscribed by the character of the two men, shaped by the history and familiarity between them. Eugene and Mortimer would have, so to speak, an amiable range of boredom, whereas boredom with people in general is potentially infinite. Rather than additional people adding variety to their circle, Eugene finds each person ultimately as boring as the last. He confronts the horrific possibility of finding (or at least fearing) that no matter who passed in and out of his life, Eugene’s response would be boredom. At least with two people, he could point to their familiarity as the source of any boredom, as opposed to finding that the boredom would never run out, that no arrival would bring relief.

Eugene is as astonished as any when his interest in Lizzie proves anomalously immune to boredom, and it results in his turning his aimlessness into a repeated and deliberate goading of Bradley. When Lizzie leaves London, Eugene attempts to pursue her, heedless of the fact that it is his pursuit that has compelled Lizzie to leave. As Sedgwick argues, Eugene’s and Bradley’s romantic attachments to Lizzie are displaced onto one another in a violent homosocial bond,⁵⁸ so that Eugene at this point in the novel is more tightly and intimately bound to Bradley than to

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia UP, 2015).

Lizzie and vice versa. As the two men's paths become more and more entangled, Eugene mocks his rival, staging a labyrinthine series of night walks which serve no purpose but to snare and vex Bradley. Bradley in turn inexorably follows Eugene—who pretends to follow Lizzie—unable to tear himself from the pursuit even though he knows that Eugene is toying with him. Eugene can go wherever he wishes, dragging Bradley in a horrifying lockstep just behind him. Eugene delights in leading Bradley around, going nowhere and devising infinite new routes by which to get there. He explains:

I tempt him on, all over London. One night I go east, another night north, in a few nights I go all round the compass...I study and get up abstruse No Thoroughfares in the course of the day. With Venetian mystery I seek those No Thoroughfares at night, glide into them by means of dark courts....Night after night his disappointment is acute, but hope springs eternal in the scholastic breast, and he follows me again to-morrow."⁵⁹

The sheer effort Eugene puts into planning his excursions, so calculated to appear aimless to a person who will never believe them to be so, is repaid only in the growing magnitude of Bradley's frustration. Indeed, as an affective destination, the petty pleasure and satisfaction at which Eugene arrives can *only* be reached in the repetition itself. To go out the next night, striking off in a new way, is the only guarantee of further pleasure in the absence of Lizzie herself.

The repetition of such chases allows Eugene to gradually map the city, crossing what Bodenheimer dubs "psychic territory."⁶⁰ Setting out each night on a new course fills in an image of London that gradually transforms into pleasure. Carving out temptation after temptation, Eugene takes aggressive possession of the city streets. For Bradley, this mapping fills out a London built on anger, jealousy, and humiliation. This affective geography expands for both men so long as they are caught up in the obsessive chase. Eugene's decision to create a new route

⁵⁹ Dickens, 533.

⁶⁰ Bodenheimer, 171.

each night emphasizes the pointlessness of Bradley's pursuit; direction is irrelevant and will always be irrelevant. Each night is doomed to end without relief, and yet he sets out again anyway. A large part of Eugene's enjoyment is in recognizing and shaping this futility. He does not make for any landmark, as in *Little Walks in London*, nor is he going accidentally astray, as in "Little Red Riding Hood." These walks are not narrational—they make no progress and seek nothing beyond themselves. Eugene cites the benefits of these journeys as "the pleasures of the chase, and...great benefit from the healthful exercise."⁶¹ These streets are Eugene's private passes, and in spite, or because, of his knowledge of the city, they become tangles streets that Bradley cannot navigate on his own.

Eugene transforms some streets into dead ends for Bradley. His sudden changes of direction render each of Bradley's pursuit courses incorrect, and give him the opportunity to make Bradley himself a sight as the two pass one another. This malleability of the streets makes the city itself a third partner in these chases, an integral part of Eugene's pleasure and of Bradley's humiliation. These scenes play out in body the dynamic between them. As Bodenheimer argues, they demonstrate that "one has the class assurance, one the emotional drive that the other lacks, yet they recognize each other."⁶² Yet this violent sense of class distance and recognition is only possible because the men use the streets as a medium of silent communication, in a journey that simultaneously separates and conflates them: "hunter and hunted are confounded in the chase, and both men are equally compelled to rehearse, and to defer, the moment when they might turn and meet 'face to face.'"⁶³ McKee notes that "Passages open up only to close down into traps,"⁶⁴ as the very streets of the city seem to change shape in

⁶¹ Dickens, 533.

⁶² Bodenheimer, 169.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ McKee, 93.

response to the battle between Eugene and Bradley. The streets play a key part in the exchange, taking on a dynamic life of their own, which is only partly under Eugene's control. Meanwhile, Bradley becomes eternally separated from the streets by his education and class aspirations. Bradley faces a city being mapped along directions out of his control, *and* one built upon foundations that have long since become strange to him. Eugene's manipulation of the city reinforces this distance, assuming control as Bradley cedes it.

This balance moves again in the opposite direction on the night when Mortimer joins Eugene on his nightly luring around of Bradley. The effects of this labyrinthine torment on Bradley are horrifyingly extreme. The walks seem to inscribe themselves on Bradley's own body, leaving marks.

[Grinding torments] was not too strong a phrase for the occasion. Looking like the hunted and not the hunter, baffled, worn, with the exhaustion of deferred hope and consuming hate and anger in his face, white-lipped, wild-eyed, drizzle-haired, seamed with jealousy and anger, and torturing himself with the conviction that he showed it all and they exulted in it, he went by them in the dark, like a haggard head suspended in the air: so completely did the force of his expression cancel his figure.⁶⁵

Bradley's body here vanishes—his tormented head becomes so prominent that the rest of the body becomes irrelevant, even invisible, and the head takes on a roving importance. Stephen James notes that “As if by a process of irrational narrative transference, the disembodied head motif is in due course displaced onto the tormented and phantom-like Bradley Headstone; flitting through the London streets at night, he is perceived as a ‘haggard head suspended in the air’ (pp. 534, 536) – a grisly counterpart to ‘the many heads erst hoisted upon neighbouring Temple Bar’ (p. 536).”⁶⁶ Although the display of the heads of traitors on Temple Bar had long since been discontinued, the history and image of it remained in public consciousness and texts, sometimes

⁶⁵ Dickens, 534.

⁶⁶ Stephen James, “Repetition, Ruminations, Superstition: The Rituals of *Our Mutual Friend*, *English* 61, no. 234 (2012): 231, citing Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, ed. by Adrian Poole (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), 534-36.

accompanied by odd anecdotes. *Collins' Illustrated Guide to London* states that the “heads of decapitated criminals, after being boiled in pitch to preserve them, were exposed on iron spikes on the top of the bar...The last [two] heads...remained a ghastly spectacle to the citizens till 1772, when they were blown down one night in a gale of wind.”⁶⁷ A later addition removes the “ghastly spectacle” and the note about when the heads came down, but both note that one enterprising man in Fleet Street rented out “spy-glasses” to passers-by who wanted a better view. The *Picture Story Book of London*, which I discuss in chapter two, is aimed at children and numbers the final heads at three “rebel noblemen” that “remained till they were decayed, or were blown down by a high wind.”⁶⁸

Bradley’s head floating along is as ghastly an image but also terrifyingly mobile, unconfined to place or even, seemingly, his own body. His expression is likewise mobile, the list of adjectives lengthy. The hyphenated words lend the description a step-like rhythm while moving the description upward from mouth to hair. The seams in his face are the work of those repeated nights; jealousy and anger have worn passages into his face. Bradley is also conscious that his emotions are written on his face, and that seeing them there increases Eugene’s pleasure. Unable to stop himself, Bradley follows along on these excursions and the experience transforms Eugene’s mind to tangled streets, into anger that writes itself back onto Bradley’s disembodied head. This dynamic even entangles Mortimer, who accompanies Eugene on this representative walk. The men know at once that Bradley is following them, and the sight of his expression haunts Mortimer. Bradley’s face “impress[e]s him. He spoke of it more than once when they got

⁶⁷ William Collins, *Collins' Illustrated Guide to London and Neighborhood: Being a Concise Description of the Chief Places of Interest in the Metropolis, and the Best Modes of Obtaining Access to Them: With Information Relating to Railways, Omnibuses, Steamers, etc.* (London: William Collins, Sons, and Company, 1873), 26.

⁶⁸ J. Gilbert, *A Picture Story Book of London; or, City Scenes*, (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1866), 75.

home.”⁶⁹ Later that night, Eugene awakens to find his friend standing over him. Held awake by the memory of that face, Mortimer has taken to pacing the floor of the men’s lodgings, moving back and forth in fruitless unease, unable to “lose sight of that fellow’s face.”⁷⁰ Bradley’s face taken on a life of its own as a kind of inescapable, mobile landmark. No matter what direction Mortimer looks, the tortured head interrupts his view, and so invades the island of domestic space that he and Eugene share. The domestic utensils here cannot preserve the peace of the men’s chambers from the kind of aggression that disturbs Mortimer.

The crosscurrents of desire and relationships between Lizzie, Eugene, and Bradley are complex ones, shaped by gender and class. Eugene, for instance, is in a good position to afford the type of roving idleness that characterizes his baiting of Bradley, a fact he takes advantage of by some nights traveling by cab and forcing the schoolmaster to hire one as well. The money is of course dearer to the schoolmaster, and the cavalier nature of Eugene walking adds to the callousness of his behavior. He notes that all the time and energy Bradley spends on these excursions is time and energy taken away from his students; Bradley’s obsession detracts from his livelihood, whereas Eugene’s only focuses his hours of idleness. Sedgwick notes that Bradley’s channeling of homosocial energy is more explicitly violent than Eugene’s cavalier plucking of insect wings, yet the latter’s response is the more terrifying for its carelessness. Although Lizzie flees before Eugene rather than following him, his pressure drives her on, and she cannot leave without having to rearrange her life and livelihood. That doubled hardship is a condemnation of Eugene’s taking up of space. He drives the woman he desires into flight, and then turns her absence into a pleasure for himself and pain for another. The search for the vanished woman is both a source of effort and a means of drawing Bradley after him.

⁶⁹ Dickens, 535.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

For Eugene, the differences between his nightly routes are unimportant except in so far as each route is yet another direction in which Bradley roams to no good effect. Bradley does not and will not find Lizzie, he finds only more anger to stoke his murderous desire. As with his disinclination to hear Bradley's name, Eugene's No Thoroughfares are established and delineated by a privileged refusal to care. Sameness of purpose eliminates the need for any specific description of routes. Desire, if it be here for Eugene, is a small pull toward Lizzie, and a large wish to bait Bradley into a murderous rage. His desire is to attract Bradley's attention and rage toward himself, rather than to find Lizzie (certainly not to marry her). The latter is hampered by Eugene's unclear sense of himself; it is much easier to acknowledge a pleasure behind him than to aim for something himself. Critics have noted the way that such walking scenes are linked with self-reflection. Walking, in this case, serves only to inscribe the city beneath their feet, connecting Eugene and Bradley step by step and turn by turn. With each corner Bradley ignores his knowledge of the city and allows his enemy control over his movements. He becomes familiar with a rather different London with only his obsession as guide. The men experience a city known only to them and only at night.

Straying Back to the Same Spot

John's relationship to the streets is methodical in its own way; he tests alleys and lanes systematically in search of recognition. He wanders in physical direction and in time, circling the same spot. Drugged and led in confusing circles, John from the past could not turn these streets into any usable mental map, and this confusion in place and time lingers on. The John narrating the chapter has returned to the same area, and his confusion again means that no matter how hard he tries or how much attention he pays, he can make no usable map from the streets. In spite of

his clear head and meticulous attention, the streets remain inseparable, as if the city has taken on an immunity to being known by him. These are streets that lead nowhere at all and which consequently are not recorded. Eugene's manipulation of London is external; he knows his way around and leads Bradley easily. John is both pursuer and pursued, and his confrontation with the city is largely internal. Although he also moves geographically outward, his motion springs from disorientation and desperation rather than sadism or pleasure. Eugene channels his desire for Lizzie into another relationship; John tries to impose a logic on his desires so that he can decide methodically to adopt one future identity or the other. His London is a city incorporated into his self rather than a self forced outward upon the streets.

The area covered by John is unrelievedly and intrusively urban, characterized by noise, damp weather, and confusing collections of lanes and alleys. It is crushed beneath the weight of its own details, detached from any larger sense of the city, where Eugene's walks are connected at a larger scale by virtue of their sameness. The urban and sensual particularity John faces results in the flattening of John's memory into snippets and sensations that refuse to cohere into a navigable narrative:

The wind was blowing so hard when the visitor came out at the shop-door into the darkness and dirt of Limehouse Hole, that it almost blew him in again. Doors were slamming violently, lamps were flickering or blown out, signs were rocking in their frames, the water of the kennels, wind-dispersed, flew about in drops like rain. Indifferent to the weather, and even preferring it to better weather for its clearance of the streets, the man looked about him with a scrutinizing glance. "Thus much I know," he murmured. "I have never been here since that night, and never was here before that night, but thus much I recognize. I wonder which way did we take when we came out of that shop. We turned to the right as I have turned, but I can recall no more. Did we go by this alley? Or down that little lane?"⁷¹

The wind becomes a force so powerful that it almost shifts John's course in and of itself, and the description immediately following is similarly replete with supposedly inanimate objects

⁷¹ Ibid., 359.

positioned as grammatical subjects—doors slam, lamps flicker, signs rock, and water from the gutters flows upward and outward. It is no wonder that John must ask himself which alley or lane he had taken on the night in question. These impressions leave him valuing his solitude in a crowded quarter of the city—he “prefer[s]” the lousy weather that has left the streets to him. If we recall here Georg Simmel’s concept of the adventure as simultaneously divorced from the regular stream of life and yet drawing part of its significance from the way in which it connects to that surrounding stream, we step closer to understanding John’s quarantining of this place and memory as one that has never been revisited. The singularity of the memory simultaneously increases its familiarity (it *had to be* this place and this night, which were never repeated) and its strangeness (it is recognizable precisely *by* its differentiation from the normal course of life and his inability to recover it).

Bewildered by the seeming infinitude of options, Harmon does what lost people often do: he tries each route in turn. For Eugene, each route he takes is more like a path checked off as one that Bradley has now followed him down. John, with each direction, tests his own memory, and every route fails in its apparent strangeness. He retraces his steps back to Rogue Riderhood’s leaving shop and boarding house, since it is the one location John can be sure of. From there each route fails to pan out. Of course, like many a pedestrian confronted with the homogeneity of roads available to him, John attempts to reassemble his course with ever more minute remembered impressions, circling more and more tightly around the same point, which nevertheless morphs perversely back into a generic slice of London:

[B]oth [alley and lane] confused him equally, and he came straying back to the same spot. “I remember there were poles pushed out of upper windows on which clothes were drying, and I remember a low public-house, and the sound flowing down a narrow passage belonging to it of the scraping of a fiddle and the shuffling of feet. But here are

all these things in the lane, and here are all these things in the alley. And I have nothing else in my mind but a wall, a dark doorway, a flight of stairs, and a room.”⁷²

In spite of the finer detail of Harmon’s memory (the poles and drying clothes, the sounds of the fiddle and shuffling feet), the path resolves over and over into unhelpful homogeneity. Rather than pinpointing the route he seeks to recreate, which passes through *the* lane and *the* alley, stairs, room, he finds only *a* wall, *a* doorway, *a* flight of stairs, *a* room. The indefinite article introduces these features as possibility only—a series of thresholds that entice with an opportunity that memory cannot fulfill. When John’s thoughts return below to the doorway, stairs, and room, it is as the possibilities he fails over and over to realize. Where Eugene pushes his psychological emptiness outward upon the city, John sees his potential restoration repeatedly fail. Yet the knowledge that they are around him *somewhere* suffices to hold his sense of self together—to fasten his drifting subjectivity to something that, though missing, remains knowable. The shape of the absence in his memory is somehow still defined enough to suffice.

Like John in body and mind, this passage circles back on itself, stranding the reader in a textual recreation of John’s personal dilemma. Indeed, the text posits this motion without advancement as typically human rather than particular to Harmon:

[L]ike most people so puzzled, he again and again described a circle, and found himself at the point from which he had begun. “This is like what I have read in narratives of escape from prison,” said he, “where the little track of the fugitives in the night always seems to take the shape of the great round world, on which they wander; as if it were a secret law.”⁷³

Rather than merely leaving him and the reader with the bewildering array of doorways and alleys, the circle itself begins to take on a form in the sense of a “secret law.” If John’s imaginary and doomed fugitives raise the question of *what* precisely John is fleeing, the elision of their course into the “shape of the great round world” itself suggests that part of his problem is the

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

extent to which his own efforts to find his bearings keep reproducing in new forms the same bewilderment he hopes to escape. This is an unintentional echo of Eugene's imposition upon Bradley; John imposes the bewilderment and stress upon himself that the barrister imposes upon Bradley. A semblance of order emerges out of the very frustration generated by being lost, as a pattern emerges from the repeated attempt to retrace his steps. Similarly, the plot and structure of the novel unfold and cohere for the reader—like a pedestrian roaming the streets of London, we approach the story with an understanding of its basic building blocks (doorways, stairs, rooms; conflicts, reversals, marriages). Although we trust that an intelligible end is in the offing, John here never actually reaches familiar ground, or if he does, he reaches it with no recognition.

Instead the knowledge that the absences in Harmon's memory have a certain shape, one legible from the edges where they touch the memories he *does* have, provides him with enough direction to continue. In the absence of any more concrete narrative, Harmon finds himself with only fleeting but intense slices of time, of "sick and deranged impressions" that "are so strong, that [he relies] upon them; but there are spaces between them that [he] know[s] nothing about, and they are not pervaded by any idea of time."⁷⁴ The memories' strength speaks to their validity, or perhaps to Harmon's inability to completely ignore what little information he has. Yet John is unable to reproduce in their entirety the spatialized connections between fragmentary sensations. It is precisely these spatialized and lost connections that John intends his journey from Riderhood's door to re-inscribe, and it is their disarray that prevents him from successfully retracing his steps. Having lost that spatial mooring, he becomes incapable, too, of really ordering events, or confining to specific moments and spans of time the impressions he still possesses.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 362.

