

Poverty Porn in Nineteenth-Century Fiction:
Spectacle, Space, Surveillance, and the
Victorian Imagination

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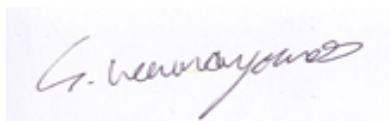
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Abstract

This thesis interrogates the Victorian slum novel and examines the ways in which poverty is deployed to mediate desire. I describe this phenomenon as ‘poverty porn’. Through an interdisciplinary analysis into the themes of spectacle, space, and surveillance in the Victorian slum novel, this thesis considers the socio-cultural implications of literary poverty porn and proposes that it functions as an extension of slumming practices in which the richer classes entered impoverished areas as a leisure pursuit. In identifying this relationship between the novel and slumming, I challenge the apparently charitable intentions of nineteenth-century slum novelists. In ‘Chapter 1: Spectacle’, I illustrate how Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* (1837) and Margaret Harkness’s *In Darkest London* (1889) present images that simultaneously evoke sympathy for the poor while providing pleasure and entertainment for their readerships. ‘Chapter 2: Space’ considers the ways in which Arthur Morrison’s *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894) and Israel Zangwill’s *Children of the Ghetto* (1892) engage with spatial relations in their representations of the slums, and critiques how each author constructs slum spaces to articulate their own identities and beliefs. ‘Chapter 3: Surveillance’ discusses how Vernon Lee’s *Miss Brown* (1884) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Mary* (1916) critique male philanthropic and artistic gazes and emphasise the oppression of poor and working-class women under surveillance. In doing so, they reveal poor women’s potential to enact social reform when they break away from the scrutinising male gaze. Throughout these chapters, I explore how these texts are informed by slumming practices and how they aim to produce various forms of pleasure in their readerships. In doing so, this thesis also contextualises the slum novel in wider nineteenth-century culture, uncovering relationships between poverty porn and philanthropy, social class, gender, sexuality, immigration, identity, oppression, and repression. This thesis thus offers new readings of both well-known and underdiscussed slum novels while unearthing the implications of the various forms of poverty porn that gripped the Victorian imaginary.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the University of Surrey and Techne for supporting my research and my professional development throughout my PhD. The University of Surrey has been my academic home since I started my BA in 2014, and without the support of the School of Literature and Languages I would most certainly not be on the path that I am travelling today. Techne has provided the funding for this thesis as well as some excellent doctoral training, which has shaped my career trajectory going forward. Through Surrey and Techne I have had the pleasure of meeting many inspiring people, and have gained many invaluable experiences.

I am indebted to my fantastic supervisory team, Patricia Pulham, Beth Palmer, and Helen Kingstone. I could not ask for a more supportive team, and I am immensely grateful for their emotional, professional, and creative support throughout the process of writing this thesis. As my primary supervisor, Patricia has been a pivotal influence in my pursuit of my PhD, and helped me with the foundational ideas that shaped this research; her attentiveness to my writing style particularly has really helped me improve my expression and confidence. Beth has helped me push my ideas to new and exciting heights, not only in my PhD but also throughout my BA and MA. Despite joining the team in the final year of my PhD, Helen's suggestions and ideas have directed my research in profound ways. Their counsel throughout this process has made me a better researcher, a better writer, and generally more confident in myself. Additional gratitude goes to Bran Nicol and Lucy Ella Rose, whose helpful comments in the first year of my PhD helped shape this thesis going forward. I would also like to thank the amazing PGR community at Surrey; our socials have helped make a fragmented few years feel connected and fulfilling.

My additional thanks go to Sarah Wise, who shared her provocative work on Arthur Morrison in its pre-published form; Sarah's research shaped and directed my section on Morrison.

I am always and forever will be grateful for my family – Mum, Dad, Alex, Gemma, Janette, Alec, Rachel, Brad, and Matthew. The board game nights and catchups have helped me keep my sanity throughout. My friends Hollie and Emma have also been incredibly important influences on me, and have helped to keep me grounded over the last three years. To Digby – taking you out for walks every day and teaching you tricks is something I value more and more every day, and I certainly owe you more than a few biscuits.

Finally, I am thankful to my wife Louise. Even in the midst of her own fantastic research, Louise has always been there for me to talk to, to form ideas with, and to read my work with her critical and creative eye. I dedicate this thesis to Lou, for showing me my self-worth and pushing me to achieve my potential. I could not wish for a better collaborator and life partner. I would not be where I am without Louise – I love her more than stars.

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Introduction

Slumming, Poverty Porn, and the Novel

In 1852, the journalist Henry Mayhew describes the slums of London's poorer districts as a space 'covered with a scum [...] and prismatic with grease', and notes that 'the air has literally the smell of a graveyard' (p. 258). Travelling through the slums, Mayhew represents the grotesque images he spectates while partaking in the leisure pursuit of 'slumming'. Slumming involves a voyeuristic practice of entering the 'intimate [...] spaces of the poor' to take pleasure in a 'grotesque spectacle' (Koven, 2004, p. 3), normally under the guise of charity. Ostensibly a factual depiction of London's poor citizens, Mayhew's research into slum life reproduced the aesthetic of the East End streets seen earlier in texts such as Charles Dickens's 1837 novel *Oliver Twist* (1850d): Dickens invites the reader to access London's riverside slums and to 'look upon the slime beneath' (p. 590). Although these texts purport to present social facts, both suggest a perverse pleasure in the grotesque spectacle of London's poorer districts. This thesis considers novels that focus on slum life to be an extension of slumming practices; as Alison Byerly (2013) notes, 'art that aspires to be realism must do more than just depict a real-seeming world [...] it must take you there' (p. 2). I argue that the slum novel functions as a continuation of slumming pursuits, 'tak[ing]' its readers into the space of the poor and constructing a spectacle of poverty that seduces the Victorian imagination. Other critics, such as Seth Koven (2004) and Judith R. Walkowitz (1992), have emphasised the intermingling of philanthropy, pleasure, and slumming in the Victorian imaginary.¹ By considering the slum novel as a form of literary slumming, this thesis develops these discussions further and enriches them by identifying the functions of pleasure, eroticisation, and poverty porn in the construction of the slums in the texts presented for analysis. This thesis identifies the roles that visual spectacle, representations of spatial relations, and methods of surveillance play in codifying poor spaces with erotic implications while touching on integral themes that appear throughout the slum novels selected, including philanthropy, social class, gender, sexuality, immigration, identity, oppression, and repression. In doing so, this thesis brings new readings of these texts to light while also developing the scholarly discussion on nineteenth-century slumming practices, the popularity of the slum novel, and erotically encoded images of poverty.

¹ Koven's *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* and Walkowitz's *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* are discussed further in the 'Literature Review' section of this thesis, and are engaged with throughout my argument.

The Victorian fascination with images of poverty and degradation is reproduced in twenty-first-century popular culture. *Macbeth on the Estate* (Woolcock, 1997), *Slumdog Millionaire* (Boyle, 2008) and *Benefits Street* (Channel 4, 2014) all constitute the ongoing desire for what I define as ‘poverty porn’. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* defines literal uses of the term pornography as ‘the explicit description or exhibition of sexual subjects or activity in literature, painting, films, etc., in a manner intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic feeling’ (2021). The *OED* also provides usage of the term in a figurative or metaphoric sense, denoting it as ‘written or visual material that emphasizes the sensuous or sensational aspects of a non-sexual subject, appealing to its audience in a manner likened to the titillating effect of pornography’ (2021). While the literal use of the term denies the ‘aesthetic’ nature of pornographic materials, both describe the sense of eroticised pleasure that derives from gazing at visual mediums. I define poverty porn with these understandings of pornography in mind; I use the term to represent the effect of nineteenth-century representations of poverty and the myriad ways they produce a quasi-erotic pleasure in their audiences. Throughout this thesis pleasure appears in various forms, including the eroticisation of the grotesque (Sections 1.1 and 1.2), the expression and affirmation of dominant views held by the reader/author (Sections 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2), sexual or romantic fulfilment (Sections 1.2, 3.1, and 3.2), images of social reform amongst political or cultural unrest (Sections 1.2, 2.2, and 3.2), and decadent excess (Sections 2.1, 3.1, and 3.2). The cultural impact of this type of poverty porn stretches beyond artistic expression; the practice of slumming is definable in these terms as it allows middle- and upper-class spectators to enter the slums and experience ‘sensuous and sensational’ visual pleasures. I argue that the development of the realist slum novel and slumming as a leisure pursuit illustrate a socio-cultural desire for poverty porn.

More recent critics have engaged with concepts of ‘poverty porn’ and visual pleasure. Discussing *Benefits Street*, Tracy Jensen (2014) defines poverty porn as a form of media that ‘aims to arouse and stimulate the viewer’ and to ‘provoke an emotional sensation through a repetitive and affective encounter’ with the poor and grotesque images of poverty (p. 4).² By broadening my use of the term to refer to the pleasure derived from literary

² Broadcast in January 2014, *Benefits Street* is a six-part ‘observational documentary’ of James Turner Street in Birmingham, a street of ninety-nine houses where ‘the majority of residents are unemployed’ (2014, p. 2). The series also placed the welfare system and benefits claimants under intense scrutinisation; for more on the dialogues and discourses that emerged out of *Benefits Street*, see Laura L Paterson, Laura Coffey-Glover, and David Peplow’s ‘Negotiating Stance within Discourses of Class: Reactions to *Benefits Street*’ (2016).

slumming, my research extends understandings of poverty porn by identifying it at its roots in the nineteenth century. In doing so, I also consider the socio-political elements impacting what is considered pornographic. In her influential feminist critique of pornography, Andrea Dworkin (1989) declares that erotic visual material is dogmatic as it approves what should be dominantly considered to be pleasurable to the gaze. For Dworkin, the visual politics of pornography ‘establish the sexual and social subordination of women to men’ (p. xxxvii). Dworkin characterises pornography as visual material that affirms socially dominant beliefs through a regime of visual pleasure. I critique nineteenth-century poverty porn along similar lines to define and redefine poverty porn in innovative ways. In addition to patriarchal discourse, I engage with pornographic representations of poverty and consider how they approve or write against dominant discourses of race, gender, sexuality, and social class.

Jack London’s journalistic piece *The People of the Abyss* (1903) illustrates the Victorian interest in poverty porn, as he enters the ‘under-world’ of the poor as an ‘explorer’ (p. i). London’s description of the slums as an ‘under-world’, combined with Mayhew’s simile of a ‘graveyard’ (1852, p. 258), indicate how the ‘grotesque’ nature of the poor is propagated by the Victorian media as fact. Disguised as a pauper himself, London takes pleasure in the thrill of existing incognito in the slums and penning his experiences for the pleasure of his readership. He touches upon immigration into the East End, the gender roles of slum inhabitants, and the discourses underlying inter-class conflicts. While London pens *The People of the Abyss* to evoke sensation and pleasure in his readership, his work naturally implicates socio-political debates.³ The phrase ‘poverty porn’ encapsulates these political, social, and erotic dimensions of slum writing; by applying this term to the slum novel, I aim to interrogate and trace the development of poverty porn throughout the nineteenth century through the analysis of selected but representative texts.

In his 1854 article ‘The English Middle Classes’, Karl Marx states that realist novelists, specifically Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell, reveal ‘more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians’ (p. 133). Marx’s focus on ‘truth’ resonates with the intent of realism as an artistic movement. As Deirdre d’Albertis (2015) argues, the realist novel focuses on representing the ‘real forces’ underlying social and moral conditions, normally with the intent to reform those conditions for the benefit of

³ In 1907 Theodore Roosevelt commented that London’s works ‘indulged in the wildest exaggeration’ and ignored the ‘heart of the wild things’ (quoted in Berliner, 2008, p. 52). Roosevelt’s criticisms illustrate the sense of sensation apparent in London’s investigation of the East End slums, as his ‘wildest exaggeration’ intensify the images of poverty and degradation visible throughout *The People of the Abyss*.

those suffering oppression under the social system (p. 130). This, as d'Albertis goes on to state, is illustrated in its influence on the New Woman and socialist movements that develop throughout the century (p. 130).⁴ On the other hand, the realist novel also represents a highly popular and entertaining way of delivering narratives to readers and is the dominant mode in nineteenth-century fiction.⁵ While the 'absolute imperative to represent truth' is integral to the realist project (d'Albertis, 2015, p. 119), the reality presented is often 'passion[ate]', 'dramatic' and 'exciting' (Maunder, 2005, p. 7). Realism is a significant method of representation in a wide range of Victorian art forms beyond fiction. Nineteenth-century art critic Anna Brownell Jameson (1845) states that realist stylings present a truthful 'knowledge of the human form' to overcome social 'difficulties', while also enabling the artist to evoke 'pleasure' from their audiences through their representation of reality (p. 67).⁶ This evocation of 'pleasure' in readers of realist fiction is mirrored in Jensen's statement that poverty porn aims to 'arouse and stimulate the viewer' (2014, p. 4). Realism is present throughout the texts that have been selected for interrogation throughout this thesis, and the relationship between authenticity and pleasure in the realist mode is considered throughout.

Slum novels published in the later years of the nineteenth century engage with and represent styles of naturalism. Towards the *fin de siècle*, the popularity of the realist form overlaps with the growth of naturalism in fiction. Discussing the influence of novelist Emile Zola on naturalism, Richard Lehan (2006) suggests that the naturalist novelist acts like a scientist, 'observing nature and social data, rejecting supernatural and transhistorical explanations of the physical world, rejecting absolute standards of morality and free will, and depicting nature and human experience as a deterministic and mechanistic process' (p.

⁴ I discuss the New Woman and the development of socialism at length in section '1.2 - Sympathy [and] kindred feeling': Slum Sisterhoods and Sapphic dialogues in Margaret Harkness's *In Darkest London* (1889).

⁵ As Alison Byerly (2013) describes, realism was a literary, artistic, and cultural 'phenomenon' that 'encapsulates' the Victorian period (p. 1). She notes that 'professors have to explain to students that this was a culture in which people voluntarily read 900-page, triple-decker novels simply because they enjoyed being immersed in a narrative for as long as possible' (p. 1). Byerly argues that this 'cultural predilection seems less remote, however, when we recognize the continuities between the realistic worlds that the Victorians sought in their literature and visual culture, and the "virtual" worlds we create today through a variety of digital media' (p. 1). The desire for 'real' experiences of places and people through literary and visual culture resonates with the slum novel and its preoccupation with taking readers slumming; I engage with this desire for literary slumming throughout this thesis.

⁶ While Jameson does not directly refer to literature, focussing here specifically on the works of Italian artists Filippo Lippi and Angelico da Fiesole, her description of realist stylings is applicable to the form of the realist novel as it acts to represent reality while also evoking a sense of pleasure, entertainment, and awe.

47).⁷ Though the movement rejects the politicisation of art and attempts to achieve social reform that characterises realism, it encourages reader sympathies for the poor while also creating an imagined ‘descent’ into the ‘savage’ world of the slums (Lehan, 2006, p. 48). The novel form, philanthropy, and slumming have complicated and overlapping relationships that encompass various forms of eroticised pleasure; by analysing the slum novel in relation to ‘spectacle’, ‘space’, and ‘surveillance’, this thesis uncovers how these relationships function in the Victorian imagination. My understanding and use of these terms are explored throughout the ‘Literature Review’ section of this thesis.

Overview of Nineteenth-Century Poverty, Philanthropy, and the Slums, 1834 – 1915

This thesis focusses on slum novels published between 1834 and 1915. The Victorian relationship with poverty, the poor, and the slums shifted dramatically between these periods as legislation, philanthropic action, and cultural norms were re-shaped. Many of these movements were influenced by or were created in opposition to the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act (PLAA). The PLAA aimed to regulate poor relief and to disband street-level charity. The Act created the workhouse system which placed the poor within a legally controlled space; each London parish had their own Poor Law Commissioner who could ‘impose their authority’ over the poor through their total control of the workhouse (Green, 2010, p. 82). Placed in the workhouse, paupers were open to scrutiny. This created a ‘hard-won and jealously guarded parochial autonomy’ and a ‘legal labyrinth that developed to regulate poor relief in the capital’ (p. 87). Under the surveying gaze of the workhouse officers and the press, the poor were often presented as demonic, defective, and degenerate. As John Welshman (2006) argues, the PLAA created a belief that ‘the bulk of social evils were to be found among the poor’ (p. 5) and as such the workhouse system acted to ‘confine’ (p. 5) the evils of poverty. As Welsh concludes, this legislation was ultimately an act of ‘discrimination’ (p. 6). The PLAA instigated a cycle in which the poor were viewed as ‘evil’ and thus subjected to the prison-like workhouse; in turn, the presumed immorality of the poor was amplified amongst the Victorian public as their identities were conflated with the dirtiness of these spaces. The PLAA is discussed further in ‘1.1 – The Deserving and the

⁷ Naturalism as a literary form became popular alongside the decadent movement. In this thesis, my interrogation of Arthur Morrison, Vernon Lee, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon engages with decadence as a literary and ‘linguistic moment [...] when language as such, the means of representation in literature, becomes problematic, something to be interrogated, explored, or thematized in itself’ (Dowling, 2014, p. ix). As a result, the decadent slum novels attempt not only to be naturalist expressions of perceived truths, but also to fulfil the aesthetic of moral degeneration and social disintegration that characterises literary decadence.

Undeserving: Sympathy and the Spectacle of Poverty in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837)', and I engage with the developing context of the PLAA across the nineteenth century throughout this thesis.

The PLAA and the growing moral panic surrounding the lives of the poor made poverty a popular topic for journalists and social investigators. Koven evidences the ways in which slumming practices and workhouse environments intersect through his analyses of slum journalism. James Greenwood's 1866 series of articles 'A Night in a Workhouse' evidence the importance of this trend. Greenwood disguised himself as a pauper and conducted an 'incognito social investigation using cross-class dress', and his articles produced a 'sensational' effect amongst readers of the *Pall Mall Gazette*; his 'first-hand' experience of the workhouse created a culture of 'eagerly indignant readers' who desired to travel the slums through Greenwood's journalistic voice (p. 51). As Welshman suggests, this further fuelled a 'moral panic'. Journalists painted the poor as 'law-breakers' as they attempted to define a so-called 'criminal class' or 'dangerous class' (p. 6). The media representation of poverty led to the invention of the term 'underclass' to refer to the poor in terms of their perceived incompetence, lack of desire to work, and lack of morality (Welshman, 2006, p. 24).⁸ Contributing to the nineteenth-century moral panic surrounding poverty, Henry Mayhew's writings throughout the 1840s express anxiety in decoding which poor individuals are 'deserving' of charity and which members can be labelled as the undeserving 'criminal' classes (1851, p. 10).⁹ The works of Greenwood, Mayhew, and Jack London are interrogated throughout this thesis; as I illustrate, the moral panic surrounding poverty is mirrored or critiqued in the slums novels I discuss, further illustrating the impact of the PLAA and slum journalism in the public imagination of the poor.

Partially in response to slum journalism, the 1860s saw a boom in philanthropic movements and groups. As Gareth Steadman Jones (2013) indicates, the media panic created

⁸ John Welshman's *Underclass: a History of the Excluded, 1880-2000* (2006) interrogates the notion of the underclass in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Welshman indicates that while the concept of the 'underclass' shifts over time, there is 'also much evidence of a linear process of work' (p. xxix). The longevity of this term and its associations of moral depravity indicate the stronghold that these ideas hold over both the nineteenth-century and twentieth-century imaginaries.

⁹ Mayhew's writing were later collected in *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851).

fears ‘centred on the maintenance of order and social stability’ (ch. 27.2).¹⁰ In response to these fears, many middle-class Victorians believed that the ‘only real solution to the problems of ‘demoralization’ [...] was for the rich to resume residence in the poorer areas’ and commit themselves to various forms of philanthropy, ranging from preaching, to financial support, and the building of cheaper residences for the poor (ch. 27.33). Living and working in the slums, these philanthropists formed part of the settlement movement (Jones, 2013, ch.27.2). Many of the organised groups that were formed in the wake of the settlement movement are discussed throughout this thesis including socialist groups, the Salvation Army, Christian or religious socialism,¹¹ Toynbee Hall, the People’s Palace, and the East London Dwelling Company. Charitable work was particularly common among middle-class Victorian women who were seeking a line of work that would offer them the freedom to explore the city; by 1893 over half a million women in Britain were ‘occupied continuously’ or ‘professionally’ in philanthropic work (Poole, 2014, p. 3). The role of philanthropy and the settlement movement in the formation of the New Women is discussed in Section 1.2 of this thesis which interrogates the relationship between New Women identities, socialism, and Sapphic friendships.

In addition to these philanthropic practices, slum researchers employed their time and money to understand the needs of paupers and their relationship with poverty. Octavia Hill’s *Homes of the London Poor* (1875) and Charles Booth’s *Descriptive Map of London Poverty* (1889), discussed throughout the second half of this thesis, illustrate the attempts of researchers to interrogate the living conditions of the poor with the intent to work towards urban regeneration. Moving beyond the preaching and money-giving philanthropists before them, Hill’s work and Booth’s research team create maps, documents, and statistical data that enabled the slums to be reworked in order to better the lives of paupers. Such work resulted in homes like the Peabody Buildings, ‘model dwellings’ that were spacious, clean, and available to the poor so long as they followed the strict rules put forward by the landlord

¹⁰ A seminal text in the study of Victorian poverty and slum life, Gareth Steadman Jones’s *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in London* (2013) interrogates the complex relationships between the poor, the middle classes, and the upper classes in nineteenth-century London. Originally published in 1971, Jones’s research also illuminates the intersection of legislation, philanthropy, class conflict, and journalism in the nineteenth century. This thesis cites the 2013 edition of *Outcast London*; as Jones notes, the huge changes in ‘economic development’ and the continuing nature of ‘casual labour’ and ‘unemployment’ in the forty years between editions meant that the 2013 version has a largely different perspective on poverty in the nineteenth century (ch. 7.26). As noted, the slum novel resonates with the hunger for poverty porn throughout the nineteenth century; as such, works like Jones’s become increasingly relevant to our outlook on poverty.

¹¹ Socialism, the Salvation Army, and religious socialism are all discussed in section 1.2 of this thesis.

(Picard, 2013, p. 44).¹² While remaining under the surveillance of a governing body, developments in the slums provided tenants with safer environments than those being offered by the workhouse.

Founded in 1869 amongst the boom in philanthropy, the creation of the Charity Organisation Society (COS) marked a major shift away from the workhouse-based PLAA system of poor relief. Initially named The London Society for Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity, the society was founded as ‘a clearing house and co-ordinator of relief activity’ (Rose, 1985, p. 11). As Michael E. Rose (1985) describes, the COS regulated and encouraged charities outside of government legalisation which contributed to the growth of philanthropy in the second half of the nineteenth century (p. 11). In 1869 the COS’s effect on the Poor Law was clear; G.J Goschen, President of the Poor Law Board, argued that cooperation with charities promoting outdoor relief would help to remedy the ‘lax practices’ of the Poor Law system (p. 11). As Jones described, the COS was ultimately formed by a ‘heterogeneous collection of individuals’ who felt that the old system of poor relief was unsatisfactory; Octavia Hill pushed for the ‘beautification of the [slums]’ while another key member, Edward Denison, suggested that the poor’s lifestyle would improve simply by moving some of the ‘urban gentry’ into their impoverished environments (ch. 11.75). While the voices of the COS differed from one another, members of the society agreed on a fundamental concept; the poverty and densely packed slums of the nineteenth century had been a ‘structural problem rather than a behavioural one’, and if the pauper suffering was to be alleviated the slums would need some form of urban regeneration (Welshman, 2006, p. 34). In 1911, the publication of George Lansbury’s *Smash up the Workhouse!* illustrated a continuing distrust in the workhouse system, partially as a result of the work of Hill, Booth, and the COS. Although the PLAA would not be abolished until 1929, philanthropic power had already largely been transferred to local organisations and regeneration projects. It is in this context that Mary Elizabeth Braddon published *Mary* (1916); I discuss this further in section 3.2.

The debates, concepts, and voices that construct the public imagination of the slums from 1834 – 1916 are varied, complex, and often conflicting. The slum novel represents the intersection of these dialogues; these texts also inform and contribute to them. The history of slumming, poverty legislation, philanthropic action, and urban regeneration is intimately

¹² The Peabody Buildings, the creation of model dwellings, and the strict rules put in place for tenants are discussed at length in section 2.1.

intertwined with the slum novel and the authors that pen these narratives. As such, I develop and engage with these contexts throughout this thesis as they are integral to building an understanding of poverty porn in the Victorian imaginary.

Research Questions

This thesis aims to answer the following research questions: Do slum novels operate in the contexts of surveillance and the perception of the poor as ‘deviant’ or ‘undeserving’? Can slum writing authentically depict working-class and pauper experiences of the slums? How do nineteenth-century literary constructions of slum space in these novels interact with other contemporaneous disciplines, such as art, criticism, and photography? How might we define a Victorian notion of poverty porn? These questions drive the theoretical and critical intentions of my research.

Thesis Structure

As I have noted, my thesis identifies ‘spectacle’, ‘space’, and ‘surveillance’ as three major themes and practices that underlie the slum novel. As such, I have organised my thesis into three chapters, each based on these themes. Rather than engaging with my texts in chronological order, I have interrogated my chosen novels in relation to the theme they most prominently represent. Each chapter analyses two of my primary texts. ‘Chapter 1: Spectacle’ considers the use of imagery in presentations of poverty in Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* and Margaret Harkness’s *In Darkest London* (1899). ‘Chapter 2: Space’ identifies the construction of slum environments and the spatial relationships within them in Arthur Morrison’s *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894) and Israel Zangwill’s *Children of the Ghetto* (1892). ‘Chapter 3: Surveillance’ interrogates Vernon Lee’s *Miss Brown* (1884) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Mary* (1916) to consider their engagement with surveillance strategies that oppress those in poverty, particularly focussing on the experiences of poor or working-class women under artistic or philanthropic male gazes. In the ‘Literature Review’ section of this thesis, I identify why I selected these particular texts and how they offer fruitful analyses in interrogating how spectacle, space, and surveillance inform concepts of poverty porn.

Each of my primary texts features elements of all three of my chapter themes. For example, I examine Israel Zangwill’s *Children of the Ghetto* (1892) in ‘Chapter 2: Space’ as the novel focuses on Jewish communal spaces in the East End. Elements of ‘Spectacle’ and ‘Surveillance’ still undoubtedly feature in my readings of *Children of the Ghetto*; community is reproduced as a central spectacle in the novel, while members of the titular

ghetto survey and critique each other throughout the text.¹³ However, organising my primary texts into the theme that is most prominent in their narratives allows a more fruitful and attentive analysis of how spectacle, space, and surveillance function in the slum novel.

Literature Review

Critical Contexts and Key Terms

The critical contexts outlined in this section of my literature review focus on my engagement with criticism that relates more specifically to my thematically organised chapters: ‘Spectacle’, ‘Space’ and ‘Surveillance’. While some of the critical material featured in this review is visible across all three overarching themes of my thesis, each has a distinctive scholarly, critical, and theoretical background. I discuss how these terminologies and contexts directly influence my analysis of the slum novels selected for interrogation in the section entitled ‘Primary Texts’. I am in dialogue with a range of criticism throughout this thesis, including the works of Michel Foucault, Seth Koven, Judith R. Walkowitz, and Lyn Pykett, and I engage with theoretical paradigms including reader-response theory, poststructuralism, feminism, postcolonialism, and theories of mapping. This literature review aims to identify the key criticisms in this thesis, highlighting both the overarching conceptual ideas as well as the more chapter-specific theoretical paradigms that I engage with in my readings.

A key theme that reoccurs throughout each of my three chapters is what Foucault terms as a *raison d'état*. In *The Birth of Biopolitics* (1989), Foucault describes *raison d'état* as an ‘art of government’ that ‘arranges’ its subjects into categories of ‘true’ or ‘false’ (1979, p. 4).¹⁴ As Foucault argues, a *raison d'état* produces the effect of *dispositif*, an ‘apparatus

¹³ Surveillance is particularly prominent in two of Zangwill's characters: Benjy, who critiques Esther for her lack of anglicisation and English literary knowledge, and Melchisedek Pinchas, who feels that Jewish values and linguistics are disappearing within his community. These are discussed at length in the section entitled ‘2.2 – Cockney-Yiddish spaces and the Cockney Jew in Israel Zangwill's *The Children of the Ghetto* (1892)’.

¹⁴ This political and moral regime is evident in each of my chapters. In ‘Chapter 1: Spectacle’, I argue that Charles Dickens organises his characters in *Oliver Twist* into charity-deserving paupers and undeserving criminals. Similarly, I illustrate that Margaret Harkness's *In Darkest London* highlights the progress-halting conflicts of religious and socialist organisations while also positioning a combination of both groups as the future of philanthropic action. In ‘Space’, I suggest that Arthur Morrison employs a *raison d'état* in mapping his short story collection *Tales of Mean Streets* as linguistic netherworlds; the slums are always demarcated as the false opposition to the values of Morrison's intellectual community. Israel Zangwill's novel emphasises the hybrid identity of the Cockney Jew while emphasising the unauthentic representations of London's Jewry in other slum fictions. In ‘Surveillance’, I argue that Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown* works against the restrictive *raison d'état* of the male aesthete while also recognising her aestheticisation of poverty in her travel writing. In my analysis of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Mary*, I recognise the presence of a *raison d'état* in attitudes to artistic value and the act of reading, and I highlight how this inhibits both poor women and female writers respectively.

[...] of knowledge-power that effectively marks out in reality that which does not exist and legitimately submits it to [this] division between true and false' (p. 19). Knowledge is intertwined with this process of *raison d'état* as authors reflect their own beliefs within their organisation of categories of true and false. I take this further by acknowledging that the *raison d'état* of slum fiction specifically is always impacted by dimensions of pleasure; reader self-location, Sapphic relationships, legible mappings of space, nostalgia, and the deconstruction of the male gaze are some of the ways this sense of pleasure appears in dialogue with a *raison d'état*. I also engage with Foucault's other concepts, particularly from *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), to inform my understanding of how knowledge networks affect regimes of power and social gazes in my chapter on 'Surveillance'. My understanding and interrogation of surveillance strategies are discussed later in this literature review.

Each chapter in this thesis builds on precursive work on the nature of slumming practices and their relationship with pleasure. Judith R. Walkowitz's *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (1992) and Seth Koven's *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (2004) are two hugely influential texts that I engage with throughout this thesis. Walkowitz (1992) highlights the first-hand depictions of poor spaces by slumming men and women which describe the slums in terms of their 'sexual and moral disorder' (p. 54). In these accounts, Walkowitz recognises a distaste for poor women who were not confined to the private space due to having to take up work as prostitutes or maids, as well as consistent depictions of poor men as failed husbands and 'abusive' alcoholics (p. 53). Overall, these first-hand depictions illustrate that the slums are perceived by the higher classes as spaces in which anxieties surrounding gender roles were realised. As Koven states, the debates surrounding social questions such as 'homelessness, social hygiene [and] childhood poverty', dialogues that were heightened by slumming practices, were ultimately 'sparked by and tapped into anxieties about sex, sexuality and gender roles' (p. 3). Koven builds on Walkowitz's ideas, arguing that slumming is not only 'bound up in [the middle classes'] insistent eroticization of poverty' but it is also part of a 'quest' to understand their own 'genders' and 'sexualities' (p. 4). I engage with Walkowitz's and Koven's conceptualisations of slumming throughout my thesis, and they influence my general engagement with discourses of sexuality and gender.

This thesis engages with dialogues surrounding sex and sexuality in the nineteenth century throughout; the slum novel is frequently encoded with sexuality, sometimes acting as a form of self-expression for the author's sexual desires. In her article 'Slumming with

the New Woman: Fin-de-Siècle Sexual Inversion, Reform Work and Sisterhood', Lisa Hager (2007) highlights the role of late-nineteenth-century slum fiction in creating a space outside of the West End where the middle classes could 'explore their own same-sex and opposite-sex feelings and identities' (p. 461). Hager describes a practice idiomatically known as 'going dirty', a form of slumming in which groups of men and women would enter the slum space to 'reform' or 'assist' the lower classes (p. 461). Going dirty enabled the creation of sisterhoods and brotherhoods that were separate from the public culture of the West End, creating communities in which same-sex desires could be explored (p. 460). Hager concludes that novels featuring sororal philanthropic groups, like *Miss Brown* and Rhoda Broughton's *Dear Faustina* (1887), align 'lesbian desire [with] reform work' and thus conflate the spectacle of the slums with sexuality (p. 461).¹⁵ Beyond established scholarship on slum writing and boundaries of gender and sexuality, I also consider how Harkness, Lee, and Braddon use their texts as sites of resistance against patriarchal discourses. In *The Improper Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (1992), Lyn Pykett argues that the development of the educated and independent New Woman at the fin-de-siècle created new forms of writing in which dialogues surrounding 'women's legal status and identity, and the changing discourse in which it was conducted' were brought to the forefront (p. 55). Pykett argues that the boom of the sensation genre in the mid-1850s anticipated the growth of the New Woman and that it laid the foundations for writing that would broaden, refine, and empower what it meant to be 'feminine' (p. i). In my sections on Harkness, Lee, and Braddon, I engage with these ideas to illustrate how these women suggest new frameworks for slum reform that reject the restrictive gazes of male philanthropists and artists. These critical texts inform my readings on how these authors use representations of poverty, slum spaces, and poor women to reflect and express their experiences in the literary landscape of the nineteenth century.