Harmon's recounting of events is necessarily syntactically disjointed, which reflects his difficulty in assimilating his piecemeal memories into a coherent sense of self. He notes, for example, "I dropped down. Lying helpless on the ground, I was turned over by a foot. I was dragged by the neck into a corner. I heard men speak together. I was turned over by other feet." Bradley's self-respect is crushed into the dirt by Eugene. By contrast, John's body is kicked down, pressed into the pavement as something of no consequence, but even the gaps in his memory cannot strip him of his sense of self. In spite of his own linguistic foregrounding of a self—I, I, I as the repeated subject (and often first word) of each statement, that *I* rings false: "[I]t was not I. there was no such thing as I."⁷⁵ The pronoun acts as a mere placeholder for a fragmented identity. Like the spatial patterns that emerge from his missing memories, *I* gives a useful if somewhat fictitious shape to an essential absence. The reemergence of the being known (even to himself) as John Harmon from the river bursts into the narrative. Something about the experience is inherently inassimilable. In spite of this problem, mapping out the past proves simpler than planning out his future. He muses, "Now, is it all thought out?... To think it out through the future, is a harder though a much shorter task than to think it out through the past."⁷⁶ It is as if the original incident has magnified the problem Harmon already faced (do I become the John Harmon of my father's will and marry Bella? Do I instead become some other John Harmon entirely by refusal?) by allowing him the option of being someone who is no John Harmon at all. As he retraces his steps and fails, the routes Harmon traces refuse familiarity, each leaving an essential gap in memory that leaves him with a number of choices, each essentially disconnected from the John Harmon who disembarked from the ship.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 363.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 366.

Detours

J. Hillis Miller's still excellent reading of *Our Mutual Friend* locates the novel in a world "everywhere heavy with the debris of history. It is as though one had been set down in the midst of the ruins of an ancient city and were forced to live the dead life appropriate to it because everything around was still fabricated and valued."⁷⁷ In this sense, Miller overlaps with Ahmed—we are none of us free of the paths laid down before us. For John, Eugene, and others in the novel, "a certain route has already been mapped out for them, and everyone expects them to follow its itinerary."⁷⁸ Yet Miller's insistence that the characters of *Our Mutual Friend* have landed in "the ruins of an ancient city" is more specific. Of course, London itself, fictional or real, is built upon its Roman ruins. The London of *Our Mutual Friend* is not merely founded upon ruin but dragged back in time by it, confining its people to a "dead life." This link to the past can only be undone by a death, Miller argues, and John Harmon and Eugene Wrayburn succeed in reforming their connections to life and toward the future only after facing and incorporating their near deaths. This sense of "itinerary" differs from the guide books discussed in chapter two, yet imposes similar structures. Rather than a friendly romp around the metropole, largely intended for a stranger, Miller's itinerary is an implacable imposition of a route upon someone who already knows the city and who would, given the option, choose his own direction. Bodenheimer classifies both the Eugene-Bradley chase scene and John's attempted reconstruction as "psychic territory," and in the latter case trauma displaces and compounds Radfoot's deliberate "turns and doubles in city streets."⁷⁹ Radfoot's precautions, like Eugene's sadistic twists and about faces, leverage the disorienting and warping possibilities of urban streets, as if inflicting them on John and Bradley. Both men to an extent internalize this dark side

⁷⁷ Miller, 295.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Bodenheimer, 171.

of the city, but John works successfully to construct a personal narrative that incorporates his turns and disorientation without it undoing him.

Familial or class expectations for characters find an aggressive and direct instantiation in the routes that Eugene forces upon Bradley. This is a city experienced totally differently by the two men, in spite of their taking the same physical route. This difference is purposely exploited and increased by Eugene, the “guide” in this midnight excursion. Bradley deliberately uses the turns and warping of city to stoke his own rage. Each night of the chase is its own barb, creating a cumulative effect leading to his attempt on Eugene’s life. Bradley and Eugene bring out the worst in one another, seeing the darkest parts of themselves emerge in this partnership. Bradley acquires a map of London routes, each dripping with condescension and bringing out in him a murderous rage. Eugene uses the streets with the casual ease and disdain his class position affords him in relation to Bradley.

John’s workaround for his gap in memory plays out very differently than Eugene’s harnessing of the streets. The streets form a connection between Eugene and Bradley—Eugene leaves his own invisible trail, which Bradley follows as nearly as possible. The streets walked by John, by contrast, fail to connect him with his past self. He maps nothing, can follow nothing. Yet it is John who most easily remakes himself into a better version of himself. Eugene eventually also alters his life by marrying, having suffered his own near death and disfigurement. Eugene and John are more closely united by river than street, as each face and escapes his death in the Thames. Yet this remaking of the self via a reorientation towards the future instead of the past⁸⁰ cannot be affected without the rest of the city.

John tries to make the streets yield up their (and his) secrets but cannot. His sense of self and his ability to orient himself within the city both fail. He finds himself stuck a kind of

⁸⁰ Miller, 325.

feedback loop: his mental incapacity from the drug blocks his ability to create a mental map, that lack of mental map means he is still confused when he returns to the area, his confusion interferes with his ability to accurately recognize or map. John, like many of the texts discussed in chapter two, has limited space in which to store various geographic details, and they therefore must decide what does not make the final cut. John's method of staying on track is to bracket his missing memories as well as the streets in the area rather than painstakingly map his way through them. Faced with this two-pronged dilemma, John elects to cordon off that missing time and continue with the information he has.

This kind of compartmentalization is common enough, and is a much smaller version of the problem raised by Haultain in chapter one. The human mind cannot adequately confront a universal whole. John's case is more pedestrian and urban than the case of Haultain looking up at the droogs of India. A Londoner could hardly have been considered staring philosophically into the infinite, the limits faced by the human mind posed analogous problems of scale. At the level of the city, the walker must shunt some areas and people aside in order to function. John accepts an aporia in memory and place as a means of detouring around it. This gap in city and in mind blocks a potential problem in John's self-as-process. Aware of one of those incomplete pieces of his identity, he deploys a disguise as Radfoot in order to address that sense of incompleteness. Bradley, by contrast, experience streets that turn into a spatial analog of the psychic territory he cannot escape.

The individual encounter between character and street in *Our Mutual Friend* demonstrates deep connections between place and subjectivity, as well as the wide range of ways one can become "lost." The experience of disorientation is as varied as the characters, and the encounter between person and city is as crucial an aspect of the urban experience as the

encounter between people. The streets of the novel do not change in the sense of the physical historical changes discussed in chapter two; yet the streets do seem to change, mutating in response to the people walking them. John uses walking as a means of resolidifying his identity in the face of his confusion and lack of memory. Although he cannot precisely retrace his steps, John comes to terms with the area in the attempt. The contest between Bradley and Eugene functions quite differently. Their chase turns the city itself into a set of barbs, and their London is a shared one. It changes shape as the two of them play out their confrontations, becoming almost a form of communication between them. This literary representation of London makes the city party to the building of character and identity. In doing so, it responds to the more centrally codified representations discussed in chapter two. *Our Mutual Friend* revels in the city's changes and in the individual point of view. Allbut's attempt to precisely locate the very window of Eugene and Mortimer's office, which I discuss in chapter two, is an approach to the gentlemen's home that the novel itself complicates. Even supposing Allbut's mapping of fiction onto the city completely accords with Dickens's own imagination, the office, full of its kitchen utensils and domestic virtues, is a point of arrival that may differ greatly from person to person. It is this mutability of place and course that *Our Mutual Friend* displays as a liberating and terrifying feature of the city.

Chapter four discusses Wilkie Collins's *Armadale*, broadening the dissertation's focus beyond London. *Armadale*'s story spans from the West Indies back to London, and travel ranges from nearly constant walking to sails halfway across the world. Collins's protagonist, Ozias Midwinter, has been wandering since childhood, and the experience of walking has become a basic foundation of his subjectivity. When in doubt, he returns to the road, which is as homelike to him as Harmon's house is to him and his wife. The bodily experience, rather than the

geographic movement, is the point. In spite of this, Midwinter suffers severe anxiety about larger questions of guidance; the novel asks whether there is any such thing as fate. Midwinter wrestles with doubt about whether his ultimate destination is of his own choosing, or whether any course he chooses will lead him inescapably to the same end.

Chapter Four

A Vagabond Life: Wandering in Wilkie Collins's *Armadale*

I was vagabond enough to like the life...I'm not trying to distress you, sir; I'm only telling you the truth. The life with all its hardships was a life that fitted me, and the half-breed gypsy who gave me his name, ruffian as he was, was a ruffian I liked.

"It's not my fault," was all he said, as she slowly turned her head and looked at him. "They met together, and there was no parting them."

--Wilkie Collins, *Armadale*

Chapter three explored embodiment, travel, and cityscape in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*. I argued that acts of walking and wandering in *Our Mutual Friend* hinge upon a disconnect between self and body, or self and city. The body, in whole or in part, is easily conflated with property. The city becomes part of selves that are perpetually in process, and the city's role, parts, and characteristics shift in response to those subjectivities. City and character become mutually constitutive. I turn now to a contemporaneous novel, Wilkie Collins's *Armadale* (1864-1866) to explore the conflation of person and place on a wider scale. This chapter moves from a novel located almost entirely in London to one with a much more sprawling setting in which London is one place among many, and not the most important among them. This extends the geography of this project outward to include settings in continental Europe and the British West Indies. Where a plethora of characters in *Our Mutual Friend* inhabit a relatively small space, *Armadale* gives the bulk of its comparatively sprawling land- and sea-scape to far fewer characters. The relationship between space and person forms in correspondingly different ways.

In *Our Mutual Friend*, settings outside of England are largely hinted at, lying beyond the borders of the book: Bella's imagination creates lives of trade in exotic places, and John Harmon returns to London only as the man from Somewhere. The characters in *Armadale* move into those spaces, and the ocean itself becomes a site of motion, violence, and history. Places outside England are home in ways not evident in *Our Mutual Friend*.

The descent of property plays as important a role in *Armadale* as it does in *Our Mutual Friend*. From the start, the prologue establishes a preoccupation with past generations and the troubling, often intangible, legacies they transmit to the novel's protagonist, Ozias Midwinter. In the novel proper, the convoluted relationship between heritage and the present – between an ancestral or historical past and an intimately personal one – permeates the plot. Various types of inheritance fatally link two properties: one in England and one in Barbados. Each estate comes with its own history and sources of wealth, and each complicates the life of its heir, a haunting presence in *Armadale's* present. The inheritance of land and wealth carry with them an approval of the means they were acquired, and this approval, usually tacit, becomes part of an ongoing exploration of the descent of choices and their moral consequences. The long history attached to a family home is not always and only a source of pride, and the nature of home is rooted in both this longer history and in the heir's personal experiences. A "home" cannot be easily passed down to someone as a house, to someone who has never seen it or built their own memories and desires on its foundations.

The plot turns around Midwinter's close friendship with Allan Armadale, which is contrasted with, and complicated by, his eventual disastrous marriage to a con-artist named Lydia Gwilt. This friendship is a crossing of paths between two families that have crossed a generation before, and the legacies of that earlier meeting taint the later one. The tension

between Allan and Midwinter's friendship and a love triangle with Lydia plays out partly in the use of property on the estate. It is Allan's own desire for a relationship with Midwinter that opens the way for Lydia's entrance into the area and the narrative. Allan literally rearranges the Armadale family property when he takes possession, taking Midwinter into the family house and renting out the estate's cottage. Lydia arrives due to a desire for the property but also due to a close connection with the family histories, and for all three characters, desire, history, and property collide in the present and resist differentiation. Questions of moral or immoral acquisition of wealth blend with similar questions of desire, and even Lydia—the closest main character to a villain in *Armadale*—sometimes struggles toward moral actions and cannot entirely give herself up to immoral gains.

Navigating such physical and psychological quandaries requires the ability to move flexibly, and Midwinter's body becomes *Armadale's* central vehicle for this process. Midwinter is a habitual walker whose movements unsettle others more than himself, and the prominence of Midwinter's body ensures that the problems of bodies in general remain at the heart of the text. The individual body cannot be separated from a larger history, and Midwinter's wandering and displacement result from a past and present marked by wider social and physical violence, racism, and poverty. Caroline Reitz calls the plot a "game of unprincipled colonial roulette" in which names and money sew a "trail of crime" across the setting of the novel.¹ The novel struggles to escape a colonial past that an older sense of Englishness does not wholly incorporate, and movement of various kinds leads to eruptions of immoral and sometime fatal consequences. As in *Our Mutual Friend*, the line between a body as literal or metaphoric property sometimes blurs, but *Armadale* does not shed the legacy of slavery, wherein some

¹ Caroline Reitz, "Colonial 'Gwilt': In and Around Wilkie Collins's *Armadale*," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 95.

bodies are always property. Specifically, the prologue establishes confluences of people and land as family holdings in the Barbados. The novel purports to leave Barbados behind structurally, in the prologue, and chronologically, in moving back a full generation before the main plot. This legacy proves that some things cannot be wholly left behind, no matter which direction a person moves.

Although the specter of Barbados gets subsumed into events closer in time and space to those of the central narrative, its presence haunts the novel in much the same way that India follows characters in Collin's later novel, *The Moonstone* (1868). The titular jewel of *The Moonstone* is an Indian gem of great cultural and financial worth that comes to England as the result of murder and theft by British forces. A group of mysterious Indians appear in England in search of it, and seemingly disappear and reappear from nowhere, with no travel between places. Their movement is erased, and yet they form a link between India and the jewel no matter where the gemstone is taken. The violent history in *Armadale* is more clearly institutionalized, and not embodied in any one symbolic stone. Instead it is transformed into other income, dispersed into other places. The Barbados property is sold, its proceeds passed on, and the past enters England in other bodies and secrets. Its presence in England is not an identifiable curse someone could undo—it is a flowering of racism and imperialism already present.

I begin this exploration with Midwinter's body and its unsettling effects upon others. These effects arise from his mixed race and an early illness, which at points appear to be the same. Midwinter's restlessness opens up the novel along several other axes: family and stranger; England and her colonies; text and identity; a traditional landed estate and a home on the road; free will and fate. Deliberate wandering, both psychic and physical, is a means of investigating otherwise bewildering and overlapping influences along such axes. I then examine the particulars

of the family history and property; throughout, naming and inheritance prevent tracing people and events. Distance, which finds its most prominent geographic form in the ocean, enables much of this confusion. For instance, it makes possible a forgery of letters and imposture that paves the way for a key marriage between two characters. It also erases the personal and family pasts of slaves in Barbados, without whose labor the Wrentmore estate, which eventually passes to Midwinter. Distance further helps erase the slave trade itself, which can be tidied away to the West Indies, its consequences largely ignored until they reappear in the narrative. Such banishment and erasure of person and place depends upon the silence distance enables. Midwinter and other characters struggle to unwind the threads of events, relying upon guides ranging from correspondence to ominous dreams. The malleable definition of “guide” is part of the problem. The question of who knows or what knows lies at the heart of *Armada*, and the wandering and drift of the novel are means of enacting guidance of varying kinds. The restlessness embodied by Midwinter and the intrusion of other marked bodies, destabilize the concept of home for Midwinter and others.

“Running in his mind”

Armada's first description of the adult Midwinter is one of struggle. Midwinter's body from the outset is associated with madness or illness, a mixed-race foreignness, and savage- or even animal-like features. He has been turned out of his position as an usher at a school due to a serious illness, at which point the young man's feverish wanderings lead him to a small coastal town in Somersetshire, where local laborers then guide him to an inn. The stranger has a “disordered state of mind which looked to [farm laborers'] eyes like downright madness.”² There he first appears in a chair, straining against two men holding him down, as the local doctor

² Wilkie Collins, *Armada*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 67.

attempts to examine him. The rector, Decimus Brock, also looks on. The stranger has a “foreign look,” with “tawny” skin, dark eyes, hair, and beard. His hands are “dusky...wiry...nervous,” and scarred. The presumably more reassuring fact that his clothing is clean gets buried in the description between this “foreign look” and a commentary on the way his toes move around in the manner of those “accustomed to go barefoot.” Midwinter is in a “frenzy” that prevents any closer examination.³ The overall impression is one of a dark, savage man struggling mindlessly against the hands of compassionate – and implicitly white – Englishmen; his mixed race body is a bundle of aggression and illness, and his urge to move does not at all fade when the fever abates.

These negative associations persist in Midwinter’s body, regardless of his actual health. The resulting impression is alienating to others, even those who, like Brock, intend to act with faith and kindness. Yet Midwinter in recovery looks little better to Brock than he had in sickness. If anything, his later impression of Midwinter is wilder: he notes a yellow handkerchief tied around a shaved head, cheeks that remain tawny and are now also “haggard,” eyes now “preternaturally large and wild,” beard “rough,” and fingers “supple, sinewy...wasted by suffering till they looked like claws.”⁴ Midwinter’s body remains full of nervous motion, although his mind has cleared. In a sharp contrast, the disturbing motion in Midwinter’s brown fingers and “yellow face” makes Brock’s “healthy Anglo-Saxon flesh” creep.⁵ In this way, Midwinter’s body is still aligned with foreignness, illness and savagery, and the Anglo-Saxon one with health. Brock’s immediate impulse is to cast Midwinter adrift again, sending him on his way and deferring his health and happiness to the future. This continues a pattern of people pressing transiency upon Midwinter, identifying his body with restlessness as if that quality were

³ Ibid., 67-68.

⁴ Ibid., 73.

⁵ Ibid.

innate. Losing his position as an usher is only the latest in a long series of displacements for Midwinter, and this perpetual leaving has turned him into a man always on his legs. Like the scars on his hands and the flexibility of his toes, the restlessness of his body reveals part of his past.

Midwinter internalizes the biases evident in Brock's opinion of the stranger's collection of unpromising features. Midwinter, one of many characters actually named Allan Armadale, has lived most of his life as a vagabond. After having run away from school as a child, he takes a new name, Ozias Midwinter, from a wandering "half-breed gypsy" who readily invites the eleven year old Midwinter to join him in his life of poverty and roving entertainment.⁶ His name change and partnership further align Midwinter with his new benefactor, a "ruffian" he admits he liked. The pejorative term "half-breed" derides a mixed race as in and of itself inferior, while "gypsy" specifically targets itinerancy, both could apply to Midwinter himself, and both are terms the rector reads in his body. When Brock prompts him for details, Midwinter's unabashed account of himself causes his listener considerable distress. His life story is itself upsetting, but so is his unflinching acceptance of it. In circular fashion, signs like Midwinter's scars and his increasingly long history of instability become one more reason for the next people he encounters to doubt him. These movements become so intrinsic that later, when faced with confusion or self-doubt, he sets out again, re-accustoming his body to hardship as a means of settling his mind and spirit.

Motion becomes the best method for Midwinter to return to himself. His account of himself to Brock demonstrates the equanimity with which he regards such setbacks:

He had only filled the usher's situation for ten days when the first appearance of his illness caused his dismissal. How he had reached the field in which he had been found was more than he could say. He remembered traveling a long distance by railway,

⁶ Ibid., 107.

with a purpose (if he had a purpose) which it was now impossible to recall, and then wandering coastward, on foot, all through the day, or all through the night—he was not sure which. The sea kept running in his mind when his mind began to give way.⁷

The tone of the passage does not vary even though the events he recounts become increasingly disturbing. The aside, “if he had a purpose,” interrupts the description of wandering so that it becomes impossible for even Midwinter himself to impose a clear narrative on his past movements. The aside also opens the larger question of whether Midwinter has a purpose in life at all. Night and day are indistinguishable, leaving only the impression of Midwinter working his way toward the coast with “the sea...running in his mind when his mind beg[ins] to give way.” The waves churn around in an internal sign of the restlessness that Brock finds so upsetting in Midwinter’s body. This running is long-term, habitual even, and it is unclear whether Midwinter, now sitting in better health, has actually lost that motion of the sea. This image may explain why Midwinter has been traveling toward the coast, but there is no reason to suppose that reaching the ocean would abate that restlessness within him. That the sea runs in his mind at the point when his mind gives way may or may not be the cause. “Giving way” is similarly ambiguous. The phrase commonly suggests a breach: in this case, Midwinter’s mind losing strength in the face of the pressure of illness. Whatever part of Midwinter that has been shoring up his mind since childhood is finally breaking down. Yet to “give way” is also the order to a boat’s crew to resume rowing, or to increase their exertions.⁸ This sense is closer to an exhortation to plow onward, and Midwinter’s mind would instead be pressing forward with renewed urgency.

This contradiction within Midwinter, the pressure upon his mind and his struggle to overcome it, represents the tension at the heart of the book. Like the tide moving in and out, various forces in the novel wax and wane, spurring revelations and silences in turn. Midwinter

⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁸ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 3rd ed., s. v. “give,” accessed Aug. 2019.

embodies this rhythm in physical and psychological vacillations. These vacillations are not confined to Midwinter, however. His own restlessness extends outward, eventually distributing itself to other people. This is particularly true of the man who becomes his closest friend, Allan Armadale; the friends form a link that allows them to adapt to changing circumstances without losing one another. Allan is an impulsive young man living in town with his widowed mother, who meets Midwinter soon after the latter's arrival at the inn. He interests himself in Midwinter's care and assures payment for both the doctor's services and Midwinter's stay at the inn. The two form an instant attachment; Midwinter is overwhelmed by gratitude for Allan's kindness, and Allan is enchanted by Midwinter's difference from all the other men he has known. The two also share an appreciation for the sea. Allan's mother, however, instantly distrusts Midwinter, and asks Brock to question Midwinter.

Taking Brock's pointed interrogation as a hint, Midwinter departs for London. There, having just come of age, he receives an inheritance of a modest income and a letter that will change his life. These place him in knowing possession of the consequences—material and psychological—of what turn out to be his father's bloody deeds. The message, written by Midwinter's father on his deathbed to his then infant son, tells the overlapping and confusing histories of Allan's and Midwinter's families. The author predicts dire consequences if his son is not careful in navigating any encounters related to this history. Allan's father (also named Allan Armadale) has been disinherited, losing the family property in Barbados and being sent away in disgrace. He adopts the alias Fergus Ingleby and travels to the West Indies to take revenge on the new heir, a distant relative named Allan Wrentmore, who later becomes Midwinter's father and the eventual author of this letter. For the sake of clarity, I will continue to refer to Midwinter's

father by his original name, Wrentmore, and to Allan's father by his alias, Ingleby; I also include a diagram of the name changes within the novel (figure 4.1).

Wrentmore describes himself as having passed his youth “in idleness and self-indulgence, among people—slaves and half-castes mostly—to whom [his] will was law.”⁹ This privileged upbringing instills in him casual malice and zero self-control. The callousness of his regard for other people is further reflected when Wrentmore “seize[s] [someone else's] servant by the throat in a frenzy of rage...speaking to him as if he had been one of the slaves on [his] own estate.”¹⁰ The ease with which Wrentmore transfers the brutality he aims at his slaves to another person's servant indicates that his anger is not only indefensible but also undisciplined, and this quality primes him for the murderous rage he later acts upon. The addition of the Armadale property, which he receives on the condition that he and his heirs also take the name Allan Armadale, to his own makes Wrentmore “the largest proprietor and the richest man in Barbados.”¹¹ This gives him a power built upon the backs of others, and his attitudes toward the property in land and property in people prove similar.

Events rapidly turn treacherous when Ingleby arrives in Barbados. Feeling robbed of his property, he decides to rob Wrentmore of his proposed wife. Wrentmore's mother has arranged, by correspondence with an old flame, a possible marriage between her son and his daughter, Miss Blanchard. The Blanchards have been living in Madeira, and Wrentmore plans to stop there on his way to England. Ingleby, however, having wormed his way into Wrentmore's friendship, takes his place, marrying the young lady instead. Miss Blanchard assists Ingleby in this with the help of her young maid, Lydia Gwilt, who forges the correspondence from Mrs. Wrentmore to Blanchard necessary to finish the marriage arrangements. In response, Wrentmore murders

⁹ Collins, 31.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

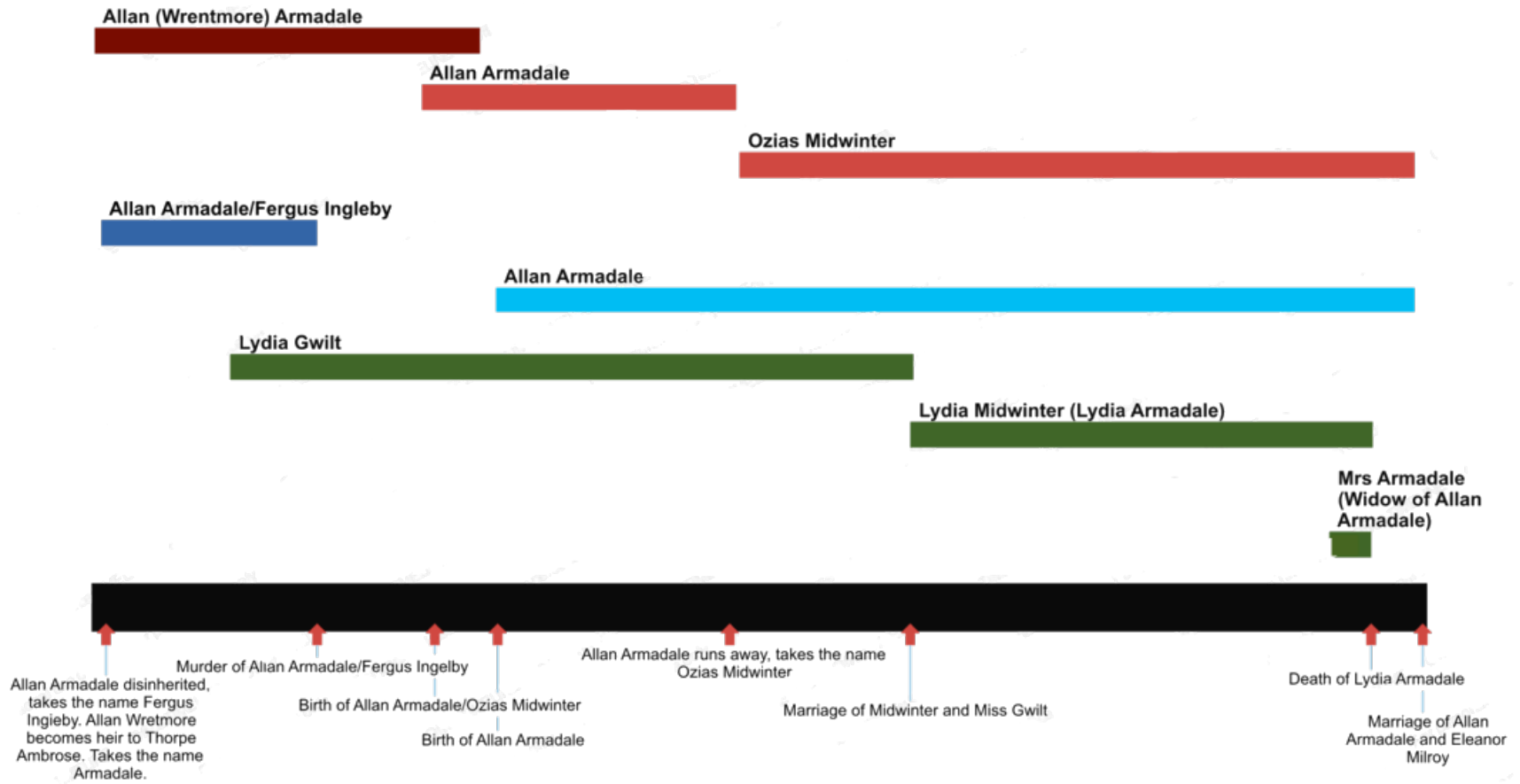


Figure 4.1: Name Changes in Wilkie Collins's *Armadale*, 2019.

Ingleby aboard *La Grace de Dieu*, a French timber ship. Ingleby's widow has a son, whom she names Allan. Wrentmore eventually also marries; his wife is a woman of "mixed blood of the European and the African race" from Trinidad,¹ and they likewise have a son whom they name Allan. Midwinter thus inherits his mixed blood from his mother, who is one of the "half-caste" people in the West Indies. Stricken by a superstitious dread when he finds that there are again two Allan Armadales in one generation, Wrentmore considers giving up the Armadale name and therefore the Barbados property. He elects not to, fearing that the possible emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies would devalue property, and leave Midwinter and his mother unable to support themselves. His only response to the idea of emancipation is to worry about the impact it would have upon his own and his family's wealth.

As is doubtless clear from this summary, in spite of the novel's perhaps tongue-in-cheek assertion that young Allan's succession to the estate of Thorpe Ambrose is the product of a "clear sequence of events,"² the reader is inevitably set adrift in a sea of people and plot points, some of which echo one another, bewildering in their vagaries. In fact, the very writing of the summary given in Wrentmore's letter leads to further complications. After Wrentmore's death, his widow marries Alexander Neal, the Scot who takes down Wrentmore's letter for the dying man. Neal and Midwinter's mother know, irrevocably, that Wrentmore murdered his rival, and that Midwinter himself will one day know it. In retrospect, Midwinter believes that this awareness colored their treatment of him, which becomes abusive, leading him to run away. Meanwhile, Allan's mother, estranged from her family due to her marriage, begins raising Allan in the small seaside town which Midwinter one day staggers into.

¹ Ibid., 23.

² Ibid., 93.

“A stranger's hand”

Midwinter's scarred hands could, he fears, kill Allan as easily as his father killed Ingleby, but they are not the only hands with significance. Neal's hand takes down the letter passed to Midwinter, but it is also the hand that whips him and locks him in a shed. Brock, having hinted that Midwinter is not fit company for Allan, starts to take Midwinter by the hand but “with a sudden misgiving, confusedly dr[aws] it back again.”³ Later, Midwinter vividly imagines the ghost of his father's hand, shutting Ingleby in the hold of *La Grace de Dieu* to drown. Like the famous hand on Hartwright's shoulder in Collins's earlier novel *The Woman in White* (1859), hands here can be arresting and terrifying. However, between Allan and Midwinter they also embody friendship, summoning one another back from deep distraction or horror, reassuring or hearty. In one way or another, hands in *Armadale* are guiding ones, and as evidenced by Neal's signature on the letter to Midwinter, hands can have multiple effects, and cross the borders between stranger and intimate acquaintance.

Wrentmore attempts to keep his wife from learning that he is a murderer, refusing to let her stay as Neal begins writing at Wrentmore's direction. Such decisions respond to and even produce emotional distances between characters. Wrentmore's determination to hide the truth from his wife, for instance, leaves him reliant upon Neal and the attending physician in Wildbad. When Neal observes that Wrentmore has “excluded Mrs. Armadale [his wife]...from a place in [his] confidence...[and is] now offering the same place to two men who are total strangers to [him],” Wrentmore replies “Yes...*because* you are strangers.”⁴ The lack of familiarity between Wrentmore and Neal, and that between Wrentmore and the doctor, makes the confession possible. The gentlemen mean nothing to Wrentmore, who disregards their opinions. This

³ Ibid., 75.

⁴ Ibid., 47.

confidence, however, pulls Neal and the doctor into paradoxically and reluctantly intimate contact with Wrentmore; they are, at once, strangers and intimates, privy to the most private moments of his life. This tension between family and stranger resurfaces elsewhere in the novel. Allan falls dramatically for Midwinter because of his otherness, and Midwinter erupts into “savage rapture of gratitude and surprise” at Allan’s basic kindness to him.⁵ Midwinter guards the secret of the murder from his friend, sometimes at considerable cost to himself. Yet he reveals the whole story to Brock in an attempt to foster trust, when Brock must leave his charge alone with Midwinter. Intimate details pass from one character to another in spite or because they are strangers, and fast friendships form in response to social distance.

Wrentmore’s message to his son is only the first of three deathbed letters all addressed to Midwinter (the one from Wrentmore, one from Brock, and one from Lydia Gwilt). Each establishes a bridge from the dead to the living in which death, the ultimate estrangement, is temporarily overcome by the sharing of intimate thoughts. With the possibility of physical touch gone by, the writer substitutes his hand on paper and in doing so gives Midwinter something to handle over and over, keeping it carefully in his pocket until he at length burns it. The exact sequence of events conveyed by Wrentmore to Midwinter and the reader is less important than what the letter means for him and for the narrative that follows. It becomes the center of an epistemic struggle between fate and free will. Like Midwinter and, as it later turns out, *La Grace de Dieu*, the contents of the letter refuse to stay in one place. His father’s dire warning means to provide Midwinter with a guide to future conduct, but the intrusion of the letter into the present of the novel only hamstring his decision-making. Confusion works itself out both in the physical wandering of characters and at the level of textual digression. The indecisive movements of characters enable pervasive scenes of delay, suspense, miscommunication, and

⁵ Ibid., 75.

prevarication between characters. At various scales, the texts within the novel break their structural bounds and spill forward into later sections and elements of the novel, which in turn persistently refuse to confine the sins of the fathers to the prologue as the letter and its contents keep erupting into Midwinter and Allan's present. Even after Midwinter destroys the letter, its words of warning remain with him, leaving him stalled between his knowledge of the past and his father's warning to be ever on the watch for future misfortunes, or, in other words, the "treachery that is the offspring of *his* [Ingleby's] treachery, and crime that is the child of [Wrentmore's] crime."⁶ Even more than the potential negative consequences to himself if his father's crime becomes known, Midwinter fears a repetition of the injury itself—some way in which he might physically or psychologically harm Allan, some way in which he might unwittingly resemble his father in more than name.

Because the text of this letter to Midwinter is the first and most pervasive of several documents which remain intrusively present for remainder of the novel and which Michael Tondre has aptly called "toxic text[s],"⁷ it is worth examining it at greater length. Wrentmore spends the bulk of the letter relating to his son the events leading him to murder his rival in detail. He closes, however, with an impassioned and superstitious warning. Midwinter's father's closes: "My son! the only hope I have left for you hangs on a great doubt—the doubt whether we are, or are not, the masters of our own destinies. It may be that mortal free-will can conquer mortal fate; and that going, as we all do, inevitably to death, we go inevitably to nothing that is before death."⁸ The doubt that Wrentmore expresses permeates the novel with paralyzing effects. The question is almost always the same: to what extent, or in what respect, does each person

⁶ Ibid., 54.

⁷ Michael Tondre, "'The Interval of Expectation: Delay, Delusion, and the Psychology of Suspense in *Armada*,'" *ELH*, vol. 78, no. 3 (2011): 585-608.

⁸ Collins, 55.

control their own fate and thus identity? Wrentmore expresses his specific fears in relation to the larger, amorphous, human journey of “going, as we all do, inevitably to death.” He intends his warning to act as a potential insurance for Midwinter against those more micro workings of fate—dangers on the route that one takes *to* death. Since these dangers springing from Wrentmore’s own actions may well carry forward beyond his death and into Midwinter’s adulthood, he sends this letter forward as a textual guide: steer clear of these people and places, avoid any intimacy if it connects you with them.

Wrentmore warns his son against specific encounters and relationships, leaving Midwinter with a set of instructions which, at the micro-level refuses to stay confined to parallel structures within the letter, and which, on the scale of the novel, refuses to stay confined to Midwinter’s past. It reads:

Never, to your dying day, let any living soul approach you who is associated, directly or indirectly, with the crime which your father has committed. Avoid the widow of the man I killed—if the widow still lives. Avoid the maid whose wicked hand smoothed the way to the marriage—if the maid is still in her service. And more than all, avoid the man who bears the same name as your own. Offend your best benefactor, if that benefactor connected you one with the other. Desert the woman who loves you, if that woman is a link between you and him. Hide yourself from him under an assumed name. Put the mountains and the seas between you; be ungrateful, be unforgiving; be all that is most repellent to your own gentler nature, rather than live under the same rock and breathe the same air with that man. Never let the two Allan Armadales meet in this world: never, never, never!⁹

Thematically, the letter establishes the set of injunctions and the course from which Midwinter will then deviate; indeed, his actions can only become recognizable *as* deviation in the wake of the letter. The series of imperatives (itself a spur to action that propels Midwinter and the reader forward) consists predominantly of commands to move: avoid, desert, hide yourself, put the mountains and the seas between you. Midwinter struggles to pull away from Allan physically and emotionally and from Brock, his “best benefactor”; he tries and fails to separate himself

⁹ Ibid., 55-56.

from “that woman” Lydia Gwilt, who herself eventually tries to murder Allan; he has *already* taken an assumed name by the time he meets Allan at the opening of the novel, albeit for reasons of his own. Wrentmore’s cautions can only backfire by establishing a tension between past and present that obscures the difference between right and wrong courses of action for Midwinter.