My sections on *In Darkest London* and *Miss Brown* engage with critical understandings of Sapphic relationships. In *Sappho and the Virgin Mary: Same-sex Love and the English Literary Imagination*, Ruth Vanita (1996) writes against a 'heterosexist' scholarly tradition which assumes that same-sex love between women is repressed in nineteenth-century literature and culture: she argues that 'Sapphic love was not always silenced, invisibilized, or exoticized by the English literary imagination but was rather one

¹⁵ I engage with the work of Hager and Koven in the second section of my chapter on 'Spectacle', where I interrogate Margaret Harkness's *In Darkest London* (1889) to illustrate how the spectacle of philanthropic sisterhood constructs the slums as a space for sexual liberation and exploration.

of its central components' (p. 1). Vanita concludes that 'love between women [...] has functioned as an enabling element in the writings of both male and female authors at least since Romanticism' (p. 1), and notes that philanthropic sisterhoods factor within this understanding of the Sapphic as 'love between women' (p. 46). As Vanita describes, sisterhoods enable Sapphic desire as a conduit for 'passionate dialogue[s] between women' (p. 2). Sapphic dialogues are the foundation for effective philanthropic changes throughout *In Darkest London* and *Miss Brown*. I engage with Vanita's definition of Sapphic relationships to highlight the way these dialogues function in charitable communities, and also to illuminate how Harkness and Lee reflect their personal relationships with women in their novels. Building on Vanita's work, Yopie Prins (1999) argues that the Victorian understandings of the Sapphic heavily featured masochistic experiences and representations, particularly in the wake of Algernon Charles Swinburne's 'poetics of passion' which mixed experiences of flogging and pleasure with an imitation of the lyrical style of the Greek poet Sappho (p. 155). By the end of the nineteenth century, the Sapphic mode connoted both masochism and same-sex female desire, appearing in the works of Michael Field amongst others (p. 74). Prins illuminates how representations of the Sapphic bear connotations of sexual pleasure, illustrating further the pornographic qualities of the slum novel. I engage with Vanita's and Prins's work to illustrate that pleasure in *In Darkest London* and *Miss Brown* is not garnered from their aestheticisation of poverty; instead, pleasure is implicated in their representation of intense and passionate Sapphic communities which commit themselves to philanthropic reform.

I use the terms 'spectacle', 'spectator', and 'spectatorship' throughout this thesis. Primarily, I use 'spectator' per its meanings in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*): 'a person who sees, or looks on at, some scene or occurrence' or 'a person who is present at, and has a view or sight of, anything in the nature of a show or spectacle' (*OED*, 1989). I apply the term spectator in my interrogations of members of the middle- and upper-classes who both physically navigate the slums and experience literary forms of slumming through the novel. I also use the term 'spectatorship' to indicate a social group, rather than a single spectator, partaking in the act of gazing. The *OED* defines spectacle as a 'specially prepared or arranged display of a more or less public nature (esp. one on a large scale), forming an impressive or interesting show or entertainment for those viewing it' (2021); in 'Chapter 1: Spectacle', I engage with my selected texts with this definition in mind to illustrate how they use imagery of the slums to evoke various forms of pleasure.

Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) is a key text in conceptualising the nature of the poverty spectacle. Debord's understanding of the spectacle provides the theoretical and conceptual dimension to my engagement with spectacles, spectators, and spectatorships. He defines the spectacle as 'a worldview transformed into an objective force' (p. 2). In the case of art that depicts the slums, this worldview is that of the middle- and upper-classes who derive entertainment from slumming pursuits. In slum fiction, the 'objective force[s]' Debord describes are therefore the depictions of the East End poor in these texts. Ultimately, he concludes, spectacles form an 'unreal unity' that 'masks the class division on which the real unity of the capitalist mode of production is based' (p. 30). By presenting the poor and the slums as spectacles in their work, artists enable 'hierarchical exploitation and repression' (p. 30). I interrogate these spectacles to identify how these images function to affirm dominant class-based beliefs and attitudes while also operating as a popular form of entertainment. While Debord's definition of the spectacle realises its function in the context of Victorian capitalism, he does not identify the role that pleasure plays in the desire for spectacular images. In this thesis, I extend the significance of Debord's definition of spectacle to encompass how literary slumming illustrates the importance of pleasure. Debord focuses primarily on the capitalist foundations that underly the spectacle; by broadening these ideas to consider the political, social, and personal desires of authors and their readerships, I develop his concepts to consider the various ways in which spectacles of poverty are encoded with aspects of pleasure. Building on Debord's critical work, I define spectacle as a series of captivating images which reflect the aesthetic and moral values of a readership. In the case of the slum novel, these values are the competing aesthetic, moral, and philanthropic interests of a readership that the author communicates via their presentation of the slums and those experiencing poverty.

In 'Chapter 2: Space', I acknowledge the nineteenth-century desire to make the entanglement of economic lifestyles in London comprehensible by documenting the attitudes and livelihoods of the poorer classes. As Walter Besant suggests in *East London* (1901), the slum's 'aggregation of mean streets' were thinly separated from the 'glittering bars and counters [,] dining-rooms, coffee-rooms [,] shopping [and] amusement' of the 'fashionable' West End (p. 9). The growing nature of the city in both size and population meant that 'prostitutes, street sweepers, vendors [and] beggars' walked alongside 'pedestrians, commuters, delivery boys, and shoppers' (Steinbach, 2016, p. 17), removing

the previously established spatial boundaries that separated affluence and poverty.¹⁶ Despite attempts throughout the nineteenth century to maintain ‘public order’ (Steinbach, 2016, p. 17), social classes remained nearby to one another. Charles Booth’s *Maps Descriptive of London Poverty* (1886 – 1903), for example, illustrate the complex juxtaposition of poor and affluent areas in London during the nineteenth century; Booth’s work also evidences the need felt by researchers to conceptualise the East End through maps and note-taking. In ‘2.1 - Arthur Morrison’s Mean Streets: Mapping and Linguistic Netherworlds in Fin-de-Siècle Slum Fiction’, I engage with theories of maps to illustrate how Morrison acts as a literary mapmaker. In Barbara Petchenik and Arthur Robinson’s (1976) influential collection of essays *The Nature of Maps*, they suggest that the ‘term ‘mapper’ [. . .] refers simply to anyone who actively conceives of spatial relationships in the milieu’ and add that the ‘conception of things in a spatial relationship is a critical operation, and he who does it is a mapper’ (p. 21). Similarly, Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchin, and Chris Perkins (2011) argue that ‘mapping not only represents reality, it has an active role in the social construction of that reality’ (p. xx). In both these major studies, the authors broaden general understandings of mapmaking beyond traditional cartography by illustrating that the dissection and understanding of spatial relations is a form of mapmaking itself. These theories influence my understanding of Morrison as a literary mapmaker who formulates the complex class relationships within the East End.

Franco Moretti’s *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (1999) provides a useful critical framework for understanding the purpose of Morrison’s mapping in representing the ‘immense geographical rift [which] had grown up between the rich and the poor of London’ (p. 78). For Moretti, the perceived gap between East and West End cultures evoked ‘fear and wonder’; making sense of the ‘rapid transitions’ between rich and poor spaces became key to making the city space ‘legible’, ‘read[able]’ and understandable (p. 79). The goal of the nineteenth-century literary mapmaker is to turn these ‘rapid transitions’ into digestible and understandable categories, much like the gradients of poverty that Booth evidences through his maps (pp. 79 – 80). Considering the ‘ethnograph[ic]’ (Maltz, 2011, p. 1) and ‘pseudo-sociological’ (Wise, 2022, p. 2) research that Morrison carried out in preparation

¹⁶ As Steinbach notes, the eighteenth-century city had far more defined gaps between poor and affluent spaces. While the city and the court were mostly the spaces of the higher classes, poverty was kept to the country and, to many, had connotations of rural life. In the nineteenth century, the cities became ‘large and densely populated’ due to growth in transport links to the city as well as industrialisation. As such, the city grew to encompass a dense amount of affluent and slum spaces that were conflated and mixed together (2016, p. 11).

for penning the stories that form *Tales of Mean Streets*, I engage with these theories of mapmaking to fully consider his role as a literary mapmaker.

In ‘2.2 – Cockney-Yiddish spaces and the Cockney Jew in Israel Zangwill’s *The Children of the Ghetto* (1892)’ I employ a different critical approach in interrogating Zangwill’s engagement with spatial relations. I argue that Zangwill negotiates space in his representation of the titular ‘ghetto’ to articulate his self-proclaimed Cockney-Jewish identity. I engage with Homi K. Bhabha’s (1994) conceptualisation of ‘hybridity’ throughout this section to illustrate how Zangwill constructs Cockney-Jewish identities as providing a position of power through his characterisation of the novel’s protagonist, Esther Ansell. Homi K. Bhabha’s work on hybrid identities is a quintessential text in understanding the nature of dual or cross-national identities, especially in postcolonial contexts.¹⁷ Bhabha’s description of hybrid identities as spaces where ‘cultural differences “contingently” and conflictually touch’ (p. 207) evidences the sense of internalised racial conflict that I unearth in Zangwill’s novel as well as in his critical essays. According to Bhabha, these identities resist ‘the binary opposition of racial and cultural groups [as a] homogenous polarized political consciousness’ (p. 207); I remain in dialogue with Bhabha’s theories to illustrate Zangwill’s positioning of the Cockney Jew as a form of resistance in response to the burgeoning prejudices against Jewish communities in the East End in the period before the 1905 Aliens Act.

In ‘Chapter 3: Surveillance’, I engage with critical works which emphasise how gazing at poor bodies submits them to the values and beliefs of the spectator. My understanding of the term surveillance derives from Foucault’s analytical work *Discipline*

¹⁷ Susan E. Sterrett (2015) describes Bhabha as a ‘post-colonial and cultural theorist who describes the emergence of new cultural forms from multiculturalism’, and emphasises the integral nature of his text in theorising postcolonial culture (p. 653). While this postcolonial context is indeed integral to Bhabha’s work, his discussion of hybridity in the quotations I engage with here more generally consider the concept of multinational identities; as such, Bhabha’s work on identity is also a powerful tool for considering Zangwill’s Cockney-Jew selfhood.

and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.¹⁸ He argues that surveillance is formed through an ‘apparatus of observation [and] recording’ (p. 173). The knowledge gained via surveying a group of people is then used to cast value judgements over their cultures, morals, and lives, resulting in the surveyor holding a ‘power-knowledge’ relationship over a group (p. 227). This is seen in the process of slumming more generally, as the middle- and upper-classes garner pleasure from gazing at poverty and degradation occurring among the poor.¹⁹ I engage with this Foucauldian understanding of surveillance and apply it specifically to the suppression of poor women and the possession of their bodies under patriarchal gazes. In ‘3.1 - Art, Philanthropy, and the Surveillance of Pauper Life in Vernon Lee’s *Miss Brown* (1884)’, I consider the theories of Lee’s aesthetic circle as forms of hostile surveillance which suppress working-class female bodies. I particularly engage with the aesthetic criticism of Walter Pater, who emphasises the need to organise aesthetic artworks by their intrinsic ‘value’ (1873, p. 20). *Miss Brown* focuses in part on the fetishisation of its eponymous working-class female protagonist under the gaze of a Pater-esque aesthete named Walter Hamlin; I argue that in doing so, Lee critiques Pater’s focus on the value of ‘pleasure’ in art and instead posits that art should provide sympathy for the poor. I critique dominant aesthetic theories within this chapter to identify the way Lee deconstructs the hostile surveillance strategies in Pater’s work while also emphasising the importance of Sapphic and philanthropic methods of sympathetic surveillance.

I further engage with concepts of patriarchal surveillance in my analysis of Braddon’s *Mary* by illustrating the impact of the male gaze. In her seminal critical work on the ‘male gaze’, Laura Mulvey (1988) describes this form of surveillance as the product of

¹⁸ Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* has been hugely influential in the study of surveillance strategies, discipline, and government. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* is a historical and sociological study of prison systems and the way they function in informing various methods of policing and control, including self-policing, data management, and constructing narratives of immorality and blame. As Nicholas Gane (2012) indicates, however, Foucault’s text goes beyond simply interrogating ‘institutional forms of surveillance, discipline and normalization’; his analyses of the ‘art of government’ reveals the ways in which power operates more generally through regimes of knowledge (p. 612). Foucault’s analysis of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon, a ‘prison-like architecture in which cells were organized circularly around a central tower, thereby enabling guards to exercise unlimited surveillance over inmates’, has been particularly impactful in theories and studies on surveillance (p. 615). For more on the continuing impact of Foucault’s text and his interrogation of the Panopticon, see Gane’s article ‘The governmentalities of neoliberalism: panopticism, post-panopticism and beyond’.

¹⁹ Additionally, the work of Charles Booth and other poverty researchers might be interrogated as an act of ‘power-knowledge’ over the East End’s poorer residents. I briefly touch upon this in ‘2.1 - Arthur Morrison’s *Mean Streets*: Mapping and Linguistic Netherworlds in Fin-de-Siècle Slum Fiction’. A full interrogation of this process of power-knowledge among fin-de-siècle research groups is beyond the scope of this thesis. Further study may reveal the operation of surveillance among these communities.

a ‘world structured by sexual imbalance’ in which ‘pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female’ (p. 62). The male gaze ‘projects its fantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly’, and their appearance is ‘coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness’ (p. 62). The novel’s protagonist is scrutinised and oppressed under the male gaze throughout the novel, and Braddon emphasises the inequality that poor women face under this system.²⁰ Throughout this section I engage with Mulvey’s concept while also acknowledging more recent scholarship on the male gaze in the nineteenth-century novel. In applying a Foucauldian understanding of surveillance in this chapter, I unearth the oppressive nature of the aesthetic male gaze; I also illustrate how, ultimately, both Anne Brown and Mary form philanthropic surveillance networks which allow them to achieve social and charitable reform.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical perspective I use throughout my thesis is a combination of new historicist and cultural materialist frameworks. The ontology of new historicism considers culture and society to be a ‘text’ made up of multiple ‘objects available to be read and interpreted’ (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2001, p. 9). Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt (2001) argue that analysing literary and non-literary social texts is a key element in interrogating ‘historically embedded social and psychological formations’ (p. 7). While literary texts are the primary focus of my thesis, I adopt a new historicist and interdisciplinary approach to uncover the social, political, and cultural processes underlying slum fiction, slumming, and poverty porn. This includes secondary sources, paintings, photographs, archived documents, personal correspondences, and newspaper articles. The recognition of these sources and their relation to my primary texts enables interrogation of the nineteenth-century cultural and social imaginary that informs and is informed by perceptions of poverty. The social imagination is not formed by art, as previous forms of historicism have argued; the social imagination forms the art itself (p. 12). Gallagher and Greenblatt conclude that the ‘new historicist project is not about “demoting” art or discrediting aesthetic pleasure; rather it is concerned with finding the creative power that shapes literary works *outside* the narrow boundaries in which it had hitherto been located, as well as *within* those boundaries’ (p. 12).

²⁰ Braddon’s engagement with the male gaze also critiques her own treatment by literary critics during the ‘sensation’ period of her literary output. See ‘3.2 - Possessing the Pauper’s Body: Philanthropic Surveillance in Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Mary* (1916)’ for more on the parallels between Braddon’s experiences of criticism and the experience of her titular heroine.

The phrase ‘the Victorian imagination’ featured in the title of this thesis refers to the socially formed perceptions and visual imaginings of the poor which impact the representation of spectacle, space, and surveillance in the slum novel.

As noted in my ‘Literature Review’, I engage with Foucauldian principles of knowledge primarily through the lens of *The Order of Things* (1966), *The Birth of Biopolitics*, and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975). While Foucault’s work pre-dates the establishment of new historicism in the 1990s, Suzanne Gearhart (1997) argues that Foucault’s earlier writings on the ‘fashioning’ of culture by ‘cultural institutions’, such as literature, family and the government, anticipate new historicist understandings of the social ‘text’ (p. 458). I engage with Foucault’s theories in tandem with my use of a new historicist theoretical framework. Foucault states that the cultural assumptions that surround race, class, and gender are cyclically affirmed in the recording of those beliefs in forms such as literature, performance, or government documents (1966, p. x). Foucault’s discussion of knowledge anticipates the new historicist notion that the social text impacts the realist novel and brings into question perceptions of poverty that are considered commonplace. For example, my engagement with Dickens’s dichotomisation of the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor in my analysis of *Oliver Twist* offers one example of how societal assumptions are reproduced in the novel. As such, new historicist and Foucauldian methods of analysing the social text influence my understanding of how the slum novel is impacted by wider socio-political contexts.

While new historicism enables me to analyse the social text of poverty, its focus on ‘individual subjectivity construction, gender and the workings of patriarchy’ (Milner, 2002, p. 154) is not extensive enough to cover the diverse array of identity and societal constructions at play within slum fiction. Cultural materialism, however, focuses on ‘class and nation’ (p. 154) and thus stimulates analyses of how ‘material’ and ‘literary’ production coincide (p. 21). Material production refers to the physical creation of a literary commodity and its dialogue with its time, place, and audience. In this case, the novel is produced as a commodity to sell to middle- and higher-class readerships. Raymond Williams (1980) defines cultural materialism as ‘a theory of culture as a (social and material) productive process and of specific practices, of ‘arts’, as social uses of material means of production’ (p. 243). In this statement, Williams implies that literature is created to enforce social

cohesion and to disseminate certain ideas surrounding social class and politics.²¹ While new historicism considers the text as an abstract concept, cultural materialism views the novel as a physical object present in different spaces, such as the home, and is mindful of the attitudes of readerships. Building on Marx's (1853) definition of 'the mode of production' as the 'regroupment of many around one capital' (p. 512), Williams's cultural materialism suggests that the production of the literary text attempts to gather its readers and audience around particular social values or practices (1980, p. 243). I am in dialogue with this concept, and I employ these ideas to illustrate how the slum novel affirms slumming practices, while also acting as a conduit to express the author's identity and experiences. By engaging simultaneously with the new historicist understanding of social texts and the cultural materialist conceptualisation of literary production, I question the role that class, gender, and identity play within my primary texts.

Both cultural materialism and new historicism emphasise the importance of considering the 'audience' of a text to unearth how class, gender and ethnicity function within fiction (Williams, 1988, p. 137; Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2001, p. 205). To enrich my analyses of readerships throughout this thesis I employ reader-response theories. Wolfgang Iser's foundational work *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978) defines reader-response theory as the analyses of a 'dialectic relationship between text, reader, and their interaction' (p. x). I engage with Iser primarily in my section on *Oliver Twist*. While I do not engage with Iser directly throughout the rest of the thesis, I emphasise the importance of reader responses when considering the various forms of pleasure present in the slum novel. This dialectic relationship between the text, its readership, and the act of reading results in an 'aesthetic response' from the reader (p. x). The 'aesthetic response' refers to the reader's experience of a text's imagery in a way that informs the 'imaginative and perceptive faculties of the reader' to 'adjust and even differentiate' their values and beliefs (p. x). In the slum novel, the adjustment of the reader's perception is two-fold: the reader is shown imagery that maintains perceptions of the poor as 'savage' or 'uncivilised' (Koven, 2004, p. 1) while also being encouraged to have sympathy towards the sufferings and hardships of slum inhabitants. While Iser suggests that these aesthetic responses are somewhat 'universal' (p. 13) and are located within the text itself, my use of a new historicist

²¹ For example, in '2.1 - Arthur Morrison's *Mean Streets*: Mapping and Linguistic Netherworlds in Fin-de-Siècle Slum Fiction' I illustrate that the research embarked on by Morrison during his planning for *Tales of Mean Streets* actually reproduces poverty gradients similar to Charles Booth's poverty maps, along with its value judgements over poor lifestyles and attitudes.

theoretical framework, which focuses on the relationship between the literary text and the social text, allows a more nuanced analysis of audience responses to slum fiction. Wanda Brooks and Susan Brown (2012) develop Iser's ideas to suggest that the goal of the reader-response scholar should be to 'grapple with the myriad cultural influences (values, practices, experiences, etc.) affecting both readers and authors, and the ways in which these influence meaning making' (p. 77). Through these theoretical frameworks I interrogate the slum novel in wider social contexts while also analysing the smaller interactions between authors, their readerships, and their intellectual communities.

Primary Texts

Each of the texts I have selected for analysis in this thesis represent a distinct impression of London's East End: each author's relationship to gender, sexuality, and ethnicity directly affects how they present the slums to their readership. I have selected texts that have been under-represented in the scholarship surrounding the slum novel to capture the diverse nature of experiences and responses to poverty. A key exception to this is Charles Dickens's much-discussed novel *Oliver Twist*, which I consider in the chapter on 'Spectacle'. Elements of *Oliver Twist*'s prose, specifically its focus on discerning between which paupers are either deserving or undeserving of charity, reoccur throughout the long nineteenth century; as such, its inclusion in my thesis is necessary to fully consider the development of the slum novel. I have paired my selected texts together thematically to enrich scholarly understandings of 'spectacle', 'space', and 'surveillance' in the slum novel.

In 'Chapter 1: Spectacle' I analyse *Oliver Twist* and Margret Harkness's *In Darkest London* to consider how they represent the East End slums as a spectacle. I argue that Dickens's novel presents the poor in a manner that rejects the perceptions of supporters of the Poor Law Amendment Act (PLAA). Dickens's representation of 'the dregs of life' (Dickens, 1850d, p. vi) was republished in 1850 in a 'household edition' for those who could afford the pleasure and remains one of the most adapted novels of the Victorian period (DeBona, 1992, p. 78). *Oliver Twist*'s significant impact on the representation of poverty provides an important context for the other primary texts in this thesis. Dickens's dichotomisation of the undeserving/deserving poor, his attempts to represent reality in a manner akin to a social documentary, and his focus on the visual characteristics of the poor all re-emerge in *In Darkest London*. In addition to a Dickensian representation of the poor, Harkness supplies the reader with a commentary on gender, the role of the 'New Woman', and represents the charitable sisterhoods that operate in the slums during the fin-de-siècle.

These sisterhoods enable women to act philanthropically in a female-dominated community and to share passionate, Sapphic dialogues and relationships. Harkness also highlights and critiques the ongoing conflicts between religious and secular socialist groups. I highlight the impact that the ‘slum sisters’, the self-named group of Salvation Army women who entered the slums to help alleviate the effects of poverty (Rappoport, 2012, p. 107), have on the philanthropic landscape of the 1880s. I also argue that in Harkness’s text, gender and sexuality intermingle with a Dickensian presentation of the poor in a way that conflates poverty with same-sex emotional and sexual desire. In doing so, Harkness utilises the spectacle of poverty to imply that East End philanthropic sisterhoods enable a liberation from restrictive gender norms. Overall, both texts utilise the spectacle of East End poverty to either critique or affirm dominant social discourses.

In ‘Chapter 2: Space’ I analyse Arthur Morrison’s *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894) and Israel Zangwill’s *Children of the Ghetto: A Study of Peculiar People* (1892) to identify their engagements with space. Morrison’s novel is composed of a series of short stories all taking place in proximity to each other in the East End; in the opening prologue to the text, Morrison suggests these slums are unaffected and undisturbed by the outside world, existing in a form of stasis (pp. 16 – 17). I propose that Morrison’s text constructs slum spaces as ‘linguistic netherworlds’, which are presented as other-worldly spaces in which speech and language are distorted, disrupted, and subverted. This section thus argues that Morrison embarks on a form of literary mapmaking which attempts to make working-class spaces ‘legible’ to his readership (Moretti, 1999, p. 78). I posit that Morrison’s linguistic netherworlds ultimately reproduce the values and norms carried by his intellectual community at the People’s Palace and in its periodical *The Palace Journal*, which Morrison co-edited with philanthropist and novelist Walter Besant. Morrison’s mapping of the slums as linguistic netherworlds represents working-class and poor cultures as illegitimate and linguistically corrupt in opposition to his intellectual community. Pleasure appears in Morrison’s text through this ‘ethnograph[ic]’ (Maltz, 2011, p. 1) and ‘pseudo-sociological’ (Wise, 2022, p. 2) affirmation of the values of the People’s Palace and his use of literary decadence, which in turn recalls the aestheticisation and organisation of poor bodies seen in Dickens’s and Harkness’s works. Zangwill’s novel continues this process of making the poor ‘legible’ and visible to his readership, although not by evoking mapmaking techniques and constructing linguistic netherworlds; instead, Zangwill utilises language, specifically a hybrid of East End dialects and Yiddish, to re-write narratives surrounding East End Jewish communities in the turbulent period just before the 1905 Aliens Act. From the 1880s

onwards London's slums became an 'area of dense Jewish settlement' and 'beliefs about racial difference crucially informed debate about urban degeneration in the late-Victorian period' (Francis and Valman, 2011, p. 4). Zangwill himself had first-hand experiences of the East End; he was born in Whitechapel to Eastern European immigrants and went on to be educated at the Jews' Free School in Bell Lane (Hess et al, 2013, p. 356). Zangwill referred to himself as a 'Cockney-Jew' (Leftwich, 1952, p. 86). I argue that Zangwill negotiates 'ghetto' space through Cockney-Yiddish dialects to define Cockney-Jewishness in the East End, particularly through the novel's protagonist Esther Ansell. Zangwill's Cockney Jew identity acts as a site of resistance, redefining representations of the East End Jew following Dickens's antisemitic representation of Fagin as a member of the undeserving poor. For Zangwill, the ghetto slum is a space of pleasure due to its nostalgic qualities, representing both childhood and the heritage of Cockney-Jew identities. In both texts, spatiality is utilised as a form of self-expression, as Morrison and Zangwill represent the norms of the People's Palace and the experiences of the Cockney Jew respectively.

'Chapter 3: Surveillance' compares the function of scrutinising gazes in Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown* (1884) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Mary* (1916). In these texts, both authors directly critique the methods of spectatorship that underly literary slumming and aesthetic constructions of poverty; more specifically, both novels interrogate the entrapping effect of male spectatorship on poor and working-class women. In *Miss Brown*, slum spaces lie at the periphery of a narrative primarily concerned with the aesthetic movement and the aesthete. As a *roman à clef*, the novel reflects Lee's experiences within 'the Pater circle' of aesthetes at the fin-de-siècle (Brake, 2006, p. 45). At the same time, Lee critiques aesthetic artists for their lack of sympathetic philanthropic duty towards the poor; as I argue, this is embodied in the entrapment of the eponymous heroine Anne Brown under the gazes of artist Walter Hamlin, his circle, and her socialist cousin Richard. Anne is half-Italian and working-class. By representing Anne's entrapment throughout the novel, Lee critiques the fetishisation of working-class women by pre-Raphaelite and aesthetic artists (Pulham, 2021, p. 62). Subsequently, I argue, she highlights the hostile surveillance strategies of aestheticism and its objectifying effect on poorer women. Through *Miss Brown*, Lee argues that social good can be achieved if the poor are aestheticised in a way that emphasises their emotional suffering, encouraging readers to view them empathetically as 'fellow-creatures' rather than objectifying and fetishising pauper bodies (Lee, 1909, p. 255). The Cold Fremley slum, owned by Hamlin, appears throughout the novel as a symbol of his amoral, aesthetic practices; he maintains the slum as an over-crowded space to retain its artistically pleasing

‘huddled roofs [which are] dark in the distance’ (p. 164). Anne pursues socialist philanthropy and forms a Sapphic, sisterly community of her own that enables her to reform Cold Fremley. As such, she regains some agency that is distanced from Hamlin’s surveillance. Pursuits of pleasure appear in two different forms in *Miss Brown*: Hamlin’s pleasure in gazing at Cold Fremley and his objectification of Anne’s body, itself linked to the fetishisation of the working classes, and Anne’s pleasure in forging Sapphic, passionate links with other women while also enacting philanthropic reform.

In my analysis of *Mary*, I carry these ideas of surveillance forward to consider how Braddon deconstructs the values of a suppressive ‘male gaze’ (Mulvey, 1988, p. 62). Slums are explicitly featured throughout *Mary*’s narrative, and Braddon illustrates the connections between slumming and the surveillance of poor women’s bodies. I contextualise Braddon’s work as a post-Poor Law Amendment Act text, noting that the disestablishment of the workhouse system enabled charity and philanthropy to be more readily carried out by middle- and upper-class citizens. Braddon also reflects on the criticism aimed at her as a writer of sensation in the mid-1850s; she aligns her experiences under the restrictive male gaze with the novel’s eponymous protagonist, who is initially homeless at the beginning of the narrative. Braddon’s titular heroine eventually climbs the social classes and uses her newfound wealth to negotiate her marriage, to take control over her body, and to enact philanthropic action for other poor women. Both Lee and Braddon critique the surveillance of poor, female bodies to illustrate the restrictions imposed by male philanthropists and artists. In both novels, personal pleasure is regained by the titular women as they deconstruct the way that they are viewed by male figures, crafting out spaces for themselves through philanthropic communities.

Methodology

Textual Analysis

I employ close textual analysis throughout this thesis. My analyses include the interrogation of some of the illustrations, prefaces, introductions, and quotations from the text as well as any paratextual material, such as frontispieces or glossaries. For example, in the third edition of *Children of the Ghetto* Zangwill reluctantly includes a glossary. He voices his concerns regarding the glossary’s inclusion in the preface. The context surrounding this glossary is my springboard for analysis in ‘2.2 – Cockney-Yiddish spaces and the Cockney Jew in Israel Zangwill’s *The Children of the Ghetto* (1892)’, and I engage with its inclusion to consider the role of authenticity in the way he constructs ghetto spaces through the use of a Cockney-Yiddish dialect. I also consider my chosen authors’ personal correspondences and their other

writings to enrich my understanding of their views and personal relationships with poverty. In her essay ‘Salvationists and Socialists’ (1888), published in *Justice* magazine, Harkness compares the ideologies and actions of two groups who enter the slums to assist the poor, namely the Salvation Army and her own Socialist group. She concludes the essay by stating that the ‘two organisations ought to work more together than they do at present, they have many points of common interest’ and she hopes that the groups will form one ‘large labour union’ (p. 2). In a later issue of *Justice* she develops this argument, stating that the two groups remain the ‘real enemies of capitalists and landlords’ (1888, p. 2). I use Harkness’s argument in ‘Salvationists and Socialists’ as a foundation for my critique of the representation of social groups and philanthropic organisations as spectacles. My analyses of my primary texts therefore engage with different aspects of these novels to properly understand the political, social, and personal contexts they are embedded in.

Archival Documents

This thesis has been enhanced by exploring archival materials that encapsulate several elements that inform slum representations in Victorian popular culture. The materials that I engage with throughout this thesis enrich my readings of the selected texts by offering deeper insights into the authorial, political, and social contexts that inform the slum novel. The *University of Surrey*’s ‘Nursing Ethics Heritage Collection’ has been an incredibly insightful resource for gathering information on nursing around the fin de siècle. The material found has provided new perspectives on nursing and care for the poor that have influenced my analyses of Harkness’s *In Darkest London*. Harkness herself trained as a nurse at Westminster Hospital in 1877, before entering the slums as a self-fashioned socialist and ‘slum saviour’ (Ross, 2007, p. 89). The text *History of Nursing: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day with Special Reference to the Work of the Past Thirty Years* (1916), located in the Nursing Ethics Heritage Collection, contextualises the role of the slum saviours within the fallout from the PLAA and suggests that the ‘harsh austerities of the Poor Law’ created a resurgence in nursing (Nutting and Dock, p. 3). Likewise, Elizabeth Jamieson and Mary Sewall’s *Trends in Nursing History* (1940) suggests that slum nursing in the nineteenth century emphasised that through a ‘feeling of relationship and understanding between different classes of society’ nurses can contribute to a ‘great and permanent amelioration of the condition of the unfortunate’ (p. 545). The texts in this collection position the nurse as an instigator of social change, a context that is hugely influential in my understanding of Harkness and *In Darkest London*. *History of Nursing* and

Trends in Nursing History also emphasise that the New Woman and the nurse were fundamentally the same figure, both pioneering social change and prefiguring the suffrage movements of the early twentieth century (Nutting and Dock, 1916, p. 3; Jamieson and Sewall, 1940, p. 545). The New Woman, philanthropic nurses, and their links to social change influence Harkness's representation of sisterhoods in the slums. Despite this, this aspect of Harkness's life and career development remains under-discussed in scholarship on her work. The material in the Nursing Ethics Heritage Collection illustrates the real social impact nurses made in the slums, and this thesis brings these previously unexplored documents to light in relation to the philanthropic sisterhoods that developed at the fin de siècle.

This thesis utilises further archival material in its analyses of spectacle, space, and surveillance in the nineteenth-century slum novel. *The British Library's* collection of Victorian slum photography offers another supplementary resource for my research. Thomas Annan's published photography collection *The Old Closes and Streets of Glasgow* (1868) illustrates how photography is used to document the lives of the poor. Annan's image entitled 'Old Tunnel Off High Street' (Figure 3) presents the poor huddled together in a single concentrated space, supplementing my research by illustrating a desire to visibly assess and gaze at the poor. 'Old Tunnel Off High Street' features in '1.1 - Picturing the Poor: Reader Spectatorship, Sympathy and Slumming in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*', in which I use the image to argue that Dickens's style of representing the poor is influenced by William Hogarth's paintings while also being anticipative of Annan's photography. I engage with correspondence to and from Harkness throughout section 1.2, which are available at *The British Library*. *The National Archives's* 'Jews and Jewish communities in the 18th-20th centuries' archive provided documents regarding the 1905 Aliens Act, which enrich my contextualisation of the political and legislative response towards immigrant communities in London.

Interdisciplinarity

While this thesis focuses on the Victorian realist novel, I engage with art, photography and other forms of visual culture to investigate the pornographic qualities of Victorian slum fiction. As Kate Flint (2000) argues, the nineteenth century sees a growing fascination with capturing the grotesque through photography and artwork, 'stimulating' the voyeuristic imagination (p. 157). The Victorian imagination is therefore influenced by a strong desire for visual culture, and as such my research requires a consideration of the many forms of visual culture that influence perceptions of the poor. *The London School of Economics's*

‘Booth Archive’ is an incredibly enriching resource; its holdings of Booth’s poverty maps, as well as his wealth of notes on the districts he studied, greatly informs my analyses of ‘Space’ in the slum novel. In section 3.2, I illustrate a public awareness of slum tourism through George du Maurier’s ‘In Slummibus’ (1884, figure 8). Maurier’s title blends ‘slum’ with ‘omnibus’, demonstrating the commercial and economic nature of slum travel in the nineteenth century; I argue that this form of slum tourism is visible in *Mary*. I also analyse Pietro Magni’s *The Reading Girl* (figure 9) statue in relation to Braddon’s novel. The statue features in the novel itself; it is heavily eroticised in its depiction of a half-naked woman reading. Interrogating the novel and the statue in tandem, I consider the effect of the male gaze in forming sexualised constructions of women which ultimately submit them to a form of restrictive surveillance. As I have noted, I engage with images by Annan and Hogarth in my chapter on *Oliver Twist*. *Punch* contributors like George Cruikshank and George du Maurier also illustrated *Oliver Twist* and *A Christmas Carol* (1843) respectively, signifying an intrinsic link between Dickens’s texts dealing with poverty and charity, and the satire of *Punch*. Cruikshank’s illustrations in *Oliver Twist*, as I argue in my chapter on Dickens’s novel, present ways of conceptualising the poor that affirm Dickens’s spectacle of poverty. The visual cultures surrounding these novels directly influence the images of poverty, gender, and class these authors present in their novels.

Chapter 1: Spectacle

1.1 – The Deserving and the Undeserving: Sympathy and the Spectacle of Poverty in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837)

Published in serial format from 1837 until 1839, Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist; or, the Parish Boy's Progress* enables the reader to spectate the experiences of the poor after the 1834 PLAA. In his preface to *Oliver Twist* (1850d), Dickens states that he aims to reveal 'recognised and established truth[s]' and to illustrate the 'impossible and wild absurdity' of other literary representations of poverty (p. v). Dickens directly addresses the imagery of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), which he suggests fails to accurately represent reality and instead presents the poorer classes as 'leading a life which is rather to be envied' (p. viii). In opposition to *The Beggar's Opera* and other texts that mask the severity of poverty, Dickens emphasises his novel's visual nature and compares his style to William Hogarth's ability to represent 'miserable reality' in his paintings (p. vi). Dickens then employs the act of painting as an extended metaphor for writing, stating that he 'paint[s]' the criminal activities of the poor 'in all their deformity' and has 'painted' poverty 'in all its fallen and degraded aspect' in the novel (p. x). In *Oliver Twist*, then, Dickens creates a spectacle of poverty; his 'worldview' is transformed into a series of images that communicate his social and political beliefs to his readership (Debord, 1967 p. 2). Dickens's ideal reader visualises his 'paint[ed]' images and rejects other 'false' perceptions of the poor. I argue that for Dickens, reading acts as a critical practice that can deconstruct the oppressive ideology of the PLAA. Dickens satirically refers to elitist readers who 'reject' his spectacle of poverty due to their 'high moral grounds in some high moral quarters', directly positioning his readers in opposition to the 'high[ly] moral' and unsympathetic imaginings of the poor by other artists as well as politicians (p. v). I focus on the reader's involvement in spectating the 'repulsive' truths of the slums and in interrogating the 'false glitter' surrounding other presentations of 'the dirtiest paths of life' (p. vi). I also consider the dual function of this form of reader spectatorship, arguing that the reader sympathises with the poor throughout the text while simultaneously enjoying the entertainment provided by viewing their lives from a safe distance, functioning as an extension of the 'slumming' practices in which middle and upper-class individuals entered London's slums as a leisure pursuit. While the verb 'slumming' did not enter the *OED* until 1860, I am applying the term

and its associated practices retrospectively to *Oliver Twist* due to its associated use of slum and pauper imagery for entertainment.

Both the Dickensian spectacle of poverty and the PLAA are hugely influential on the development of the slum novel throughout the Victorian period; while the other texts featured in this thesis are mainly published at the end of the century, Dickens's *Oliver Twist* is important in understanding the socio-political function of the slum novel. By the publication of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Mary* in 1916, the PLAA was largely destabilised and philanthropy outside of government legislation was encouraged, supported, and regulated.²² My analysis of the spectacle of poverty in *Oliver Twist* interrogates the aestheticisation of poverty and the desire for literary slumming at the roots of its popularity in the nineteenth century. The context of the PLAA and its attempts to tackle unregulated philanthropic endeavours to support the poor is integral to the discourses on charity and class identity that appear throughout this thesis.²³

Dickens's spectacle of poverty is produced in direct response to the values and aims of the PLAA. The 'moral' approach of PLAA supporters emphasised the need to 'correct acknowledged evils', a phrase used by Joseph Hume MP (1834) during a reading of the amended Poor Law in the House of Commons, thus turning away from the 'demoralising [...] idleness' they felt was being supported by acts of charity and sympathy in the street. In rejecting these 'high moral' perceptions in favour of Dickens's images, Dickens's readership engages not just in the act of reading but in the act of spectating; the visual nature of the novel places the reader within 'the cold, wet [and] shelterless midnight streets of London'

²² In '3.2 - Possessing the Pauper's Body: Philanthropic Surveillance in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Mary* (1916)' I discuss the developments and relevance of the PLAA to the slum novel further, and illustrate that the dialogues present in Dickens's novel continue throughout the nineteenth century. The influence of Dickens's spectacle of poverty is visible throughout this thesis, most notably in my analysis of Israel Zangwill's direct references to Dickens in *Children of the Ghetto* and in my interrogation of Vernon Lee's intextual reference to Dickens's pauper figures in her travel writing.

²³ Dickens contributed to and spearheaded many philanthropic efforts throughout his career. His most famous charitable endeavor was the creation of Urania Cottage, a space for ex-sex workers or allegedly 'fallen' women'. Dickens intended Urania Cottage to act as a 'real home to the young women he set out to help, run on homely principles, and not a place where they had to expiate their sins' (Tomalin, 2011, p. 266). Frank Christianson (2007) argues, however, that Dickens likely saw his novel writing as a philanthropic act. Christianson argues that philanthropy is 'central' to Dickens's realism as his novels often focus on the oppressed and repressed in urban culture, and attempt to move the reader towards charitable sympathy (p. 79). Christianson particularly highlights Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* as a 'philanthropic' realist text that treats charitable acts as positive and transformative events. Christianson does briefly note, however, that Dickens's texts often simply work within established classifications of poverty; this thesis identifies some of these classifications in considering how Dickens discerns between the deserving and undeserving poor. For more on Dickens and philanthropy see Christianson's *Philanthropy in British and American Fiction: Dickens, Hawthorne, Eliot and Howells*.

to gaze at the ‘miserable reality’ of poverty (p. vi). For Dickens, the reader’s spectatorship of his images in *Oliver Twist* naturally enables a critique of the ‘high moral’ supporters of the PLAA like Joseph Hume. The spectating reader critiques and engages with the perceived ‘paint[ed] and ‘miserable’ realities of the Act, and according to Dickens, this enables the reader to realise the oppression of the poor in the workhouse and the slums in a manner that opposes the discourses of the PLAA. Linda Lewis (2011) argues that Dickens offers his readership a truthful representation of the oppression of the poorer classes under the PLAA. Lewis suggests that Dickens allows the reader to spectate ‘victim[s]’ of the workhouse system and emphasises the ‘systematic failure’ of Poor Law reform to assist the poor (p. 29). By presenting scenes ‘in the street, in the gutter, or in the workhouse’, Dickens encourages sympathy while informing the reader’s aesthetic vision of poverty. Lewis goes on to state that this results in Dickens’s creation of an ‘ideal reader’ who accepts his images as ‘reality’ (p. 37). As noted, Dickens’s spectacle of poverty aims to consolidate his worldview; his imagery aims to propel his reader to be sympathetic for the poor and to be critical of the PLAA. To use the distinction later defined by Henry Mayhew in *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851), the reader spectates the ‘deserving’ poor with a sympathetic perception while viewing the undeserving ‘criminal’ poor as a grotesque spectacle (p. 10). The ideal reader of *Oliver Twist*, as Dickens makes clear in the preface to the novel, is intended to accept these codified values within his spectacle of poverty. The grotesque presentation of the ‘undeserving’ ultimately affirms the values of his readership and fulfils desires to partake in slumming practices through spectatorship. This section identifies the role Dickens’s spectacle of poverty plays in affirming generalised, popular perceptions of the poor for the entertainment of his audience while claiming to work against the injustices of the PLAA.

Oliver Twist’s function as a form of slumming both overlaps with and works against Dickens’s project to ‘dim the false glitter’ of the PLAA (1850d, p. vi). Dickens’s ideal reader sympathises with the suffering poor as a response to the imagery he presents throughout the novel. Running alongside this emotional response to *Oliver Twist*’s imagery is a belief in the ‘truth[ful]’ and ‘real’ nature of the events Dickens presents. I argue that Dickens’s suggestion that the text is an authentic reality intended to create sympathy for the poor, and not simply a ‘Beggar’s Opera’ (p. viii), actually presents the novel as an extension of the problematic ‘slumming’ practices that develop in the period surrounding the novel’s publication. As noted, Koven (2004) describes Victorian slumming as a ‘fashionable’ practice in which the richer classes enter the space of the poor as spectators (p. 1). As Koven goes on to argue, this practice ‘encouraged some observers to trivialise poverty, transform

it into a self-serving entertainment, and perpetuate absurd misconceptions about the savagery of the poor' (p. 1). The apparently 'charitable' nature of *Oliver Twist* more accurately reflects the practice of slumming. Slumming was generally practised under the guise of altruism, creating a 'passion' for charity among the middle classes which is 'fuelled by unconsummated and unacknowledged desires for all sorts of taboo intimacies between rich and poor, the clean and the dirty, and the virtuous and the verminous' (p. 5). While Koven here refers to sexual intimacies, *Oliver Twist*'s visual nature offers the pleasure of spectating the 'indecent' other that is the basis for these sexual activities. Dickens' presentation of the workhouse as a 'cheerless' space (p. 51) of malnutrition and imprisonment extends the range of slumming practices to gaze not just at slums themselves, but also to spectate the grotesque experiences of the poor under the PLAA.²⁴ Furthermore, Dickens's project to paint the 'miserable reality' of poverty for sympathetic purposes is akin to the passion for charity in slumming practices, which masks the spectator's pleasure in gazing at the grotesque other. I argue throughout this section that *Oliver Twist*'s function as a mode of entertainment and an extension of slumming does not negate Dickens's sympathetic project. Rather, Dickens's aim to create sympathy for the poor among his readership is a fundamental component of slumming and the spectatorship of the poor. I illustrate that behind Dickens's sympathies and his desire to encourage a critical use of reading, there is a claim to narrative authenticity made by Dickens that is associated with the power dynamics of slumming; the poor are a passive 'paint[ed]' image (1850d, p. x) while Dickens and his readership can actively sympathise and criticise the Victorian social system.

In his presentation of images of the poor, Dickens engages with conceptualisations of sympathy that precede *Oliver Twist*. A seminal text in theorising sympathy, Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) suggests that sympathy relies on the 'compassion of the spectator', when gazing at 'unhappy situations', to imagine themselves within that scenario (p. 8). Rae Greiner (2011) posits that 'sympathy in the nineteenth-century imagination was already thoroughly implicated in questions of aesthetic form', as Smith's theory of sympathy directly influences the development of and the images present within realism (p. 418). Smith's influence is visible in Dickens's statement that *Oliver Twist*

²⁴ Koven argues that the workhouse is an extension of the grotesque, overcrowded living conditions of the slums, and was equally susceptible to slumming and slum tourism. This section also considers Dickens's representation of the workhouse to be an extension of slumming, and interrogates how he presents workhouse space both to critique the PLAA and to entertain his readership.

represents the realities of the PLAA. Dickens brings his readership ‘into relation’ with the poor’s social position and thus cultivates a form of compassionate spectatorship that is critical of the treatment of the poor under the Act. Sympathy is an intrinsic element in Dickens’s aesthetic form and his spectacle of poverty. During Oliver’s initial meeting with the Artful Dodger, Dickens emphasises Oliver’s emotional experience of travelling from his workhouse to London through visual imagery; Oliver travels ‘empty’ streets which ‘serve [...] to show the boy his loneliness and desolation’, and the Dodger eventually finds him ‘gazing’ at the surrounding public-houses (p. 55) with ‘tears standing in his eyes’ (p. 56). Through the visual representation of the empty streets Oliver travels through and his inaccessibility to the warmth and food of the public houses, Dickens represents the lack of access to care for pauper children in the streets following the movement towards workhouse relief under the PLAA. The ‘tears’ in Oliver’s eyes aim to evoke this emotional response through Dickens’s construction of imagery while also representing the real-world effects of the PLAA on street paupers. The following description of the Dodger as ‘dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see’ with a small, malnourished frame (p. 56) further attempts to realise the effects of poverty through visual stylings, yet also appeals to the desire for dirtiness that underlies slumming practices. Dickens’s spectacle of poverty, therefore, aims to evoke sympathies through the aesthetic form while also critiquing the treatment of the poor under the PLAA; simultaneously, these visual stylings enable his middle-class readers to access slum spaces and to take pleasure in their grotesque inhabitants and environments.

Dickens states his intent to produce sympathy in his readership throughout his literary career. In his introduction to the first issue of *Household Words* (1850a), Dickens suggests the goal of his work is to form a readership that is ‘moved by one sympathy’ (p. 1). The concept of a ‘multitude moved by one sympathy’ defines Dickens’s reputation as a writer; in his article on Dickens, Charles Eliot Norton (1868) emphasises the sympathetic function of Dickens’s novels, arguing that he brings his readers ‘into relation with [their] fellow-men’ and ‘inspire[s] them with something of his sweetness, kindness, charity and good-will’ (p. 671). Norton highlights Dickens’s relationship with his readers and the role of sympathy in inspiring charity towards the poor, which is also present in Dickens’s earlier writings. Norton’s position is accepting and uncritical of Dickens’s work; he avoids mentioning that Dickens profited hugely through the publication of his depictions of the poor. In addition, the popularity of *Oliver Twist* in the early stages of Dickens’s career undoubtedly set the stage for his success as a literary celebrity throughout the nineteenth

century.²⁵ Despite this, Dickens's novels are connected with sympathies for the poor throughout the wider Victorian imaginary.

In their works on reader-response theory, several critics have emphasised the visual nature of Dickens's novels and his evocation of sympathy in his reader.²⁶ These theorists identify the importance of the reader's relationship with Dickens and their engagement with the content of his narrative. I remain in dialogue with these theories throughout this section, as reader-response theorists' analyses of the relationship of Dickens's images and his reader's perception of social conditions enrich my interrogations into how his 'paint[ed]' images function as forms of sympathy and slumming. As Wolfgang Iser (1972) describes, Dickens's novels make 'great use' of images 'to enable his readers to experience the social system that governed the world they were living in' (p. 294). Dickens allows his reader to experience, and ultimately to criticise, this social system by creating a 'dynamic process of reproduction' (p. 294). This process operates by reproducing 'familiar' images in 'unfamiliar' ways that encourage the reader to criticise previous artistic representations of the poor and the PLAA (p. 294). Furthermore, as Amber Vazquez (2015) states, the fiction published around the time of the PLAA 'reflects fears of the poor' and contributed further to the fears of pauperism felt by typically middle-class readers (p. 159). *Oliver Twist*, at least in the early sections of its narrative which focus on the poor's experience of the workhouse, is an outlier of this trend. Rather than portraying the general public's conventional fears of the poor, Dickens 'construct[s] the space of the workhouse as a site of death' and thus articulates paupers' 'fears of being mistreated as inmates and dying in the confines of the workhouse' (2015, p. 159). Yet this sense of the workhouse being a deathly threat to paupers brings Dickens's presentation of the space further into contact with the desires of slum-goers who are attracted to the slums by peril, danger, and the grotesque (Koven, 2004, p. 5). This section questions whether Dickens's 'realities' always provide his readers with a chance to sympathise with the poor by highlighting the ways *Oliver Twist* reproduces the pleasures of slumming through a spectacle of poverty.

Critical Reading and the Workhouse

Dickens constructs images that highlight the class inequalities at play within the PLAA's discourse, shaping the reader's gaze to be critical of its 'miserable reality'. David Green

²⁵ Claire Tomalin (2011) highlights that demand for the publication rights to *Oliver Twist* was high, and Dickens and his London publishers profited greatly from it (p. 124).

²⁶ Examples include Dominic Rainsford's (1997) *Authorship, Ethics and the Reader: Blake, Dickens, Joyce*, Jennifer Hayward's (1997) *Consuming Pleasures: Active Audiences and Serial Fictions from Dickens to Soap Opera*, and Carolyn Oulton's (2019) *Dickens and the Myth of the Reader*.

(2010) notes that the Act ‘was less about poor relief itself than about the exercise of legitimate authority’, in which each London parish had their own Poor Law Commissioner who could ‘impose their authority’ (p. 82). This formed a ‘hard-won and jealously guarded parochial autonomy’ and a ‘legal labyrinth that developed to regulate poor relief in the capital’ (p. 87). This regulation utilises the surveying gaze of parish officials, relying on the spectatorship of pauperism to maintain authority over the poor. Located within the workhouse, paupers became a spectacle that the parish officials could survey, subsequently creating a system whereby the poor were ‘impersonal objects to be managed and governed’ (p. 16). The surveillance of pauperism was not a privilege available to just the ruling classes and parish officials; the 1851 edition of *Tallis’s Illustrated London* lists multiple workhouses and ‘poor streets’ in which tourists might gaze at the poor (Gaspey, 1850, p. 99).²⁷ Even later in the century, James Greenwood’s series of articles entitled ‘A Night in a Workhouse’ (1866) began a popular trend of journalists entering the semi-public space of the workhouse disguised as the poor; these writers aimed to ‘learn by actual experience how casual paupers are lodged and fed’ (p. 1). Both *Tallis’s Illustrated London* and Greenwood’s articles represent the ‘false glitter’ Dickens speaks against in the preface to *Oliver Twist*, creating a desire to engage in and gaze at the life of the pauper while also ignoring their plight under the PLAA.

Dickens places his reader’s critical gaze in opposition to the spectatorship of officials and slum tourists, allowing them to spectate the workhouse and the parochial Mr Bumble in a manner that critiques the uneven distribution of power in the workhouse space. At the beginning of the text Mr Bumble asks Mrs Mann:

do you think this respectful or proper conduct [...] to keep the parish officers a waiting at your garden-gate, when they come here upon parochial business connected with the parochial orphans? Are you aweer, Mrs. Mann, that you are, as I may say, a parochial delegate, and a stipendiary? (1850d, p. 6)

Mr Bumble’s characterisation forms part of the ‘dynamic process of reproduction’ that informs the reader’s critical perception of the PLAA. The repetitive use of the premodifier ‘parochial’, employed by Bumble throughout the narrative, highlights the possessive authority that the parish holds over the poor. As a spectator to this, the reader is shown that

²⁷ One of the notable examples in *Tallis’s Illustrated London* is St. George’s Fields, Southwark, a workhouse where the ‘honest and industrious poor are liberally provided for, and instructed in occupations, by which they may hereafter earn their own livings’ (Gaspey, 1850, p. 35). The guide’s editor, William Gaspey, makes numerous reference to ‘poor streets’ which are described as a ‘collection of low public-houses, old clothes, and other second-hand shops, and poor lodging-houses’ (p. 99), and describes other workhouse-like spaces such as an ‘asylum where deserted children were received and instructed in useful employment’ (p. 35).

this system results from and is informed by the desire to ‘manage [and] govern’ the poor as a social act; Mr Bumble frequently employs ‘parochial’ as an adjective until he loses his position as parish beadle in chapter thirty-seven. Dickens encourages his reader to critically interrogate Bumble’s authority, suggesting it is upheld simply by the repeated use of the term ‘parochial’ and his role as a spectator.

Mr Bumble’s ironic name further undercuts his authority due to its evocation of the word ‘bumble’, which in the early 1800s carried the connotations of ‘a mistake, a blunder; a bungled task’ and ‘a blundering or incompetent person’ (*OED*, 2018). His failure to maintain his position as beadle, his repetition of ‘parochial’, and the connotative association of his name suggest to the reader that his authority is upheld not by his success in caring for the poor, but by his verbal affirmation of his role as a parish official. In this regard, the critical use of reading is employed by Dickens to illustrate how the workhouse system after the Act relies on social performance to maintain the hierarchy of the spectating rich and the spectacle of the poor. Anna Dever (2009) argues that Dickens’s authorial gaze interrogates the part ‘social performance and performativity’ play in upholding class conflict as his *oeuvre* recognises the ‘imprisoning’ nature of social conventions while attempting to make his readership critical of ‘authenticity or supposed reality’ (n.p). Bumble’s ritualistic approach to his ‘parochial’ authority questions the ‘supposed reality’ that maintains social class hierarchies, highlighting how his use of language superficially maintains his authority. In this early section of the novel, the spectator and spectacle hierarchy typically seen in the workhouse space is subverted: the reader spectates the parish official who is normally the surveyor of the poor. Consequently, Dickens enables a critical use of reading as his readership spectates the oppressive way in which parish officials manage and govern under the PLAA. As such they are encouraged to view Mr Bumble’s surveying power as a product of the social conventions of the Act.

By subverting the spectator and spectacle relationship typical of the PLAA, Dickens encourages his readership to be critical of parish authority figures like Mr Bumble as well as the workhouse space itself. In his 1850 *Household Words* essay ‘A Walk in a Workhouse’, Dickens describes workhouse spaces in a way that resonates with his questioning of ‘supposed reality’ in *Oliver Twist*. In addition, this text illustrates an example of Dickens himself practising slumming; he travels through the workhouse, spectates the grotesque scenes occurring there, and then reproduces his experiences as an aesthetic spectacle for the

entertainment of his audience.²⁸ Dickens juxtaposes the phrases ‘Lord bless the parish of St. So-and-So!’ and ‘good luck to the parish of St. So-and-So, and thankee gentleman’ with his description of ‘another room [in] a kind of purgatory or place of transition’ with ‘one sane attendant’ (p. 205). This suggests that while the authority of the parish is enabled by the workhouse space, reflected in Bumble’s affirmation of his ‘parochial’ authority on arrival at the workhouse, further interrogation reveals the lack of care for the poor and realises the workhouse as a site of death. Described as an ‘[in]sane [...] purgatory’, Dickens presents the workhouse as a space that negates the life of the poor while also ‘bless[ing]’ the parish with more authority. In *Oliver Twist*, this is visible in the narrator’s initial description of the workhouse space. The narrator states that under the PLAA the workhouse is a space that offers its inmates ‘the alternative [...] of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it’ (p. 11). The narrator also states that ‘the relief [of the poor] was inseparable from the workhouse and the gruel; and that frightened people’ (p. 11). This second statement highlights the self-affirming nature of the new Poor Law and the ‘inseparable’ conflation of the poorer classes and the workhouse. Dickens suggests that this self-affirming system threatens the poor with death by ‘starvation’, thus perpetuating the poverty it supposedly remedies. The workhouse in *Oliver Twist* is therefore not only a self-affirming space that gives authority to parochial officials and parishes, but it is also a ‘purgatory’ wherein the poor are constantly experiencing the threat of death. By representing the workhouse in this way Dickens enables a critical perception of the space as a threat to the poor rather than a space to alleviate their poverty; he also suggests that the public fear of workhouse paupers derives from a conflation of them with the workhouse space itself.

Dickens encourages his ideal reader to be sympathetic to the poor’s condition by forming this critical perception of the PLAA through his spectacle of poverty. In spectating the workhouse space, the sympathetic and critical uses of reading overlap in Dickens’s ideal reader. The imagery he ‘paints’ realises the ‘miserable reality’ of the workhouse, and as such, the reader is invited to criticise the PLAA and sympathise with the poor. The literary

²⁸ Dickens’s ‘Night Walks’, published in his essay and travel writing collection *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1861), is another example of Dickens’s own practice of slumming. He describes that a ‘temporary inability to sleep’ led him to ‘walk about the streets all night, for a series of several nights’ (p. 565). He states that his intention was to receive a ‘fair amateur experience of houselessness’ (p. 565). In attempting to ‘get through [a] night’ of walking the streets Dickens states that he was brought ‘into sympathetic relation with people who have no other object every night in the year’ (p. 565). This pursual of sympathetic relations is similar to his stated intentions to *Oliver Twist* as he attempts to represent the ‘miserable realities’ of poverty. Yet Dickens is going slumming here, walking the cities at night for the therapeutic function of helping his insomnia. ‘Night Walks’ perhaps aims to capitalise on the incognito slum journalism of Greenwood and others, as Dickens claims to be experiencing ‘houselessness’.

images in *Oliver Twist* ultimately deconstruct the apparent reality of the Act while also privileging and presenting what Dickens views as ‘established truth[s]’ (1850d, p. v). This critical use of reading, as Iser argues, is enabled by Dickens’s seemingly paradoxical attempt to make his reader believe the ‘reality’ of the text while also making them aware that they are reading an imagined fictional narrative (1972, p. 284). The reader is therefore aware that the text and its images are part of a ‘virtual dimension’ imagined by Dickens in which the poor are ‘create[d]’ and ‘form[ed]’ by the author (p. 284). While Dickens’s creation of this ‘virtual dimension’ would appear to undermine his project to represent ‘established truth[s]’ and ‘miserable reality’, his spectacle of poverty causes the reader to ‘question’ the apparently ‘objective reality’ of the Act (Iser, 1972, p. 294). This is evident in Dickens’s metafictional references to novel writing throughout *Oliver Twist*. In the very first paragraph of the novel, he describes the eponymous protagonist as an ‘item of mortality’ (p. 1). Following this statement the narrator notes that it was ‘of considerable doubt whether [Oliver] would survive to bear any name at all’ and they directly address the reader, stating that if Oliver had died the novel would be the ‘most concise and faithful specimen of biography [...] being comprised within a couple of pages’ (p. 1). Combined with the later description that Oliver is ‘badged [and] ticketed’ as an ‘orphan of the workhouse’ (p. 3), Dickens emphasises the precarious mortality of paupers at the hands of an ill-equipped workhouse system. Oliver is ‘badged’, a verb that illustrates that the social labelling of Oliver reduces his identity to simply that of an ‘orphan of the workhouse’. Dickens plays with language and fiction here to illustrate the threat the workhouse places towards Oliver’s identity; the text itself is at threat, possibly being reduced to a couple of pages, and Oliver’s precarious mortality threatens to leave him without the linguistic marker of a name. This connection between Oliver’s identity, morality, and the novel itself emphasises to the reader that his position in the workhouse is a sort of fiction itself, illustrating that the workhouse dictates his identity and his life experiences.

By acknowledging the threat the workhouse poses to Oliver’s mortality and identity, Dickens presents the reader with what he considers to be ‘established truth[s]’. Through his spectacle of the workhouse, he highlights that the boundaries of social class are artificially constructed ‘badge[s]’ and thus further prompts his reader to be critical of other images of the poor. Dickens anticipates Karl Marx’s 1867 critique of ‘value-forms’ (p. 61). For Marx, the ‘value-form’ does not innately hold value but is socially codified with economic and social beliefs that change depending on the interests of the ruling classes (p. 61). Dickens’s depiction of Oliver’s identity as arbitrary, alongside Bumble’s self-affirmation of his

‘parochial’ role, prompt the reader to question the attribution of value throughout *Oliver Twist*. As Jon Mee (2010) posits, the use of language in *Oliver Twist* ‘provokes readers to rethink their own positions and their relations with others’ (p. 20). Mee’s argument echoes Norton’s statement that, through his novels, Dickens brings himself ‘into relation with [his] fellow-men, and [inspires] them with something of his sweetness, kindness, charity, and good-will’ (1868, p. 671). Dickens highlights the arbitrary nature of social categories and encourages critical reading, suggesting to his readers that the PLAA maintains the poor’s oppressed position. His representation of the workhouse space, as well as Mr Bumble’s and Oliver’s socially constructed positions, imbues his readers with a critical, sympathetic gaze and thus creates what Lewis identifies as Dickens’s ‘ideal reader’ (Lewis, 2011, p. 37). Dickens’s spectacle of the workhouse deconstructs the power relations of the PLAA, while also allowing his readers to spectate the grotesque scenes of death in these spaces.

Image, Sympathy and Dickens’s Readerly Community

Dickens’s ideal reader is further encouraged to engage in sympathetic and critical ways of reading in the way he communicates with his whole readership as a community. David Hume’s 1738 *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1896) reflects on how sympathy and social action are formed by a group response rather than the spectatorship of a single individual. For Hume, unlike Smith, sympathy is not solely reliant on the ‘compassion of the spectator’; sympathy is facilitated by ‘our manners, or character, or country, or language’ (p. 167). This is apparent in the methods Dickens employs to create his reader’s sympathetic spectatorship, particularly when considering *Oliver Twist*’s original publication in serial format in *Bentley’s Miscellany*. The shared experience of the essays, debates, and fictions that periodicals like *Bentley’s Miscellany* feature create a community of readers akin to Hume’s description of a group with its own ‘manners’ and ‘character’. In its original form, *Oliver Twist* functions to garner sympathy for the poor from the periodical’s readerly community via a spectacle of poverty. Dickens’s critique of the PLAA illustrates the creation of communal spectatorship as he anticipates his readerly communities’ adoption of a critical gaze through his satirical voice. Charles Knight (2004) argues that satire is a form of ‘indirection’ in which the subtextual frustration of the author is transposed onto the reader, thus ‘cultivat[ing] the will to resist and enabl[ing] the power to say no’ (p. 47). This satirical indirection is clear in the narrator’s description of the PLAA; the workhouse is described as a space to hold ‘juvenile offenders against the poor-laws [...] without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing’ (1850d, p. 4). The narrator additionally declares that

the creators of such oppressive systems are ‘very great experimental philosopher[s]’ (p. 4). Dickens’s employment of the noun ‘inconvenience’ with the phrases ‘too much food’ and ‘too much clothing’ indirectly encourage the ‘compassion of the spectator’ by juxtaposing poverty with the minor effect of an ‘inconvenience’. Additionally, this deconstructs the ‘false glitter’ of the PLAA by highlighting that this ‘very great’ solution perpetuates poverty itself. Dickens anticipates his readership’s interpretation of this sequence by indirectly highlighting the inadequacies of the Act, as his readers are expected to draw meaning from the gap between Dickens’s critique of the Act and his mimicry of its ‘very great’ supporters. Dickens ‘cultivates the will to resist and enables the power to say no’ in the readerly community of *Bentley’s Miscellany*, reflecting Hume’s statement that sympathy and social change are driven by joint spectatorship.

Dickens’s dissemination of the ‘will’ and ‘power’ to achieve social change among his readerly community fundamentally differs from that of the individual reader, as evident in Dickens’s emphasis on a ‘multitude moved by one sympathy’ in his introduction to *Household Words*. Dickens’s ideal reader does not exist in isolation and can access the ‘will’ to social change as part of a sympathetic community. For Dickens, as for Hume, the shared spectatorship of his audience is integral to social change. *Oliver Twist* evokes the reader’s will to reform by creating what Stanley Fish (1980) calls an ‘interpretive community’ (p. 14). Interpretive communities create meanings amongst a group of readers, as the ‘act of reading’ determines ‘the shape of what is read rather than [...] the other way around’ (p. 14). Ultimately Dickens creates meaning ‘not [for] an isolated individual but [for] a public and conventional point of view’ (p. 14), presenting images throughout *Oliver Twist* that encourage his readership to sympathise with the poor and to be critical of the PLAA. Dickens forms an interpretive community with its own ‘manners’, ‘character’ and ‘language’ (Hume, 1896, p. 167) to reveal social truths and to encourage sympathy for the poor.