Syntactically, the passage also establishes a line of motion from which it inevitably strays, and Midwinter’s sense of self follows a similar pattern. The letter prompts him to choose his actions against a series of prohibitions—presupposing his character as a life always in danger of exceeding its bounds. The parallelism in this section of the letter begins with deceptive rhythm; although it opens with very structured sentences, that structure breaks down increasingly as the passage continues. Thus the list of persons to “avoid” is always followed by a neat qualifier “—if [said person resurfaces].” So too, “Hide yourself from him under an assumed name” initially seems balanced with “Put the mountain and the seas between you;” but this second sentence then elongates, incorporating additional parallel structures. “[B]e ungrateful, be unforgiving” spills over into the longer “be all that is most repellant to your own gentler nature.” Like the persistently expanding presence of the letter’s contents within the novel itself, the warning keeps expanding beyond its original sentence structure. Similarly, the closing “never, never, never!” merely emphatically repeats the sentence’s opening word in an apparent loss of emotional control on the part of its author. Midwinter’s similar inability to let go of the past and, in particular, his fears about the future, drives most of the plot.

The letter’s closing lines literalize this threatening mirror of past in present, as Wrentmore describes the young Midwinter “lying on [his] breast, sleeping the innocent sleep of a child, while a stranger's hand writes these words for you.”¹⁰ This is the only portion of the letter that foregrounds the presence of its audience—the baby, Neal, and the doctor—and its

¹⁰ Ibid., 56.

sudden inclusion of those others must be jarring to Midwinter. In effect, two Midwinters stand momentarily opposed, the child and the man. The elder also reads about the “stranger’s hand” when that “stranger” has long since become his stepfather. The partial domestication of the figure of Neal, and the reminder that Midwinter’s past includes other, earlier, selves open the door for an additional problem. If Neal can turn from a distant signature on the fateful letter into a violent presence in his life, perhaps other figures from the letter can as well. This closing gesture of encompassment threatens to likewise fold Wrentmore’s history and actions, with all their violence into Midwinter’s life, and it reinforces his growing dread.

Shipwreck

The presence of the letter from his father creates and complicates Midwinter’s attempts to forestall events, and it contributes to his difficulty in telling fate from self-determination. This difficulty takes the form of repeated hesitation, almost to the point of paralysis, which is thematically figured as a shipwreck. The letter and the knowledge it conveys of the murder aboard the ship *La Grace de Dieu* prefigure the vessel’s return. Midwinter regards the reemergence of the ship as the most ominous event he encounters. *La Grace de Dieu* does not entirely sink; instead, it moves across the sea and through time, seemingly waiting for Allan and Midwinter. While stopped at Castletown for repairs to Allan’s yacht, the friends fall in with a Dr. Hawbury, who lends Allan his personal boat for a midnight cruise. Midwinter accompanies him on a sail between the Isle of Man and the Calf, where they come upon the wreck of *La Grace de Dieu*. They clamber aboard in very different moods: Allan is oblivious to the ship’s part in his own personal history and excited by the find, but Midwinter is nearly overpowered by superstitious terror. Since Allan forgets to secure their borrowed boat alongside, they are forced

to spend the night on the wreck. There the incongruity of Allan's hearty obliviousness increases Midwinter's fear. As Allan investigates all unknowingly the very cabin in which his father was left to drown, his unconscious repetition of the circumstances creates a haunting effect.

Midwinter clutches Allan's collar when his friend reaches for the cabin door. The contrast in moods is worsened when, as a tormented Midwinter tells him he sees a ghost like Allan in the cabin and a ghost like himself locking him in, Allan "la[ys] his strong hand on the crazy lock, and t[ears] open the cabin door," crying "Ghost of Allan Armadale, come on deck!" and then leans in laughing at the place where his father died.¹¹ If the ship does not hold ghosts, per se, the presence of Allan and Midwinter upon the wreck echoes the circumstances of their fathers' fatal meeting.

This ghostliness is a function of the ship itself, which mysteriously drops out of sight only to return with its cargo of misery. *La Grace de Dieu* appeared to sink away from the narrative in the prologue, a generation ago off the coast of Madeira. And yet, it remains intact enough for Midwinter and Allan to board her and spend the night. It is a place that the friends can visit, but also a body that has followed their families. Like Midwinter's scarred hands and disturbingly flexible feet, the ship bears the marks of its past. The wheelhouse and binnacle are gone, but the cabin door remains, locked as if never opened. The ship's history is darker than Midwinter's. It brings with it a legacy of murder, a memory of the night that Wrentmore boarded the ship in a storm, rescued Ingleby's widow, and then locked his rival below to die. As a part of the narrative of Wrentmore's journey from Barbados to England, the ship carries broader history with it. In being the location where Ingleby and Wrentmore played out the last scene of their dispute, *La Grace de Dieu* pulls the narrative into the ocean and toward the other bodies it buries, giving voice to the dead.

¹¹ Ibid., 150.

The letter's textual intrusion appears ahead of the ship itself as a warning. This slippage between text and ship, and between generations of Armadales, presents a problem of interpretation in which experiences and perspectives elide and must be sifted out. Midwinter's impulse is to take the reappearance of the ship and subsequent events as an omen and guide, but he hopes it means nothing, and if it must mean something, he is uncertain how to read it. This problem becomes focused in a dream Allan has after he stretches out on the deck and sleeps. Allan is visited by a dream of which Midwinter demands a detailed account and then elevates to the status of *the Dream*. He records it and, like his father's letter, keeps it in his pocket, believing it to be a dark portent. The Dream's content is dramatic enough to invite interpretation and vague enough to frustrate it. Allan encounters the shadow of a woman and a man, and then the shadow of both in varying contexts, each building up to indicate what seems to be a danger to the dreamer. The Dream is inaccessible to Midwinter except through Allan's narration, and his anxiety of interpretation emphasizes this distance.¹² The one man has all the supposed knowledge, and the other all the sense of urgency about it. That is to say, the Dream poses a problem of perspective and access to information such that it is unclear who has the greater authority of meaning. On the one hand, Doctor Hawbury's subsequent systematic and condescending dissection of Allan's dream results in extreme tension between the three men but is based upon medical science. On the other hand, Midwinter believes he has important context that he cannot share with the doctor or with Allan, but which still takes precedence over the doctor's method. Allan does his best to mediate between two obstinate and mildly offensive debaters and satisfies no one. His private exhortation that Midwinter tear up his account of the dream fails, as does his request that his friend leave off thinking of the problem.

¹² For an extended discussion of *Armadales*'s layers of mediation, see Audrey Jaffe, *The Victorian Novel Dreams of the Real: Conventions and Ideology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

In this kind of superstitious tenacity, Midwinter never leaves the wreck, and the motionlessness of the ship upon the rocks takes on a psychological equivalent. Unlike John Harmon, who in practicality compartmentalizes his doubt, Midwinter remains effectively stranded on the ship. Although the ship itself only appears twice in the novel, the sensation of being stranded upon it permeates the rest of the text. This stasis is apparent on cover of the first edition of 1866 from Smith, Elder and Co., which features a small boat and responds to the pivotal import of the events (figure 4.2). The image, embossed in gold on red, is a rendering of Allan and Midwinter, on their ill-fated moonlight voyage in Dr. Hawbury's boat, as they approach the wreck of the larger ship looming nearby. The craft has a single sail and pennant flying, and "Allan" written on the prow. Two men sit facing one another in the boat, one working the tiller. A field of stars rises up to frame the sail in a triangle, and it gives way to mirroring waves underneath, giving the image the rough shape of a diamond. Out of the waves rises a sea serpent, small pieces of its coils emerging from the water in front of the boat, with its tail curling behind. Its face rises up, level with the heads of the men, giving the impression that the serpent and the man facing it are making eye contact in a moment of breathless pause. The reflection between the men—one facing the other, each named Allan Armadale—suggests the interpretive slippage. The doubling upon the wreck of past in present (and perhaps the future predicted in the present) is the source of the wreck's real terror. The serpent has no literal presence in the text itself. Its sinuous emergence and submergence rise and fall like Midwinter's frequent drops into superstitious dread. Only one occupant of the boat faces the monster's head; the other may be oblivious to it. In effect, the image crystallizes the relationship between Midwinter and Allan: they remain frozen on that boat, approaching the wreck, regarding one another but surrounded and threatened by sinuous (and possibly fantastic) forces. Flighty Allan will always be in danger

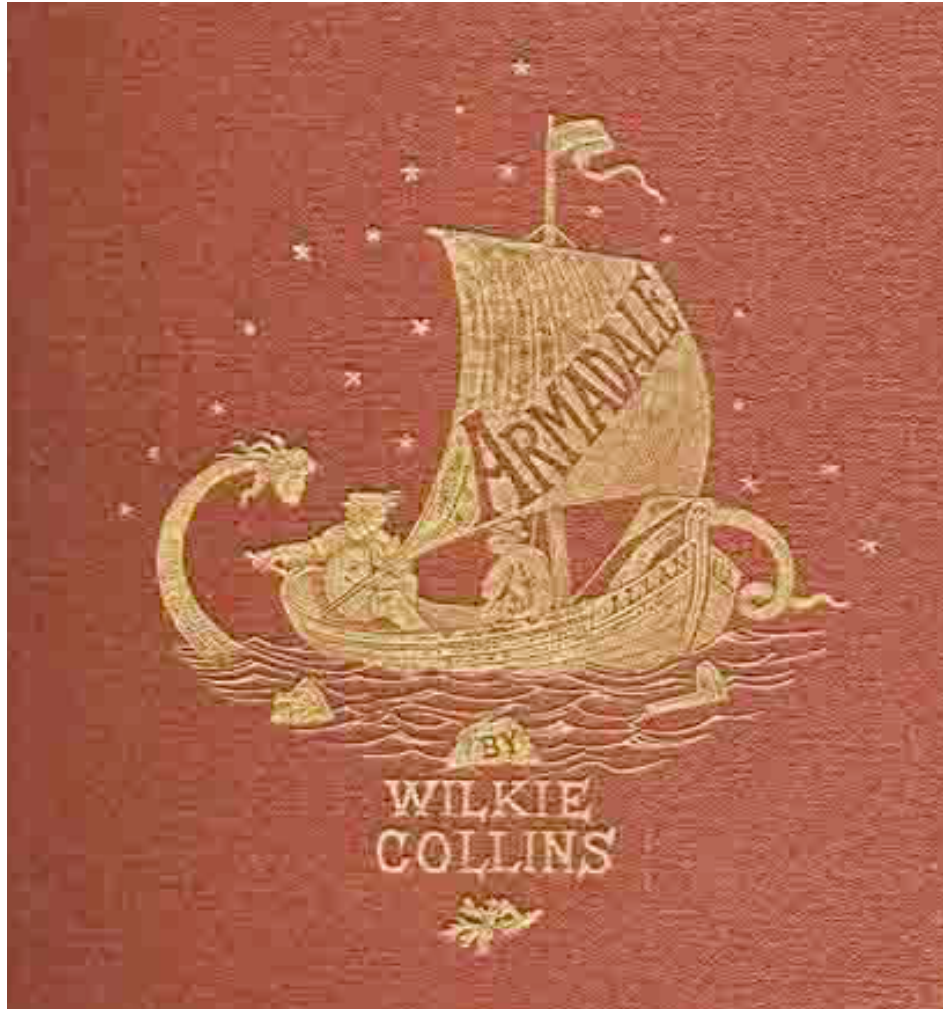


Figure 4.2: First edition book cover, London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1866.

of letting their ride home drift off, and Midwinter will always be hyperaware of the monster, real or fictional, in the deep.

Worse yet, the influence of the ship grows outward into the narrative after its return, accruing ominous associations and spreading until it invades places and times it has never been. Its ominousness lies in its ability to vanish and reemerge, crossing vast seas but arriving in perfect stillness where least expected. The vessel, having drifted from the neighborhood of Madeira northward to the Isle of Man, emerges, still upon the rocks, as if it has always been

there. Like a ghost (it is the ghost of the ship, just as the ghost of Armadale lingers behind the locked cabin door), it has sprung up seemingly solely to confront Midwinter. The ship gains import from Allan's dream, the interpretive possibility of which is broad enough to apply to a wide variety of circumstances. Its essence, or Midwinter's dread about it, returns at intervals in the novel with all the force of that wreck springing up out of the rocks and the shadows. It intrudes into other parts of the narrative or even other geographies. For example, during a picnic later organized by Allan, Lydia Gwilt's silhouette starkly emerges from the landscape, appearing to Midwinter as a fulfillment of part of the Dream. Suddenly Midwinter is trapped in the grip of the wreck. His renewed impression of the wreck finds an apparent validation in her figure at the lake. The wreck thus spreads outward into other scenes and regions, freed of its ties to the sea. Each time they appear, the wreck and the Dream seize control of Midwinter's mind and the setting in which he finds himself, as if the Dream overwrites place. This sense of shipwreck, wherein Midwinter is anchored to a past, always on the verge of being trapped and drowned by it, is opposed by his restless walking as if enough motion and thought will sever him from his family's past and help him avoid the descent into betrayal and murder he fears lies ahead.

The Vagabond Animal, or the Vagabond Man

Midwinter's body and past mark him as an outsider to other characters. He is more used to being the spectacle than the observer, aligning him more with the sights described in the guidebooks I discussed in chapter two than their readers. He believes himself unfit to be a gentleman's friend, because he cannot be easily assimilated into the narrative of such a life. Yet he is inexorably drawn toward Allan Armadale, in the grip of a tacitly homoerotic desire that thrills and tears at him. Unlike Mortimer and Eugene's relationship in *Our Mutual Friend*, which

I discussed in chapter three, Midwinter's relationship with Allan is fierce and at times uncomfortable rather than calm and sweet. Eve Sedgwick cites this relationship in passing as resembling Mortimer and Eugene's in the lack of remark it garners and the presence of a "mysterious imperative (physical debility, hereditary curse, secret unhappy prior marriage, or simply extreme disinclination)" preventing one of the men from marrying.¹³ Yet the extent to which Allan's mother and Brock try to part the two gentlemen and Neelie's jealousy of Midwinter differentiate Collins's pairing from Dickens's. The friendship garners noteworthy negative attention and specifically interferes with Allan's heterosexual flirtation. Midwinter tells Brock that he is unable to truly part himself from Allan, and likens himself to a dog whose master has whistled for him, "with a momentary outburst of hidden passion in him, and a sudden springing of angry tears in his wild brown eyes, 'and it is hard, sir, to blame the dog when the dog comes.'"¹⁴ The angry helplessness of Midwinter's outburst indicates the passion of his attachment to Allan, and the extent to which he regards that attachment as unfitting. Being commanded to come is a force that contrasts sharply with Midwinter's solitary vagaries. He takes comfort in solitude, because this question of his fitness for companionship is not actively in question. He is most at home in his own skin when wandering. Midwinter can then view his fear and doubt at one remove, in which the familiar rhythm of walking temporarily settles him back into his body, like shrugging into an old coat. He sets out on foot not to reach any particular destination but to rediscover a part of himself that he heavily associates with walking and sleeping rough.

One result of this restlessness is a redefinition of home. Having settled with some difficulties into life with Allan at Thorpe Ambrose (where Midwinter is learning the duties of

¹³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Homosocial Desire*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015): 174.

¹⁴ Collins, 97.

steward in deference to his friend's wishes), Midwinter finds himself falling in love with Lydia Gwilt, who has entered the neighborhood in the guise of a governess and is trying to seduce Allan to get the Armadale money. Because Allan is also falling for Lydia, Midwinter decides to take two weeks away from Thorpe Ambrose in order to quash his attraction to her. Although Midwinter's departing comments to Allan purport to distance him from his friend in upbringing, temperament, and habit, this passage depends as firmly upon his connection to Allan as the denial of it. He may see himself as someone inescapably formed and most at home on the road, but Midwinter's ability to leave presupposes a return that leaves him anchored to Allan and Thorpe Ambrose. The boundary to Midwinter's journey is not a geographic border or obstacle, but one of time and affection. As an unfamiliar space to Midwinter, the house at Thorpe Ambrose cannot be home yet his friendship with Allan anchors one end of his travels at the house, limiting the potential extent of his roaming:

For years and years, the life of a wild animal—perhaps I ought to say, the life of a savage—was the life I led, while you were at home and happy. I have the leaven of the vagabond—the vagabond animal or the vagabond man, I hardly know which—in me still... I will only say that the comfort and the luxury of our life here are, at times, I think, a little too much for a man to whom comforts and luxuries come as strange things. I want nothing to put me right again but more air and exercise; fewer good breakfasts and dinners, my dear friend, than I get here. Let me go back to some of the hardships which this comfortable house is expressly made to shut out. Let me meet the wind and weather as I used to meet them when I was a boy; let me feel weary again for a little while, without a carriage near me to pick me up; and hungry when the night falls, with miles of walking between my supper and me. Give me a week or two away, Allan... and I promise to return to Thorpe Ambrose, better company for you and for your friends.¹⁵

Midwinter's formulation of his problem is persistently embodied. His language echoes the opening racist description of him as savage and animalistic. Weariness and hunger, exposure to the elements, are the landmarks by which he hopes to recover his peace of mind and to reach backward to reconnect with an earlier and truer version of himself. Midwinter also explicitly

¹⁵ Ibid., 367.

contrasts not just his current life with Allan with his past one, but also his and Allan's past lives from one another—the one marked by suffering and roaming while the other by “home and happ[iness].” Midwinter perceives Allan's pleasures and life as essentially domestic. In this view, Allan's inheritance of the great house at Thorpe Ambrose is another (albeit much grander) incarnation of the same life.

This perception does not hold up under scrutiny. Allan feels no attachment to, or sense of home at Thorpe Ambrose, because Allan's ties are to people rather than to the family property. Midwinter's roving in turn drags Allan away from the estate as the movement separates person from property. Allan and Midwinter initially bond over affection for the changeable sea, and this fosters a connection characterized by waves of movement. Allan has a tendency toward impetuosity and an inability to take seriously the social obligations attached to his inheritance. In spite of Midwinter's assumption that Allan's life has fitted him to be the master of Thorpe Ambrose (far more than his own has fitted Midwinter to be its steward), Allan persistently *misfits*. His carelessness, impulsiveness, and infelicity with words disrupt his succession and alienate his neighbors; he moves athwart the expectations for landed gentry in violations that are, in their own way, as severe as Midwinter's.