George Cruikshank’s illustrations of *Oliver Twist* encourage and assist in constructing Dickens’s spectacle of poverty for his readerly community, while also contributing to his statement that the reader’s experience of the text should be visual in a manner akin to William Hogarth’s realist paintings (p. x). Cruikshank’s images, while not denying the interpretation of individual readers, provide a central spectacle that aims to resonate with the interpretive community of *Bentley’s Miscellany*. This is evident in Cruikshank’s image entitled ‘Oliver Asking for More’ (Figure 1), which visually represents the uneven and oppressive relationship between the ‘badged [and] ticketed’ poor and their overseeing parish authorities. The gaunt children on the right side of the image are pictured

as shocked at Oliver's request for more food while also hurriedly feeding themselves. Furthermore, these children are homogeneously grouped in a small space in the image with each child represented with the same gaunt and wasted features. On the left side of the image, Mrs Mann and 'the master' are separated from the children and appear larger and fuller than them. This juxtaposition of the gaunt children and the fuller master visualises the hunger of the poor and the greed of the higher classes. While this is apparent from the text, as Dickens notes that the boys were experiencing 'starvation' and that the master was 'fat [and] healthy' (p. 13), the use of space in Cruikshank's image visualises this in a manner that is visible to Dickens's interpretive community. Spatially, Oliver's movement from the right side of the image, where his huddled peers are located, to the left side represents a form of arbitrary transgression. In attempting to separate himself from his peers and to achieve 'more', Oliver's behaviour visually horrifies the other workhouse children and the parish officials. The image itself represents not only Oliver's transgression but also the unseen limitations that lead to him receiving a 'blow' with the master's ladle and being physically restricted (p. 13). Dickens's interpretive community can spectate the arbitrary nature of the system that separates the 'starv[ing]' poor from the 'healthy' rich, as Oliver's simple movement from right to left illustrates the socially constructed nature of these roles. Oliver's subsequent punishment, and the statement that he will 'come to be hung' (p. 13), operates with Cruikshank's image to represent the excessive punishment for this alleged transgression. The marriage of text and image in *Oliver Twist*, particularly in 'Oliver Asking for More', epitomises the critical use of reading encouraged by Dickens in response to the PLAA through spectacle.

Dickens's and Cruikshank's images further evoke sympathetic and critical reader perspectives as a transitional stage between Hogarth's images of poverty and the slum photography that appears towards the end of the nineteenth century. Hogarth's *Gin Lane* (1751, Figure 2) illustrates sympathy for the lower classes while also being critical of the lifestyles of the poor. Much like *Oliver Twist*, this text is produced in response to legislation: the 1751 Gin Act aimed to reduce the consumption of spirits among the lower classes (Muldoon, 2005, p. 160). Unlike Dickens, however, Hogarth's painted 'miserable reality' supports this legislation. The foreground of the image directly presents child neglect and starvation, portraying the slums as a space of death much like Dickens's workhouse. As Hogarth illustrates through the appearance of the gin barrels that the paupers are brawling over in the background and the bottle held by the starving man in the foreground, this results from the selling of spirits to the poor. The image is framed on the left by a pawn broker's

shop and on the right by a gin shop, illustrating that the higher classes are profiting from the addictions of the poor without recognising the chaos and death occurring in the slums around them; the pawn broker himself is facing away from the slum space and the brawling poor in an ignorant fashion. Hogarth also encourages a critical use of spectatorship in *Gin Lane* by juxtaposing the addictions of the poor and the profiteering of the higher classes, which is further emphasised with the inscription ‘Gin cursed Fiend [...] Makes Human Race a Prey’. Much like ‘Oliver Asking for More’, transgressions such as alcoholism are shown to be constructed by the ruling classes to ‘prey’ on the poor. Dickens’s and Cruikshank’s images not only reflect Hogarth’s earlier representation of the slums, but they also anticipate slum photography.

In his 1868 collection *The Old Closes and Streets of Glasgow*, Thomas Annan represents the slums in less chaotic and more sympathetic terms. In ‘Old Tunnel Off the Highstreet’ (Figure 3) and ‘Broad Close’ (Figure 4), the figures of the poor are presented against a bleak backdrop of deprivation. Annan notably pictures the streets as empty, contrasting Hogarth’s chaotic spectacle of the slums in *Gin Lane*. Rather than the overarching social problems acting as a motivation for Annan’s photos, his work emphasises the general sense of lack that these paupers experience. Lionel Gossman (2015) argues this is emphasised by the omission of a caption on these images, suggesting that Annan’s goal was to simply show the ‘fetid, dangerous and disease-ridden slum[s]’ and the lack of ownership that accompanies the poor’s experience within this space (p. 90). Annan’s ‘social documentary’ style (p. 93) claims to represent truth, much like Dickens, and focuses on the emptiness of the slums. The workhouse space, in Cruikshank’s illustration, is similar. The reader’s focus is drawn to the gaunt figures of the children and their juxtaposition to the large master, while the workhouse fades away and illustrates the sense of emptiness in the space; likewise, Annan’s photograph foregrounds the suffering poor themselves, while the dirty, narrow streets surrounding them only serve to emphasise their poverty. Both Annan’s and Cruikshank’s images focus on documenting the experience of the poor themselves to sympathetic effect, while in Hogarth’s *Gin Lane* the chaos of the slums is a spectacle employed to encourage a critical perception of the law and the poorer classes. Dickens’s text and Cruikshank’s illustrations act as intermediary works of art, bridging Hogarth’s critical and Annan’s sympathetic methods of visually representing the poor. The chaos that ensues from Oliver’s request for more, as Oliver is ‘blow[n]’ with the master’s ladle, appears alongside a sympathy for the poor’s punishment for an arbitrary transgression. To the interpretive community of *Bentley’s Miscellany*, these elements that reflect Hogarth’s work

and anticipate Annan's later photography are integral to how the text is received. The interplay of text and image in *Oliver Twist* allows the reader to spectate and sympathise with the condition of the poor, chronicling the 'actual experience of how casual paupers are lodged and fed' (Greenwood, 1866, p. 1) in a manner that prefigures the 'social documentar[ies]' of Annan and Greenwood. Yet, as Dickens notes in the preface, it also builds on Hogarth's work to 'paint' images that reveal the 'miserable reality' of legislation and the oppression of the poor by the ruling classes. The spectatorship of Dickens's community of readers is therefore integral to his project to create social change; the spectacles that he and Cruikshank create juggle social commentary and emotional sympathy to encourage the reader's will to philanthropy.

Slumming, the Undeserving Poor and the Reader's Self-Location

I have argued that Dickens attempts to construct his readership's critical use of reading to deconstruct the 'value-forms' (Marx, 1894, p. 61) of the PLAA and to question the 'authenticity or supposed reality' (Dever, 2009) of the ruling classes. While Dickens's imagery within the text appears to operate solely to achieve social change and to evoke reader sympathies, these spectacles also function as a form of entertainment. Dickens achieves this by constructing images that develop from Hogarth's social realism while prefiguring Annan's photographic social documentaries. Consequently, Dickens's ideal reader is implicated in a shared sympathy for the poor in *Oliver Twist*, gazing at and being encouraged to criticise the mistreatment of the poor under the Act. *Oliver Twist*'s function as an anti-Poor Law novel is problematised, however, when considering its success as a form of entertainment. Queen Victoria wrote in her journal that the novel is 'excessively interesting' (1838), while contemporaries of Dickens praise his ability to evoke 'excite[ment]' alongside 'sympathy' (Anon., 1838a, pp. 42 - 45) and his 'genius' in 'embodying London' (Anon., 1838b, p. 1114). The success of *Oliver Twist* is not solely due to its timeliness as a response to the PLAA, but also its ability to interest, excite, and entertain.

Dickens entertains his readers by reflecting the practice of slumming in his spectacle of poverty. *Oliver Twist* ultimately allows the reader to enter the space of the poor and to spectate their lives through fiction. Koven refers to this as 'artistic slumming' which entertains readers by representing the grotesque nature of the slums in a way that aligns with middle-class understandings of poverty and their 'desires for excess' in fiction (2004, p. 1). Normally practised under the guise of charity, slumming is reflected in Dickens's project to

encourage his readership to be sympathetic for the poor. Slumming and sympathy are fundamentally intertwined in *Oliver Twist*, operating together to allow Dickens to critique the Act while also entertaining his readership. In a later 1853 article in *Household Words*, Dickens reflects on his representation of the Jacob's Island slum in *Oliver Twist*. In this piece of travel writing, he describes a 'ditch stretch[ing] its slimy length, [which is] no credit to our sanitary age' and concludes that Jacob's Island was 'a dirty ditch [...] when "Oliver Twist" was written; a dirty ditch it still is' (p. 463). Dickens's descriptions of Jacob's Island in both *Household Words* and *Oliver Twist* allows readers to enter slum spaces as a form of 'self-serving entertainment' by enabling them to spectate the 'slimy' slum space from the safety of their own homes. In the text, Dickens describes Jacob's Island as a series of

crazy wooden galleries common to the backs of half-a-dozen houses, with holes from which to look upon the slime beneath; [...] dirt-besmeared walls and decaying foundations; every repulsive lineament of poverty, every loathsome indication of filth, rot and garbage [...] they must have powerful motives for a secret residence, or be reduced to a destitute condition indeed, who seek a refuge in Jacob's Island. (1850d, p. 402)

The premodifiers 'crazy', 'loathsome', and 'repulsive' reflect the perception of the poor as 'savage', which as Koven notes results from the belief that slumming can 'civilise' and 'teach' the poor (2004, p. 1). Two perceptions of the poor are at play in this description, as well as in the narrative as a whole: they are presented as 'savage[s]' while also being constructed as 'destitute' victims of a hostile slum environment. As such, the reader spectates the 'deserving' poor with a sympathetic perception while viewing the undeserving 'criminal' poor as a grotesque spectacle (Mayhew, 1851, p. 10). The language Dickens employs to present the 'undeserving' criminal poor and the slum spaces they inhabit enables a perception of them as the 'dregs of life' (1850d, p. v), as he unfavourably describes Fagin and Sikes in the preface, while Cruikshank's 'Oliver Asking for More' and the earlier sections of the narrative sympathetically present Oliver as a member of the 'deserving' poor. This dichotomy is evident in the final sentence Dickens uses to describe Jacob's Island, in which he refers to criminal 'motives' or 'reduced [and] destitute' positions. The dual spectacle of the 'criminal' poor and the 'deserving' poor that Dickens constructs functions as a form of 'self-serving entertainment' for his audience (Koven, 2004, p. 121), affirming this dichotomy while also allowing his middle-class readers to engage in slumming practices.

As a 'self-serving' form of entertainment Dickens's use of artistic slumming in *Oliver Twist* privileges spectatorship, whether this spectator is the novel's interpretive

community of readers or Dickens himself. Dickens employs the mode of ‘distance reading’ in the novel to protect his readership from the perceived dangers of the slums while also allowing them to spectate the poor that inhabit this space. As Emily Heady (2012) suggests, ‘distance reading’ involves the author describing ‘diverse elements’ that come together to form a ‘whole picture’ in the reader’s mind (p. 101). As such, the act of writing ‘distant[ly]’ is a ‘strategic’ mode used to define a ‘meaningful self-location’ and to empower Dickens’s authorial voice (p. 114). In enabling slumming to be practised without entering the physical slum space, Dickens actively constructs an image of poverty for this readership; the poor themselves, as the central spectacle of the novel, are denied this agency and are only viewed through the lens of the reader-author relationship that Dickens creates. It is in this relationship that both Dickens and the reader experience ‘self-location’, as his ‘established truth[s]’ are affirmed by the sympathetic response of the reader to the plight of the poor. Rather than solely evoking the ‘compassion of the spectator’ (Smith, 1759, p. 8), reader spectatorship in *Oliver Twist* emphasises the otherness of the poor and as such is a practice of self-location for the reader and the author. Slumming reduces the agency of the spectated poor through the distant self-location of the spectator, harbouring perceptions of the poor as ‘savage’ (Koven, 2004, p. 1) and ‘repulsive’ (Dickens, 1850d, p. 381).

These prejudices are prevalent in Dickens’s representation of Fagin as a spectacle, constructing him as ‘repulsive’ in racial and class-based terms. In his initial description, Fagin is described as a ‘villainous-looking [...] Jew’ with a ‘repulsive face [which] was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair’ and is depicted wearing a ‘greasy flannel gown’ (1850d, p. 68). The premodifiers ‘greasy’ and ‘matted’ echo Dickens’s use of the adjective ‘slimy’ in both the *Household Words* and *Oliver Twist* descriptions of Jacob’s Island. The reader is encouraged to spectate Fagin as an extension of his ‘loathsome’ and ‘flith[y]’ (p. 402) environment, reflecting the role of artistic slumming in upholding a consistent aesthetic perspective of the poor’s space as a ‘spiritual and cultural wasteland’ compared with the ‘beauty’ of London’s West End (Koven, 2004, p. 214). The narrator’s constant references to Fagin as both a ‘villain’ and a ‘Jew’ set up a cultural opposition to the reader and strengthens their sense of self-location. As Kathy Lavezzo (2016) describes, Dickens’s characterisation of Fagin illustrates a ‘widespread English revulsion’ towards ‘London Jewry’ as Fagin ‘offers literary confirmation of the popular reputation of Jews as disreputable petty traders, tricksters, and criminals’ (p. 250). Through literary slumming and

the spectatorship of Fagin, a power dynamic is therefore formed between the spectating reader and the spectacle of the poor London Jewry.²⁹

Cruikshank's illustrations represent Fagin as 'repulsive' to the interpretive community of *Bentley's Miscellany*. In the image captioned 'Oliver Introduced to the Respectable Old Gentleman' (Figure 5), Fagin's 'greasy gown' and 'repulsive face' are reflected in Cruikshank's representation of the slum environment. Fagin's long gown is drawn with lines similar to the curtains that conceal his den from outside observers on the right side of the illustration, representing his criminality and his 'powerful motives for a secret residence' by conflating the act of concealment with his clothing (1850d, p. 402). On the left side of the image, a small depiction of gallows foreshadows Fagin's death. Cruikshank's image not only conflates Fagin with the 'loathsome' slum environment by representing his criminal actions but it also extends Dickens's representation of the workhouse as a site of death onto the wider slum space. Furthermore, as Jane Cohen (1980) notes, Cruikshank's illustrations of Fagin's face throughout the novel continues to affirm visual stereotypes of London Jewry as 'monstrous' and 'deformed' (p. 241). Through this illustration, Dickens's antisemitic representation of London Jews is a spectacle that is reproduced for the entirety of his interpretive community. As such, the middle-class reader is distanced from Fagin's actions, the slum environment, and his 'deformed' appearance. This allows Dickens's reader to experience a meaningful self-location through slumming by comparing their 'civilised' culture to Fagin's criminal behaviour (Koven, 2004, p. 1).

Cruikshank's later illustration of 'Fagin in the Condemned Cell' (Figure 6) operates to further affirm this power relationship between the readership and the 'undeserving' poor. While the curtains in the earlier image indicate Fagin's ability to conceal his criminal actions, Fagin is unable to escape the gaze of spectators in this illustration. The uncurtained cell window in the background of the image, as well as Cruikshank's framing of the image

²⁹ At the time of *Oliver Twist*'s publication, around twenty thousand Jews were living in London (Lavezzo, 2016, 249). Throughout the 1830s, Jews were granted various civil privileges such as running retail businesses in the city (p. 249). As Lavezzo notes, although some prospered under these new rules anti-semitic values still remained in London; many 'Jews were barred officially from many professions and political positions, including membership in Parliament' (p. 249). She particularly cites the beliefs of Thomas Arnold, the father of literary critic Matthew Arnold, who suggested that 'only Christians – not the wandering, exiled, and always-foreign Jews – can truly occupy and possess English territory in any meaningful way' (p. 249). By the 1890s, the East End had become an 'area of dense Jewish settlement' (Francis and Valman, 2011, p. 4). The growth of Jewish communities and increasing debates surrounding the 'Jewish Question' led to the establishment of the 1905 Aliens Act, which further favoured anti-semitic prejudices against Jewish communities. Jewish communities, identities, and literature in the context of the 1905 Aliens Act are interrogated in section 2.2 of this thesis, 'Cockney-Yiddish spaces and the Cockney Jew in Israel Zangwill's *The Children of the Ghetto* (1892)'.

as if the reader were gazing through a cell door, ultimately illustrates a failure in Fagin's ability to control how he is spectated. Rather, as a 'condemned' man and as a member of the 'undeserving' poor he holds no real agency and is instead subjected to the gaze of Dickens and his readers. In comparison, the following and final chapter note that Oliver, having regained his middle-class heritage, has become 'truly happy' (p. 439). Symbolic of the deserving poor, Oliver's placement within a 'happy' middle-class lifestyle functions as a form of self-location by affirming that the poor can achieve social mobility when they are deserving of sympathy.³⁰ His reclaimed gentility also allows the reader to locate themselves within his middle-class origin revealed at the end of the novel. Fagin's reduction to a spectacle of criminality and 'savagery' creates a different form of self-location: the reader and Dickens achieve self-location as they separate themselves as spectators from the criminal behaviour of the 'undeserving poor'.³¹ Slumming is therefore a fundamental aspect of *Oliver Twist*'s imagery as the text emphasises the middle-class reader's sense of self-location in opposition to the grotesque criminal underclasses and the slum spaces they inhabit.

Conclusion

The spectating reader is encouraged to practice both sympathy and slumming throughout *Oliver Twist*. By encouraging the reader to critically read the workhouse and slum spaces, Dickens encourages reader sympathy; in allowing them to safely spectate the slum space and the immoral criminal underclasses, he enables their desires for excess, a sense of self-location, and slumming. As Marx, Norton, and Dickens himself suggest, Dickens's 'established truth[s]' are taken on by his interpretive community. Dickens holds the ability to present his reader with his own seemingly authentic 'reality'. His 'established truth[s]' function not to 'dim the false glitter' of the criminal underclasses and the slums, but rather to contribute to his artistic style that builds on Hogarth's realism while also anticipating Annan's social documentary style of photography. This visual style permeates *Oliver Twist*

³⁰ Oliver's middle-class heritage complicates the relationship between him and the concept of the deserving poor, as Oliver is always already middle-class throughout the novel even as this is unknown by the reader. Oliver's heritage, however, illustrates that Dickens's representation of the deserving poorer classes is encoded with middle-class values; as Cates Baldrige (1993) emphasises, Oliver retains his virtuous, moralistic perspective even under the gaze of Mr Bumble, Fagin, and Sikes (p. 187). When Oliver is asked to describe his experiences in the middle of the narrative, Dickens highlights Oliver's ability to recognise the 'evils' that have affected him, and notes that after telling his story he rested with 'virtue watch[ing] him as he slept' (p. 229). Oliver is characterised as a member of the deserving, virtuous poor as he himself is able to recognise immorality or 'evil', and speaks against it in this middle section of the narrative.

³¹ This operates similarly to Arthur Morrison's creation of a linguistic netherworld, as discussed in section 2.1.

and whether it evokes sympathy, slumming, or both, the apparent “authenticity” of Dickens’s ‘established truth[s]’ remains affirmed. Dickens’s ideal reader rejects other narratives of poverty created by the PLAA and texts such as *The Beggar’s Opera* in favour of his visual stylings and social truths. Dickens’s sympathetic project operates in conjunction with slumming in *Oliver Twist* to create a form of reader spectatorship that accepts his ‘paint[ed]’ images as authentic. While Dickens and his reader have the agency to achieve self-location and to enact sympathies for the poor, the poor themselves lack agency in their function as spectacles to be gazed at throughout the novel. *Oliver Twist* reproduces slumming practices, placing the poor in a passive position in which they are spectated, scrutinised, and understood according to the values of Dickens and his readership. Dickens’s use of a spectacle of poverty to communicate his worldview to his readership is reflected in Margaret Harkness’s *In Darkest London*. In Harkness’s text, however, her representation of the slums is not characterised by a spectacle of the poor; instead, Harkness employs a spectacle of philanthropy, specifically through images of slum sisterhood, to represent her beliefs about socialism, the Salvation Army, and the potential of Sapphic relationships. Her representation of the slums and poor simply becomes a series of images, or ‘types’, which she uses to mediate the experiences of middle-class philanthropic women.

1.2 - 'Sympathy [and] kindred feeling': Slum Sisterhoods and Sapphic dialogues in Margaret Harkness's *In Darkest London* (1889)

Between the publication of *Oliver Twist* and *In Darkest London*, the social landscape of philanthropy in the East End shifted hugely despite the attempts of PLAA supporters to repress charitable relief for the poor.³² Margaret Harkness's sympathetic engagement with the poor and slum spaces operates alongside her project to conjoin the Salvationist and Socialist groups of women who participate in philanthropic slum work. As many critics have recognised, by the 1890s slum work and sympathies for the poor were seen as almost exclusively feminine (Jaffe, 2000; Rappoport, 2012; Cameron and Dunleavy, 2015). As Jill Rappoport (2012) notes, this led groups of female philanthropists to self-identify as 'slum sisters' in recognition of their simultaneous roles as both active participants in slum philanthropy and as a community of women in constant dialogue with one another (p. 108). Slum sisterhoods flourished under the religious sympathies of the Salvation Army and the secular beliefs of socialist groups.³³ In 'The Woman Question: from a Socialist Point of View' (1886), Eleanor Marx states that socialist sisterly communities attempt to 'free' women and the oppressed poorer classes from the 'tyranny' of men *and* the producers of capitalism (p. 209). On the other hand, she argues, religious sisterhoods, such as nunneries, enforce the economic and patriarchal oppression of women by encouraging them to be monogamous and by labelling 'necessary' prostitution among poorer women as a 'sin' (p. 210). Eleanor Marx concludes that 'women, once more like the labourers, have been expropriated as to their rights as human beings' (p. 213), and that by dedicating herself to the 'wants of the [sisterly and philanthropic] community [...] woman will be independent' (p. 221). Harkness, who worked with Eleanor Marx as a slum sister in the philanthropic East London Dwelling Company (Ross, 2007, p. 90), engages in an active dialogue with 'The Woman Question: From a Socialist Point of View' throughout her novel *In Darkest London*.

³² The transformation of philanthropic culture between 1837 and 1889 is discussed further in this introduction.

³³ Founded in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth, The Salvation Army aimed at alleviating poverty through a 'Christian mission' as well as charitable work (Taylor, 2014, loc. 222). Initially named the 'Christian Mission', The Salvation Army rebranded in 1878 in order to, as David W. Taylor (2014) argues, 'institutional[ise]' the group and to further remove itself from being seen as a 'church' (Taylor, 2014, loc. 222). The Salvation Army were huge players in slum philanthropy in the second half of the nineteenth century; William Booth himself opens his seminal work *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890) by emphasising the 'progress of The Salvation Army in its work amongst the poor' and describing their successes in aiding in the poor's suffering via 'spiritual means' (p. 5). For more on the Salvation Army, their history, their ecclesiastical beliefs, and their work in the twenty-first century see David W. Taylor's *Like a Mighty Army?: The Salvation Army, the Church, and the Churches* (2014).

I argue that *In Darkest London* goes beyond Eleanor Marx's definition of sisterhoods in an attempt to consider sisterly communities outside of socialism; Harkness represents both secular and religious female philanthropic communities as liberating for both women and the poor. In her essay 'Salvationists and Socialists', published in the March 1888 edition of the socialist magazine *Justice*, Harkness argues that socialists and members of the Salvation Army should work together for the benefit of the poor. Harkness recognises that 'Salvationists are so much occupied with endeavours to save sinners from the burning pit that they have little or no time to study the economic questions that occupy the minds of Socialists', while also suggesting that the 'two organisations ought to work more together than they do at present, they have many points of common interest' (p. 2).

In Darkest London grows directly out of Harkness's argument in 'Salvationists and Socialists'; the novel deliberately juxtaposes the lifestyles of socialist and Salvationist philanthropists while also illustrating how they operate together under the 'common interests' of aiding the poor. In her follow-up letter of April 1888, also published in *Justice*, she concludes that

the real enemies of capitalists and landlords are men above line the [sic] of starvation. Much energy is wasted among such men at present. They know what they want; but they do *not* know how to get it. (p. 2, emphasis Harkness)

This statement is deliberately gendered in a way that echoes Eleanor Marx's argument that the 'tyranny' of men affirms capitalism and the oppression of women simultaneously. In Harkness's case, however, 'energy' is 'wasted' on the socialist 'men' who do not actively partake in philanthropic work. By 'dressing, walking, and writing together', female socialists and Salvationists 'construct alliances that simultaneously advance individual and collective professional goals' (Rappoport, 2012, p. 136). Sisterly communities actively operated within the slums to improve the conditions of the poor while also advancing their

social positions in a previously male-dominated urban philanthropic culture.³⁴ In this section, I identify how *In Darkest London* represents the complex and intermingled relationships between socialism, religious philanthropy, capitalism, and female same-sex communities through its spectacle of the slums.

Between the publication of *Oliver Twist* and *In Darkest London*, male-centric philanthropy shifted to become a predominantly female practice. Despite the attempts of Poor Law Commissioners to reduce public acts of charity, philanthropic organisations flourished after the 1834 PLAA. The 1831 edition of *Cruchley's Picture of London* lists twenty philanthropic organisations; in the 1834 reprint, this list is expanded to include nearly forty charities offering medical care and income support for the poor. Until the late 1860s charitable work was led by middle-class men in a variety of professions, including doctors and clergymen (Elliott, 2002, p. 5). By 1893, however, over half a million women in Britain were 'occupied continuously' or 'professionally' in philanthropic work (Poole, 2014, p. 3).³⁵ The role of women became so integral to slum philanthropy that Salvation Army founder William Booth, in his seminal work *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), calls upon 'sober, serious, practical men and women [to save the] strength and moral backbone of the country' by practising philanthropy within the slums (p. 21). Booth's call to action, together with the rise of the 'New Woman' (Hager, 2007, p. 560), influences the formation of philanthropic slum 'sisterhoods' (Devereux, 1896, p. 45). Mrs Roy Devereux states that by 1896 the 'socialistic dream', which she refers to as the achievement of 'liberty', 'freedom', and equal distribution of labour among all social classes and genders (p. 70), has shifted from the 'universal brotherhood of man' (p. 45) to the 'sisterhood of woman' (p. 61). Devereux argues that the formation of slum sisterhoods makes this possible: 'When woman

³⁴ Until the late 1860s charitable work was led by middle-class men in a variety of professions, including doctors and clergymen; women were often involved, either as patrons or active participants in philanthropy, but rarely led efforts to reform the slums (Elliott, 2002, p. 5). In *Philanthropy and the Construction of Victorian Women's Citizenship: Lady Frederick Cavendish and Miss Emma Cons* (2014), Andrea Geddes Poole discusses the social contexts that resulted in the growing numbers of female philanthropists. Philanthropy allowed women to 'rise to leadership roles within charity' and engage in lives separate from the conventionally feminine domestic sphere (p. 6). As a result, philanthropy played a large part in creating a 'distinct women's public sphere' by the 1880s (p. 10), influencing the accessibility of professional opportunities available to women and therefore pre-empting the creation the 'New Woman' as well as the later suffrage movement (p. 11). Through philanthropic organisations, Poole concludes, 'women advertised for volunteers and organized, lobbied, and agitated for recognition, funding, and change' (p. 11). The shifting social contexts surrounding constructions of female identity therefore play a major part in the growth of female-lead philanthropic efforts within the slums.

³⁵ This thesis identifies and engages with the writings of several women that were either involved in or spearheaded philanthropic efforts in the East End after 1860, including Catherine Booth, Beatrice Webb, Harkness, Eleanor Marx, Amy Levy, Vernon Lee, Octavia Hill, and Clementina 'Kit' Anstruther-Thompson.

stands shoulder to shoulder with her sister in public and in private life, she will stand at the very gates of her kingdom, abreast of that “brave vibration, each way free” (p. 61). As Booth’s and Devereux’s comments indicate, groups of women, or ‘sisterhoods’, are considered conduits of social change at the fin de siècle.

Devereux’s call for sororal solidarity both in public and in private suggests a form of ‘Sapphic’ love that can be found within philanthropic sisterhoods (Vanita, 1996, p. 2). Ruth Vanita’s *Sappho and the Virgin Mary: Same-sex Love and the English Literary Imagination* (1996) works against a ‘heterosexist’ scholarly tradition which assumes that same-sex love between women is repressed in nineteenth-century literature and culture: she argues that ‘Sapphic love was not always silenced, invisibilized, or exoticized by the English literary imagination but was rather one of its central components’ (p. 1). Vanita concludes that ‘love between women [...] has functioned as an enabling element in the writings of both male and female authors at least since Romanticism’ (p. 1), and notes that philanthropic sisterhoods factor within this understanding of the Sapphic as ‘love between women’ (p. 46). As Vanita describes, sisterhoods enable Sapphic desire as a mode of ‘passionate dialogue between women as a paradigm for lyric intensity and sublimity’ (p. 2), indicated in Devereux’s lyrical depiction of women standing ‘shoulder to shoulder [at] the very gates of her kingdom’ (1896, p. 61). As Vanita goes on to highlight, Sapphic relations also ‘involve ideas of a community, of learning, teaching, writing and study as activities occurring among women’ (p. 2) that are implied in Devereux’s definition of slum sisterhoods.³⁶ As Vanita suggests, slum fiction at the fin de siècle begins to focus on female philanthropic communities and thus features the ‘homoerotic’, or the sexual attraction between two or more same-sex people (p. 8). She describes the presence of Sapphism in both religious and secular sisterhoods, specifically philanthropic or ‘radical’ groups, which allowed women to enter an isolated community and forge passionate lesbian relationships while practising their shared moral or political beliefs (p. 6; p. 64). While Vanita does not identify the relationship between the two seemingly competing forms of religious and socialist sisterhoods, *In Darkest London* represents the relationships between these two groups through a spectacle of sisterly community. Originally published in 1889 with the title *Captain Lobe: A Story of the Salvation Army* under the pseudonym John Law, the novel was republished in 1890

³⁶ Vanita’s connection between community and the Sapphic mode draws on the Greek poet Sappho and her community on Lesbos. In *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873) Arthur Symonds presents Lesbos as a ‘blooming’ community (p. 166) and as the ‘centre of Aeolian culture’ (p. 290). Symonds also notes that women were ‘in freedom of action and in mental training [...] at least the equals of the male sex’ (p. 166), indicating a link between the ability to enact passionate Sapphic dialogues and a weakening of patriarchal structures.

under Harkness's real name. The novel was renamed to reflect William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, further emphasising the narrative's direct engagement with the contexts surrounding Booth's call for action from both men and women. In changing the title and reclaiming the text under her own name, Harkness emphasises the influence that burgeoning communities of slum sisters had on *In Darkest London*. Harkness's spectacle of poverty is informed by concepts of Sapphism and the growth of philanthropic, same-sex communities.

In this section, I argue that Harkness presents both the poor and the large philanthropic groups that enter the slums as spectacles for her readership. In her combined images of mass poverty and mass philanthropy, Harkness represents the complicated relationship between slum sisterhoods and the poor. While Dickens's *Oliver Twist* does feature middle-class figures like Mr Brownlow, they primarily remain separate from the 'slimy' slums; comparatively, *In Darkest London* presents the reader with the image of the middle-class philanthropist who attempts to achieve social reform while taking up residence within the slum streets of the East End. While this allows Harkness to represent the real social good enacted by slum sisterhoods, she also represents the slum space in a sexually charged manner. Same-sex relationships and desires are implied throughout *In Darkest London*; the text's representation of homoerotic relationships between female philanthropists implicitly eroticises the slum space. The interaction between groups of paupers and groups of socialists becomes eroticised in a way that differs from Dickens's presentation of the undeserving/deserving poor. Yet Harkness also borrows the elements that make the Dickensian slum appealing to middle-class readerships, such as the use of descriptive language to simulate slumming practices, the evocation of the reader's sense of self-location, and the use of language that constructs the poor as grotesque. However, in this sensationalised spectacle of poverty Harkness also recognises the slums as a space in which men and women are liberated from the confines of both sexuality and gender, allowing them to engage in homoerotic relationships while also working alongside each other as equals in philanthropic work. As a result, *In Darkest London* represents a simultaneous attempt to appeal to the reader's desire to experience a literary version of slumming while also representing the slums as a space where norms of sexuality and gender can be evaded.

However, there is no evidence to suggest that Harkness herself engaged in homoerotic relationships. As numerous critics have noted, there is little biographical material available on her life (Biderman 2003, p. 7; Ross, 2007, p. 89). In this section, I do not intend to argue that she was personally involved in lesbian relationships. Rather, I argue

that *In Darkest London* has homoerotic implications and that Sapphic desire is an important part of Harkness's spectacle of slum sisterhood. As Rappoport argues, 'Slum Sisters attempted to put themselves literally in others' places, speaking to as well as for them, and showing how readers of their fiction, sermons and manifestos could do so too' (2012, p. 114). This dialogue between women, she goes on to state, is also a radical practice; by entering the slums to garner philanthropic relationships with poorer women, sisterhoods 'attempted to make visible [a] rhetorical interchangeability of subject positions' (p. 114). This is made possible, according to Rappoport, by the passionate dialogues 'between women' that reflected on their social position through writing and discussion (p. 108).

Rappoport's study builds on Adrienne Rich's (1980) concept of the 'lesbian continuum' (p. 649), which further illustrates the need for and effect of sexual and emotional dialogues between women. Rich's continuum is also reflected in Vanita's later call for scholars to consider that 'Sapphic love was not always silenced [...] by the English literary imagination' (p. 1, 1996). According to Rich, the lesbian continuum is 'a range – through each woman's life and throughout history – of woman-identified experience', experiences which range from 'primary intensity [of] genital sexual experience with another woman' (p. 649) to 'the sharing of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny [and] the giving and receiving of practical and political support' (p. 649). Harkness's novel can be read in the context of the lesbian continuum as she articulates how groups of women work together in their philanthropic efforts and their shared 'inner life'. Harkness herself worked alongside Beatrice Webb and Eleanor Marx in the East London Dwelling Company, and as Tabitha Sparks (2019) observes, her relationships with these women were the most prominent and most affecting relationships of her whole career (p. 39). The socialist concepts and ideals formulated by these women created a self-affirming sisterhood that developed the political voices of Webb, Harkness and Eleanor Marx. Forming part of the lesbian continuum, the slum sisterhoods seen throughout *In Darkest London* are empowered by a shared, Sapphic mode of dialogue, in which 'intense' communications between women create the foundation for an 'ideal [female] community' (Vanita, 1996, p. 38). While *In Darkest London* does not directly represent same-sex acts between women, it does highlight the role that these Sapphic relationships play in slum philanthropy. While discussing slum sisterhoods, Koven states that

The nature of surviving sources suggests that we can gain deeper insights by examining what role, if any, same-sex desire — *not same-sex acts* — may have played in structuring the moral imaginations of elite women engaged in slum

philanthropy. We also need to begin to see that the apparent eschewal of sex (however we may construe “sex” as physical acts) cannot be equated with the absence of sexuality. (2004, p. 278, emphasis added)

Following Koven’s statement my analyses of *In Darkest London* emphasises how homoerotic desire, as opposed to actual sex acts, factor within Harkness’s representation of slum philanthropy. Koven’s statement also alludes to how the creation of philanthropic groups of ‘elite women’ results in the circulation of same-sex desire. Vanita’s definition of Sapphic relationships resonates with Koven’s statement regarding same-sex desire and slum sisterhoods: Sapphic desire involves ‘ideas of a community, of learning, teaching, writing and study as activities occurring among women’ (1996, p. 2) which are the foundations of the ‘imagination of elite women engaged in slum philanthropy’ (Koven, 2004, p. 278). I argue that philanthropy, Sapphic desire, and sororal communities all feature and communicate with one another in Harkness’s novel to represent and highlight the importance of same-sex desire occurring between the women in these groups. Ultimately, I argue that Harkness’s spectacle of the poor mediates same-sex friendships and triangular desire by eroticising philanthropic slumming.

In an 1875 letter to Beatrice Webb, Harkness discusses concepts of love and desire. Harkness suggests that love is created between two people ‘by virtue of their sympathy + kindred feeling’, before concluding that

‘their minds should be of the same description, that they should be perfectly honest to one another, not easily offended, and – I cannot describe it, but friends must be more to one another than I have written’ (n.p)

Harkness’s comments on ‘kindred feeling’, as well as her personal and professional relationships with these women, reflect Devereux’s description of sisterhood as women standing ‘shoulder to shoulder’ to achieve social change. Harkness’s definition of love also resonates with Vanita’s definition of the Sapphic model of desire, as she focuses on shared ‘minds’, ‘sympath[ies]’, and ‘feeling[s]’ as the main aspects of love. In a previous letter to Webb, dated a few months before her letter on love, Harkness also asks ‘don’t you think it very strange the sort of immoral [...] subjection women are in? The gilded chains their lords and masters bind them in’ (1875, n.p). The slum sisterhoods Harkness operates within therefore appear not only as a way of expressing shared desires for social change among women, but they also act as communities in which women may escape the masculine ‘gilded chains’ in which middle-class women experience ‘immoral [...] subjection’ outside of the slum space.

Slum philanthropy in same-sex, middle-class communities is connected with a form of Sapphic desire and represents a movement away from the ‘chains’ of other masculine spaces. Lisa Hager (2007) argues that there is a connection between the New Woman and slum sisterhoods. The New Woman appeared at the fin de siècle ‘as a sister figure [that] represented a challenge to Victorian femininity in centering her identity in a woman-centered space that is both familial and professional’ (p. 461). ‘The Woman Question’, mentioned by Eleanor Marx and referenced multiple times throughout *In Darkest London*, refers to the debates which directly informed understandings of the New Woman; the Woman Question prompted discussions that reconsidered the position of women and feminine identity throughout the nineteenth century (Canning, 2006, p. 193). Hager argues that slum narratives written by female novelists conflate ‘lesbian desire’ with ‘reform work’ (p. 461) in response to the growth of Sapphic philanthropic communities. This conflation suggests that the sisterhoods of New Women entering the slums are a marker of ‘late-century sexual and class deviancy’ (p. 461), and Hager demonstrates this with novels like Rhoda Broughton’s *Dear Faustina* (1897). Throughout *In Darkest London*, Sapphic desire and the New Woman are represented positively, reflecting the shared ‘mind’ and ‘sympathy’ that Harkness posits is integral to concepts of love.

In *Queering the Underworld: Slumming, Literature, and the Undoing of Lesbian and Gay History* (2007), Scott Herring identifies the connection between the act of reading a slum novel, or ‘armchair slumming’ (p. 157), and homosexual cultures of the long nineteenth century. While focussed mostly on texts from the United States, Herring’s suggestion that writers and artists ‘turned the slumming narrative against itself, used it to manipulate homosexual identifications, and frustrated the compulsion to reveal underworld sexual knowledge’ (p. 3) resonates with the Sapphic mode present in Harkness’s *In Darkest London*.³⁷ Herring highlights how slum sisterhoods ‘distance’ themselves from ‘legitimate’ heterosexuality by rejecting the dominant bourgeois culture and spending their time amongst the poorer classes (p. 63). Throughout his study Herring aligns the rejection of class and gender hierarchies enacted by these sisterhoods with a rejection or subversion of sexual norms; the underworld of the poor becomes intertwined with the underworld of Victorian middle-class sexuality. While I disagree with his suggestion that such philanthropic projects

³⁷ Herring’s examples include Willa Cather’s 1905 short story ‘Paul’s Case: A Study in Temperament’, Jane Addams’s *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910) and Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). Herring’s analyses of Addams’s text illustrate its blending of the ‘New Woman reform’ novel (p. 27) and the lesbian novel. This blending is seen in Harkness’s novel, illustrating a cross-cultural relationship between the New Woman movement and lesbian slum writing.

are formulated solely to conceal same-sex desires (p. 30), arguing instead that these women genuinely intended to and did positively improve the slum space, Herring's recognition that these two underworlds are intertwined informs my analysis of *In Darkest London*.

Koven's chapter "'Nasty Books': Dirty Bodies, Dirty Desires, in Women's Slum Novels' directly identifies female same-sex desire as encoded within fin-de-siècle slum fiction. Using examples from Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown* and L. T. Meade's *A Princess of the Gutter* (1896), Koven argues that these novels represent middle-class and cross-class sisterhoods that involve 'physical intimacies that surpass the boundaries of romantic friendship' (p. 295).³⁸ Koven concludes that these 'novels offered readers an encoded way of managing society's dirt'; his use of 'dirt' simultaneously refers to both the slums and marginalised same-sex desires. Through the novel and their social work, women like Lee and Meade therefore 'powerfully reshaped gender, sexual subjectivities, and social welfare in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain' (p. 301). Harkness's novel and her wider philanthropic work perform these functions in three significant ways: by representing how the Salvation and socialist sisterhoods can work together in their philanthropic efforts, by illustrating passionate Sapphic dialogues in her spectacle of sororal philanthropy, and by representing the ability of these dialogues to transform social hierarchies.

In addition to understanding how Sapphic relationships are presented throughout *In Darkest London*, I analyse how sisterly communities can be defined by the interlocking contexts of socialism, the Salvation Army, the New Woman, and nursing. These contexts are all connected by their focus on the slums themselves as the cause of poverty. Sally Brooke Cameron and Matthew Dunleavy (2015) identify *In Darkest London* as a novel focusing on the environment of the slums as the instigator of poverty rather than the circumstances of the individual. According to Cameron and Dunleavy, Harkness suggests that only through the sentiments of sisterly communities can the slums be 'reshaped' (p. 108). This is exemplified in the novel when Jane Hardy, a self-proclaimed socialist seeking

³⁸ Much like Harkness, Marx and Webb, Lee was actively engaged with philanthropy. As a member of the socialist institution Toynbee Hall, Lee assisted in educating the working classes on art criticism and frequently went slumming on an outwardly philanthropic basis with her lover Clementina 'Kit' Anstruther-Thompson. Diana Maltz (2006) draws connections between Lee's literary aestheticism with her philanthropic endeavours in *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870-1900: Beauty for the People* (pp. 67 – 97).

L.T. Meade engaged with philanthropic causes through journalism and fiction. Jacqueline Harris (2016) argues that Meade's engagement with 'New Journalism, progressive women's organisations, and philanthropic causes' such as the Bureau of the Lyceum Club and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children informed her popularity as a literary celebrity (p. 201).

answers to 'The Woman Question' (p. 187; p. 192), defines what she means by the environment. Jane states that environment

means the filthy places they live in, where there's nothing to lift 'em up, and a great deal to pull 'em down; where they see nothing but wretchedness, and become old women before they've been children. (p. 93)

Jane's statement here is deliberately gendered, referring specifically to children who are forced to be 'old women', thus indicating both a cross-class and sororal sympathy with the poor. Jane also presents poverty as deriving from a 'wretched' and 'filthy' environment, which affects the individuals who live there. Harkness, therefore, represents the slums in the manner that Cameron and Dunleavy describe, focussing on 'environmental factors' that 'reproduc[e] class difference and identity' (p. 111). In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens represents the 'broken' houses of the slums as a direct result of individuals who have the 'courage' to enact criminal activity (p. 402). In comparison, Harkness's novel inverts this relationship to suggest the harsh environment itself causes poverty. Jane concludes that to help the poor, sisterhoods must 'fight [...] the upper classes' by educating themselves with socialist concepts and sympathetically trying to modify the environment of the poor (p. 82). This is evident in Harkness's sisterhood within the East London Dwelling Company, wherein Eleanor Marx, Harkness, and Webb, among others, provided affordable housing and support for the poor. Webb builds on these ideas in *The Abolition of the Poor Law* (1918), where she states that the poor law 'surround[ed] relief with deliberately unpleasant conditions' (p. 3) which resulted in a misplaced public 'resentment' of the individual pauper in connection with their 'degrading' environment' (p. 4).

This focus on the environment, as well as the role of the sisterly community and the figure of the New Woman in reshaping the slums, are connected by Harkness's training as a nurse. She trained as a nurse at Westminster Hospital in 1877, before entering the slums as a socialist and self-fashioned 'slum saviour' (Ross, 2007, p. 89). Contemporaries of Harkness, Mary Adelaide Nutting and Lavinia Dock (1916), argue in *A History of Nursing* that the 'harsh austerities of the Poor Law' and the rising position of the New Woman created a surge in nursing towards the end of the nineteenth century (p. 3). Nursing, in this context, became a conduit for social change; nurses viewed the unsanitary environments of the poor as the foundations for their physical and mental illness, rather than blaming the unwell individuals for the condition of their dwellings (p. 4). In her earlier novel *A City Girl* (1887), Harkness provides a note to her reader while introducing an East End nurse into the narrative. The note states that 'I trust my readers will not fail to recognize this sister as an

exceptional member of the noble band of hospital nurses; for which no one had a greater respect than myself' (p. 151). This quotation illustrates how the contexts of sisterhood and nursing are in dialogue with one another, and Harkness's respect for nurses indicates her engagement with the methods in which sisterhoods care for sickness among the poor. The notion that Harkness's reader should recognise the woman as a 'member of the noble band of hospital nurses' also suggests that her readership should recognise the vital part that nursing sisterhoods played in alleviating the physical and mental effects of poverty, thus presenting nursing as a vital part of philanthropy at the fin de siècle. The New Woman, nursing, the slums, socialism, and the Salvation Army are integral contexts that inform Harkness's spectacle of slum sisterhoods throughout *In Darkest London*.

The variety of social contexts that intersect in Harkness's novel has, for some critics, been indicative of her engagement with the naturalist and realist modes of novel writing (Miller, 2013; Sparks, 2018; Livesey, 2018). These critics consider the 1888 letter from Friedrich Engels to Harkness, in which he critiques *A City Girl* on account of its lack of realism. Engels defines realism as a mode of art that features 'besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances' (p. 114). Engels argues that *A City Girl* fails as a form of realism, noting that Harkness's 'working class figures are a passive mass, unable to help itself and not even showing (making) any attempt at striving to help itself' (p. 114). He concludes by asking Harkness 'how do I know whether you have not had very good reasons for contenting yourself, for once, with a picture of the passive side of working-class life, reserving the active side for another work?' (p. 116). *In Darkest London* may represent this 'work' Engels refers to, as Harkness emphasises the active role of the working classes in both religious and secular sisterhoods. The sisterhoods in the text feature working-class characters who, through the agency provided by either socialism or the Salvation Army, aim to change their social conditions. One of these is Jane Hardy, a factory labour mistress, and Harkness's narrator frequently notes that alongside her work Jane attends socialist meetings (p. 84; p. 89; p. 91; p. 94; p. 101; p. 114; p. 187; p. 199). In addition, the narrator notes that multiple women within the Salvation Army sisterhoods are from working-class backgrounds (p. 73). Harkness seems to therefore actively appeal to Engels's definition of realism, representing the agency of the working classes to change their conditions. In doing so, she also employs the naturalist mode. As Ruth Livesey (2018) notes, Harkness's literary mode illustrates naturalism's 'structural pessimism about the possibility of social transformation' that is slightly at odds with Engels's realism and Harkness's socialism; poverty and classes below the working class are documented and described as

unchangeable facts of the fin-de-siècle city (p. 116). As in Lehan's definition of naturalism, Harkness acts like a 'scientist, observing nature and social data' as she 'reject[s] absolute standards of morality and free will, [...] depicting nature and human experience as a deterministic and mechanistic process' (2006, p. 47). Harkness writes between realism and naturalism: she represents the working classes and slum sisterhoods as actively trying to change their social conditions while also representing poverty and pauperism as social facts.

Through naturalism, Harkness details different 'types' of pauperism in a way that is reductive in comparison to her depiction of slum sisterhoods. While Cameron and Dunleavy suggest that Harkness is wholly occupied with the effects the environment has on poverty, I highlight that Harkness does represent a wide range of individual paupers: an 'all-seeing' loafer (p. 12), a 'midget' identified satirically as Napoleon who is forced to exhibit himself for a livelihood (p. 15), rugged ex-sailors (p. 17), a prostitute described as a 'vampire dressed in a gaudy skirt' (p. 22), a woman selling babies (p. 47), and an 'unfortunate woman whose fate it had been to have too many children' (p. 61). In addition, communities of German, Algerian, South African, Italian, and Jewish paupers all feature in Harkness's wide-reaching representation of individuals. At the same time, these characters are left unnamed by Harkness. Even Napoleon is initially named 'midget' before being nicknamed Napoleon by other slum inhabitants (p. 15). For Sparks (2018), Harkness's vast representation of pauper archetypes results in the poor being constructed as a sort of 'absent character'; by presenting the poor as archetypes that lack identifiable proper nouns, Harkness draws the reader's attention to the slum environment as the primary social issue causing poverty as opposed to individuals (p. 45). At the same time, Harkness's use of archetypes reflects Mayhew's organisation of the chapters in *London Labour and London Poor* into "types" of pauper, which has titles ranging from 'Coffee-Stall Keepers' to 'Thieves' Women' and 'Bodily Afflicted Beggars'. In a note to the reader halfway through *In Darkest London*, Harkness states that

As some people – for instance, General Booth, Mr Barnett, and Captain Cooke – are mentioned by name in this book, readers may perhaps think that all of the characters represent living men and women. This is not the case. [...] the principal characters [...] are all types, not real men and women. (p. 72)

Harkness's imagery conforms to generalised 'types' of pauper seen in Mayhew's earlier text alongside an emphasis on the environment as the leading cause of poverty. While Harkness does successfully highlight the role that the slums play in creating poverty, the way in which she categorises the individual paupers as "types" makes them secondary to her nuanced and

complex representation of slum sisters. This section argues that these “types” function as spectacles through which same-sex, Sapphic friendships are mediated, and which ultimately serve to emphasise the communal experiences of slum sisterhoods who work in perilous areas of the East End.³⁹

Harkness’s pauper “types” appear in the tradition that Mikhail Bakhtin (1965) refers to as ‘bodily realism’ (p. 19). Her use of archetypal ‘absent characters’ (Sparks, 2018, p. 45) illustrates the multitude of effects poverty can have on the poor. As such, Harkness’s imagery does not simply emphasise the importance of the environment as Cameron and Dunleavy suggest, but her use of spectacle rather represents a complex relationship between the individual, the environment, and slum sisterhood. According to Bakhtin, bodily realism is a mode of literary representation akin to a carnival, in which social and political norms are subverted (p. x) and which features a ‘boundless ocean of bodily imagery’ (p. 319). In bodily realism, the body is not ‘a private, egotistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but [is] something universal, representing all the people [...] this is not the body and its physiology in the modern sense of these words, because it is not individualized’ (p. 19). For Bakhtin, then, the grotesque bodies in this form of realism represent exaggerated representations of groups of people rather than individuals. Bodily realism is visible throughout *In Darkest London*; the East End is represented as carnivalesque in Harkness’s narrative. Her initial description of Whitechapel at the beginning of the text is heavily focussed on the body, as ‘elbows’, ‘eye[s]’, ‘arm-in-arm,’ ‘neck’, and ‘hands’ are recognised through the narration in quick succession. In addition, the way that characters respond to the body of Ruth, one of the novel’s protagonists, acts as synecdoche for the same-sex desires and relationships occurring in both socialist and Salvationist groups. In “‘The problem of leisure/what to do for pleasure’: women and leisure time in *A City Girl* (1887) and *In Darkest London* (1889)”, Eliza Cubitt (2018) argues that moments of grotesque carnival produce pleasure in Harkness’s slum sister figures. Cubitt suggests that while slum philanthropy develops as ‘a profoundly liberating [...] feminist demand’ (p. 88), the ‘violence of the slums seems to thrill the slum sisters: the fear they feel affords them pleasure’ (p. 85). Ultimately, slum sisterhood functions as a form of masochism in Harkness’s novels. While slum sisterhoods like the East End London Dwelling Company positively affect and alleviate poverty, the sisters themselves gain pleasure from the ‘thrill’

³⁹ As I note later in this chapter, this sense of peril also introduces masochistic pleasure into the novel as the slum sisters face physical and verbal abuse from the poor.

of entering the slum space. Harkness's use of bodily realism illustrates this, mixing the bodies of the poor with the tone of carnival in which sexual and social norms are subverted. I suggest that throughout *In Darkest London* Harkness represents a dialogue that occurs between slum sisterhoods, Sapphic relationships, and masochistic pleasure through the mode of bodily realism. This section argues that Harkness's eroticised representation of same-sex sisterhoods and bodily presentations of the poor ultimately serve to mediate the transformative potential of socialist and Salvationist sisterly communities in the East End. *In Darkest London* attempts to bring the discourses of the Salvation Army and socialist groups together by representing the unifying, Sapphic dialogues that occur in sisterhoods via a spectacle of philanthropic community.

Harkness's Bodily Realism: Loafers and Slum Sisters

Harkness displaces the poor in focussing on the spectacle of sororal, philanthropic sisterhoods; she presents the poor as objects which represent the philanthropic challenges posed to slum sisters as they travel through the slums and forge Sapphic relationships. As I have noted, paupers appear as 'absent character[s]' (Sparks, 2018, p. 45) through the lens of 'bodily realism' (Bakhtin, 1965, p. 19). Similarly to how Dickens's spectacle of poverty operates to affirm his beliefs in a dichotomy between the deserving and undeserving poor, Harkness utilises imagery of the poor and their bodies as conduits to represent the experiences and pleasures of sisterly philanthropy. As Cameron and Dunleavy argue, Harkness's focus on sisterhoods rather than poverty 'enables the spectator to maintain a boundary between himself/herself and the object of suffering', and *In Darkest London* 'explicitly encodes this sympathetic identification as mediated by and for the middle-class subject' (2015, pp. 126 - 127). Harkness's bodily realism presents poor bodies as grotesque, filtering the spectacle of the poor through the experience of slum sisters who garnered pleasure from the masochistic elements of travelling through the slums.

In the first chapter of *In Darkest London*, Harkness's representation of 'Whitechapel Road' (p. 13) illustrates the grotesque bodily realism she employs to represent the poor. The narrator describes the road as

the most cosmopolitan place in London; and on a Saturday night its interest reaches a climax. There one sees all nationalities. A grinning Hottentot elbows his way through a crowd of long-eyed Jewesses. An Algerian merchant walks arm-in-arm with a native of Calcutta. A little Italian plays pitch-and-toss with a small Russian. A Polish Jew enjoys a sauer-kraut with a German Gentile. And among the foreigners lounges the East-End loafer, monarch of all he surveys, lord of the premises. It is

amusing to see his British air of superiority. His hands are deep down in the pockets of his fustian trousers, round his neck is a bit of coloured rag or flannel, on his head is a tattered cap. He is looked upon as scum by his own nation, but he feels himself to be an Englishman, and able to kick the foreigner back to "his own dear native land" if only Government would believe in "England for the English," and give all foreigners "notice". (pp. 12 - 13)⁴⁰

This description of the East End is excessively bodily. 'Elbows', 'eye[s]', 'arm-in-arm,' 'neck', and 'hands' all present the End-East poor in relation to the body, while the words 'grinning', 'plays' and 'amusing' all create a semantic field of pleasure.⁴¹ Harkness keenly represents the East End through bodily imagery, reflecting a sense of pleasure during slum work that was felt within sororal philanthropic communities. Her satirical depiction of the loafer also maintains her focus on representing the perspective of philanthropic sisterhoods, as well as the danger in discerning where socialist/Salvationist groups should direct their charity. Harkness's narrator concludes that the English loafer is ultimately a 'sponge' on welfare culture 'until death puts an end to [his] sponging' (p. 13). This sentiment is reflected in her 1889 article 'The Loafer: What We Shall Do With Him', where she states that loafers 'act as parasites, they attach themselves to the working-man' and are a dangerous 'species' of pauper who misguide the philanthropic efforts of socialists and Salvationists (p. 180). Harkness concludes that the loafer is a 'class which is no class, [composed of] incapables and semi-criminals who drag down the working man, confuse the minds of the philanthropists, and escape police supervision' (p. 180). *In Darkest London* therefore presents the East End through a 'boundless ocean of bodily imagery' (Bakhtin, p. 319) while accentuating the danger posed by the loafer. In addition, Harkness adopts a satirical tone by juxtaposing the depiction of the loafer as 'scum' with hyperbolic metaphorical descriptions such as 'monarch of all he surveys' and 'lord of the premises'. Humour and pleasure, interlocked with the depiction of the loafer as a danger to philanthropy, prefigures the masochistic impulse of the slum sisters visible in the later sections of the novel. The unnamed loafer appears as a form of 'absent character' (Sparks, 2018, p. 45), a "type" of pauper characterised by the grotesque danger they pose to the slum sister. Reflecting Dickens's distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor, Harkness's characterisation of the loafer is a direct indication of the dangers posed to slum

⁴⁰ For more on immigration and the multicultural nature of slum space in the 1890s, see section '2.2 - Cockney-Yiddish spaces and the Cockney Jew in Israel Zangwill's *The Children of the Ghetto* (1892)'.

⁴¹ Similarly, Braddon queers and sexualises the slums throughout the opening chapter to *Mary*.

philanthropists in discerning the poor “authentically” in need of charity.⁴² The loafer, alongside other homogenised, unnamed pauper characters that appear throughout the novel, represents the difficulty of asserting which members of poor communities are not ‘sponge[s]’ or ‘parasites’. Harkness’s use of dehumanising metaphors throughout her article, as well as the large paragraphs used to describe a loafer who is never named, emphasises that the poor in her novel ‘are all types, not real men and women’ (p. 72) meant to represent the vast diversity of paupers that the slum philanthropist has to consider and evaluate. The representation of the poor in Harkness’s novel ultimately serves the positive representation of sororal slum philanthropy seen throughout, while also emphasising the experience of sisterhoods who encountered such dangers.

Harkness’s characterisation of Ruth is similarly filtered through bodily realism, yet she is not constructed as an ‘absent character’. Ruth embodies the potential for socialist and Salvationist sisterhoods to deconstruct boundaries and enact social reform. She inherits a ‘small cocoa-nut chip factory’ from her deceased father, and is placed under the guardianship of the factory’s predatory foreman Mr Pember (p. 23). Ruth becomes engaged in both the Salvation Army and socialism through her connections with Captain Lobe and the factory’s labour-mistress Jane Hardy respectively; as such, she acts as synecdoche for Harkness’s belief that socialists and Salvationists ‘must work [...] together’ (1888, p. 2). The description of Ruth’s physicality that appears throughout the novel, especially through the gaze of onlookers, erotically charges her characterisation as a symbol for Sapphic sisterhood. Ruth’s initial description is narrated from Captain Lobe’s perspective. The narrator states that Ruth’s ‘clear white forehead looked like an ivory tablet, upon which Time had written no false word’, and that her ‘voice was soft and sweet, an excellent thing in women [while] her golden hair seemed to set her face in a halo holiness’ (p. 29). The narrator concludes that Lobe ‘thought of all of this; for the Army has its saints [,] martyrs, and its evangelists’ (p. 29). The description of Ruth’s ‘clear’ forehead as an ‘ivory tablet’ pre-empts how Salvationist *and* socialist tendencies are encoded onto Ruth’s identity throughout the novel. The description of her ‘golden hair’ followed by the metaphor of ‘halo holiness’ and Lobe’s suggestion that she would fit within the Army’s ‘saints [and] martyrs’ exemplifies how her role as a Salvationist is connected to her body. As Elizabeth G. Glitter (1984) argues, the descriptor of ‘golden hair’ carries erotic connotations of ‘female sexual

⁴² This dichotomisation between the deserving and undeserving poor is part of a wider social trend, as discussed in 1.1.

power' as well as wealth in fin-de-siècle literature (p. 17). As Galia Ofek (2009) expands, golden and yellow hair is also connected with 'angelic women' capable of redeeming 'stray men' (p. 176), characterising women who subvert the socio-political, cultural, and semiotic systems which oppress [...] them' (p. 191).⁴³ Golden hair, therefore, carries connotations of change and reform in the nineteenth century; Ruth is defined by her hair throughout the novel, and it becomes an important bodily spectacle in Harkness's portrayal of her as a figure that unifies both socialism and religious philanthropy.

When travelling the slums with the Salvation Army, a slum dweller declares to Ruth 'Bless your golden hair [...] If I want saving I'll come to you, miss' (p. 29). The use of the verb 'saving' further links the Salvation Army with Ruth's 'golden hair' and body, as well as with concepts of beauty and attraction. This motif is repeated when the narrator assumes Jane's point of view during her initial meeting with Ruth, noting that '[Ruth] had taken off her hat, so the labour-mistress could see the smooth, white forehead that lay below her golden hair, and the clear skin beneath which the red blood was coming and going' (p. 83). Again, this description focuses on Ruth's body. The representation of Ruth's 'red blood [...] coming and going' is heavily erotic. The colour 'red' connotes passion and sensuality, while the use of the verbs 'coming' and 'going' in quick succession emphasises Jane's rapid response to Ruth's body. Directly after this description, Jane tells Ruth of the poor conditions that women experience in the workplace (p. 83), their lack of equality with male workers (p. 85), and the need for labour unions (p. 86). Her passion for Ruth is therefore conflated with her engagement in socialist circles. Representing the potential for a combined Salvationist and socialist philanthropy, Ruth's body is presented in an erotically charged manner. In addition, by representing Jane's attraction to Ruth alongside her socialist discourse, Harkness depicts a Sapphic dialogue in which women discuss, debate, and protest against social inequalities 'together' (Vanita, 1996, p. 260). While the loafer's bodily representation emphasises the dangers and pleasures experienced by Salvationist and socialist sisterhoods,

⁴³ Ofek specifically cites the titular heroine of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) as a key example of a golden haired women who usurps patriarchal and class-based structures; she particularly emphasises that Lady Audley's use of hair dye and artificial hair marks a somewhat transformative moment, as her change in hair stylings is soon followed by her progression in wealth and social status (p. 38). While I do not discuss hair specifically, I interrogate the oppressive, bodily surveillance experienced by another of Braddon's eponymous protagonists in '3.2 - Possessing the Pauper's Body: Philanthropic Surveillance in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Mary* (1916)'. I make some reference to *Lady Audley's Secret* in my engagement with Braddon's literary representation of male gazes and their oppressive affect on poor, female bodies.

Ruth's body represents the exciting and erotic potential for a combined sororal project striving for class and gender equality.

In Darkest London presents sisterhood and its potential for progress as a focal spectacle. The powerful attractiveness of the female philanthropist is also visible in Harkness's correspondence, particularly in an undated letter to the philanthropist Laura Lafargue.⁴⁴ Harkness writes

Dear Madame Lafargue

Thank you very much indeed for all your goodness to me.

If I forget it, which is not likely, I shall never forget your mass of golden hair shimmering in the lamp-light. It reminded me of the glorious autumn tints I saw last year in the Tyrol; tints so magnificent that I felt it worth while to be alive just to feast my eyes on them.

You have heard all this so often you are tired of it, are not you?

Being only a woman, I may tell you that you have photographed yourself in my memory as one of those things pleasant to think of when very tired, very disgusted with myself, + other people.

I have put you in my gallery of pictures from real life, as[?] scenery; my private view.

I should have liked to see you oftener; but people who spoil[?] their rose-trees for others are so un-common they provoke unselfishness even in the most selfish individuals, such as

Yours affectionately

M.E. Harkness (n.d)

'Disgust' and pleasure become intertwined in Harkness's use of language, much like her description of the loafer. In addition, Harkness's representation of Lafargue's 'mass of golden hair shimmering in the lamp-light' again alludes to the erotic sexual power attributed to golden hair (Glitter, 1984, p. 17) that is visible in her depiction of Ruth. Her use of the verb 'feast' implies a desire to consume Laura. Furthermore, Harkness's use of the 'rose-tree' metaphor utilises the floral imagery common in Sapphic and lesbian writing; the rose specifically acts as vulval imagery and suggests a passionate desire (Vanita, 1996, p. 236). Jane's focus on Ruth's 'red' blood also recalls the colour imagery associated with the rose, illustrating further Sapphic connections between Harkness's letter and her representation of

⁴⁴ Flore Janssen and Lisa C. Robertson (2019) suggest that the letter may date from 1885, as it appears to reference a trip Harkness and Webb took to Tyrol in the previous year.

Sister of Eleanor Marx, Laura Lafargue engaged in philanthropic work much like Webb, Marx, and Harkness. Information on Lafargue's life and work is relatively scarce. Chapter 4 of Leslie Derfier's (1991) *Paul Lafargue and the Founding of French Marxism, 1842-1882* details some of Lafargue's philanthropic work in the slums of England and France, as well as her role in collecting, organising, and publishing Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels's writings in France and Spain.

Ruth. Harkness's vague reference to 'things pleasant to think of when very tired' also reflects the definition of love that appears in her correspondence with Webb, where she states that she 'cannot describe it, but friends must be more to one another than I have written'. In both instances, she cannot 'write' the true nature of her desires. Harkness's reference to her position as 'only a woman' further indicates unexpressed and unfulfilled Sapphic dialogues. Harkness's use of the phrase 'gallery of pictures from real life' is important to the context of *In Darkest London* when considering Engels's suggestion that Harkness's novel should focus on a 'truthful reproduction' of pauper life (1888, p. 114). Through the description of her 'golden hair', Ruth reflects Lafargue and represents Harkness's 'private view' of the sororal philanthropist. This 'private view' is erotic, Sapphic, and burgeoning with the potential to break down barriers between Salvationists and socialists, as well as class and gender-based divisions between people.

The Transformative Potential of Philanthropic Sisterhoods

In Darkest London illustrates the tension felt by Harkness in her desire to maintain her socialist beliefs while also adopting practices from the religious philanthropy of the Salvation Army. In her 1890 article 'In Praise of General Booth', Harkness notes

Eighteen months ago [...] My Socialistic dream was vanishing; for I had discovered to my bitter disappointment that the Socialist leaders were the strongest Individualists of my acquaintance, and that, although six of them could do the necessary work if united, no six could work together for more than six months without a quarrel. They talked Socialism, but practiced Individualism; and all the time the slummers were starving. (p. 1)

The disjunction between the 'talk' of socialism and the lack of practice among Harkness's circle emphasises her disenchantment with her 'socialistic dream'. Oscar Wilde's 1891 essay 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism', published one year after Harkness's article, suggests that the future of socialism 'itself will be of value simply because it will lead to Individualism' (p. 5). While Wilde suggests that his form of Individualism will be 'far freer, far finer' and in 'perfect harmony [with] Socialism', his definition of the group still prioritises 'Thought' over philanthropic practice (p. 98) in the manner Harkness critiques. Her criticism that socialism leaves slum inhabitants to 'starv[e]' is coupled with her praise of General Booth's efforts to alleviate poverty through the Salvation Army. She states:

I will give my reasons for believing that General Booth's scheme will do more than anything else at present towards driving poverty out of England, and advancing the day when Love will become a Religion. (p. 2)

In a reversal of her relationship with socialism, Harkness praises the philanthropic practice of the Salvation Army while later noting that ‘it makes [her] physically ill even to look at a Bible’ (1891, p. 3). Her distaste for religious discourse echoes Eleanor Marx’s suggestion that religion constrains women through the concept of ‘sin’ (1886, p. 210). In *In Darkest London*, Harkness’s narrator critiques the outdated gender dynamics present within the Salvation Army by constructing their dress as a spectacle of repression. Describing the uniform of Salvation Army women, the narrator notes that ‘a salvation poke bonnet takes away from Satan his most subtle temptations for the female sex – shopping, and the looking-glass’ (p. 19). It is later noted that ‘slum saviours have not much time to think about their personal appearance, and Salvation uniform gives the “snub direct” to all that is becoming in female dress, while it encourages the stronger sex to strut about like so many small military peacocks’ (p. 173). Uniform is presented in gendered and repressive terms by Harkness’s narrator. The simile ‘like so many small military peacocks’ also suggests that the Salvation Army uniform creates a power imbalance between men and women, as the male members are given a military-esque power within the East End while female desires are ‘snub[ed]’. As Pamela Walker (2001) suggests, the ‘black straw bonnet trimmed in black ribbon’ worn by these women (p. 116) acted as a ‘visual reminder of the self-control and self-denial required of all Salvationists, and it linked Salvationists together, making all their actions part of public witness’ (p. 117). This description reflects Harkness’s negative presentation of the Army uniform as a self-suppressive extension of religious discourses: women reject their desires while male members of the Army can ‘strut’ around the East End.