Allan's lackadaisical approach to familiarizing himself with the estate exemplifies the little care he attaches to the supposed duties of his new station. The morning after Allan's arrival at Thorpe Ambrose, he “survey[s] the prospect from his bedroom window, lost in the dense mental bewilderment of feeling himself to be a stranger in his own house.”¹⁶ Allan experiences the cognitive dissonance of having zero familiarity with his own property and a resulting inability to feel in possession of it. He proceeds to rattle around the large house, selecting random doorways through which to pass and startling the servants. His jovial exploration causes

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

a stir, and his staff likely finds him even stranger than the day before. Although he acquires the company of a manservant to show him around the house, Allan waves him off once they emerge onto the grounds: “You needn’t show me around. I’ll go alone...and lose myself, if I can, in my own property.”¹⁷ This wander functions very differently from Midwinter’s. The property is large enough to get physically lost in, and Allan’s approach is to revel in his own disorientation. His careless tone suggests that his disorientation and the change in home will not change him in essential character. As Allan gradually takes possession, a small room at the back of the house that used to his mother’s becomes his favorite. It is in this room, however, that Midwinter tells Allan that he intends to leave, and it is here where the two meet immediately upon Midwinter’s return and argue, playing out the second warning of Allan’s Dream. After this quarrel, the house and town again cease to feel like home to Allan.

The comfort of Thorpe Ambrose is precisely what necessitates Midwinter’s two weeks away—weeks which to Allan seem like the aberration, but which to Midwinter are merely a return to the normal course of his life. Wandering is, in effect, familiar territory to Midwinter, now bounded by the increasingly familiar territory that is Allan’s life and property. By uprooting himself, Midwinter also adds to Allan’s sense of disquiet and restlessness. The novel does not portray any of Midwinter’s journey. He leaves the story as he leaves the town—buying steak that he feeds to a stray dog huddling from the rain—and reappears on the outskirts of town on his way back—an anonymous figure until he nears enough for Gwilt to recognize him. Once she meets him, she convinces him that Allan has seriously wronged her, laying the groundwork for their dispute.

In spite of the depth of Midwinter’s affection for Allan, his friend’s flighty qualities are so prominent that they frustrate any attempt to read Allan as a second protagonist. He is instead

¹⁷ Ibid., 204.

viewed with amusement. The text toys with the stereotypically familiar representation of the landed gentry and in doing so, plays with the one of the Victorian novel's common plots involving inheritance, love triangles, and the machinations of scheming relatives or would-be spouses. In a move that has lent itself to queer readings, *Armadale* introduces Midwinter and Allan as seemingly balanced main characters, deeply enough attached to one another to create a homoerotic subtext.¹⁸ It then introduces Gwilt, whose first-person narration and arresting personality shunt Allan back into the role of a much more minor character whose only function in the plot is to be the focal point of the tension between Midwinter and Gwilt. The novel destabilizes the comfortably landed and wedded course that the reader might expect. Lydia Gwilt is no Jane Eyre. As Audrey Jaffe notes, Collins's contrasting refusal to use the title to indicate a main protagonist in the vein of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) is apparent, as are its implications for the novel as a whole.¹⁹ The title immediately frustrates the reader's expectation of such a character, gesturing at the novel's refusal to confine itself to a clear protagonist or romantic couple. Although *Armadale* includes large excerpts of Lydia's diary, these do not unfold for the reader the consciousness of an unambiguously moral woman; and, rather than being a rewarding culmination to the book, Gwilt's marriage to Midwinter is merely one step along an intricate chain of events that will lead to Gwilt's death.

Catherine Delafield explores how the use of Lydia's diary as a key part of the narrative greatly contributes to the impression of her wickedness.²⁰ Her diary subverts a feminine form of writing associated with domestic record, and it gives access to Lydia's murderous thoughts, expressly kept under her own control. Lydia is perhaps more akin to Lady Lucy Audley, whose

¹⁸ See Sedgwick, and also Reitz, who reads this attachment as a necessary meeting between a stereotypical English gentleman and the face of a changing nation.

¹⁹ Jaffe, 116-138.

²⁰ Catherine Delafield, *Women's Diaries as Narrative in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009).

past prior to becoming a governess in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) remains ominously shrouded and only reemerges after her marriage and to her great detriment. In *Lady Audley's Secret*, Audley Court is in the end literally abandoned. Instead of a similar decay of the family holdings at Thorpe Ambrose, *Armadale* closes with what should be the wedding day and satisfying marriage of Allan to Miss Milroy. Yet, as happens in the bulk of the novel, the relationship between Allan and his fiancée gives way to that between Allan and Midwinter. Discussion of the marriage is compressed into a one sentence report of their conversation, which is subsumed into the conversation between the two men: "For the most part the conversation had turned on the bridegroom's plans and projects."²¹

A Madhouse is Not a Home

Allan's marriage is crammed into the book's epilogue while the climax of the novel is instead an extended narration of Gwilt's third attempt to murder him. Gwilt, while married to Midwinter and living in Naples, arranges for Allan's new crew to sink his ship and drown him, just as his father drowned before him. Allan astonishingly survives and returns to England, but he does not arrive in London until after erroneous reports of his death have spread. Gwilt, who has already returned to London and started posing as Allan's widow to obtain his money, suddenly finds herself needing to arrange another death for him. She solicits the assistance of Dr. Downward, an old criminal associate. He has become the owner of a new sanitarium in the neighborhood of Fairweather Vale, near Hampstead Heath. Still a very new area of urban expansion, the neighborhood smacks of spackle and fresh paint. It is in this neighborhood that Midwinter, now suspicious of his wife, catches up with her, and it is here where she faces him down and pretends that she barely knows him. Her confrontation with Midwinter is an assault on

²¹ Collins, 814.

family. She estranges herself from her husband, but when Midwinter faints, she cradles his head in her lap. The tenderness she shows to him in private gives the lie to her rejection.

Gwilt moves into the sanitarium late that night in the guise of Downward's first patient. The following day, she joins a tour being given by Downward to prospective donors, with the explanation that it is the easiest and earliest opportunity for her to become acquainted with the premises that are her new home. With this tour, Downward takes advantage of the limits of "home" for women of all stations to solicit public interest and funds. That is, there can be a restrictive experience of home that is heavily gendered. Allan easily leaves Thorpe Ambrose behind him, free to follow Midwinter or other whims, whereas these women must lead lives of "miserable monotony" in which anything is a "harmless refuge from the established tyranny of the principle that all happiness begins and ends at home."²² This bounded experience primes these women for taking Downward's tour as a means of temporary relief. Most of the group consists of neighborhood ladies of the middle classes, for whom home has itself become a site of unhappiness. These women,

poor souls, to the number of no less than sixteen—old and young, married and single—had seized the golden opportunity of a plunge into public life. Harmoniously united by the two common objects which they all had in view—in the first place, to look at each other, and, in the second place, to look at the Sanitarium—they streamed in neatly dressed procession through the doctor's dreary iron gates, with a thin varnish over them of assumed superiority to all unladylike excitement, most significant and most pitiable to see!²³

The social desire to see and be seen is key to Downward's purposes. The women, in their desire to be both observer and object, blend in with the building; syntactically the "thin varnish" could apply to numerous parts of the unfinished building or grounds, but shifts into a metaphor of "assumed superiority to...unladylike excitement." The women simultaneously position

²² Ibid., 768.

²³ Ibid.

themselves as a key part of the spectacle, as watchers of the same, and as people above being drawn into the scene. The identification of the women with the building mingles their association with the home with the madness that could result. In this manner the tourists will also be certain to see Lydia, as the sanitarium's mysterious first patient, drifting along after them but separated from them in space and manner. Fittingly, Downward names her illness as "Shattered nerves—domestic anxiety."²⁴ Lydia appears as an extreme version of the women on the tour, for whom domesticity itself has grown so overpowering as to become illness.

The tour provides convenient witnesses to Lydia's presence and introduces Downward's system for dealing with nervous patients. It imposes control over the building and the walkers, shaping the place into an impression of cutting edge medicine and (not unladylike) excitement. The unfinished aspects of the building become a manifestation of a revolutionary method. The doctor's patter is reminiscent of a carnival barker, luring in passers-by with promises of the new and interesting:

When *I* see the necessity of keeping your mind easy, I take the bull by the horns and do it for you. I place you in a sphere of action in which the ten thousand trifles which must, and do, irritate nervous people at home are expressly considered and provided against. I throw up impregnable moral entrenchments between Worry and You.²⁵

Downward's *I, I, I, I* separates himself and his methods from other doctors, and positions him as solving a problem ignored by his learned colleagues—that telling a patient to be at ease is, as he says, the medical equivalent of telling someone not to think of a polar bear. It is doomed to fail. In this system, then, a doctor's orders for rest and calm are transformed into physical features of the sanitarium itself. The doctor's method involves being able to control the environment of the patient without the patient necessarily being aware of that control. Downward's premise is that the home, with all its potential benefits, is nevertheless riddled with noises, fumes, and other

²⁴ Ibid., 769.

²⁵ Ibid., 772.

possible disturbances to nervous patients. In an intricate arrangement of hidden latches, buttons, and other devices built into the sanitarium, an inmate's room becomes controllable from outside it and without the patient's awareness. Downward insists that "the medical treatment of nervous suffering [is] entirely subsidiary to the moral treatment of it. That moral treatment you find here. That moral treatment, sedulously pursued through the day, follows the sufferer into his room at night; and soothes, helps and cures him, without his own knowledge."²⁶ In this method, the doctor does not merely tell a patient to rest between his visits, leaving this difficult part of a prescription to them. Instead, he acts upon the building and thereby acts upon the body of the patient. The treatment becomes more ominous as, like the poison Gwilt will later use, it creeps into the room while the patient sleeps unaware.²⁷

The tour also serves to introduce these mechanisms to Lydia, carefully leading her through the steps she will need to murder Allan. This involves rooms that can be silently unlocked or locked, an apparatus that silently releases deadly fumes into the patient's room, and a bottle of the liquid necessary for the poisonous chemical reaction. The asylum becomes the site of violent crime in a warping of the kind of spectacle associated with Bedlam and other asylums by guidebooks I examined in chapter two. Many of these guide books include hospitals or related charities as stops on their recommended tours of the city. The Bethlehem "madhouse,"²⁸ more commonly known as Bedlam, features frequently, and, when described in any detail, it is described as an example of modern health-care and a site with a long history. Routledge notes that the hospital was founded in 1246, and was itself moved and expanded to its 1877 site (St.

²⁶ Ibid., 772.

²⁷ See Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, *Wilkie Collins, Medicine, and the Gothic*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009) for an extended reading connecting this metaphoric and physiological connection.

²⁸ *Routledge's Guide to London and its Suburbs: Comprising Descriptions of All its Points of Interest, Including the Most Recent Improvements and Public Buildings*, (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1877), 164.

George's Field in Lambeth),²⁹ and *Black's Guide to London and its Environs* (1875)³⁰ cites the same timeline.

Although Downward emphasizes his break with the old methods and institutions, even a hospital as old as Bedlam boasted newer methods, very often made by changes to the hospital itself. Yet descriptions do not escape sensationalizing violence by or toward inmates. Buildings were renovated to accommodate a “modern plan of treatment by kindness instead of cruelty,”³¹ and include “every possible indulgence.”³² Bedlam and St. Luke's became “spacious and handsome buildings, with extensive grounds for exercise, and every accommodation which humanity can suggest for the unfortunate inmates.”³³ The asylum supplied patients with amusements from books to billiards and a cricket field,³⁴ and a room lined with cork and India rubber replaced the old restraints as a more humanitarian alternative to earlier practices. Given what Timbs describes of the historical treatment of inmates in Bedlam, the approach during the 1860s would have been an improvement indeed. Until a parliamentary review of the hospital's methods in 1815, patients were chained to walls and bedded on straw in rooms resembling dog kennels, poorly clothed, and exposed to ridicule of the public via tour. Until 1770, visitors were permitted to see the inmates for *Id.* each, a practice that produced such disturbances that the porter was also a constable and made the rounds accompanied by other servants as extra muscle.³⁵ More recent guides omit the ghastly description of previous methods in the hospital in

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

³⁰ *Black's Guide to London and its Environs*, (Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1875), 259-260.

³¹ *Routledge*, 165.

³² *Black*, 260.

³³ Brady, John Henry. *A New Pocket Guide to London and its Environs: Containing Descriptions, from personal knowledge...enlivened with biographical and other anecdotes connected, by history or tradition, with the places described.* London: J. W. Parker, 1838. 91.

³⁴ *Black*, 260.

³⁵ John Timbs, *Curiosities of London: Exhibiting the Most Rare and Remarkable Objects of Interest in the Metropolis, with Nearly Sixty Years' Personal Recollections*, (London: Longmans, Green Reader, and Dyeer, 1868), 52.

favor of focusing on its improvements; and yet, they also evoke something of the spectacle by including lists of infamous former inmates:

the renowned porter of Oliver Cromwell, who had more volumes around his cell in the College of Bedlam than Orlando in his present apartment; Nat Lee, the dramatic poet, who spent four years here; and Peg Nicholson, the woman who tried to kill George III...[Edward] Oxford for shooting at the Queen on Constitution-hill; and M'Naughten [sic], another so-called lunatic, who shot Mr. Edward Drummond, Sir Robert's secretary, in mistake for Sir Robert Peel himself.³⁶

Such descriptions still rely upon Bedlam's macabre history and the sensationalism attached to famous crimes, supplying in historical account the titillation earlier tours had supplied in person.

By locating Lydia's attempt at murder within the sanitarium, *Armadale* dispenses with the distance between sensational crime and the tourist. Allan, receiving a false report that his fiancée, Neelie Milroy, has been devastated by the news of his death and committed to the hospital, rushes to the sanitarium, accompanied by Midwinter. In spite of Midwinter's urging, Allan insists on staying the night, and his friend joins him. Downward assigns Allan the room with the device that Lydia intends to use to poison him, and Midwinter to the neighboring one. Lydia, as she paces the hallway, creating more poison gas within the room at intervals, is unaware that Midwinter, sensing danger, has switched rooms with his friend. When Lydia, at length, discovers this, she pulls Midwinter out of the poisoned room just in time to save his life. She leaves him a short note and enters the room herself, suffering the death she had crafted for Allan. Just as Allan's marriage to Neelie gets eclipsed by his friendship for Midwinter, Midwinter's marriage to Lydia gives way to the homoerotic bond between the men. Lydia's love for her husband is real enough; she remains torn between her scheme for the Armadale wealth and her more genuine feelings for Midwinter. In the end, however, the effect is removing her

³⁶ *Routledge*, 165.

from the plot entirely. She is buried in the presence of only Midwinter and Allan with her very name erased: her gravestone features only her first initial and date of death.

The guided tour of Downward's sanitarium attempts a toxic imposition of order and a deployment of spectacle in the service of murder. The restraints imposed by the impression Downward wants to give the visitors and by what information he needs to give Lydia strictly mold the tour. The sanitarium, with all its hidden features and carefully concealed control of patients' environments, likewise rigidly limits action within its walls. Yet these features rather backfire than otherwise. All of Downward's and Gwilt's plans fail to anticipate Midwinter prompting his friend to change rooms. Midwinter's movements in the sanitarium are, like his earlier roving, entirely self-guided and liberating. Doubt no longer plagues him, and he settles fully into his skin to save his friend. With only one course open to him, Midwinter need only decide to take it rather than remain in his room.

Winding down

A final character, who embraces a perpetual motionlessness, serves as a counterpoint to the roving evidenced by Midwinter and others. *Armadale*'s more humorous supporting pillar of stagnation takes the form of Major Milroy, father of Allan's fiancée Neelie Milroy. He and his family take the cottage attached to the Thorpe Ambrose estate and thus have frequent contact with Allan. Mrs. Anne Milroy has a spinal condition which has kept her bedridden for years, and cottage life takes shape around her. Her illness "had made the secret misery of the little household for years; and it was now to pass beyond the family limits, and to influence coming events at Thorpe Ambrose."³⁷ Mrs. Milroy's body and mind reach out to swallow the area and

³⁷ Collins, 375.

people around her. Her confinement to her bedroom paradoxically has a large influence on the surrounding area.

Mrs. Milroy's body is wasted by her illness but also marked by her own reactions to that illness. She makes desperate and pathetic attempts to hide her condition from others, and by doing so she only increases the prominence of her malady: "The utter wreck of her beauty was made a wreck horrible to behold, by her desperate efforts to conceal the sight of it from her own eyes, from the eyes of her husband and her child, from the eyes even of the doctor who attended her, and whose business it was to penetrate to the truth."³⁸ Her beauty, rather than her self or even her whole body, seizes the attention, and then only its ruined form. It is the wreck, more than its former wholeness, that speaks. Unlike the literal wreck of *La Grace de Dieu*, which haunts in its echoes of its former state and events, this metaphoric wreck relies solely upon the damage done to Mrs. Milroy's body for its impact. Mrs. Milroy becomes so ashamed of her body that she essentially tries to detach herself from it, actively concealing it even from her intimate relations and the doctor who cannot effectively treat her without an accurate assessment. Even here, the image of the wreck evokes a kind of timeless stasis; Mrs. Milroy tries to keep her appearance in its past state, to the point of wearing heavy makeup and perusing fashion catalogues in a fervent attempt to give her body the appearance of health and style.

Like Midwinter's restlessness, Mrs. Milroy's illness does not only affect her. It affects Allan in proportion to his emotional investment in Mrs. Milroy's daughter. When Mrs. Milroy's illness curtails her husband's friendliness and Neelie's availability for flirtation, "Allan gr[ows] a little restless and dissatisfied. He beg[ins] to resent Mrs. Milroy's illness; he beg[ins] to think regretfully of his deserted yacht."³⁹ As the Milroy world shrinks down to the space of the

³⁸ Ibid., 373.

³⁹ Ibid., 246.

cottage, the effects upon others spread outward, and Allan feels a corresponding restlessness. He begins thinking nostalgically of a yacht he built himself and has set aside in order to take up residence at Thorpe Ambrose. His urge to return to roving at sea the instant that his romantic entertainment wavers adds to the sense that Allan is not quite fit for the life of the landed gentleman. The influence of Mrs. Milroy's illness upon the surrounding area is a triumph of sorts of illness over place, distinct from Midwinter's body driving him into motion. Allan's impulse to move here aligns him much more closely with his friend than with his romantic interest, an alignment that remains through the end of the novel.