Contemporaries of Harkness note the negative effects that Salvation dress has on women. In her non-fiction text ‘Facts about the Salvation Army’, Eleanora Stackhouse (1889) describes the ‘hideous disfiguring bonnets’ worn by Salvation women (p. 16). She notes that while the men’s uniform ‘is so attractive as [the] distinctive dress of an order’, the women ‘lose’ the elements of their personality that are ‘distinct, [and become] peculiar’ through the ritual of wearing of a black bonnet created ‘in the tailor’s image of some other woman’ (p. 17). Despite these criticisms of the Salvation women’s uniform, Walker notes that the dress conveyed ‘an authoritative professionalism’ and provided many women with a sense of agency, especially among the working-class members of the Army (p. 117). Harkness’s description omits the authoritative nature of the dress worn by Salvation Army women, arguing that the uniform itself is suppressive of female desires and social power; Harkness suggests that the Salvation Army offers empowerment to women only through the philanthropic practices and shared sympathies for the poor within slum sisterhoods. The

narrator states that ‘never since the world began has there been seen such an attempt as these girls are making at present [...] They go to the slummers with a Bible in the one hand, with the other free to nurse the sick and help the helpless’ (p. 73), before concluding that ‘these girls will carry on their crusade against poverty until the slummers begin to see more clearly, for even in these dark corners of the earth a light is breaking at present’ (p. 74). The language used here reflects Devereux’s description of the socialist dream as the achievement of ‘women stand[ing] shoulder to shoulder with her sister in public and in private life’ (1896, p. 91). Through sisterhood, the ‘crusade’ of these women will work towards remedying poverty. The socialist understanding of sisterhoods as the gateway to dismantling class hierarchies is therefore reflected in Harkness’s presentation of philanthropic practices amongst religious slum sisters, extending this understanding of the power of same-sex communities to the Salvation Army. The narrator’s indication that the women have one hand ‘free to nurse the sick and help the helpless’ also connects these sisterhoods to nursing as a role motivated by the desire for social change in the same way described by Nutting and Dock (1916, p. 3). While the women must identify with suppressive discourses, indicated by the hand taken up by the ‘bible’ and Harkness’s description of their dress, they have one hand ‘free’ to improve slum conditions. For Harkness, philanthropic practice amongst religious sisterhoods is socially transformative despite the use of a religious discourse that makes her ‘physically ill’.

In addition to interrogating the archaic rituals of the Salvation Army, Harkness critiques the ineffective nature of socialism throughout *In Darkest London*. As noted, by 1890 Harkness felt that her ‘Socialistic dream was vanishing’ due to the individualism developing amongst socialist groups. R. A. Biderman (2003) argues that Harkness ‘became frustrated with those well-meaning but ineffective middle-class reformists who spoke fine words but saw poverty only in the abstract’, noting an emphasis in her work on ‘those dedicated slum workers (often young women) who gave their lives to the distressed, diseased and disabled festering in the dankest hovels of London’s cancerous underclass’ (p. 8). In *In Darkest London*, this frustration with the individualism and abstract perceptions of poverty among socialist groups is represented by Harkness through the dialogue of an unnamed socialist woman. The woman states that socialist groups

cannot work together. They split up into small parties, and spend their time in quarrelling. They have a paper called *Justice* [...] the same things are repeated in it again and again. Before it leaves the press every one knows exactly what will be said

and what will be avoided in it. It is just the same with the lectures. Sunday after Sunday the same things are said to the same people (p. 114)

The use of the phrase ‘again and again’ and the indication that the ‘same things are said to the same people’ suggest these socialists fail to enact social change and progress, thus deviating from Eleanor Marx and Devereux’s understanding of the ‘socialistic dream’. Following the publication of ‘Salvationists and Socialists’, the editor of *Justice* published a note suggesting that Harkness’s article ignored the Salvation Army’s ‘aggravat[ion of the] evils it aims at remedying’ (1888, p. 2). Harkness’s response in the following issue argues that the Salvation Army ‘carried on in the socialist spirit’ and notes that ‘men and women cannot be left to starve while Socialists are waiting for a Social Revolution, or laying siege to the ballot box’ (1888, p. 2). Harkness’s criticisms of the inability of socialist groups to accept other philanthropic communities, as well as their focus on abstract arguments and politics over action, is reflected in the unnamed women’s declaration that *Justice* is a perpetual repetition of itself. The phrase ‘Sunday after Sunday’ further contributes to Harkness’s critique of socialism. While Britain became ‘less Sabbatarian’ toward the end of the nineteenth century, Sunday still carried connotations of Sabbath and religious ritual (Miller, 2008, p. 169). Playing on these connotations, Harkness’s use of the phrase ‘Sunday after Sunday’ critiques socialism for ritualistically repeating the same discourses and debates rather than physically enacting philanthropic work. By conflating socialist groups with Sabbath practice, Harkness also suggests that socialist groups have shifted into discourse rituals comparable to religious practices that make her feel ‘physically ill’ (1891, p. 3).

Despite criticising this shift in the functioning of socialist groups, the unnamed woman concludes that ‘Socialism is in the air; it is touching everyone, and tingeing everything’ (p. 117). *In Darkest London* represents the wide-reaching effect of socialism by illustrating the actions taken by sisterhoods to assist the poor, specifically poor women, through the use of spectacle. Harkness’s narrator states that ‘day by day girls starve in the London streets, and live lives worse than death, while money is sent to teach the heathen not to murder their innocents’ (p. 82). Just after this, Jane states that a ‘leetle pressure of the finger and thumb on the windpipes of the girl babies would be so good for ‘em [...] and so bad for the capitalist’ (p. 95). Sympathy for poor women lies at the heart of the socialism Harkness advocates, correlating with Eleanor Marx’s description of the goal of socialism to ‘free’ women from the ‘tyranny’ of male capitalists. The phrase ‘so bad for the capitalist’ illustrates the lack of value given to working-class women as individuals; they are valued only as workers, and according to Jane applying a ‘leetle pressure of the finger and thumb’

to girls at birth would be better than subjecting them to an oppressive capitalist system. Through Jane's voice, she illustrates the thoughts and criticisms of her fellow socialists as well as working-class women themselves. Beatrice and Stanley Webb's *Problems of Modern Industry* (1898) identifies the culture surrounding working-class women's work as one of 'inferiority', noting that women experience lower wages and less opportunity; they also have a smaller variety of roles available to them and less access to unions (p. 77). Likewise, working-class poet "Marie" reflects the role of death as an escape from oppressive labour in her poem 'It is Not for Long' (1849), where she states that 'rude labour doth await, / and I must up and do; / ... Or Death will ope his iron gate' (p. 187).⁴⁵ The only solution for this, according to Harkness's narrator, is philanthropic action amongst socialist sisterhoods. Her narrator suggests that socialist slum sisters 'are the pioneers of their sex in questions connected with female labour' who are 'eager to work on equal terms with men' and are 'defiant of all special legislation for women' (p. 198). In addition to this, throughout the novel the unnamed woman notes that male socialists favour 'discourse' over 'action' in a way that is ineffective in changing the social conditions of the slums (p. 55; p. 113; p. 114; p. 115; p. 116; p. 187). The gendered nature of these statements indirectly presents sisterhoods as communities of 'action', a suggestion that is reflected in Harkness's, Webb's and Eleanor Marx's active work within slum communities. In 'Women as Civil Servants' (1881), Harkness argues that to achieve equality with men in the 'sphere of action' women must have a 'bond of mutual helpfulness, binding together all women irrespective of class to meet the obstacles incident to changing social conditions of life' (p. 381). As she emphasises, only by crossing class barriers and assisting their 'struggling sisters' can women 'command the same market price as that of the other sex' (p. 875). Harkness illustrates throughout *In Darkest London* that through the action of socialist sisterhoods, class and gender inequalities can be reformed.

Deconstructing Boundaries Through Spectacle: Salvationists and Socialists

The perceived dichotomy of religious and socialist philanthropies is deconstructed by Harkness through her representation of slum sisterhoods. Despite William Booth's suggestion that Salvation Army members ought not to 'clamour for [the] Great Schemes' of

⁴⁵ The true identity of "Marie" is unknown, although Florence S. Boos (2008) notes that an issue of *The People's Journal* described her 'as a factory dye-worker in Chorley' (p. 185). "Marie" published 'thirty poems and an essay between 1846 and 1852' (Boos, 2008, p. 185), and her poetry offers a personal insight into the experiences of working-class women in the factory space during the mid-nineteenth century. Boos's *Working-Class Women Poets in Victorian Britain: An Anthology* offers further insight on "Marie" as well as her contemporaries.

socialism (1890, p. 297) and Eleanor Marx's argument that religion maintains the patriarchal and economic discourse that socialism aims to reduce (1886, p. 210), the late 1890s eventually saw a deconstruction of this binary opposition. Gertrude Himmelfarb (1991) notes multiple examples where the lines between religious and socialist philanthropy blend towards the fin de siècle, despite previous conceptualisations of these two groups as fundamentally different (p. 85). She cites William Morris's 1885 pledge of devotion to the 'religion of socialism' and Keir Hardie's 1895 description of socialism as 'the embodiment of Christianity in our industrial system' in exemplifying this blend of religious and socialist philanthropy (p. 86). Christian or religious socialism aimed to 'infuse society with the social and moral ideals they associated with Christianity' while also "socializ[ing]" the churches, making them more responsive to social problems and more sympathetic to socialism itself' (p. 86).

Writing before the religious socialism movement, Harkness anticipates this combination of religion and socialism in both 'Salvationists and Socialists' and *In Darkest London*. Describing a visit to a Salvation Army meeting, the unnamed socialist woman in *In Darkest London* notes that 'man after man prayed that God would point out why I did not join the Salvation Army' (p. 56). The woman describes that the Salvationists consider her as 'doing the same work as themselves, only under another name' before asking 'would the almighty say what prevented me from joining the Salvation Army?' (p. 56). The declarative statement that socialists and Salvationists perform the 'same work as themselves, only under a different name' reflects Harkness's argument in 'Salvationists and Socialists' that the 'two organisations ought to work more together than they do at present [as] they have many points of common interest' (1888, p. 2). As in 'Salvationists and Socialists', the unnamed socialist women's comments derive from a direct experience or interaction with the Salvation Army. Harkness's article is based on a tour given by a Salvation Army officer of one of their 'feeding place[s]' (p. 2); the unnamed socialist woman's depiction of her visit to the Salvation Army's base occurs during a similar tour led by Captain Lobe. The parallels between these two texts further highlight that the boundaries established between the philanthropic activity of the Salvationists and the socialists are arbitrarily construed.

In representing the boundary in this way, Harkness again privileges social action over social discourse. In both *In Darkest London* and 'Salvationists and Socialists', action holds more value than the differences between religious or socialist discourse. The unnamed socialist woman suggests that the Salvationists have a 'terrible doctrine' that 'believe[s] in immortality', yet she continues to visit and assist slum dwellers alongside Captain Lobe (p.

57). Likewise, Harkness critiques the Salvation Army for being ‘so much occupied with endeavours to save sinners from the burning pit that they have little or no time to study the economic questions that occupy the minds of Socialists’ (1888, p. 2) while assisting the Salvationists at ‘eating-house[s]’ and ‘doss house[s]’ (1888, p. 2). Her work represents the potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between Salvationists and socialists; this partnership is reflected in models of slum sisterhood, which involve women working ‘together’ (Rappoport, 2012, p. 136), standing ‘shoulder to shoulder’ (Devereux, 1896, p. 61) enacting social change based on their ‘kindred feelings’ of sympathy (Harkness, 1875, n.p) for the poor. Her representation of slum sisterhoods as a spectacle of community, same-sex dialogues, and reformist action parallels her belief in social action over discourse. While the socialists she critiques merely ‘quarrel’ and ‘repeat’ the same discourses surrounding social reform, Harkness utilises the naturalist form to represent the active agency and communal spirit of slum sisterhoods throughout her use of spectacle. The images that Harkness presents in the novel acknowledge yet depart from the shortcomings of both the Salvation Army and socialist groups; Sapphic sisterhood becomes a unifying communal experience that transcends the differences between the philanthropic groups and offers the potential for social change. This is evident in Harkness’s direct indication that both groups ultimately enact the ‘same work [...] under a different name’ (p. 56).

The spectacle of sisterly community present throughout *In Darkest London* works to disassemble the perceived differences between socialism and the Salvation Army. In presenting the potential for a partnership between the two groups, Harkness utilises what Jacques Derrida (1972) later defines as ‘deconstruction’ (p. 41). For Derrida, deconstruction involves the dismantling of binary oppositions to remove all aspects of hierarchy from those two terms (p. 41). In Harkness’s case, she attempts to remove the bias of her socialist readers in *Justice* and *In Darkest London* by recognising the close relationship between the philanthropic actions of the Salvation Army and socialist groups. This, as Derrida notes, eventually results in the ‘irruptive emergence of a new “concept”, a concept that can no longer be, and never could be, included in the previous regime’ (p. 42). As a pair of texts, ‘Salvationists and Socialists’ and *In Darkest London* create a new concept of shared philanthropic action that develops later in the century in the form of religious socialism. Additionally, the structure of Harkness’s novel itself represents the creation of an emergent new concept. Through Harkness’s combined spectacle of socialist and Salvation Army sororal groups, *In Darkest London* deconstructs the dichotomisation of these organisations in a way that recognises the potential for new regimes of philanthropy to develop.

Sapphism, Masochism, and The Woman Question

Harkness's nuanced deconstruction of the Salvation/socialist binary enables her to emphasise the Sapphic connections made by women across socialist and religious philanthropic groups. As noted, Vanita defines the Sapphic mode as a 'passionate dialogue between women as a paradigm for lyric intensity and sublimity' which involves homoerotic 'ideas of a community, of learning, teaching, writing and study as activities occurring among women' (p. 2). Harkness's characterisation of Ruth represents an emergent new 'concept' which blends socialist and religious sisterhoods, as well as the Sapphic dialogues that occur between these two groups. As Lynne Hapgood (2018) argues, Harkness's 'task in writing novels about contemporary social conditions necessarily required her to employ the shared language and conventions of the present' and also 'to listen and hear the yet as unarticulated but evolving meanings of the future' (p. 131). Ruth epitomises this project to represent new forms of sisterhood and philanthropy. Throughout the novel, Ruth is constantly shifting between a desire to join the Salvation Army and an impulse to act on the thoughts of her socialist companion Jane Hardy. Ruth states that her reason for joining the Salvation Army sisterhood is to escape the romantic pursuits of factory owner Mr Pember. Ruth describes the feelings of Mr Pember's female factory workers, noting that their employment under him is like 'watch[ing] little yellow ducks given to serpents, and I have seen the poor things shaking with fear, but they couldn't go away. I don't know how it is, but I feel like that' (p. 75). The phallic simile of the 'serpent' recalls Eleanor Marx's description of the simultaneous threat of patriarchal and capitalist power, further evident in Pember's role as a factory foreman and Ruth's depiction of him as a predator of both the working-class women in his factory as well as herself. This directly follows Ruth's discussion with a slum sister who joins the Salvation Army to escape from a convent, in which she is kept against her will by a tyrannical priest and is unable to 'even look out of a window' (p. 46). The nunnery is presented oppressively in much the same way Eleanor Marx considers it in 'The Woman Question From a Socialist Point of View', yet Harkness does not argue the same for religion as a whole. As a group, the 'slum lassies' hold the agency to bring an alcoholic man 'to his knees' (p. 43), 'nurse the sick and help the helpless' (p. 73), and act as a 'civilising force' (p. 73). Harkness concludes that as a community, Salvation sisterhoods 'penetrate into cellars where no clergyman or priest has ventured' (p. 73). Her spectacle of sisterhood illustrates a function of sororal relations that Rich argues is vital to the lesbian continuum: lesbian existence 'comprises both the breaking of a taboo and the rejection of a compulsory way of life' (1980, p. 649). Her use of the verb 'penetrate' to describe the charitable work of

these women re-appropriates the phallic nature of the ‘serpent’ simile attributed to Mr Pember, shifting the dynamics of power suggested by his predatory nature. This statement also negates ‘clergyman[en]’ and ‘priest[s]’, which as Dorice Williams Elliott (2002) and Andrea Geddes Poole (2014) note were typically male philanthropic roles that were replaced by slum sisterhoods at the fin de siècle (p. 5; p. 3). Ruth’s and the Salvation sisters’ experiences illustrate that sisterhoods provide women with the opportunity to break from the ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Rich, 1980, p. 631) prescribed by Mr Pember and the tyrannical priest. The shared dialogue and philanthropic actions of these sisterhoods are therefore Sapphic, providing women with an escape from masculine systems and allowing them to develop their philanthropic projects ‘together’ (Vanita, 1996, p. 2).

Harkness’s spectacle conflates Salvation sisterhoods with Sapphic and masochistic pleasure. For Vanita, the erotic nature of Sapphic dialogues derives from the ‘danger and pain of erotic love in a women’s community’ (p. 52), especially when the community is acting as an ‘escape’ from androcentric systems wherein the sisterhood feels constantly under threat from the ‘inevitability of parting’ from sororal unions (p. 253). ‘Danger’ and the ‘erotic’ become intertwined in Sapphic dialogues and communities. Cubitt describes a moment in *In Darkest London* in which one of the ‘neighbours of the “slum sisters”’ admit that they tried to burn down the women’s shutters one night in retaliation against disparaging the street in the *War Cry*’ (2018, p. 85). Cubitt argues that ‘the slum sisters seem enlivened rather than terrified [...] the violence of the slums seems to thrill the slum sisters: the fear they feel affords them pleasure’ (p. 85). This is evident within the text when the pauper neighbour states that ‘you *can*’t scare those girls; they’ve got *that* spirit, they ain’t afraid of nothing. It’s my belief they wouldn’t mind being killed. It’s not good trying to scare em’, they just enjoys it’ (p. 180). The plural reference to the sisters as ‘girls’, as well as the indication that they have a shared ‘spirit’ and ‘enjoy’ evading the dangers of the slums, casts their experiences of slumming within the context of pleasure. The Salvation Army sections of *In Darkest London* operate as what Maureen Morgan (2007) calls a ‘Victorian martyrdom narrative’, blending the violence these women experience in the slums with a religious ecstasy in which faith is used against ‘cruelty’ (p. 133). Alongside the pleasure of martyrdom, the communal and sororal experience of these women is ultimately Sapphic: Yopie Prins (1999) argues that the Victorian understanding of the Sapphic heavily featured masochistic experiences and representations, particularly in the wake of Algernon Charles Swinburne’s ‘poetics of passion’ which mixed experiences of flogging and pleasure with an

imitation of the lyrical style of the Greek poet Sappho (p. 155). The slum sisters' communal 'enjoy[ment]' of martyrdom alludes to this aspect of the Sapphic mode.

The conflation of pleasure and pain is further evidenced in the chapters 'Slumdom' and 'Slumdom (continued)'. During Ruth's tour through the slums, the Salvation sisters describe being attacked (p. 40) and verbally abused (p. 41) before interrupting these narratives of violence to communally consume 'dinner' (p. 41). This structure is paralleled again in 'Slumdom (continued)', in which the women share their own personal 'histor[ies]' while 'having tea' just before travelling to Covent Garden Market where they are met with further abuse (p. 49). Violence and philanthropy are combined with leisure in Harkness's use of structure.⁴⁶ As Cubitt goes on to argue, leisure becomes 'a profoundly liberating [...] feminist demand' both in Harkness's texts and throughout the 1890s; leisure activities allow women to escape into communities of their own and to gain a shared experience separate from androcentric systems (p. 88). The same-sex communal experience of pleasure and leisure, especially in relation to masochism, is at the heart of Harkness's spectacle of Salvation sisterhoods. Her suggestion that 'love' between individuals results from 'their sympathy + kindred feeling' is evident here. The masochistic impulse appears alongside a shared sympathy for the poor in the slum sisters' attempts to 'save' them from poverty (p. 47). In travelling with the Salvation sisters, Ruth experiences and perceives the shared sympathies, masochist impulses, and pleasures of the Salvation Army sisterhood.

Ruth's experience with Sapphic dialogues also continues throughout her interactions with socialist Jane Hardy. When Jane is introduced in the novel, it is immediately in the role of Ruth's protector. Directly after Ruth 'slams the door of Mr. Pember's sanctum' as a response to his marriage proposal, she 'walk[s] straight into the arms of the labour-mistress' (p. 93). The narrator goes on to note that

Her head fell on the shoulder of the strong-minded spinster, who folded one arm round the girl's waist, while she extended the other towards Mr. Pember's door, and said, shaking her fist, "The capitalist!" [...] Then she led the girl into her little office, and threw open the window. She had despised the would-be slum saviour at first, but a revulsion of feeling had begun to set while she watched Ruth sitting on the sofa in Mr. Pember's room; and when that shriek made the factotum drop his newspaper, she swore inwardly that she would protect [Ruth]. (p. 94)

Jane is immediately presented as a protective socialist force. Ruth's bodily connection with Jane's 'head' and 'arms' connotes a protective instinct that immediately juxtaposes Mr

⁴⁶ I interrogate the connection between philanthropy and leisure in '3.1 - Art, Philanthropy, and the Surveillance of Pauper Life in Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown* (1884)'.

Pember's serpent-like approach to courting Ruth. Jane's exclamation of 'The capitalist!', when considered alongside her attempts to protect Ruth from Mr Pember's pressure to marry him, appears to reflect Eleanor Marx's argument that the socialist should attempt to dismantle the powerful position of both the 'capitalist' and of 'men' (1886, p. 209).⁴⁷ Jane's position as a self-proclaimed socialist (p. 96) and her multiple references to 'The Woman Question' (p. 187; p. 193; p. 194) construct her character as a direct reflection of Eleanor Marx's argument that socialist sisterhoods are the gateway to answering, as the title of her article suggests, 'The Woman Question: from a Socialist Point of View'. Vanita argues that the simultaneous rejection of male power and the protection of one woman by another is Sapphic, illustrating the passionate love that occurs between women outside of male-dominated spaces like Mr Pember's 'sanctum' (1996, p. 125).

The Woman Question itself also contributes to the Sapphic tone present in the interactions between Ruth and Jane, who symbolise the role of sisterly solidarity in Harkness's wider spectacle of philanthropy. As Prins notes, the Victorian understanding of the Sapphic 'converges with nineteenth-century debates around "The Woman Question"' (1996, p. 15). Jane and Ruth's relationship becomes a way of figuring out their positions and identities as women, a process that was also a key element of the discourses surrounding The Woman Question (1996, p. 15). The shift away from Mr Pember's attempts to 'prey' on Ruth like a 'serpent' (p. 75) to Jane's 'arm[s]' wrapping around Ruth's 'waist' (p. 94) implies a sense of solidarity and connection when the bodies of these two women interact. During Ruth's tour of the factory, Jane takes her into a room in which 'two of the [factory] girls are kissing, and this sight roused the ire of the labour-mistress' (p. 85). Jane then goes on to state that 'kisses between women mean nothing. [...] Go on with your work, and keep your kisses for your sweethearts' (p. 85). As Sharon Marcus (2009) notes, 'female friends often exchanged kisses' at the fin de siècle (p. 46), yet Jane's suggestion that the women ought to 'keep [their] kisses for [their] sweethearts' presents this form of kissing as interchangeable with an erotic act. In *Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Volume 4* (1927), Havelock Ellis argues that from the late nineteenth century there is a distinction between kissing between friends and kissing between sweethearts: the first is simply an affectionate social convention, while the second acts as a 'channel for directing nervous force into the sexual sphere' (p. 17). The erotic nature of this moment reflects the 'passion' of the Sapphic

⁴⁷ The institution of marriage itself comes under the critique of feminist socialists at the turn of the century, including Mona Caird (1888) and Florence Farr (1910). I discuss these debates and contexts further in my analysis of Braddon's *Mary*.

mode, and Harkness's representation of the dialogue between factory women reflects her thoughts in her non-fiction study of working-class women, *Toilers in London* (1889). She states that 'among no other class of young women does there appear to be so much camaraderie, such a strong instinct that all must pull together, such a commune of food, clothes and halfpence as among the factory girls of the metropolis' (Harkness, 1889, p. 11). The erotic exchange between these women represents the close 'camaraderie' between female factory workers. Jane suggests that the close relationships between these women drive her to engage with socialist practices; her socialism is based on 'improv[ing the] condition[s]' these women are made to work in while 'fight[ing] Mr. Pember' (p. 95). When Ruth informs Jane of her engagement to Captain Lobe, the narrator notes that 'to her great surprise the strong-minded spinster threw two arms around her and gave her a kiss' (p. 185). Already imbued with a Sapphic subtext, the kiss between Ruth and Jane at the *dénouement* of the narrative represents their continuing physical connection. Much like her interaction with the slum sisters, Ruth's relationship with Jane and socialism enables a Sapphic dialogue between the two as well as an escape from the advances of Mr Pember. Ruth represents the emergent new concept at the heart of Harkness's 'Salvationists and Socialists': her character can shift between Sapphic interactions with Salvationists and socialists, allowing her to escape the advances of the male capitalist and to contribute to the philanthropic project of these sisterhoods.

Sapphic Triangulation

The *dénouement* of the novel encapsulates Ruth's role as a symbol of emergent new concepts of sororal philanthropy. The narrator notes that 'one bright December morning, a tender left the Tilbury Docks with Ruth, Captain Lobe and Miss Hardy on board it', following Lobe's order from the Salvation Army 'to accompany six hundred emigrants to Queensland' (p. 194). Travelling together, Ruth, Captain Lobe, and Jane form an erotic triangle that carries forward the notion of philanthropic community seen throughout the novel. The triangulation of these figures ultimately serves as the most integral spectacle of the text, encapsulating the importance of socialist and Salvationist dialogues in sisterly communities. This further deconstructs the arbitrary boundaries separating socialist and secular philanthropy: Lobe travels to Australia to continue his role as a 'Salvation captain' (p. 199), while Jane joins Ruth as a 'friend' (p. 195) and to continue her socialist project as a 'pioneer of [her] sex on questions connected with female labour' (p. 198). The text represents a form of triangulation with Ruth at the centre, and Harkness engages with the

literary device of romantic or erotic triangulation. René Girard (1965) conceptualises erotic triangles as literary *logos* involving three subjects engaged in a passionate dialogue with one another; this *logos* simultaneously represents the ‘unity’ and ‘desire’ occurring between the characters involved within that triangle (p. 52). Building on this, Eve Sedgwick (1985) argues that the typical ‘schematization’ of these triangles focuses on the ‘rivalry between the two active [male] members of an erotic triangle’ and implicitly represents a sexual and homosocial bond between men (p. 21). According to Sedgwick, the erotic triangle encompasses a rivalry between two men which concerns their desires for one woman. Encoded within this rivalry is an erotic passion that is displaced onto the female subject as the ‘object’ of desire (p. 2). Sedgwick argues that in fiction, erotic triangulation functions to emphasise and embody male homosexual or homosocial desire (p. 3). Sedgwick goes on to argue that such triangulation fails to represent lesbian or Sapphic love between women due to the ‘historical power relationships’ that position women as the ‘object’ of the triangle (p. 3).

In Darkest London acts as a break from the masculine and homosocial tradition of erotic triangulation recognised by Sedgwick. Before departing for Australia, Jane states to Ruth ‘we’ll be friends [...] When you join Captain Lobe in Australia I’ll come with you, if they’re sound out there on the Woman Question’ (p. 194). Harkness emphasises Jane’s interest in the Woman Question in this final chapter through Jane’s frequent references to the Question and its surrounding debates (p. 194; p. 195; p. 196; p. 197; p. 198; p. 200). Jane’s attempt to seek solutions to the Woman Question, alongside her suggestion that it is the condition for her continued ‘friend[ship]’ with Ruth, recalls Eleanor Marx’s argument that the sisterly ‘community’ can solve the economic debates surrounding the Question and allow women to ‘be independent’ and ‘equal’ with men (1886, p. 221). The narrator notes that Jane is a ‘pioneer’ as she is ‘eager to work on equal terms with men, defiant of all special legislation for women, sometimes [a] caricature [...] of the screaming sisterhood’ but more often ‘setting these people an example by the way in which [she] refuse[s] to separate the interests of both sexes’ (p. 198). While sometimes a ‘caricature’ of sisterhood, Jane embodies the future potential of sororal socialism in a manner akin to Eleanor Marx’s description of the capabilities of sisterhood; this is conflated with her ‘friend[ship]’ and protection of Ruth in her statement of intent when agreeing to travel to Australia. This conflation of the socialist community and Jane’s sororal relationship with Ruth presents a passionate, Sapphic dialogue between the two. As Vanita notes, Sapphic desire involves ‘ideas of a community, of learning, teaching, writing and study as activities occurring among

women' (1996, p. 2). Jane's involvement in this erotic triangulation, featuring Ruth at the centre and Lobe as the other subject, breaks away from the male homosocial tradition of triangulation identified by Sedgwick.

Harkness's characterisation of Captain Lobe ultimately results in a Sapphic erotic triangle.⁴⁸ Earlier in the text, Jane tells Lobe of her desire to protect Ruth. She states that 'if she is ill, I will nurse her' and says to Lobe that 'I've quite a respect for you, Salvation. 'Tisn't many men would act like this. You're too good to be a man; in fact, I think you're a woman' (p. 195). As a socialist, Jane's reference to 'nursing' illustrates the link between social progress, sisterhoods, and medical care as later recognised by Nutting and Dock (1916, p. 4). In allowing Jane to 'nurse' Ruth and to continue forming their Sapphic bond, Lobe himself is granted admittance into their sisterly community as Ruth describes him as a 'woman' (p. 195). Lobe's position as a 'woman' is repeated in the final line of the novel, where Jane states that 'he quite upsets my theories about men' and concludes that 'he isn't a man – he is a woman' (p. 200). The movement from the uncertain verb 'think' to the modal verb of certainty 'is' places Lobe within Ruth's and Jane's sisterly community, rather than situating him at the top of the power hierarchy as in Sedgwick's homosocial model of triangulation (1985, p. 3). In changing the title of the novel from *Captain Lobe: A Story of the Salvation Army* Harkness further reduces the authority and power of Lobe himself. The revised title, *In Darkest London*, instead refers to the philanthropy enacted by Salvationist and socialist sisterhoods across the East End rather than the male 'Captain'. Harkness's transition from the male pseudonym of John Law to the use of her actual name also echoes Lobe's shifting gender, ultimately reflecting the transition from philanthropy as a male-dominated practice to one primarily carried out by women (Jaffe, 2000; Rappoport, 2012; Cameron and Dunleavy, 2015). By rejecting Lobe's role as a 'man' through Jane's direct speech and the title of the novel, Harkness removes this gender-based hierarchy from the erotic triangle taking place between Jane, Ruth, and Lobe. Harkness's presentation of Lobe as 'a woman' constructs this triangulation as a synecdoche for the novel's focus on both

⁴⁸ Critics have discussed and conceptualised female, sororal, and Sapphic forms of triangulation. Discussing the 'writerly triangle' between Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë, and Harriet Martineau, Linda Peterson (2007) argues that triangular sororal bonds in the nineteenth century 'transcend other earthly relationships' and represent 'sororal unity' (p. 203). Peterson suggests the triangulation that occurs between these three women represents an intellectual desire to achieve 'literary [...] genius' (p. 910). In *Lesbian Panic: Homoeroticism in Modern British Women's Fiction* (1997) Patricia Juliana Smith also interrogates concepts of lesbian triangulation. For Smith, reinstating same-sex female desire into concepts like triangulation is integral to reclaiming the history and the stories of lesbian women that have been suppressed by a 'lesbian panic' in the early twentieth century (pp. 6 – 7).

Salvationist and socialist sisterhoods, and their ability to work in unity: Ruth, as the ‘object’ of the triangle, represents the potential for the Salvation Army and socialist groups to be unified in the project to gain social equality for the poor and to solve ‘the Woman Question’. Lobe’s engagement to Ruth (p. 194) and Jane’s desire to ‘protect’ her (p. 94) illustrate a shared passion that is ultimately Sapphic as a form of ‘love between women’ (Vanita, 1996, p. 1) that is conflated with passionate philanthropic work (p. 46). Harkness’s presentation of this Sapphic triangulation at the end of the text emphasises that the pivotal spectacle of the text is that of sisterly communities and the importance of unifying sisterhoods that are arbitrarily divided by religious and secular beliefs.

Conclusion

In Darkest London highlights and emphasises the slum work carried out by women at the fin de siècle. Through Jane and Ruth’s relationship, Harkness illustrates the robust selfhood these women carved out for themselves in sisterly communities while also working to better the lives of the poor. Although the poor appear as “types” in the novel and illustrate a similar deserving/undeserving dichotomy of the poor seen in Dickens’s text, the socialist and Salvationist sisterly communities in *In Darkest London* use their agency to ‘nurse the sick and help the helpless’ while navigating the complexities of the Woman Question (p. 13). Harkness represents the integral role Sapphic dialogues play in forming the identities of women like Ruth, and the potential these dialogues hold for the future. Developing and working with Eleanor Marx, Beatrice Webb, and Laura Lafargue, Harkness is engaged in a project that aims to shift the perception of both capitalist and patriarchal systems of oppression. *In Darkest London* acts as a synecdoche of this project, representing the central part that Sapphic dialogues play in fin-de-siècle philanthropic sisterhoods through spectacle.

Despite the large temporal gap between *Oliver Twist* and *In Darkest London*, Dickens’s and Harkness’s spectacles of poverty and philanthropy respectively return to a common theme; in both cases, their worldviews are expressed through their use of imagery. Dickens employs a spectacle of poverty to enforce ideas of the deserving and undeserving poor, which he communicates to his ideal reader through a visual method of writing. Harkness shifts slightly away from this; while she emphasises the dangers that philanthropists face in discerning the poor who need or deserve charity, her reader is primarily encouraged not to sympathetically engage with images of pauperism but rather to understand the experiences of slum sisterhoods. Acting as spectators, both Dickens’s and Harkness’s readers are influenced by their images of the poor. Ultimately, Dickens’s and

Harkness's spectacles simply act as conduits for their perceptions of poverty. The dominant spectacles in both novels reflect slumming and act as a form of poverty porn; the reader derives pleasure from seeing their views on paupers affirmed, being taken into grotesque and perilous slums through fiction, and, in the case of *In Darkest London*, gazing at the same-sex dialogues and exchanges taking place in philanthropic communities. As noted, *In Darkest London* also evidences the beginning of a movement towards understanding the environmental causes of poverty as opposed to being solely sympathetic to the circumstances of individual paupers. Published after 1890, both Arthur Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894) and Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* (1892) reflect and respond to this growing focus on space and spatial relations.

Chapter 2: Space

2.1 - Arthur Morrison's Mean Streets: Mapping and Linguistic Netherworlds in Fin-de-Siècle Slum Fiction

During the 1890s a shift in perspectives saw the positioning of the small, over-crowded slum environment as the main cause of poverty, rather than the lifestyle and heritage of the poor individual. As I have argued, *Oliver Twist*, written much earlier in the century, focuses on popular distinctions between the figures of the deserving pauper and the undeserving criminal (Mayhew, 1851, p. v). By 1892, as Cameron and Dunleavy note, philanthropists, politicians, and artists considered 'environmental factors' to be the primary mechanism that 'reproduc[ed] class difference and identity' (p. 111). This shift towards considering environmental factors as the root of poverty was prompted by the research conducted by Friedrich Engels, Octavia Hill, Charles Booth, and others who mapped and investigated the slum space intending to improve paupers' quality of life. In the first section of this chapter, I argue that this desire to map and 'categorise' poverty is reproduced in Arthur Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894).⁴⁹ I argue that Morrison's collection of short stories engages with the growing importance of mapping poverty at the turn of the century while also affirming what Michel Foucault (1979) would later define as a *raison d'état* (p. 20).⁵⁰ As an ethnographer, pseudo-sociologist, and mapmaker, Morrison uses language to construct the slum space as otherworldly and the inverse of wealthier environments. This conceptualisation of the slum space is not uncommon in works depicting the slums, particularly at the fin de siècle. Margaret Harkness's *In Darkest London* (1890) utilises the superlative adjective 'Darkest' to delineate the slums as 'other', while also invoking the themes of colonial travel and imperial ideology seen in Henry M. Stanley's *In Darkest Africa* (1890). Jack London refers to slums as the 'Abyss' in the title of and throughout *The People of the Abyss* (1903). Likewise, George Gissing's *The Nether World* (1889) uses the term 'Nether' in a manner defined in the *OED* as 'beneath the earth; of, belonging to, or native to

⁴⁹ Stories in *Tales of Mean Streets* include 'Introduction: A Street', 'Lizerunt', 'Without Visible Means', 'To Bow Bridge', 'That Brute Simmons', 'Behind the Shade', 'Three Rounds', 'In Business', 'The Red Cow Group', 'On the Stairs', 'Squire Napper', '"A Poor Stick"', 'A Conversation', and '"All That Messuage"'. Morrison notes in the collection that most of these stories previously appeared in *The National Observer*, *Macmillan's Magazine*, and *The Pall Mall Budget*; these stories were edited to be 'slightly different' for *Tales of Mean Streets* (n.p).

⁵⁰ Translates to 'government reason' or 'reason of state' (Senellart, 2004, p. 1). As Michel Senellart (2004) notes, Foucault utilises this term to represent an 'external politics' that is brought to bear on subjects and spaces in order to inscribe a set of beliefs onto a community or group (p. 1).

hell or the underworld' (2003). In these artistic imaginings of the slums, poor environments are perpetually seen as oppositional or negative spaces in comparison to more affluent spaces. Morrison's use of a research style influenced by Charles Booth's and Octavia Hill's, combined with his artistic and literary technique, results in a spatial arrangement of the slums as abnormal and oppositional to more "normative" social spaces. In addition, Morrison delineates slum space through language, both in describing the poor and through the poor's direct speech. Building on concepts represented in slum novels from the early 1890s, I argue that Morrison forms what I term a 'linguistic netherworld': the slums of London's East End are mapped throughout his fiction as an other-worldly space in which speech and language are distorted, disrupted, and subverted.

Morrison's work was influential to later East End fiction and contributed to the popularity of the slum novel at the fin de siècle. William Somerset Maugham (1938) notes that his slum novel *Liza of Lambeth* (1897) 'profited by the interest [Morrison] had aroused [in] what were then known as the lower classes' (p. 160), citing the publication of *Tales of Mean Streets* and *A Child of the Jago* (1896) as major factors in his success. Jack London (1903) exemplifies the effect of Morrison's work throughout his exploration of the slums, which includes a visit to 'the municipal dwelling erected by the London County Council on the site of the slums where lived Arthur Morrison's "Child of the Jago"' (p. 60). Despite Morrison's success as a slum novelist, relatively little is known about Morrison's background.⁵¹ Peter J. Keating (1971), a foundational scholar on Morrison and other writers who focus on the working classes in their fiction, notes that his 'birth certificate shows that he was born in Poplar, the son of an engine fitter' and 'from a few obviously autobiographical remarks in his published writings it seems reasonable that at least some of his childhood was spent in the East End' (p. 168). Keating states that it is 'impossible to draw any conclusions about this period of his life' (p. 168), noting that no further record of Morrison's life is discoverable until he is appointed assistant editor of the *Palace Journal*

⁵¹ Morrison also penned a popular series of detective stories for *Strand Magazine*, eventually published in the collection *Martin Hewitt, Investigator* (1894). Ellery Queen's *Queen's Quorum* (1951), a quintessential text in the study of detective fiction from 1845 – 1950, describes Morrison's detective Martin Hewitt as 'a man of awe-inspiring technical and statistical knowledge' (p. 54). As I describe later in this section, this focus on 'knowledge' and investigation factors highly in Morrison's creative process and the research he undertook in the formation of his slum novels. Morrison also had an interest in Japanese art, publishing *The Painters of Japan* in 1911. Investigation and aesthetic are therefore equally important in Morrison's *oeuvre*. P. J. Keating's *The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction* (1971) features writers who focus on working-class relationships and their experience of London life. Keating's analysis focusses on the works of Arthur Morrison, George Gissing, Walter Besant, Rudyard Kipling, and members of The Cockney School as key artists who represent 'the urban and industrial working classes in Victorian fiction' (p. xi).

on March 6th 1889 (p. 169). Under the guidance of the *Palace Journal*'s chief editor Walter Besant, Morrison edited, read, and wrote articles on photography, life drawing, and other visual arts alongside discussions of writing as a practice.⁵² Morrison's time at the *Palace Journal* was integral to his career and his writing style. As Eliza Cubitt (2020) notes, his time as sub-editor allowed him to gain 'confidence in his own writing' and instilled an emphasis on precise factual storytelling that is present throughout his literary style (p. 73). During his time at the *Palace Journal*, Morrison discussed crime, poor women, and philanthropic institutions like Toynbee Hall, amongst others; these subjects and related topics reappear in *Tales of Mean Streets* and throughout Morrison's fiction.⁵³

While conclusions about Morrison's life in the East End are 'impossible', his personal connections with working-class spaces influence his construction of the slums in *Tales of Mean Streets*. Vincent Brome (1965) characterises Morrison as an author with a 'masked' persona, citing his obituary in *The Times* as a 'bewildered piece of writing' that can only give the 'barest bones of his life' (p. 7). Brome also notes multiple accounts in which Morrison describes his father as an 'engineer' whilst he was 'in fact an engine fitter', suggesting that Morrison actively engaged in constructing his persona in relation to his experience of working-class life while rejecting the poorer profession of engine fitter (p. 7). More recently, critics have grappled with the lack of correspondence and biographical information by attempting to read Morrison's politics through his fiction. Audrey Murfin (2014) argues that there is a synthesis between Morrison's politics and his aesthetic form. Murfin indicates that 'Morrison had a great interest in the visual arts, particularly in photographic technology (and later in life, in Japanese painting)', arguing that 'Morrison's theories of art, and the correspondence between realism and photography in the late-19th

⁵² Walter Besant was a novelist, historian, and literary critic. Besant founded the Incorporated Society of Authors, which 'went on to become the most successful and long-lasting professional association organized by and for the benefit of authors in Britain' (Salmon, 2019). The Society was established in the belief that 'collective action was necessary in order to defend authors' 'trade interests' and to express a long-held 'grievance' against exploitative publishers and inadequate laws of copyright', and presented a 'valuable case-study of the wider transformation of the arts in modern professional society' (Salmon, 2019). Besant's *History of London* (1885) is a highly detailed piece of non-fiction that represents the historic stories behind London's streets. Besant also wrote slum fiction, such as his novel *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (1882). Among other elements in Morrison's life, it is likely that Besant's writings on the streets and the slums influenced Morrison's literary output. For more on Besant's contribution to art, see Richard Salmon's 'Transforming the Art of Fiction: Walter Besant, Professional Service and the Society of Authors' (2019).

⁵³ Under the leadership of Samuel Barnett, Toynbee Hall became an important philanthropic centre. The Hall aimed to share cultural and artistic knowledge with the poor in the surrounding slums of Spitalfields. Among Toynbee Hall's contributors and community were Vernon Lee, Beatrice Webb, Annie Besant, Walter Besant, and Charles Booth. For more on Toynbee Hall as both a philanthropic institution and as a community of artists, see Asa Briggs's and Anne Macartney's *Toynbee Hall (Routledge Revivals): The First Hundred Years* (2011).

century, can help us to understand his social and political positions' (p. 5). Murfin goes on to note that unlike Dickens and other slum novelists, Morrison's 'aim is not to reassure his readers, but rather to make them intensely uncomfortable' through his slum imagery (p. 18). In *Arthur Morrison and the East End: The Legacy of Slum Fictions* (2020), Eliza Cubitt states that while Morrison himself remains an 'enigma' (p. 6) whose work carries 'mysteries and intricacies of style' (p. 7), further scholarship and readings of his novels have revealed aspects of his life and persona (p. 7). As Cubitt argues, Morrison's representation of the East End reconfigured the imagery associated with the slums in the wider Victorian consciousness (p. 7). She emphasises that Morrison's visual representation of the slums acts as synecdoche for his own, individual perspective on slum life; for Morrison, the East End is a space which previous fictions have only 'imagine[d]' and 'made spectacular' (p. 13). Ultimately, according to Cubitt, Morrison's imagery 'pushes against the boundaries of the representation of the slum and the boundaries of realism' (p. 13). Like Dickens, then, Morrison's work is highly visual; Morrison's imagery, however, signifies the extremes of poverty throughout the slums in a more unsettling manner. Keating's, Brome's, Murfin's, and Cubitt's criticisms illustrate that while Morrison's personal life is an enigma, his political, literary, and philanthropic public persona illuminate some aspects of his relationship with the streets and spaces of London's East End.

From the mid-nineteenth century, conceptualisations of slum spaces highlight the role of the environment in perpetuating poverty and class relations. The philanthropic research undertaken to understand the East End at this time is a key influence on Morrison's fiction. In *The Condition of the Working-Class in England* (1844), Engels describes Manchester's slum streets by highlighting their lack of space, describing one slum dwelling as 'badly planned, badly built [...] badly ventilated, damp, and unwholesome' and noting that the inhabitants were 'confined to the smallest possible space, [with] at least one family sleep[ing] in each room' (p. 50). Engels's criticism of the lack of living space in slum dwellings resonates with later writings on the subject and illustrates the constant links made between poverty and the environment. Though Engels suggests in his preface to the 1892 edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England* that the East End and the working classes have experienced a 'revival' and have achieved basic workers' rights (p. xix), other writers took issue with the congested estates and inappropriately small dwellings in the East End. In Volume 3 of *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1892) Charles Booth notes that while 'model dwellings' like the Peabody buildings started to become more common in

the East End (p. 24), many areas remain ‘squalid and over-crowded’ (p. 105).⁵⁴ Criticising and mapping the slum space is a vital way in which Engels and Booth interrogate the mechanisms underlying poverty.

Engels’s and Booth’s focus on slum environments recognises a relationship between poverty and space. The socialist and philanthropic work of Octavia Hill further illustrates beliefs in enacting social change through the environment. In *Homes of the London Poor* (1875), Hill positions the environment as the primary oppressive mechanism affecting slum inhabitants’ quality of life. She states that by renovating social spaces, ‘poor people’ can be ‘free’ from the ‘tyranny and influence of a low class of landlords and landladies’ (p. 5). Hill subverts concepts of ‘class’ in this statement: the poor are humanised as ‘people’, and the ‘landlords and landladies’ are characterised as ‘low class’. She highlights that by changing and understanding space the ‘never-dying hope’ of the poor can be fulfilled (p. 6). For Hill, the poor are equal to all other human beings in all but their impoverished environment; understanding the slum space becomes integral to fulfilling the ‘spirit of [the poor’s] homes and lives’ (p. 77). While Engels’s writings introduce connections between poverty and spatiality, Hill’s and Booth’s work emphasise the importance of rejuvenating the slums and provide ideas that prompt the focus on poor environments in artistic and literary depictions of poverty.

Morrison’s fiction illustrates this shift in a way that resonates with the research conducted by Hill and Booth. In his preface to the third edition of *A Child of the Jago* (1897), Morrison states that portraying the unsettling nature of poor environments is an integral element of his slum writing. Morrison notes that he aimed to induce in the reader, upon considering his images of poverty, a ‘discomforting [...] consciousness of duty neglected’

⁵⁴ Developed in an initiative headed by George Peabody, the Peabody Buildings created clean, safe homes for the poorer classes. Peabody donated over £500,000 to the ‘Peabody Donation Fund’, which in 1865 became a housing society. The housing society aimed to provide dwellings for the lower classes who ‘had been suddenly disturbed by the long pent-up invasion of metropolitan railroads’ and to remedy the ‘discomfort and disease’ that subsequently developed in the overcrowded streets (Picard, 2013, p. 44). The buildings were strictly monitored, and an intense screening process divided the poor into undeserving and deserving categories in order to identify who should be able to live in one of the many Peabody Buildings erected around Spitalfields. The planning proposal notes that ‘no applications for rooms will be entertained unless every applicant’s family has been vaccinated [and the applicant] further agrees to have every case of infectious disease removed to the proper hospital [and] the passages, steps, closets and lavatory windows must be washed every Saturday and swept every morning before 10 o’clock. This must be done by the tenants in turn. Washing must only be done in the laundry [and] Tenants are required to report to the superintendent any births, deaths or infectious diseases occurring in their rooms. Any tenant not complying with this will receive notice to quit’ (quoted in Picard, 2013, pp. 44 – 45). For more on the Peabody Buildings, their strict rules, and their long-lasting effect on social housing, see Liza Picard’s *Victorian London: The Life of a City 1840 – 1870* (2013).

to care for the poor (p. xi). Morrison rejects the concept that ‘the sole function of art [is] to minister to [readers’] personal comfort’, arguing that when representing poverty the slum novel should reveal social truths that the reader will then internalise as their ‘duty’ to remedy (p. xi). In this statement, Morrison parallels Dickens’s earlier preface to *Oliver Twist* in which he details his moral responsibility to show the ‘truth’ of poverty and to avoid contributing to the distracting ‘glitter’ featured in depictions of the poor which glorify and sensationalise criminality (1837, p. x). Much like Dickens, Morrison compares himself to the painter William Hogarth, particularly considering his ability to provoke ‘disgust’ in a way that encourages readers to consider the low quality of life experienced by paupers within the slums (1897, p. xi).⁵⁵ Unlike Dickens, Morrison questions the category of ‘realism’ used to label his work.⁵⁶ Morrison declares that he ‘shall adhere to fact or neglect it as may seem good to me: regardless of anybody’s classification as a realist, or as anything else’ (p. xv), arguing that the fictional streets of the Jago act as a synecdoche for ‘neighbourhoods already densely over-populated’ (p. xv). Cubitt’s assertion that Morrison’s imagery ‘pushes against the boundaries of the representation of the slum and the boundaries of realism’ (p. 13) is evident here. As Morrison goes on to note, realism focuses on the artist’s ‘own eyes’ and presents truths purely within the ‘individual terms of art’; his work aims to avoid the artistic and instead represent the facts of social life in his fiction (p. viii). He expands by stating that there is

a foolish fancy that because the houses of the Old Jago have been pulled down, the Jago difficulty has been cleared out of the way. That is far from being the case. The Jago, as mere bricks and mortar, is gone. But the Jago in flesh and blood still lives, and is crowding into neighbourhoods already densely over-populated. In conclusion: the plan and the intention of my story made it requisite that, in telling it, I should largely adhere to fact; and I did so (p. xi).

The sketch of the Jago attached as a frontispiece to this edition (Figure 7) frames the text with a visual map that embodies the compact and condensed nature of these streets,

⁵⁵ As discussed in Chapter 1.1. Dickens describes Hogarth as ‘the moralist, and censor of his age – in whose great works the times in which he lived, and the characters of every time, will never cease to be reflected’. He also praises Hogarth’s portrayal of ‘the very scum and refuse of the land [...] without the compromise of a hair’s breadth’ (1837, p. iix).

⁵⁶ As discussed in my introduction, my definition of realism here refers to a genre that attempts to reflect ‘real’ life as well as the ‘real forces’ underlying regimes of class and gender (d’Albertis, 2015, p. 119). As d’Albertis describes, realism has an ‘absolute imperative to represent truth’ and to offer critiques of the social environment. Despite this, the ‘reality’ of the realist novel is often ‘passion[ate]’, ‘dramatic’ and ‘exciting’ (Maunder, 2005, p. 7) and is published to entertain readers while offering social critiques.

emphasising Morrison's desire to be 'factual' in his fictional representations of the slums.⁵⁷ Morrison's focus on social and spatial 'fact' is somewhat indicative of Booth's research methodology. Booth critiqued slum novels on the basis that they appeal to an 'imagination which is called "realistic"' rather than attempting to improve slum conditions, and notes that his maps instead illustrate the 'numerical relation which poverty, misery, and depravity bear to regular earnings' (1889, p. 6). Morrison's focus on 'adher[ing] to fact' echoes Booth's attempt to uncover these 'numerical relations'. Both Morrison's novel and Booth's work result in the formation of maps, illustrating a clear link between studies of the slum space and mapmaking.

Tales of Mean Streets, published one year before *A Child of the Jago*, also appropriates Booth's investigative techniques. In an article entitled 'Arthur Morrison', Reverend Arthur Osborne Jay (1896) highlights the intense research Morrison conducted while writing *Tales of Mean Streets*, describing it as a 'persistent personal investigation, the patient investigation of months' and notes how he 'embodied the life of [Jay's] parish in his story' (p. 4). Jay describes how Morrison 'saw people in their houses, talked with them, got to know them – even had them visiting at his house', consequently leading Jay to consider 'what conscientious labour art involved' (p. 4). Jay argues that Morrison's intense investigations provided him with an 'intimate knowledge of the poor classes' in *Tales of Mean Streets* (p. 4). Jay's description of Morrison's research methodology, comparable to Booth's investigations, evidences his engagement with the concepts of empiricism and 'fact' (Morrison, 1897, p. xv) that lie at the heart of naturalism. John Greenfield (1996) argues that Morrison 'disavows literary realism' in favour of the 'sort of realism practised by George Gissing and Émile Zola' (p. 89).⁵⁸ Greenfield goes on to argue that the 'general effect of

⁵⁷ Although the Jago is a fictional slum, Morrison based its layout and environment on the 'notorious slum of the Old Nichol which was demolished in 1895 under the London County Council Boundary Street scheme' (Maynard, 2008, p. 45). In fictionalising the demolished Old Nichol, as Jessica Maynard (2008) argues, Morrison is writing historically, 'after the event', to 'typify a national problem and to underline the debilitating physical and moral influence represented by the Jago' (p. 46). In doing so, Morrison suggests that 'although one slum has been demolished, [...] the "dispossessed Jagos" are displaced and merely proceed to "infect" another area' (p. 46). As such, Morrison's fictionalisations embody the factual reality of continuous overcrowding in the slums.

⁵⁸ As discussed in my introduction, Richard Lehan (2006) suggests that the naturalist novelist acts like a 'scientist, observing nature and social data, rejecting supernatural and transhistorical explanations of the physical world, rejecting absolute standards of morality and free will, and depicting nature and human experience as a deterministic and mechanistic process' (p. 47). Émile Zola was a French playwright, journalist, novelist and theatrical practitioner who is credited as the foundational artist of naturalism. As Brian Nelson (2012) describes, for Zola naturalism 'meant a commitment to the idea that literature has a social function: to engage with the 'order of the day' through a representation of the sorts of things that

[Morrison's] naturalism, with its accompanying emphasis on determinism and social Darwinism, is to reify or harden class ideology' (p. 89). By representing social classes at the 'lowest stratum' through naturalism, Morrison imagines the slums as a 'static environment' that 'negates any possibility of historical analysis or revolution' (p. 101). The negation of social change highlighted by Greenfield illustrates how Morrison presents the slums as netherworlds; the East End is fixed in a form of oppressive stasis, incapable of revolution. As such, it exists as a space that negates outside influence.

Morrison presents the slums as degenerative, linguistically disruptive, and dysfunctional spaces in a manner that resonates with the decadent artistic tradition.⁵⁹ Morrison characterises the poor in relation to their disjunctive or degenerative language; I explore this through the narratives 'Behind the Shade' and 'Lizerunt'. This is visible within literary decadence. Linda C. Dowling (2014) defines decadence as a literary and 'linguistic moment [...] when language as such, the means of representation in literature, becomes problematic, something to be interrogated, explored, or thematized in itself' (p. ix). The problematising and interrogation of language that Dowling identifies are visible throughout decadent theories of art and literature. Decadent critic and artist Arthur Symons (1899) argues that decadence is characterised by its 'ingenious deformation of language' (p. 6). This deformation of language feeds directly into Morrison's conceptualisation of the slums as linguistic netherworlds, as pauper experience is characterised by broken or disrupted linguistics. Similarly, decadent critic and novelist Paul Bourget (1884) conceptualises decadence as a style in which the 'unity of the book is decomposed to give place to the independence of the page', 'the independence of the phrase', and 'the independence of the word' (p. 180). Morrison's depiction of the poor's direct speech reflects Bourget's concept of 'decompos[ition]', as their language is often broken or disrupted throughout *Tales of Mean Streets*. Themes of degeneration and linguistic decomposition appear throughout the text. As such, Morrison's use of naturalism is intertwined with his use of a decadent aesthetic to present the slums as "other" to the world inhabited by the reader and Morrison himself. Morrison's pauper environments are organised by this relationship between his use of

concerned people on a daily basis in their social and individual lives' (p. 294). As reflected in Morrison's influenced works, Zola's naturalism relied on the author acting as a 'would-be scientist' by using research and experience to create an 'empirical' illustration of reality. Alongside this pseudo-scientific method, the author also employs motifs of subversion, irony, and satire (p. 294).

⁵⁹ Morrison directly shared interests with the decadent movement: Eliza Cubitt (2016) notes that Morrison's interest in Japanese art anticipated and may have contributed to similar interests seen throughout decadent works of art, as evident in Aubrey Beardsley's front cover illustrations for *The Yellow Book* (p. 82).

naturalism and his decadent imagery as the slums appear in his texts as ‘static environment[s]’ (Greenfield, 1996, p. 101) characterised by their ‘deformation’ and ‘decompos[ition]’.

In portraying and analysing slum spaces throughout *Tales of Mean Streets*, Morrison acts as a literary mapmaker. Other critics have associated Morrison with mapping and the documentation of poor spaces. Diana Maltz (2011) refers to Morrison as an ‘ethnographer’, arguing that his journalistic research and elements of his writing, like the map in *A Child of the Jago*, illustrate a ‘meticulous recording’ of the ‘claustrophobic containment’ of the slums (p. 1). According to Maltz, Morrison goes to great lengths to present the slum as a space of ‘depredation’ (p. 5). Maltz, however, focuses on Morrison’s ethnographic depiction of social customs within the slums as opposed to his mapping of the space itself. She exemplifies this by highlighting how Morrison’s poor figures imitate concepts of ‘savagery’ and ‘tropes of nativism familiar to any readers of E.B Tylor’s *Primitive Culture* (1871)’ (p. 5). Morrison’s ethnographic depiction emphasises how pauper culture differs from that of his middle-class readership in both ‘speech and ways [of living]’ (p. 5). To ‘drive home this image of [the slums] as an underworld’, Morrison uses language and speech to display the customs of the poor through their differences to the reader (p. 12). Sarah Wise (2022) draws direct parallels between Booth and Morrison, stating that Booth’s work encourages Morrison among others to ‘introduce a sociological (or rather, pseudo-sociological) note into their work – classifying, typifying, and feeling free to include deeply shocking images of squalor and social dysfunction that were noted in the authoritative prose of *Life and Labour*’ (p. 2). Wise goes on to note that Morrison and Booth even shared a ‘common source’ in garnering research on the slums, describing ‘the door-knocking, surveying and note-keeping of [Reverend] Jay’s curate, Rupert St. Leger’ (p. 3). The anecdotes, quotations, and vignettes of slum ‘types’ collected by St. Leger as he worked his parochial territory appear in both Booth’s notebooks and Morrison’s novels (p. 3).⁶⁰ Morrison, therefore, operates as a mapmaker, researching poor spaces to offer an authentic image of poverty in his fiction.

Conceptualisations of mapmaking seen in cartographic theory further illustrate how Morrison acts as a mapmaker through his slum fiction. In Barbara Petchenik and Arthur Robinson’s (1976) influential collection of essays *The Nature of Maps*, they suggest that the

⁶⁰ Working under Reverend Jay, St. Leger was responsible for compiling research and information on the slums for Jay’s two non-fiction works: *Life in darkest London* (1891) and *The social problem: its possible solution* (1893). Morrison was provided with direct access to Leger’s notes and Jay’s texts, and Leger also shared his research with Booth (Wise, 2022, p. 5).

‘term ‘mapper’ [. . .] refers simply to anyone who actively conceives of spatial relationships in the milieu’, and add that the ‘conception of things in a spatial relationship is a critical operation, and he who does it is a mapper’ (p. 21). By constructing ‘mean streets’ and the streets of the Jago as visual and textual spaces Morrison acts as a mapper or mapmaker. Building on this conceptualisation of the mapmaker, Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchin, and Chris Perkins (2011) argue that ‘mapping not only represents reality, it has an active role in the social construction of that reality’ (p. xx). Dodge et al highlight that mapmakers illustrate the reality of social spaces and therefore alter the perception of the map viewer (p. xxi). As Morrison himself suggests, his construction of the city space aims to instil a sense of ‘duty’ in the reader (1897, p. xi); in this sense, Morrison is a key example of a literary mapmaker who actively ‘construct[s]’ the reader’s reality (Dodge et al, 2011, p. xx). The ethnographic and pseudo-sociological nature of Morrison’s creative process is echoed in more recent conceptualisations of mapmaking, which in turn reveal functional connections between Booth’s poverty maps and Morrison’s *Tales of Mean Streets*.

Nineteenth-century mapmaking has been recognised by critics as an attempt to delineate boundaries of normality/abnormality, particularly in the context of Booth’s work. Leif Jerram (2013) states that Engels’s comments on Manchester’s slums illustrate that ‘space was not incidental to the production and maintenance of a grotesquely unequal system; space was precisely the mechanism that generated and sustained that system’ (p. 402). Jerram interrogates Engels’s conceptualisation of the slum space by engaging with Henri Lefebvre’s influential monograph *The Production of Space* (1974). The spatial nature of poverty and its consequent effects on class hierarchies is described by Lefebvre as an aspect of ‘contradictory space’ (p. 316). For Lefebvre, contradictory spaces are defined by their relation to divisions. Examples include the ‘division between social and mental, the division between sensory and intellectual, and also the division between the everyday and the out-of-the-ordinary’ (p. 385). Considering Engels and Lefebvre, Jerram illustrates how social classes are defined through the contradictory co-existence of the poor and rich in the city space. The conceptualisation of space by Booth, Hill, and Morrison further defines the lines between ‘everyday’ and ‘out-of-the-ordinary’ social class categories. In the key to his poverty maps, Booth describes the poorest class (Class A in his notebooks) as ‘loafers and semi-criminals’. The use of black to connote the ‘semi-criminal’ acts committed by

members of Class A juxtaposes the lighter colours of the wealthier classes.⁶¹ London operates as a form of contradictory space, evident in Booth's colour-coding of poverty gradients. By mapping poor spaces Booth and Morrison affirm a *raison d'état*, which Foucault defines in earlier work as an 'art of government' that 'arranges' its subjects into categories of 'true' or 'false' (1979, p. 4). As a method of 'construct[ing] reality' (Dodge et al, 2011, p. xx), mapmaking perpetuates a perception of the poor as extensions of an abnormal space.

Mapping Mean Streets: Poverty and Environment

Throughout each of the thirteen short narratives that form *Tales of Mean Streets*, Morrison identifies slum space as a mechanism that maintains poverty. A review of Morrison's work, published in an 1895 issue of *The Bookman*, praises his attempts to represent the 'great East side' and the poverty visible within it (Anon., p. 83). The anonymous reviewer describes how

few intrepid writers have invaded the press with picturesque sketches drawn at first hand from the life of the "great East Side," and have met with unwonted success [...] Another and more powerful writer of the East has arisen in Mr. Arthur Morrison, whose *Tales of Mean Streets* in London has met with the disapprobation of Messrs, Smith and Mudie's Libraries, and is probably, for that reason, the most-talked-of book of the hour. (p. 83)

The reviewer's description of *Mean Streets* as a 'first hand' depiction of East End life touches on Morrison's personal interactions with poor spaces throughout his childhood and in his research. Furthermore, the removal of *Mean Streets* from library circulation on moral grounds illustrates Morrison's success in producing a 'discomforting [...] consciousness of duty neglected' (1897, p. xi). While there is no documentation to suggest which elements of Morrison's stories led libraries to censor them or the extent to which they were banned, the 'disapprobation' of the libraries illustrates anxiety surrounding the effect of Morrison's depiction of the 'great East Side' on readers. In his pamphlet *Literature at Nurse, or, Circulating Morals*, George Moore (1885) argues that libraries like Mudie's often censored texts despite positive responses from critics. Moore goes on to suggest that circulating libraries do not just censor immorality, but they also attempt to remove texts that are too 'real' or realist; libraries reject both general social truths and the truths of the author that do not fit the 'narrow limits' of portrayal that Messrs, Smith and Mudie's deem acceptable to

⁶¹ A note in the contents to Booth's first volume of *Labour and Life of the People* refers to the 'general character' of Class A as 'very poor and rough; some of the loafing, semi-criminal class and given to drink; lazy, shiftless people'.

circulate (Moore, 1885, p. 17).⁶² Moore's argument suggests that in recognising the libraries' disapproval of *Tales of Mean Streets*, the reviewer further emphasises the perceived authenticity of Morrison's stories.⁶³

The anonymous *Bookman* reviewer indicates that Morrison is successful in his use of naturalism as he produces a provocative and realistic text, stating that Morrison 'powerful[ly]' writes an authentic depiction of the East End. From the collection's inception, Morrison uses mapping to signify 'reality' (Dodge et al, 2011, p. xx). The opening story, 'Introduction: A Street', focuses on the slum space and its possible mobilities. The narrator states that the titular unnamed 'street [is] in the East End', going on to describe that

There is no need to say in the East End of what. The East End is a vast city, as famous in its way as any the hand of man has made. But who knows the East End? It is down through Cornhill and out beyond Leadenhall Street and Aldgate Pump, one will say: a shocking place, where he once went with a curate; an evil plexus of slums that hide human creeping things, where filthy men and women live on penn'orths of gin, where collars and clean shirts are decencies unknown, where every citizen wears a black eye, and none ever combs his hair. The East End is a place, says another, which is given over to the Unemployed. And the Unemployed is a race whose token is a clay pipe, and whose enemy is soap: now and again it migrates bodily to Hyde Park with banners, and furnishes adjacent police courts with disorderly drunks. Still another knows the East End only as the place whence begging letters come; there are coal and blanket funds there, all perennially insolvent, and everybody always wants a day in the country. Many and misty are people's notions of the East End; and each is commonly but the distorted shadow of a minor feature. Foul slums there are in the East End, of course, as there are in the West; want and misery there are, as wherever a host is gathered together to fight for food. But they are not often spectacular in kind. (pp. 7 – 9)

Here, Morrison highlights the spatial nature of the East End while also critiquing popular perceptions of the poor within that space. By beginning his description of the titular 'Street' with a sense of mobility 'through Cornhill' and 'out beyond Leadenhall Street', Morrison maps streets and spaces. The notion of going 'down' from Cornhill Street, which was known for its 'expensive buildings', 'commercial architecture', and the 'prestige' of its inhabitants (Summerson, 1977, p. 169), illustrates a movement downwards through poverty gradients and into the 'evil plexus of slums'. The narrator's mapping of the streets influences the reader's 'discomfort' (Morrison, 1897, p. xi) in experiencing the slums throughout the text.