Major Milroy copes with his wife's illness and his reduced means in his own curious way. His hobby is tinkering with a perpetually unfinished clock, which becomes a comical incarnation of some the tensions of the novel and of his household in particular. The clock's beginning dates to the time of Milroy's roughly simultaneous misfortunes: the loss of his fortune and the start of his wife's illness, because of which he retired from the army and began a more modest life in the country. His attempts to reorder his personal universe, however, result in utter stagnation. Not only does he never finish building the clock, he allows it to entirely replace the wider social life he previously enjoyed. His hobby confines him to his home and to a lack of progress that is every bit as debilitating as that experienced by his wife. Even clock time here warps into a kind of subjective obsession, in which the clock *cannot* be finished, because only its perpetual construction enables the stasis that Milroy so enjoys.⁴⁰ The clock remains riddled with problems; it either does not correspond to the correct time, or its rotating figures stall behind or run into doors that fail repeatedly to open. When he demonstrates it for Allan and Midwinter, the

⁴⁰ For a reading which compares the meaning of Milroy's clock to that of its original model, see Lisa M. Zeits and Peter Thoms, "Collins's Use of the Strasbourg Clock in *Armada*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 45, no. 4 (1991): 495-503. They likewise emphasize Milroy's transformation of the clock from a symbol of universal and provident order to a symbol of the hopeless and human attempt to create that order.

performance of these figures—supposedly a changing of the guard—goes hilariously ill. The image of the little figures proudly slamming into the doors over and over instead of successfully emerging is, like the reappearance of the shipwreck, a disruption of time and space. The path of the figures remains blocked, or their time is not yet come. The display devolves into a comic refiguration of other appearances, reappearances, and disappearances of the novel. The bodies announce and yet disrupt their own arrival.

No amount of Milroy's tinkering, it seems, will make these inanimate bodies go right. Likewise, no amount of work will undo the effects of Mrs. Milroy's illness on the Milroys's life and home. The construction of the clock merely recreates in miniature a fundamental problem in the novel: bodies will not be governed by any regulation, and this often has violent results. In response to the demonstration, Midwinter's reaction rises to "sheer delirium" "paroxysms of laughter" than continue with "convulsive violence."⁴¹ Midwinter's own illness and hysterical reaction perhaps a reflection of this problem, marking his body, like Mrs. Milroy's as wrong and out of place. Moving bodies haunt the narrative, beginning with those treated as property and moved to the British West Indies.

Armada includes the ocean as a site within the narrative and not just as a gestured-at periphery, opening up the novel to larger and more specific questions about the relationship of England to colonial spaces than are available in *Our Mutual Friend*. Additionally, the setting encompasses the ship as a bounded and specific site that nevertheless moves in space to trouble the shores of England. As Reitz argues, Midwinter's heritage resists incorporating into England as an ideally homogenous home space. He represents the rapidly changing space of empire and deep disruptions to the image of an English nation, destabilizing the definition of home. The country estate for Allan, and in the case of Midwinter, any plot of land at all, falls short of home.

⁴¹ Collins, 271.

Land ownership the colonies is likewise fraught. This restlessness is particularly embodied in Midwinter, whose wandering functions to stave off the sense of shipwreck as historical or personal stagnation. His constant movement helps him shake off his dread of repeating past sins in the present. More specifically, the hand—written or physical—holds a wide range of meanings; its most significant influence is as a connection from character to character and as a guiding touch, for good or for ill. Touch establishes and reinforces a deep connection between Midwinter and Allan, replacing an image of Thorpe Ambrose as home with a much more mobile one built between the two men. The bond between these friends is flexible and outstrips the relationship between Midwinter and Lydia or between Allan and Neelie Milroy. The rest of the Milroy household serves as a counterpoint to Midwinter's liberation from his doubt, and to Allan and Midwinter's final reconciliation. The cottage is full of the wrecks of bodies and total stagnation in time and space. Midwinter especially comes to a roaming habitation that at least seems to process the problems raised by the novel, even if it does not wholly succeed in reconciling these disparate places, bodies, and selves. The novel ends rather flatly upon the eve of Allan's wedding to Neelie, and with Midwinter's pat assertion that he no longer *needs* to know what the future brings.

Chapter five examines the Neverlands of J. M. Barrie, where, among other things, the crocodile who swallowed a clock stalks Captain Hook. Hook and the crocodile share a relationship, albeit a one-sided one: Hook moves, and the crocodile follows. This chase echoes that between Dickens's Bradley Headstone and Eugene Wrayburn discussed in chapter three. The chase in *Peter and Wendy* takes on a similar sense of fatality. It seems doomed to end in Hook's eventual death, with the ticking of the clock as a countdown to the final confrontation between man and beast. It is the eventual stopping of this clock, however, that allows for Hook's

downfall; the crocodile can come for him only because time has been silenced. Conversely, when someone wants to know the time in the Neverlands, they have to go find the creature who has swallowed the clock and listen for the chimes. This constant back-and-forth is part of a larger mutability of time and space in the Neverlands. The next chapter thus shifts focus from wandering still rooted in a recognizable geography (Limehouse Hole, the English countryside, the continent) and into a purely speculative set of geographies (the Neverlands), with particular emphasis on the pleasures and drawbacks of seemingly *unlimited* roads and communal creations of space.

Things that often seem like problems in *Our Mutual Friend* and *Armadale*—the ease of disguise and fluidity of identity, the constraints of personal and familial history—dissolve or even turn to tantalizing possibilities in Barrie's works. In the Neverlands, thought itself can create new spaces, and the children can switch identities at will and for pleasure. Land itself becomes mobile and changeable and class anxieties and burgeoning suburban norms are discarded or satirized. Yet there is something terrifying underlying these abilities, a sense that it may be possible to travel too far, or even to lose oneself entirely. The elongation of childhood for Peter Pan and his lost boys is not without drawbacks. Chapter five examines Barrie's works with a particular focus on the mutability of person and space, and the limits of text in fully realizing these complications.

Chapter Five

The Neverlands: Always More or Less and Island

[Wendy] asked him where he lived.
“Second to the right,” said Peter, “and then straight on till morning”
“What a funny address!”
Peter had a sinking. For the first time he felt that perhaps it was a funny address.

J. M. Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*¹

Described in the novel *Peter and Wendy* (1911) as “always more or less an island,” the Neverlands² of J. M. Barrie defy easy description. The seeming permanence of “always” gives way to an immediate linguistic remapping of the island, in which the vagueness of “more or less” gives readers ample scope to pencil in the landscape with whatever features they choose. The Neverlands may be an island, may *most often* be an island, may be always at least island-*ish*. The result is an overall impression of unmappability, either from the vagueness of the island’s description, or because its features are ever in flux, or some combination of the two. This unmappability of the Neverlands is less a feature of its position in the genres of satire and whimsical fantasy than an inherent feature of orientation, graphically or otherwise represented. That is, I want to examine this novel and its place in the larger Peter Pan mythos not for its peculiarities, but because it makes peculiarly visible a common tension.

Although route maps and other navigational aids are ostensibly intended to produce a clear and navigable representation of space, we often read fiction for traces of known places and

¹ J. M. Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, illustrated by F. D. Bedford, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911), 37.

²Neverland is also known in various versions of the Peter Pan story as Never Never Land, and the Neverlands. This fluctuation in naming contributes to the blurring of boundaries, identities, and narrative in the text itself. In order to preserve this sense of layering, I use “the Neverlands” throughout, except when directly quoting variants.

familiar ground, and, as my second chapter has shown, even purely functional representations of space are always already aesthetic and limited objects, the result of choice and sometimes chance. So too, does the map's representation change as a given audience uses, whether than user is re-traversing their native city or visiting another for a brief time. What Peter Pan and the Neverlands, in all their varied incarnations, make most visible is the tension between our expectation of a clear path on paper and the limitations of such a document. Attempts to map Barrie's unmappable "island" are necessarily varied: they cross genres and even harness conventions of contemporary guidebooks and maps to guide the reader's adventures, and this mutability is an integral part of the fantasy space Barrie creates, and of an approach to storytelling that incorporates multiple authors. This textual site overtly mediates the blurred boundaries between subjectivity, body, and geography examined in previous chapters, making it a useful text in which to rethink the difficulties and delights of orientation and its representation.

In this chapter I trace the way these boundary crossings occur, including movements across textual versions, within the narrative of the novel *Peter and Wendy*, in illustrations and maps of the Neverlands, and as metaphoric mappings of the mind. To that end, I begin with the children's book, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* (1906), with an eye to its imaginative appropriation of London's actual Kensington Gardens. This early version of Peter's adventures transforms the gardens into a space inhabited by fairies, talking birds, and other wonders—its map stands alongside several roughly contemporaneous maps of Kensington Gardens and the surrounding areas. This book makes Peter's world seem close at hand and accessible. The narrative voice, which reads very similarly to the walking tours I discuss in chapter two, leads the reader past known landmarks now grown fantastic.³

³ J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, illustrated by Arthur Rackham, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906).

From Kensington Gardens, I move into the more amorphous Neverlands as they spring direct from the minds of the Darlings. I also consider a recent illustrated edition of the novel that grapples with the difficulty of capturing this space visually in hard copy. This edition, released by Harper Collins, touts its new illustrations and “interactive elements,” designed by MinaLima Studios.⁴ Although the volume has a strikingly contemporary aesthetic in contrast to many other illustrations, I am interested in it primarily for how it, like the first conversation between Wendy and Peter, makes apparent the discontinuity between the Neverlands as what the materials of a hard copy, (mostly) static book can convey and as the ephemeral imaginary possibilities that are implied.⁵ It also embodies another feature in keeping with the Peter Pan body of work—it necessitates active involvement from the reader in an attempt to overcome those material limitations.

At first glance, the landscape of the Neverlands seems to be a familiar one. Most contemporary readers recognize key features of the Peter Pan story, which might include Peter’s perpetual boyhood, Captain Hook and the crocodile that terrifies him, a jealous fairy named Tinker Bell, and the Darling children’s adventures with pirates and mermaids—we are unlikely to feel completely lost. Over the years impressions of the story have merged into an amalgamation of versions; overlaps and confluences begin with Barrie’s own obsessive reworking of the story across genres and have continued in many other literary, filmic, and

⁴ J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan: Lavishly Illustrated with Interactive Elements*, ill. by MinaLima Design, (New York: Harper Design, 2015). MinaLima is perhaps better known for its work on the Harry Potter film series, including, intriguingly, the Marauder’s Map.

⁵ Barrie’s own amused interest in the materiality of mapping surfaces in his essay “Shutting a Map: A Note of Warning.” This includes advice for those attempting the perilous task of shutting a pocket map in public, including “*Don’t speak to the map...* When you have got the map half-folded you will see that there is something wrong. Do not frown, at this point, and say, ‘Confound you, what is the matter with you now?’ The map will not answer. It will give you no assistance. You ought at once to realise that you and it have entered upon a desperate struggle.” This “desperate struggle” to manipulate the map as advertised suggestively prefigures the experience of manipulating the images in the MinaLima edition, which often promise yet fail to make convenient the unmappability of the Neverlands.

illustrated versions. Peter Pan's seeming ubiquity means that many audiences arrive in the Neverlands with the sense of having seen them already. As with *Our Mutual Friend* and *Armadale*,⁶ however, the familiar leads us into unexpected and pleasurable byways in Barrie's work. The general impression of Peter Pan as a character of children's film and literature often further obscures its origins in other genres, many of which were eagerly consumed by adult audiences. My main focus will be on *Peter and Wendy*, which was wildly popular in its own day, if less known today than various films. I also discuss illustrations and cartography of relevant real-world places to demonstrate how space is produced at the intersections between texts and genres, and how Barrie purloined features of cartography and guide books to create settings that transformed the familiar into the fantastic.

What we tend to think of as "Peter Pan" actually began as a small portion of a novel written for adults, entitled *The Little White Bird* (1902).⁷ Specifically, some passages of this book take the form of tales about the mysterious and fey boy Peter as told by the book's adult narrator to a child named David (chapters thirteen through eighteen). These tales were shortly thereafter excerpted and republished as *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. This book was beautifully illustrated by the then relatively unknown artist Arthur Rackham, who gained subsequent acclaim for illustrating an edition of *Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm* (1909), Kenneth Graham's *The Wind in the Willows* (1950), and numerous other works. In the mean time, the stage play of *Peter Pan* debuted in 1904, with Nina Boucicault starring as Peter⁸ and

⁶ I discuss these roughly contemporaneous novels, by Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins, in my third and fourth chapter, respectively.

⁷ J. M. Barrie, *The Little White Bird*, illustrated by Arthur Rackham, (London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902).

⁸ Peter Pan has traditionally been played by a woman. Many staged versions additionally have the same male actor portraying both Mr. Darling and Captain Hook, which has contributed to numerous psychoanalytical interpretations of the play.

was repeatedly revised by Barrie until a published version was released in 1928.⁹ The novel itself, originally illustrated by F. D. Bedford, has been subsequently republished under the titles *Peter Pan and Wendy* (in 1915 as a school edition and again in 1921 with new illustrations) and *Peter Pan* (its most common title since).

This collection of texts has spawned over a century of sequels, prequels, and related material, replicating an essential conundrum of the text's content—that the origins of Peter, Wendy, the other characters, and of the Neverlands themselves are all contradictory at best. Any attempt to orient oneself in the critical and textual history or within the text itself risks foundering upon this uncertainty of starting points—it is difficult to know where one is without knowing where one started. Barrie himself notoriously resisted explaining the origins of the stories, at various times attributing the authorship to other people (including a child, in the case of a staged version; and as a communal work crafted with the Llewelyn Davies children),¹⁰ and in his dedication to the play Barrie playfully insists that he has forgotten its origins and cannot even prove he authored the original.¹¹

⁹ One of the most significant changes in the interim was the addition in 1908 of the scene that ends the novel version in 1911. The scene and later chapter “When Wendy Grew Up” tells of Peter returning to the Darling nursery after many years, only to find that Wendy is a grown woman with a daughter named Jane. Jane (and, it is implied, future female descendents of Wendy) journeys to the Neverlands to help Peter with his spring cleaning now that Wendy has grown too old to fly. Other additions and stage directions make it clear that the 1928 published version of the play was not intended to actually be staged.

¹⁰ Barrie spent the summer of 1901 with the Llewelyn Davies family and then fashioned their imaginative adventures into a book titled *The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island, Being a Record of the Terrible Adventures of the Brothers Davies in the Summer of 1901, Faithfully Set Forth by Peter Llewelyn Davies*. Only one of the two copies of this book is still extant, and is located at Yale's Beinecke Library. Barrie's relationship with the Llewelyn Davies children and their parents is its own avenue of investigation.

¹¹ J. M. Barrie, *The Annotated Peter Pan: The Centennial Edition*, edited by Maria Tatar, (New York: Norton, 2011). The Norton Critical edition provides a helpful overview of Peter's origins and incarnations, as well as a copy of *The Boy Castaways* and Barrie's own introduction to the play. For a more detailed textual history, including Peter Pan's roots in pantomime, see Kirsten Stirling, *Peter Pan's Shadows in the Literary Imagination*, (New York: Routledge, 2012). For the play specifically, see also R. D. S. Jack's “The Manuscript of *Peter Pan*,” *Children's Literature* 18 (1990), 101-13.

Existing criticism on Barrie's work often falls into two sets, the first of which explores these nebulous and multiple origins in the novel's textual precursors and Barrie's biography.¹² The second stems from psychoanalytic readings¹³ which focus on the novel's fluctuating narrative voice and its vexed borders between boy and girl, child and adult. These lines of criticism share a fascination and, occasionally, frustration with the story's resistance to charting; blurred boundaries find a spatial incarnation in the Neverlands, which are portrayed as an ever-changing amalgam of the Darling children's imaginations. Like the frequent story-telling ventures Barrie pursued with the Llewellyn Davies children, the Darling children communally construct an imagined and highly contingent space that allows for deep pleasures but which also necessitates a continual forgetting of the landscapes and adventures that have come before. This dialectic of pleasure and erasure enables not only the continued existence of Peter and the Neverlands within the text itself, but also fuels the countless adaptations, sequels, prequels and other variants that inevitably inflect our readings of the novel. Where the walker using a guidebook to take in the highlights of London chooses a route in advance and lets the guide shape how they come to know the unfamiliar space, and where the characters choose between limited possible paths of action in *Our Mutual Friend*, and *Armadale*, the Darling children's

¹² Bibliographies and biographies are voluminous. For biography, see Andrew Birkin, *J. M. Barrie and the Lost Boys: The Love Story that Gave Birth to Peter Pan*, (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1979). For bibliography, see Carl Markgraf, *J. M. Barrie: An Annotated Secondary Bibliography*, (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 1989). More recently, see Kirstin Stirling, whose bibliography includes sequels and prequels as well as secondary literature and Barrie's related writings.

¹³ The best known of these remains Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, (London: MacMillan, 1984). Her chapter "Peter Pan and Literature for the Child: Confusion of Tongues" in particular has been widely cited (and contested) for arguing of the mixed narrative voice in *Peter and Wendy* that "When children's fiction touches on that barrier [between adult and child] it becomes not experiment . . . but *molestation*" (70). Jonathan Padley, while acknowledging the merits of Rose's attention to the fraught boundary between childhood and adulthood, comments that *The Case of Peter Pan* "highlights the propensity for analyses of Peter to go problematically off-piste" (274). "Peter Pan: Indefinition Defined." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 36.3. For a more recent, Lacanian, reading, see Karen Coats, *Looking Glasses and Neverlands: Lacan, Desire, and Subjectivity in Children's Literature*, (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2004).

adventures are not so circumscribed. Although they have a tour guide of sorts in Peter, they soon discover that he is a rather unreliable navigator.

Like those of the text itself, Peter's origins are ambiguous. *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, for instance, transforms an existing island in the middle of the Serpentine, which divides Hyde Park from Kensington Gardens, to one on which are born birds who become human infants (a narrative similar to that of the stork delivering babies). Peter, still part bird at seven days old, slips back out of his unbarred nursery window and flies back to Kensington Gardens. Peter's origins as later recounted in *Peter and Wendy*, however, are more indeterminate, which becomes apparent and distinctly textual during his oft-quoted initial conversation with Wendy Darling in the Darling nursery. This passage can serve as a synecdoche of the text as a whole for several reasons. It showcases early the novel's peculiar blend of child and adult, as Wendy and Peter perform the roles of guest and hostess. It likewise describes their departure from supposedly known spaces (London, the nursery) for imagined and fluctuating ones (the Neverlands, Hook's ship) and so parallels the general progression of this dissertation as a whole. Many critics have demonstrated the text's uneasy policing of various boundaries, such as that between child and adult. Similarly, the distance between the Darling nursery and the Neverlands is not so far as it might at first appear.

From the outset, the Darling home includes fantastical features that make Peter's arrival there less an intrusion and more a growth of the Darlings' own thoughts and surroundings. Although it is tempting to align the nursery with linear time—to think of it as the space in which one must eventually grow up—it is from the outset a space where generations overlap and double back. Thus Mrs. Darling's thoughts, as we will see, merge easily with those of her daughter Wendy, and when Peter returns after many years to find Wendy a grown woman with a

daughter of her own, he seems not to notice the difference. A similarly tempting alignment would position the Darling home as “real” and locatable, and the Neverlands as wholly imagined or fantastic. But many of the novel’s satirical elements slip sideways into fantasy (Nana, the canine nanny; Mrs. Darling’s fear that hanging Peter’s shadow out to dry will look like the washing and “lower the whole tone of the house”¹⁴; Mr. Darling’s crawling into Nana’s crate in shame after his children disappear, and then becoming a fashionable phenomenon invited to come to dinners in his crate). Much of the humor in these descriptions arises from the Darlings’s class anxiety and their desire to be seen as part of a suburban fashionable set rather than as working class. The apparently easy slippage from one to another rests, in the Darlings’s view, not on actual income or means (indeed, the novel introduces them as a couple anxiously calculating the cost of having children), but on carefully managing appearances so that they read to others as financially stable.

Unsurprisingly, then, Peter and Wendy’s sincere attempt to model adult mannerisms in the Darling nursery suffers from similar slippage between childhood and adulthood, and host and guest. Their imitations of genteel hospitality are comically undone by the boy’s mix of insecurity and bravado and by the girl’s love of melodrama. Their impasse hinges upon the text’s vexed relationship between a supposedly “real” shared set of landmarks and cultural markers and the imaginary and fluid landscape of the Neverlands. But this distinction increasingly blurs as time passes:

“Boy,” [Wendy] said courteously, “why are you crying?”

Peter could be exceedingly polite also, having learned the grand manner at fairy ceremonies, and he rose and bowed to her beautifully. She was much pleased, and bowed beautifully to him from the bed.

“What’s your name?” he asked.

“Wendy Moira Angela Darling,” she replied with some satisfaction. “What is your name?”

¹⁴ Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, 18.

“Peter Pan.”

She was already sure that he must be Peter, but it did seem a comparatively short name.

“Is that all?”

“Yes,” he said rather sharply. He felt for the first time that it was a shortish name.

“I’m so sorry,” said Wendy Moira Angela.

“It doesn’t matter,” Peter gulped.

She asked where he lived.

“Second to the right,” said Peter, “and then straight on till morning.”

“What a funny address!”

Peter had a sinking. For the first time he felt that perhaps it was a funny address.

“No, it isn’t,” he said.

“I mean,” Wendy said nicely, remembering that she was hostess, “is that what they put on your letters?”

He wished she had not mentioned letters.

“Don’t get any letters,” he said contemptuously.

“But your mother gets letters?”

“Don’t have a mother,” he said. Not only had he no mother, but he had not the slightest desire to have one. He thought them very overrated persons. Wendy, however, felt at once that she was in the presence of a tragedy.¹⁵

Wendy adopts the role of hostess, and her side of the conversation indicates that she expects a stereotypical introductory conversation, modeled on the Darlings’ satirical suburban existence—a proper name, a home and postal address, a family. In other words, she expects identifiable familial and geographic roots to locate Peter within her budding mental map of London and the Darlings’ social circle. The reader might already question, however, whether Wendy’s manners are any closer to reality than those Peter has learned from the fairies; certainly her enthusiastic approval of his bow suggests overlap (not to mention the fact that no introduction of the sort would be conducted in the lady’s bedroom). Peter’s answers refuse to map onto her preconceived notions, and Wendy decides that his name is “rather short,” his address “funny,” and his lack of mother simply “tragic.”

Peter’s well-known assertion that he lives at the “second to the right and then straight on till morning” resembles more an amorphous direction than a plottable and institutionalized

¹⁵ Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, 36-38.

address.¹⁶ The humor in Wendy's follow-up question about whether that description is what goes on Peter's letters relies upon the disjunction between the two. Peter's answer produces a brief illusion of determinacy that instantly fades. As Maria Tatar notes, this phrase has passed into common usage as a means of eliciting creative paths and solutions.¹⁷ Right of *what?* When does morning begin? The reader probably agrees with Wendy that it is all terribly vague. Soon, the seductive pleasures of flying distract Wendy and her brothers from this negation of navigation, and the children lose count of how many nights they have been flying, and over how many seas. This is not merely a product of distraction, however. In setting out for the Neverlands, Peter, Tinker Bell, and the Darlings increasingly depart charted spaces and measurable times.

Lost and Found in Kensington Gardens:

In spite of the fanciful nature of the Darlings' adventures, the impulse to visually represent their journey has been consistent across publications, albeit with varying methods and success. For instance, the map included in *Peter Pan and Kensington Gardens* and the book's opening passages persistently adapt the language and tone of guidebooks (figure 5.1), as well as the oft mapped Kensington Gardens.¹⁸ Barrie lived close enough to Kensington Gardens at the time of writing for the park to be a frequent haunt, and Rackham spent extended time in the gardens as he prepared illustrations for the children's book. The result fuses the familiar landscape and genre with a fantastic one more in keeping with the fanciful illustrations that follow (figure 5.2).¹⁹ Notable features of the real gardens have been changed into the Broad

¹⁶ Indeed, the contemporary reader has likely inserted the word "star" into this direction, following many later adaptations and quotations in film and fiction. It does not appear in the original novel or the original stage play, but much like the heath in *King Lear* it is now present more often than not.

¹⁷ Barrie, *The Annotated Peter Pan*, 53.

¹⁸ Arthur Rackham, "Peter Pan's Kensington Gardens," 1906, in J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, frontispiece.

¹⁹ Arthur Rackham, "Fairies of the Serpentine," 1906, in J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*.

Walk (still named the Broad Walk on contemporary maps), the Baby Walk, Round Pond, the Gold King, the Birds' Island, the Baby's Palace, and the Lost House. Other features, such as the Fairies' Winter Palace and the place where the "sheep have their hair cut" are wholly invented or significant only in the world of Peter Pan and imaginations of children and readers.

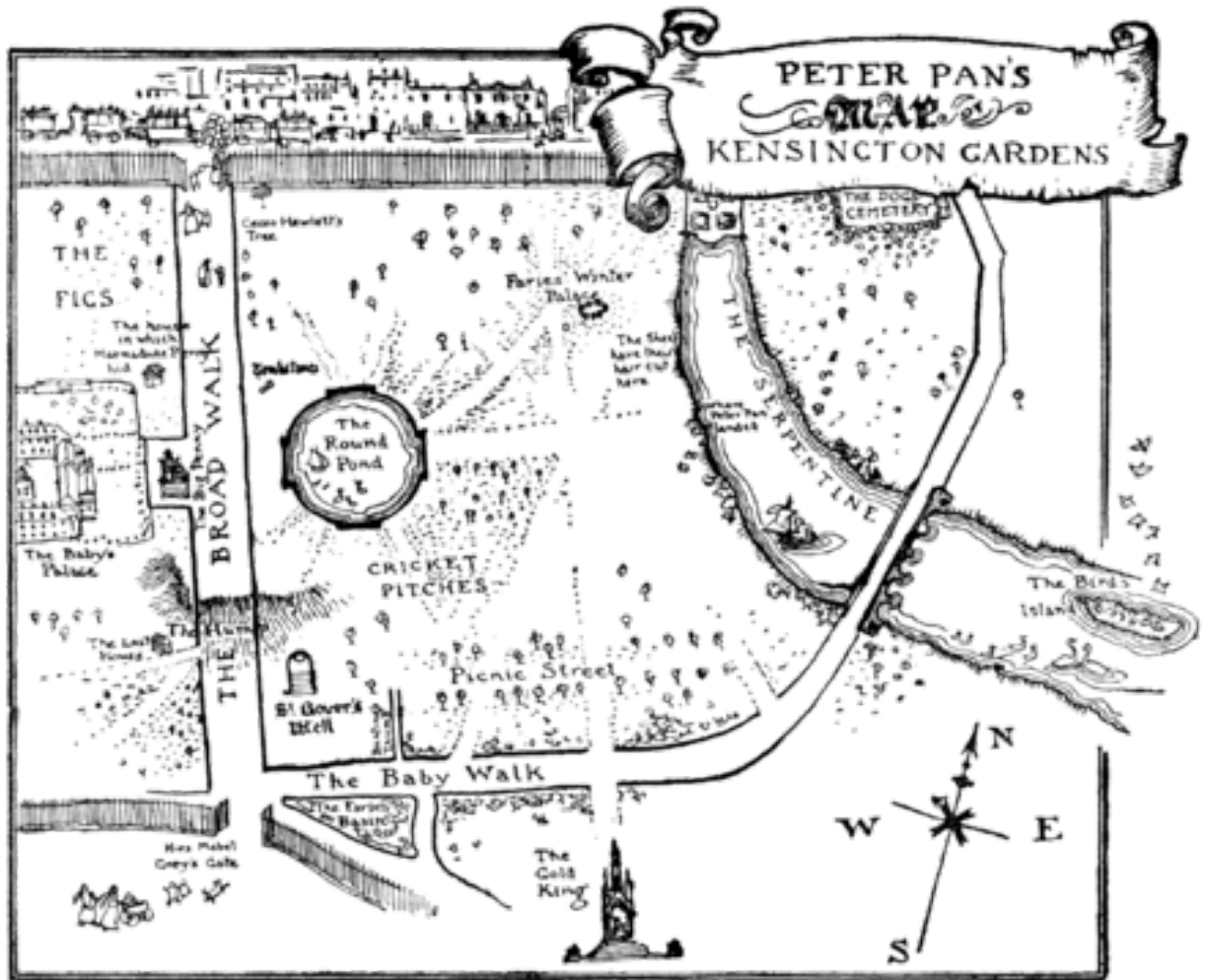


Figure 5.1: A map of “Peter Pan's Kensington Gardens,” in *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, 1906.



Figure 5.2: Arthur Rackham, Fairies dance along the Serpentine, in *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, 1906.

The first chapter of the book, entitled “The Grand Tour of the Gardens,” opens “You must see for yourselves that it will be difficult to follow Peter Pan's adventures unless you are familiar with the Kensington Gardens.”²⁰ The narrator addresses a reader presumed to be in the know—“you must see” indicates we always already know who Peter Pan is, and that his adventures are tied to the gardens. It also assumes a reader who intends to “follow” the narrative of Peter’s adventures as if they proceed or will at least be related linearly. The map of “Peter Pan’s Kensington Gardens” visually performs a similar feat. Barrie and his readers would, by the time of the publication of *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, have had much material upon which to draw. Even those who were not personally familiar with Kensington Gardens would have had ready access to a range of maps and atlases of London and the surrounding area. I trace a few representative examples before returning to *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, in order to demonstrate the overlaps and disconnects between them. By 1908, when Ward Lock and Co. published *London and the Franco-British Exhibition*, a pocket-sized guidebook capitalizing on the international joint venture held near Shepherd’s Bush, the pocket guide included many features that remain staples of the genre today.²¹ In addition to introductory information about the exhibition itself, the guide includes general information about London, including transportation, lodging, police and notable crime (apparently pick pocketing, in this case), changing money, hospitals, tipping customs, and other topics that would sound familiar to users of much more recent guidebooks. It particularly boasted of its up-to-date transportation information, including a railway map “(specially drawn for this guide) showing all the new Tube and other lines.”²² A 1911 update (the 36th edition) is cursorily repackaged as the *Coronation*

²⁰ Barrie, *Kensington Gardens*, 1.

²¹ *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to London and the Franco-British Exhibition*, (London: Ward Lock and Co. Limited, 1908).

²² *Ibid*, 50.

Edition, with the focus of its supplementary materials slightly changed accordingly. This edition did, however, notably expand its range of maps to include a second railway map, the “Main Roads out of London,” and others. More significantly for my discussion of Peter Pan, in this later version Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens merit their own pullout map, suggesting the area’s increasing prominence as a visiting destination and depicting more detail than was available in the earlier edition.²³

A passage in the section “View Points, Notable” informs the reader that, “One of the finest Park views—quite unknown to the majority of Londoners—is that from a point in Kensington Gardens near the refreshment pavilion overlooking the Serpentine. The views from the Serpentine Bridge are also very fine.”²⁴ This blurb accorded with a growing sense that western London varied considerably in character from points east and that the modern traveler to, or even inhabitant of, London had little chance of knowing the entirety of the city with the kind of intimacy that had been possible when it was smaller.²⁵ The interested reader or walker could then turn to the middle of the guide for more detailed descriptions of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, which outline the history of these hundreds of acres, its notable features, and ways of getting around what the author affectionately dubs “London’s finest lung”:

What London owes to this delightful stretch of greenery can never be told. Prior to the Dissolution the park formed part of the Manor of Hyde, and was the property of the Abbey of Westminster...but it is to Queen Caroline, the consort of George II, that we owe its most attractive feature, the Serpentine, an artificial sheet of water, stretching from Lancaster Gate in a south-easterly direction to the Dell, opposite Albert Gate, and having with the Long Water [the portion of the lake to the northwest, which lies in Kensington Gardens] an area of 41 acres. Notice boards point the way to the various gates, and the stranger will do well to heed them, or he may find himself far out of his course.

²³ *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to London and its Environs; With Two Large Section Plans of Central London; Map of London and Twelve Miles Round; Two Railway Maps; Map Showing Main Roads out of London; Plan of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, and Twenty other Maps and Plans*, Ward Lock and Co’s Illustrated Guide Books, (London: Ward Lock and Co. Limited, 1911).

²⁴ *Ibid*, 32.

²⁵ See chapter two, for instance, for Augustus C. Hare’s introductory remarks to his walking tour of London.

The author takes care to situate the park and the reader historically, describing the development of the area and placing particular emphasis on the lake as its “most attractive feature.” He also orients the reader more literally, noting that “Notice boards point the way to the various gates, and the stranger will do well to heed them, or he may find himself far out of his course,” presuming that the visitor has a particular path in mind. Following his own advice, he begins a more detailed description of the park and gardens as if “entering from Hyde Park corner”:

We have on the left the well-known Rotten Row (1 1/2 miles), reserved for riders.²⁶ The carriage-drive adjoining is thronged on fine afternoons in the season with the carriages of the aristocracy. This is one of the sights of London that no one with a taste for elegance should miss...Bathing is allowed in the Serpentine from 5 to 8 a.m., and from 7.30 to 8.30 p.m. in summer (except Sundays). A few hardy enthusiasts have achieved a well-earned notoriety by taking a morning dip all the year round. Boating can also be enjoyed for 1s. to 1s. 6d. per hour...On the Kensington Gardens side of the bridge [across the Serpentine] is a Refreshment Pavilion, much patronized in summer for afternoon tea; and on the other side is the Powder Magazine.²⁷

The guide’s voice here makes many of the same moves as the narrator of *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. It recreates the sensation of following particular paths through the gardens, pointing out notable features or possible activities as the reader “passes” them. The author’s mention later in this description that the “Round Pond (7 acres), beloved by juvenile yachtsmen, was formed [in the reign of George II]” is the only mention I have thus far found in turn-of-the-century guides and descriptions of the gardens of children’s use of them.

The largest difference between this description and Barrie’s (apart from whimsy) is that Barrie shifts the passage into the second person, directly addressing the reader. This gives the walk through Pan’s Kensington Gardens a sense of immediacy only latent in the guidebook. The children’s book addresses the reader as a familiar friend, guiding him or her through the gardens

²⁶ The 1911 edition adds that Rotten Row is “a corruption of *route du roi*,” perhaps catering to another turn of the century interest, the linguistic and geographic origins of city street names.

²⁷ *Pictorial and Descriptive Guide, 1911*, 161-63.

as if narrator and reader are walking together. The reader here appears to be a child rather than an adult, as indicated by the passage's preoccupation with games and simpler vocabulary. We turn in at the northern gate, recognizing a lady with balloons, who is afraid to leave the safety of the fence ("if she were to let go her hold of the railings for one moment, the balloons would lift her up, and she would be flown away")²⁸ and proceed south down the Broad Walk. The narrator directs our attention hither and thither, seductively blending the familiar and the whimsical:

Next we come to the Hump, which is the part of the Broad Walk where all the big races are run; and even though you had no intention of running you do run when you come to the Hump, it is such a fascinating, slide-down kind of place. Often you stop when you have run about half-way down it, and then you are lost; but there is another little wooden house near here, called the Lost House, and so you tell the man that you are lost and then he finds you. It is glorious fun racing down the Hump, but you can't do it on windy days because then you are not there, but the fallen leaves do it instead of you.²⁹

We move from the ostensibly factual "next we come to...where all the big races are run" and are lured at the crest of the hill into running downward along with gravity. The hill tugs you so that "you" can become "lost" when stopping only halfway down the Hump. Perhaps this is in part a slippage from "losing" the race by stopping halfway into the state of simply "being lost." Fortunately for children, this sensation of being lost immediately vanishes upon the arrival of an adult who "finds you." For the child reader, being lost is not ignorance of where precisely one is but losing the guidance and purpose that had been leading us down the Broad Walk—once lured into play, we lose direction until an adult reappears on the scene to turn us onward. The anonymous man's task of "finding us" seems easy; we do not need him to explain where we are or direct us back up the hill, merely to enter our sphere of awareness with a sense of assurance and presence.

²⁸ Barrie, *Kensington Gardens*, 2.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 5-6.

This strangely placeless sense of disorientation seeps into other ostensibly mapped features, which become a blend of the “real” and the imagined. The stones along the eastern edge of the Broad Walk, for instance, existed in the gardens at this time, but have here been transformed into the tombstones of children “who had fallen unnoticed from their perambulators” to be trapped in the gardens after Lock-out time. Here we see at work a definition of “lost” that speaks more to attention than to place or direction. The problem is less that these children have fallen and more that they did so *unnoticed* and slipped beyond hope of recovery. Peter’s adventures in the gardens similarly do not take on any ominous cast until he tries to return to his mother only to find his window barred and his mother curled around another infant. These changes suggest to Peter, and to the reader, for the first time that a mother’s attention is not unwavering and that sometimes you cannot go home again. In *Peter and Wendy*, this inattention extends from Mr. and Mrs. Darling, who are out for the evening while Peter whisks away their children, to Peter’s careless shepherding of them to the Neverlands, and to the narrator’s casual attitude toward the Neverlands’ frequent changes.

Barrie’s co-option and alteration of the guiding voice points out a notable gap in the guide’s pages. Although the actual reader of the guidebook is unlikely to be on the lookout for fairies as he or she rambles over the Serpentine into Kensington Gardens, adults were hardly the gardens’ only visitors, and even those visitors that the guidebooks *do* account for might have approached the area in strikingly different ways, attending to different features entirely, or interacting with the same features with radically different eyes. Ward Lock, and Co.’s guides were not the only ones aimed at an audience presumed to have leisure time, (sometimes varied) disposable income, and a sense that a visitor could—with help—discover urban gems unknown to even some London natives.

In order to follow along visually with the guide's description of the area, the 1908 reader consulted the "Plan of Central London—Section 2" which folds out. The map's territory stretches from Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush in the west along the Thames to the East India Dock, and is divided into half mile squares. Railways are depicted as solid lines with boxy stations, underground routes as black and white checks, and tramways as hatched lines. The reader would have found the teal shading of the Serpentine River and Round Pond very familiar from earlier maps. The Broad Walk, Kensington Palace, and Albert Memorial are clearly marked, as is the Buck Hill Walk heading south along the eastern edge of the river, and the Magazine at the bridge over the Serpentine. Gates leading out of the park and Rotten Row are also labeled. Nearby transit stations include Notting Hill Gate, Kensington, Hyde Park Corner, Lancaster Gate, and Queens Road; and major landmarks are clearly marked as black buildings, including, for example, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Houses of Parliament, and St. Paul's Cathedral. Although the emphasis has shifted here from the more artistic styles of earlier maps, the result remains aesthetically pleasant. However, this map is clearly intended primarily as a functional document, geared toward getting around to various points of interest in a presumably strange city. The accordion fold keeps the otherwise overly long map from being unwieldy while out and about, and Kensington Gardens is, from this perspective, just one of many notable potential stops in London, given equal weight and emphasis with other well-known features of the city.

Users of the 1911 version would have benefited from a new map solely featuring Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. This plan divided the Long Water (northwest of the bridge in Kensington Gardens) from the Serpentine (Hyde Park). The larger scale map makes room for the depiction of the island in the lake and the boat house on the Serpentine's eastern shore. The

Broad Walk and Buck Hill Walk are named, but so too are the Flower Walk along the park's southern edge, Budge's Walk (stretching from the pond northeast to the Fountains, now known as the Italian Gardens), the North Walk along the park's northern edge, and Lancaster Walk, running north and south through the park's center. Key named sites include Kensington Palace, the Round Pond, St. Govor's Well,³⁰ the Albert Memorial, Refreshments (at the pavilion), the Temple, and Speke's Monument. As we will see, many of these sites will be creatively transformed by Barrie into fantastical versions of themselves, bridging the space between the Kensington Gardens of the early 1900s and the unmapped realms of the Neverlands.

Rackham's illustration of the Serpentine looks across the water to the bridge over the lake (figure 5.2). The bird's eye view of the Serpentine on the map here gives way to the perspective of someone standing on the shore and gazing into the distance. Fairies fly and dance in the foreground, and the lighting suggests dusk or "Lock-out time," the text's term for when the gates are closed and fairies begin to come out of hiding. Ripples on the surface of the water and detailed reflections of the trees around the edges supply a gesture at realism that is gently undermined by the fairies, whose wings threaten to blend into the color of the water. Their forms, trailing from the shore upward, lead the viewer's eye toward the bridge in the background. The apparent merger between fantasy and reality is accomplished here by means of apparent depth, whereas in the map the labeling of the "The Bird's Island" lends a tongue-in-cheek gravitas at once undermined by the tiny birds lifting off and seeming escaping into the map's marginalia. Although the viewer approaches the intersection of reality and fantasy from

³⁰ This is the only period map of Kensington Gardens I have thus far encountered that mentions the well, which appears in passing in *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. Barrie, having lived in the vicinity of the gardens, had intimate knowledge of its smaller features, as well as ample time in them accompanied by small children. The presence of the well in his version of the gardens indicates his interest in the smaller, quirky features that the child's imagination made much of but which seldom rated notice in official guides to the area. This attention to the small and nod to the very local remained a feature of his work.

opposite directions, as it were, map and illustration achieve a similar effect and together emphasize the permeability of the boundaries between imagination and observation and those between cartography and illustration.

Map of a Child's Mind

The ready porousness between reality and fantasy bleeds into other apparent boundaries. Thus the lines between present and past, adult and child, attention and forgetting likewise diffuse through the landscape of *Peter and Wendy*,³¹³² in which the Neverlands shift forms perpetually in response to the children's imaginations. By the 1911 publication of *Peter and Wendy*, illustrated by F. D. Bedford, any semblance of a traditional map has fallen away to be replaced by textual meditations on this shifting nature of the Neverlands. The title of chapter one, "Peter Breaks Through" suggests a sense of direction that never clearly materializes. For, the reader thinks, surely Peter must be breaking *from* somewhere into somewhere else and, moreover, the line between here and there seems firm enough to require "breaking." As the chapter unfolds the satirical history of Mr. and Mrs. Darling and the births of their children Wendy, John, and Michael, it at first appears that Peter emerges from the children's fantasies and into their nursery, for "Mrs. Darling first heard of Peter when she was tidying up her children's minds."³³ The image of the children's minds undergoing a brisk nightly cleaning amuses and disturbs; it has contributed to a line of psychoanalytical readings of Peter Pan that aim to unpack just what

³¹ Many scholars have also linked the Neverlands and Peter (the *puer aeternus*) with death, playing on a doubled sense of "lost" as missing and passed on. See for instance Tatar's "Introduction to J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*."

³² Readers seeking biographical connections here might want to consult Barrie's "Introduction to Peter Pan," reprinted in Tatar: "Some say that we are different people at different periods of our lives, changing not through effort of will, which is a brave affair, but in the easy course of nature every ten years or so. I suppose this theory might explain my present trouble [in remembering writing *Peter Pan*], but I don't hold with it; I think one remains the same person throughout, merely passing, as it were, in these lapses of time from one room to another, but all in the same house. If we unlock the rooms of the far past we can peer in and see ourselves, busily occupied in beginning to become you and me."

³³ Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, 7.

“naughtiness and evil passions” get “hurriedly stow[ed]...out of sight.”³⁴ Also unclear is whether Mrs. Darling finds Peter’s “most perplexing” presence something that should be tucked away or uncovered.³⁵

Mrs. Darling’s tidying up points us back toward problems of forgetting and remembering. What would it mean to pack away some thoughts so that their owners stop attending to them? What does such redirection look like? One possible answer emerges in Mrs. Darling’s own investigation:

“But who is he, my pet?”

“He is Peter Pan, you know, mother.”

At first, Mrs. Darling did not know, but after thinking back to her childhood she just remembered a Peter Pan who was said to live with the fairies. There were odd stories about him, as that when children died he went part of the way with them, so that they should not be frightened. She had believed in him at the time, but now that she was married and full of sense, she quite doubted whether there was any such person.³⁶

Even within what should be Wendy’s explanation—and she notably substitutes his name for the information her mother seeks--Peter’s origins and chronology remain indistinct. Rather than “first hear[ing]” about Peter while tidying Wendy’s mind, now Mrs. Darling *already* knows something of him. Even now when “married and full of sense,” she only *doubts* his existence. Moreover, Wendy fully expects her mother’s familiarity with Peter, an expectation packed into that tangential “*you know.*” Already, any belief that Peter must be emerging from a child’s mind is complicated by his apparent existence across minds (all the Darling children) and across generations (also familiar to their mother—indeed it is Mrs. Darling’s dream of Peter that supplies the chapter title). These complications are furthered by the perspective in “Peter Breaks Through,” which recounts the night the Darling children went missing but before Wendy and her

³⁴ Ibid, 8. See Jacqueline Rose. More recent accounts have drawn attention to the ways *Peter and Wendy* addresses itself to dual audiences. See for example Stirling.

³⁵ Ibid, 11.

³⁶ Ibid.

brothers return at the novel's end. This uncertainty of the origin, not to mention the content, of Peter Pan stories, then, does not merely emerge from consideration of the novel's textual and biographical predecessors but permeates the content of the book itself. Indeed, given the text's persistent refusal of origins, the scholarly determination to identify its biographical seeds is understandable (the text provokes the question) yet puzzling (surely the perpetually circling and circulating content elicits readings of the movement itself).

The geography of the Neverlands has been depicted numerous times over the years in an effort that is perhaps as compulsive and frustrating as pinning down the text's origins. Described as a "map of a person's mind," the Neverlands' landmarks include an array of fantastic peoples and places nestled easily alongside the concrete and mundane. This comfortable mix is reminiscent of Robert Allbut's collection of fictional events located as nearly as possible in London,³⁷ and is all the more striking in that the more natural features, such as a coral reef, seem realistic in spite of their wholly fictional setting:

I don't know whether you have ever seen a map of a person's mind. Doctors sometimes draw maps of other parts of you, and your own map can become intensely interesting, but catch them trying to draw a map of a child's mind, which is not only confused, but keeps going round all the time. There are zigzag lines on it, just like your temperature on a card, and these are probably roads in the island, for the Neverland is always more or less an island, with astonishing splashes of colour here and there, and coral reefs and rakish-looking craft in the offing, and savages and lonely lairs, and gnomes who are mostly tailors, and caves through which a river runs, and princes with six elder brothers, and a hut fast going to decay, and one very small old lady with a hooked nose.³⁸

The ostensibly mappable and identifiable portions of the human body here are subsumed into the more amorphous landscape of the child's mind. The features here also echo familiar staples of adventure fiction in the form of reefs and caves and other locales that lure the children into exploration. The zigzags establish a strange link between mind, body, and space. The doctor tries

³⁷ Robert Allbut, *London and Country Rambles with Charles Dickens*, (London: Sheppard and St. John, 1899). For a more extensive discussion of this work, see chapter two.

³⁸ Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, 8-9.

to map a child's mind, and produces "zigzag lines" that are like a temperature chart. The ability to chart bodily data, slides into mapping some unspecified feature of the mind, and the resulting lines in turn are "probably" roads in the Neverlands. This uncertainty is twofold: the zigzags could *become* something else in the Neverlands, or they could be a sign of some unknown source emerging in the child's mind. The landscape of the Neverland is as much textual as geographic—with paths of citation leading readers back to Robert Louis Stevenson and other authors,³⁹ and with Peter's name "scrawled all over" Wendy's mind like a geographical feature.⁴⁰ If Peter's name can appear as a scrawl inside Wendy's mind, perhaps the geography of the island may move back in the other direction as well, transformed and hidden in the mind and body themselves. Unsurprisingly, Peter Pan has inspired readings that combine the slips between actual place and fictional events, and between fictional space and readerly mind. Paul Fox, for instance, comments that "the text's charting of territory and type, the island and its inhabitants, would appear to map out the topography of an imperial idyll."⁴¹ Jonathan Padley, going a step farther, argues that Peter's most defining feature is his resistance to definition—as unified text, as human, as a father to the lost boys.⁴²

This vexed attempt to interpret the "map of a mind" of Neverland emerges directly from the text, which moves from notable features and people to encompass abstract pieces of the Darlings' world in the forms of needlework, fathers, religion, "and so on":

It would be an easy map if that were all, but there is also first day at school, religion, fathers, the round pond, needle-work, murders, hangings, verbs that take the dative, chocolate pudding day, getting into braces, say ninety-nine, three-pence for pulling out

³⁹ For a discussion of Peter Pan in relation to piracy and imperialist masculinity, see Bradley Deane, "Imperial Boyhood: Piracy and the Play Ethic," *Victorian Studies* 53, no. 4 (Summer 2011): 689-714.

⁴⁰ Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, 11.

⁴¹ Peter Fox, "Other Maps Showing Through: the Liminal Identities of Neverland," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 32, no. 3. (Fall 2007): 252-68. For a broader look at the relationship between male childhood and British imperialism, also see Bradley Deane.

⁴² Jonathan Padley, "Peter Pan: Indefinition Defined," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 36, no. 3 (September 2012): 247-87.

*your tooth yourself, and so on, and either these are part of the island or they are another map showing through, and it is all rather confusing, especially as nothing will stand still.*⁴³

Particularly curious are “murders [and] hangings” which might also point to the influence of cheap and sensational texts, and “verbs that take the dative” as another intersection between map and textuality. The list steamrolls, however, off the edge of identifiable features. The “and so on” syntactically bridges the gap between the recognizable (“the round pond”) and the kind of confusion that already plays a prominent part in the novel. “Either” these elements are “part of the island” or they come from “another map showing through.” As with the chapter’s title, the reader finds themselves asking “map of what?” and “showing through from where?” This other map (often justifiably identified with the “real” world of the nursery and the Darlings’ suburban home) evokes the palimpsest of one map drawn over the remains of another. This layering, like the search for origins discussed above, dissolves the boundaries between Peter’s world, the imagination, and the world of the nursery. Lest the reader stop at the image of a palimpsestic map, the passage adds “nothing will stand still.” This refusal to stand still is Neverlands’ predominant characteristic, and this aspect of the island spatially represents the novel’s narrative fluctuations and textual ambiguities.

Any topography the text maps must also be a contingent one. This is especially the case since the text’s nebulosity also implies persistent collusions between the text and readers. The MinaLima edition emphasizes this problem by accompanying the above passage about mapping of a child’s passage with a fold-out imitation of medical notes (figure 5.3). They are inscribed in a “PATIENT CARD” for the patient “DARLING CHILDREN,” condition “UNKNOWN (?)” and stamped confidential. The question mark ironically inverts the mystery of the “unknown”

⁴³ Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, 9. Emphasis added.

condition, as we are forced to ask whether their condition is really so obscure as it appears at first glance. The card folds out to reveal zigzag line graphs, unlabeled except for child 1, 2, and 3, sequential numbers, and an unexplained letter titling each (07194 (B), 07195 (E), 07196 (Q)). Clearly the Darling children are separated into different charts. Yet, in spite of this, they share a card and are spoken of as a single patient, and the sequential numbers suggest their having been examined in a row. Folding the flaps back reveals a triptych of sorts—three brains illustrated and labeled with a name and described age (figure 5.4). John, on the far left, is “Somewhat Young,” Wendy, in the middle, “Rather Grown Up,” and Michael on the right “Thoroughly Young.” A generic sketch of a human head illustrates each panel, the crown of the head taken over by a divided brain, the parti-colored sections numbered in no apparent order. But though each brain is colored separately and each head is labeled with a brief description of the child’s Neverland, the images are visually collapsed. Left profile, full face, right profile; each could well be the same head from different views, and the Darling children again blur into a shared subject.⁴⁴

Folding the brain images upward leaves the lower heads floating beneath a newly revealed map of Neverland, “according to the minds of the Darling Siblings” (figure 5.5). Blue sea seeps down to curves and swirls previously marking the border between lower head and mind, and a compass rose floats in the void previously occupied by Michael’s skull. The map in the center of the ocean is probably at least somewhat familiar to contemporary readers—it is an island with some familiar landmarks, including Skull Rock (shaped like a skull to the northeast,

⁴⁴ Barrie, *Peter Pan*, 19.

Serial No. 120380

MEDICAL NOTES

PATIENT CARD

Patient: DARLING CHILDREN

Condition: UNKNOWN (?)

Doctor's Notes: * There are zigzag lines
on it, just like your temperature
on a card.

CONFIDENTIAL

(Stamp):

MEDICAL BOARD

Administrator's
Initials: *ML*

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY.

Referred 6-17-05 To Dept. 306.

L.F.

P.T.O

Figure 5.3: Front of patient card for the Darling children, MinaLima's *Peter Pan*, 2015.

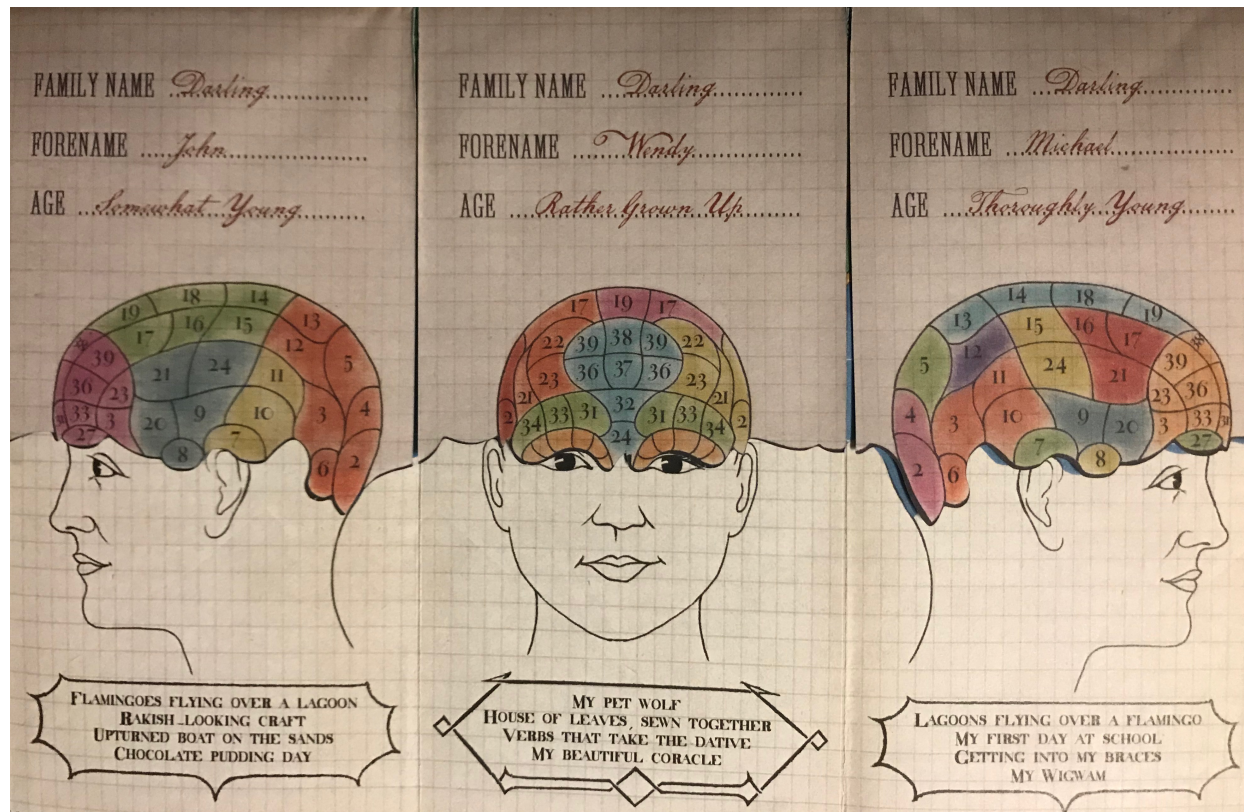


Figure 5.4: Interior of the Darling children's patient card, MinaLima's *Peter Pan*, 2015.