⁶² Moore's pamphlet is a direct response to Mudie's attempt to censor his novel, *A Mummer's Wife* (1885). Moore emphasises that in removing his novel from library circulation he actually made more profit from the publication at six shillings per copy (p. 4).

⁶³ The censorship of *Tales of Mean Streets* by circulating libraries further aligns Morrison's work with the decadent movement. As Joseph Bristow (1995) argues in 'The Perversity of the Decadent Movement', producing art that sits uncomfortably with the general public, either through its shocking content or perceived immorality, became intertwined with the figure of the decadent artist in the 1890s (p. 65).

Morrison further creates discomfort by destabilising perceptions of the poor; the repeated refrain ‘one will say’ suggests a general perception that inhabitants within this space are perceived homogenously as ‘the Unemployed’, ‘human creeping things’, and as ‘beg[gars]’. Morrison evokes images of the poor that resonate with the perception of the ‘undeserving poor’ popularised by Dickens and Mayhew (Mayhew, 1851, p. v), before dismissing these images as too ‘spectacular’ and as simply the ‘misty [...] notions’ circulated within Victorian culture. Morrison’s critique of perceptions of poverty is indicative of Booth’s intentions in creating his maps. As Mary S. Morgan (2019) argues, the maps and notes featured in Booth’s poverty maps epitomise the importance of spatially understanding poverty at the fin de siècle. Morgan notes that ‘once seen, Booth’s maps enter the visual memory of those who live, work or just walk on the streets of London’; the maps illustrate to the viewer that ‘there were many gradients of being poor, not one line or boundary’ (pp. 22 – 23). While Morrison’s and Booth’s maps take different forms they both use similar methodologies; Rosemary O’Day and David Englander (1993) emphasise that despite his focus on numerically categorising gradients of poverty, Booth’s team conducted multiple forms of research including ‘questionnaires, interviews, personal observation; collection of statistical data; collation of data; sampling; and statistical tabulation of data’ (p. 18). Morrison’s use of the interview and personal observation methods of mapmaking, similar to those employed by Booth, are visible throughout *Tales of Mean Streets* in the way he guides the reader through multiple poverty gradients and lifestyles. Morrison’s ‘A Street’ goes on to describe how ‘round the corner there are a baker’s, a chandler’s, and a beer-shop’ (p. 9), shifting away from the ‘misty [...] notions’ of how other writers describe working-class locations and livelihoods. Morrison also maintains the use of mobile verbs like ‘round’ to spatially guide the reader through the slums. By beginning the text with ‘A Street’, Morrison maps the ‘Great East Side’ (Anon., 1895, p. 83) in a way that illustrates the nuanced gradation in a manner akin to Booth’s poverty maps.

In mapping the slums in ‘A Street’, Morrison visually signifies differing levels and forms of poverty. Morrison describes the bustling activity of the street, noting the movements of the ‘baker’, ‘chandler’, ‘squalid women’, and ‘girls [who] go to factories in white aprons’ (p. 17). The deliberate juxtaposition of the ‘squalid women’ with girls in clean ‘white aprons’ illustrates Morrison’s attempts at demonstrating a heterogeneous image of the East End. Gradients of poverty are realised in his imagery which shows ‘filthy’ paupers (p. 7) alongside working-class women in ‘white’ aprons. Morrison’s visual representation of these different types of poverty reflects Booth’s key to his poverty maps, which designate

the ‘lowest’ unemployed as Class A and the ‘poor [...] intermittent earners’ as Class C; it also echoes the attempts of mappers and sociologists to make the city and its class divisions ‘legible’ (Moretti, 1999, p. 78).⁶⁴ In his analyses of cartography in the late-nineteenth-century novel, Franco Moretti (1999) identifies the mapping work of Booth and others as an attempt to understand the complexities of the city space. Moretti suggests that the attempts to map poverty at the turn of the century are methods intended to understand the ‘immense geographical rift [which] had grown up between the rich and the poor of London’ (p. 78). For Moretti, the perceived gap between East and West End cultures evoked ‘fear and wonder’, and making sense of the ‘rapid transitions’ between rich and poor spaces become key to making the city space ‘legible’, ‘read[able]’, and understandable (p. 79). The goal of the nineteenth-century mapmaker is to turn these ‘rapid transitions’ into digestible and comprehensible categories, much like Booth’s gradients of poverty (pp. 79 – 80). The fin-de-siècle novel is an extension of these attempts to make poor spaces legible (p. 79), as evidenced by Morrison’s invocation of Booth’s research throughout ‘A Street’. While Moretti suggests that his novels are derivative of Booth’s maps, Morrison’s series of short, intertwined narratives in *Mean Streets* evolve and develop these gradients of poverty. This shows that far from just being an imitator of Booth, Morrison’s choice of the short story form enables him to include the voices of the poor in his mapping of poverty.

Morrison’s ‘ethnograph[ic]’ (Maltz, 2011, p. 1) and ‘pseudo-sociological’ (Wise, 2022, p. 2) research into these spaces is also visible in how he maps the slums, specifically through his depiction of poor lifestyles. Morrison repeatedly refers to acts that are not attainable by the poor, noting that ‘nobody in this street goes to the theatre’ and that ‘nobody reads poetry or romance’ (p. 24). Morrison also describes the romantic act of ‘keeping company’ as a dominant behaviour between slum dwellers; the narrator states that ‘keeping company’ is ‘indigenous – is a custom native to the place’ (p. 22). Morrison’s use of the terms ‘indigenous’ and ‘native’ follows similar uses seen throughout E.B Tylor’s earlier ethnographic work *Primitive Culture* (1871), illustrating his engagement with such discourses. Understanding the ‘custom[s]’ of the poor is therefore key to the way Morrison’s literary mapmaking makes poor culture ‘legible’.

⁶⁴ Class C, ‘intermittent earnings’, is grouped with Class D (‘small regular earnings’) by Booth with the note that these are ‘together the “poor”’. Between Class A and C is Class B, simply described as ‘Casual earnings – very poor’ (1904, p. 33). While there is not space within this chapter to identify them in detail, classes A through to E (‘Regular standard earning – above the line of poverty’) are all represented in Morrison’s ‘A Street’.

Through this legible mapping of the slums, Morrison emphasises the relationship between poverty and the environment. As noted, Octavia Hill's seminal work *Homes of the London Poor* argues that 'poor people' can be 'free' from the 'tyranny' of slum conditions through the rejuvenation of the environment (1875, p. 5). Hill concludes that the quality of life within poor spaces can be improved by renovating them with three main qualities in mind: 'simplicity, industry, and providence' (p. 78). Rejuvenating the slum space in this way would enable denizens to live in 'happy prosperity' (p. 78). Morrison's 'A Street' constructs a poor environment that lacks simplicity, as indicated by the chaotic mixture of unemployment with various working-class livelihoods in the imagery visible in the story; as such, the clear, 'ordered' (Hill, 1875, p. 78) dwellings Hill calls for are not present in Morrison's environment. Instead, Morrison maps the titular street with a freeze-framed disorder that illustrates how poverty is maintained in the slums. The narrator describes 'more muffled scrubbing and more squalling, and perhaps a feeble attempt or two at decorating the blankness of a square hole here and thereby pouring water into a grimy flower-pot full of dirt', before stating that 'this is the record of a day in this street; and every day is hopelessly the same' (p. 14). The image of the street as a space in stasis is ultimately interlocked with the 'grimy', chaotic, and 'squalling' nature of the slum which conflates the stagnation of the space with poverty itself. Stasis is employed as a key thematic motif throughout 'A Street'. The narrator notes that

No event in the outer world makes any impression in this street. Nations may rise, or may totter in ruin; but here the colourless day will work through its twenty-four hours just as it did yesterday, and just as it will to-morrow. Without there may be party strife, wars and rumours of wars, public rejoicings; but the trotting of the little feet will be neither quickened nor stayed. [...] Nothing disturbs this street—nothing but a strike. (pp. 16 – 17)

As a street where nothing is 'disturb[ed]', the 'little feet' previously connected with the 'grimy' poverty of the space remains intact. The stasis of the environment illustrates the lack of 'simplicity, industry, and providence' (1875, p. 78) that Hill calls for. Morrison ends the chapter with a similar triadic list describing the qualities of this street in stasis, characterising it by 'its lack of accent, its sordid uniformity, its utter remoteness from delight' (p. 25). The environment of the slums is the focus of Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets*, and Morrison maps the space in a manner that emphasises its limited capacity for change.

Social Change and Environmental Disruption in 'Without Visible Means'

Published 14 years after Hill's proclamation to achieve 'simplicity, industry, and providence' throughout the East End, Morrison's 'A Street' suggests a pessimistic attitude towards slum rejuvenation. The final paragraph of 'A Street' opens with the question 'where in the East End lies this street?', followed directly with the declarative clause 'everywhere' (p. 26). The employment of the street as a synecdoche for the conditions of the East End suggests that the other stories in *Mean Streets* similarly feature spaces that lack the potential for social change. Morrison's disenchantment with the rejuvenation of slums has been recognised by other critics in their analyses of how spatial relations are depicted throughout his work. Roger Henkle (1992) argues that Morrison has a 'pessimism [...] about the bridging of the social sphere', adding that his work suggests those in poverty cannot achieve middle-class lifestyles and comforts (p. 15). Morrison's naturalist mode as well as his illustration of pauper lifestyles positions the slum environment as an unchangeable sociological 'fact' (p. 320). Similarly, Adrian Hunter (2013) argues that *A Child of the Jago* and *Tales of Mean Streets* both embody Morrison's disenchantment with philanthropic efforts to improve the slums. Hunter argues that Morrison's engagement with philanthropy echoes Oscar Wilde's earlier sentiments in 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism' (1891), in which Wilde states that those 'who do most harm are those who try to do most good' (p. 312). Ultimately, Hunter argues, Morrison illustrates that slum environments will always persist; philanthropy simply worsens the living conditions of the poor by removing their agency in achieving a better quality of life (p. 312). Morrison's pessimism is a departure from his mentorship under Besant during his time editing *The Palace Journal*. In the 1897 reprint of his slum novel *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (1882), Besant argues in the preface that philanthropists set on rejuvenating the slums create a 'greater awakening to a sense of responsibility, of brotherhood, of self-sacrifice, than we have witnessed in our generation' (p. 6). He also argues that the 'people [of] the nineteenth century' have used their 'wealth and comfort' to deconstruct class barriers and to improve the lives of the poor (p. 6). Despite being published in the same year as Besant's reprint, Morrison's preface to *A Child of the Jago* declares that the slums 'in flesh and blood still live' (1897, p. xi). Morrison's pessimism regarding slum rejuvenation is evident in the 'still[ness]' of the slum environment. In mapping the titular space of 'A Street', Morrison recognises the presence of a philanthropist from the 'Mutual Improvement Society' who is characterised by their 'smug' papers and debates, as well as their 'self-satisfied' and 'ignorant' nature (pp. 24 – 25). The narrator concludes that 'ignorance is the inevitable portion of dwellers here: seeing

nothing, reading nothing, and considering nothing' (p. 26). The mapping of the slum environment as a static and unchangeable space is therefore linked with the presence of philanthropists, building an argument against their presence in a manner akin to Wilde's sentiments on socialism.⁶⁵ Morrison's role in mapping the slum space and his attempts to make the complex gradients of poverty legible to his readership also suggest that these environments are static and lack the potential for social change.

Morrison does, however, illustrate the possibility of environmental change among the poor themselves. As noted, Morrison employs the motif of stasis throughout 'A Street' to highlight that social rejuvenation of the slums by philanthropists is impossible, stating that 'no event in the outer world makes any impression in this street' (p. 16). The only exception to this stasis is the actions taken by the poor themselves to better their conditions: the narrator concludes that 'nothing disturbs this street—nothing but a strike' (p. 17). Henkle's and Hunter's arguments that Morrison is pessimistic about social projects like Hill's is somewhat reductive; Morrison's pessimism is more specifically aimed at the philanthropic efforts which Besant praises in his preface to *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*. Strike action appears throughout *Tales of Mean Streets* as an indicator of potential social change, illustrating Morrison's belief in the poor's ability to improve their environment.

In 'Without Visible Means', Morrison signifies the importance of strike culture in East End environments. The narrative begins with the statement that 'all East London idled, or walked in a procession, or waylaid and bashed, or cried in an empty kitchen: for it was the autumn of the Great Strikes' (p. 66). The collective pronoun 'all' recalls the suggestion that 'A Street' epitomises 'everywhere' (p. 26) in the East End, while the quick succession of the verbs 'idled', 'walked', 'waylaid' and 'bashed' also echo the 'disturb[ance]' of strike action indicated in 'A Street' (p. 17). 'Without Visible Means' traces the movements of three men carrying out a worker's strike: a 'voluble young man of thirty, a stolid workman rather older, and a pale, anxious little fellow, with a nasty spasmodic cough and a canvas bag of tools' (p. 66). In showing different ages and 'types' of male pauper here, Morrison further illustrates an understanding of poverty gradients. The mobility of these strikers is also a key element of the narrative; they 'tramp' from 'Burdett Road [to] Enfield Road by way of Victoria Park, Clapton, and Stamford Hill' (p. 66), they visit locales such as the Enfield Arms Factory and 'Potter's bar' (p. 68), and they discuss journeys to other locations like

⁶⁵ This also reflects Harkness's distrust of socialist groups which favour discourse and debate over directly reformist action.

Manchester and Middlesbrough (p. 68). Navigating the slum space becomes key to the attempts of the three men to bring the ‘bloated capitalists to their knees’ (p. 69). As P.J Keating argues, the presence of strikes in Morrison’s work illustrates his engagement with the wider social contexts surrounding poverty, especially following the 1889 London Dock Strike, and also demonstrates his investment in understanding the agency of the poor to improve their conditions (1971, p. 168).⁶⁶ Morrison utilises his ‘ethnograph[ic]’ (Maltz, 2011, p. 1) and ‘pseudo-sociological’ (Wise, 2022, p. 2) research to demonstrate the voices and agencies of these three men.⁶⁷ One of the men, Newton, speaks against ‘bloated capitalists’ (p. 69). Newton declares that ‘when workin men stand idle an ungary in the midst o the wealth an the lukshry an the igstravagance they ve produced with the sweat of their brow, why, then, feller-workmen, it’s time to act’ (p. 69). Newton echoes Karl Marx’s (1867) concept of ‘surplus-value’ in recognising that the working classes ‘produce’ the profits which maintain the hunger and ‘idle[ness]’ of the poor (p. 177). By illustrating the poor’s economic understanding of their social position, Morrison recognises the working-class individual’s agency in changing their social environment; the mobility of the strike, evident through the wide range of locales featured as well as the large distance the men travel throughout the narrative, is the key element of Newton’s subversive strike act. Navigating spaces becomes integral to the poor’s liberation from their social position, bringing into question the involvement of middle-class philanthropists like Hill and Booth. Morrison ‘embodie[s] the life’ (Jay, 1896, p. 4) of the poor by illustrating their agency toward social change through their voices and by mapping their movements through the East End environment.

⁶⁶ The London Dock Strike marked a pivotal turning point in the public recognition of unions and worker’s rights. As Iain McKay (2015) suggests, while this strike was preceded by others which showed a new ‘spirit of revolt amongst the unskilled, including the match-girls strike and the unionization of London gasworkers, the dockers’ strike had more of an impact due to the numbers involved’ (p. 30). The strike sought better pay, better working conditions, and permanent worker’s contracts. The Docks Strike also played a key role in ‘the development of anarchism as it provided a concrete example of the power of organized labour and the importance of anarchist involvement in it’ (p. 31). Philanthropist and clergyman James G. Adderley (1892) commented that the strike had a huge impact on the unionisation of labour and the ‘more recognised position of the dock labourer’ (p. 212).

⁶⁷ There is also a connection to Émile Zola’s naturalist mode in Morrison’s focus on strike action among the working classes: Zola’s *Germinal* (1885) focuses on a coalminer’s strike in 1860s France. As Phillip Walker (1984) describes, the creative basis for *Germinal* followed Zola’s ‘factualistic’ and ‘positivistic’ research with the striking coal miners, resulting in an ‘authentic’ vision of coalminer lifestyles and strike actions (p. 2). While there is no evidence to suggest Morrison had read *Germinal*, there is a clear linkage between Zola’s naturalist methodology in creating the novel and Morrison’s interviews with the working classes during his time in the East End.

The strike at the centre of 'Without Visible Means' is disrupted in the dénouement. As the strike continues, the narrator describes that the 'road got looser and dustier [and] the symptoms of the tramp came out stronger and stronger on the gang' (p. 72). The 'loose' roads that Morrison maps throughout the narrative are directly linked with illness; the men are 'tortured' by the dust, causing strong 'symptoms' among the group. Initially described as a 'pale, anxious little fellow, with a nasty spasmodic cough' (p. 66), Joey 'f[alls] slow' (p. 73) under the environmental conditions. The mobility of the men is halted by the slum environment, and Joey's pre-existing 'cough' is only worsened by the men's attempts to achieve agency. In imagining the slum space in this way, Morrison reflects on the relationship that Hill draws between philanthropic rejuvenation and pauper health; for Hill, the '[im]pure' nature of poor 'homes', 'ground[s]', and 'air' causes illness and stunts the attempts of paupers to formulate their own identities beyond their impoverishment (p. 27).⁶⁸ Although Morrison draws on the relationship between environment and identity suggested by Hill, 'Without Visible Means' challenges Hill's point of view by indicating that, despite the best efforts of philanthropists, the slum environment still stunts the agency of the poor.

Morrison's article 'Whitechapel', published on April 24th 1889 in *The Palace Journal*, indicates his interest in re-writing the slums to more authentically represent working-class experience as well as to challenge philanthropic efforts and other slum narratives. Morrison begins this article by criticising two modes of 'graphically-writ[ing]' the slums (p. 1022). By 'graphically-written', Morrison refers to the imagery by journalists, novelists, philanthropists, and other writers 'who have never seen [Whitechapel], but have heard as much about it as most have' (p. 1022). Morrison states that these spectacles are simply 'amusing to those acquainted with the district' (p. 1022). The first of these modes concerns depictions of Whitechapel as 'a horrible black labyrinth [...] swarming with human vermin, whose trade is robbery, and whose recreation is murder' (p. 1022); the second is the presentation of the slums as 'Outcast London [...] a wilderness of crazy dens in which pallid wasters crawl to die; where several families [...] watch each other starve' (p. 1022).⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Hill refers to this as 'being known' (p. 27). Speaking of her personal experiences from her philanthropic work throughout the East End, Hill describes how 'Health had been secured by an abundance of air, light, and water. Even among this very lowest class of people, I had found individuals whom I could draft from my lodging-houses into resident situations (transplanting them thus at once into a higher grade), simply because I was able to say, "I know them to be honest, I know them to be clean." Think of what this mere fact of *being known* is to the poor' (p. 27, emphasis Hill). Morrison's narrative appears to represent the similar effects of an un-rejuvenated slum environment - the poor's identity and agency is stunted by the conditions.

⁶⁹ Morrison's criticisms reflect the spectacles of the poor seen in *Oliver Twist* and *In Darkest London*; Dickens represents the criminal poor, while Harkness represents 'Outcast London'.

Directly following his comparison of these two modes, Morrison states that although ‘such spots as these there certainly are in Whitechapel’, the space ‘goes some distance beyond the bounds set’ (p. 1022). He then goes on to describe working-class public houses, places of work, banks, and poor settlements (pp. 1022 – 1023) in an attempt to de-sensationalise Whitechapel.⁷⁰ The two modes of writing that Morrison critiques suggest that the poor either use their agency to commit murder as ‘recreation’ or they are dehumanised as passive ‘palled wastrels’. Much like ‘Without Visible Means’, ‘Whitechapel’ illustrates that this is a reductive method of visualising the poor; ‘Whitechapel’ also emphasises that the environment needs to change beyond the efforts of philanthropists for the poor’s strike action to be effective. ‘Without Visible Means’ and ‘Whitechapel’ both illustrate that mapping the slums is a more accurate method than ‘graphically-wri[ting]’ them, as Morrison’s research enables him to be ‘acquitted’ with the spaces he describes. Morrison’s deconstruction of ‘graphic-writ[ing]’ is reflective of his efforts to portray slum life factually; much like Booth’s poverty maps, it reveals that there are ‘many gradients of being poor’ (Morgan, 2019, p. 23) rather than a homogenised and passive experience of poverty. Social change is stunted by the slum environment despite the efforts of philanthropists, indicating Morrison’s pessimism about philanthropy as described by critics. Despite this, he avoids committing to a single image of the working classes and the poorer classes as either wholly passive or active in attempting to change their conditions.

Linguistic Disruption in ‘Lizerunt’

The environmental disruption of ‘Without Visible Means’ is echoed in Morrison’s depiction of language in the East End. In ‘Lizerunt’, the longest narrative in *Tales of Mean Streets*, Morrison’s spatial mapping is intrinsically linked with a sense of linguistic degradation. ‘Lizerunt’ details the life of a young, ‘beaut[iful]’ (p. 31) poor woman as she drifts from a stable factory position into an abusive domestic relationship. P.J Keating argues that the narrative identifies the violent dangers facing young women within the slum space (1971, p. 175), and the dénouement of the narrative positions the slums as a separate, ‘autonomous [...] world’ with no escape (p. 190). This concept of the slums as another ‘world’ is visible

⁷⁰The Whitechapel murders of 1888 provided the street with a sensationalised reputation. In *Jack the Ripper and the London Press* (2001), L Perry Curtis notes that the murders acted as a springboard for a variety of articles that depicted the poor, the working classes, and slums spaces through images of ‘sensationalism and vulgarity’ (p. 66). Curtis also notes that the coverage of the Ripper murders acted as a precursor to the New Journalism of the late 1890s and early 1910s (p. 294). The Whitechapel Murders were referenced in multiple issues of *The Palace Journal* between October 10th 1888 and December 15th 1889, so Morrison would have been keenly aware of the murders and their effect on creative portrayals of the East End.

from the beginning of 'Lizerunt'. The narrator states in the opening lines that 'somewhere in the register was written the name Elizabeth Hunt; but seventeen years after the entry the spoken name was Lizerunt' (p. 31). Just as strike action is stunted by the slum environment, Lizer's name is disrupted by the 'spoken' word of the East End space; the blending of her forename and surname symbolically signifies a collapse of identity and illustrates a separate linguistic logic to the 'register' and the spaces beyond the slums. Morrison's invocation of the word 'runt', meaning an 'undersized or otherwise inferior' animal (*OED*, 2011), further indicates her stunted development. The title of the narrative itself also emphasises that Lizer's identity has been effectively replaced by the spoken and distorted word. Midway through the narrative, Lizer's marriage to Billy Chope leads the narrator to refer to her as 'Mrs. Chope' (p. 43) or 'Lizer Chope' (p. 62), thus continuing the linguistic distortion of her birth name. Much like Morrison's representation of the environmental disruption in 'Without Visible Means', his representation of linguistic distortion features as a method that he uses to map the slums.

As Dodge et al emphasise, maps 'inherently capture the interests of those that produced them and work to further those interests' (2011, p. 2). As much as they seek to represent all-encompassing 'truth[s]', maps feature 'many subjective decisions [which] are made about what to include, how the map will look, and what the map is seeking to communicate' (Dodge et al, 2011, p. 2). Mapping, linguistics, and the intent of the mapmaker are bound by the concept of 'heteroglossia' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 263), particularly in the case of 'Lizerunt'. For Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), heteroglossia is a fundamental component of narratives. Bakhtin states that

Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia [...] can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized). These distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances and languages, this movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersion into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogization -this is the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel (p. 263).

By juxtaposing the distortion of Lizer's name with the narration of the story, Morrison emphasises the sense of abnormality in the linguistics used within slum space; this creates an interrelationship between the 'speech of [Morrison's] characters' and the social voices of Morrison and the narrator in which the cultural divisions between the two are highlighted. The use of distorted linguistics and heteroglossic narrative is fundamentally involved in Morrison's mapmaking as a practice of spatially highlighting the differences between the

slums and the spaces occupied by Morrison and his readers. As a literary map of the East End, *Tales of Mean Streets* represents Morrison's unique perspective on the slums that developed from his sociological and ethnographic research as well as his intimate insider knowledge of the East End from his childhood in Poplar. By depicting Lizer through linguistic distortion, Morrison symbolically shows the reader the disruptive nature of the slum environment; as such, his depiction of Lizer's lack of stable identity continues his mapping of East End streets as cyclically maintaining poverty and oppression.

Lizer's deteriorating identity and her subsequent experience of domestic abuse are part of Morrison's mapping of the slum environment. P. J Keating's argument that 'violence' is the main threat facing Lizer throughout the narrative (1971, p. 175) is reductive. Violence and the loss of stable linguistic identity are consequences of the wider danger of the slum environment. Morrison's mapping of the slums through language and pauper experience is recognised by James Macarthur (1895) in his foreword to the American edition of *Tales of Mean Streets*. Macarthur states that through Morrison's 'residence and attentive study [where he] acquired his knowledge of the East End and its myriad denizens' (p. 10), his writings allow readers to 'learn from its pages more of the degradation and misery of a certain side of London life than they could in many weeks of philanthropic "slumming"' (p. 13). Morrison's mapping of East End life goes beyond the physical space encountered by middle-class slummers as his use of language embodies the experience of the poor within the slum space. Morrison's method of depicting the slums enables the further 'legibility' of pauper experience, which as Moretti notes is a fundamental component of mapmaking (1999, p. 78). This is visible in the close link between linguistic disruption and Lizer's experience of the slum environment. Lizer loses her position in the pickle factory in part three of the narrative, entitled 'A Change in Circumstances'. The narrator notes that as a result Lizer has to seek 'odd jobs' that are 'precarious, and [...] are worse paid', and states that in 'the East End they are sporadic and few' (p. 53). The narrator goes on to directly link this to Lizer's experience of domestic violence at the hands of her unemployed husband Billy, describing how 'more bashing than ever was needed to ensure the extraction of the last copper' (p. 53). Through Lizer's experience of domestic abuse, Morrison touches upon wider anxieties surrounding the poor and marital violence. In *How the Poor Live*, George Sims (1883) describes a 'familiar' image of a 'poor woman [with] her head strapped up with sticking-plaster and surgical bandages, who begs the magistrate not to punish the hulking fellow in the dock who has so brutally ill-used her' (p. 87). Sims's description demonstrates wider middle-class anxieties that pauper marriages were in fact cycles of domestic

violence.⁷¹ Morrison also links this with the instability of the East End space and the linguistic collapse of Lizer's name. The environmental stasis visible in 'A Street' operates alongside the linguistic instability in 'Lizerunt' to present the slums as spatially separate from the surrounding, more affluent environments. The East End is a 'sporadic' and 'precarious' space that leads the narrator to conclude that 'Lizer's self was scarcely what it had been' (p. 53), echoing her distorted renaming at the beginning of the narrative. The combination of abuse and poverty that Lizer experiences due to her environment leaves her with 'gaps [...] in her big white teeth' (p. 53), later leading her to experience a state of 'hysterical blubbing' (p. 59). These two descriptions illustrate a deconstruction of Lizer's physical capability to express words, further contributing to the sense of linguistic disruption in the title of the narrative and Lizer's name. Language is a key element in Morrison's attempt to make the poor's distortion of self legible, acting as an attempt to 'communicate' (Dodge et al, 2011, p. 2) poor experience through a literary map of the East End.

Morrison's linguistic mapping in *Mean Streets* results in the formation of a 'raison d'état' (Foucault, 1979, p. 4). In his addition to *The Bookman's* series of articles entitled 'How to Write a Short Story', Morrison (1897) reflects on the role of the short story in illustrating experiences of poverty. Morrison states that the writer of short stories must

review mentally everything that happens — the things that are not written in the story as well as those that are — and let him review them, not necessarily in the order in which the story presents them, but in that in which they would come before an observer in real life. In short, from the fiction let him construct ordinary, natural, detailed, unselected, unarranged fact; making notes, if necessary, as he goes. Then let him compare his raw fact with the words of the master. [...] Then, it may be, his critics will complain of his "sketchiness," and cry aloud for a "finished picture," meaning the industrious transcript of the incapable. But he will know that he has done well, and he will judge them at their worth. (pp. 45 – 46)

Morrison's use of linguistic distortion in 'Lizerunt' embodies the method of writing that he describes here. Morrison's call for 'unarranged fact' and for methods of review beyond what is 'written in the story' is demonstrative of his use of techniques that go beyond simple observation of the slums (Macarthur, 1895, p. 13); linguistics become a way of mapping pauper experiences of slum spaces. The '[un]finished picture' Morrison refers to is indicative of the distortion of Lizer's name and her lack of stable selfhood. Morrison's article further indicates the importance of ethnographic and sociological study in the formation of

⁷¹ Jenna Dodenhoff discusses this further in her article "'A Dangerous Kind': Domestic Violence and the Victorian Middle-Class' (2008). Dodenhoff reflects on John Stuart Mill's (1869) and Frances Power Cobbe's (1878) suggestion that domestic violence is a phenomenon belonging to the poorer classes (p. 1).

Tales of Mean Streets – his emphasis on note-taking and the construction of the factual is a component of his role as a researcher and naturalist writer. Lizer's experience of the slum environment illustrates his attempt to map spatial relations beyond what is visually perceptible. At the dénouement of the narrative, Lizer is forced onto the streets by Billy to make money as a sex worker. The narrator details 'a scuffle in the dark passage, with certain blows, a few broken words, and a sob', before abruptly concluding the narrative with the line 'the door slammed, and Lizer Chope was in the windy street' (p. 62). Morrison disrupts this description with a quick succession of sub-clauses, which combined with the unheard 'broken words' further alludes to a linguistic disruption in Lizer's environment.

Similar disruptions are seen throughout *Tales of Means Streets*. Joey's cough in 'Without Visible Means' fragments his direct speech (p. 80). The narrative 'Behind the Shade' also offers a reflection on expressions of class identities and their disruption within slum space. This narrative focuses on a 'common East End street', specifically zoning in on a house with a 'green door with a well-blackened knocker round the corner; and in the lower window in front stood a "shade of fruit"' — a cone of waxen grapes and apples under a glass cover' (p. 115). This 'shade of fruit' is the titular focal point of the narrative, and acts as synecdoche for a failed attempt to signify comfortable class status within the East End. The narrator describes that 'one day, a card appeared in the window, over the shade of fruit, with the legend "Piano-forte Lessons"' and notes that this 'was not approved by the street' (p. 118). The card acts as a 'standing advertisement of the fact that the Perkinses had a piano, which others did not' and also suggests to the street a 'grasping spirit on the part of people able to keep a house to themselves, with red curtains and a shade of fruit in the parlour window' (p. 118). The external elements of the Perkins's house, a 'shade of fruit', 'red curtains', and a card advertising 'Piano-forte Lessons', represent an attempt to signify an upper-working or lower-middle-class status which the other inhabitants of the street lack access to. The dénouement of the narrative disrupts this signification and reveals that the Perkinses live in extreme poverty. The narrator describes that

The room was bare and empty, and their steps and voices resounded as those of people in an unfurnished house. The washhouse was vacant, but it was clean, and there was a little net curtain in the window. The short passage and stairs were bare boards. In the back room by the stair head was a drawn window-blind, and that was all. In the front room with the striped blind and the short curtain there was a bed of rags and old newspapers; also a wooden box; and on each of these was a dead woman. Both deaths, the doctor found, were from syncope, the result of inanition (p. 126).

This description here becomes further removed from the initial image of the ‘shade of fruit’, moving from the ‘clean’ washroom to ‘beds of rags and old newspapers’, and eventually to a depiction of the Perkinses as two women who have died from malnutrition. The slum environment disrupts their attempts to signify a more comfortable lifestyle through the wax fruit, itself a symbol of artifice that emphasises the women’s lack of access to proper nutrition. As the narrator notes, ‘the street’ does ‘not approve’ of their attempts to signify a higher class identity via a shade of fruit and the piano-forte lessons; referring to both the physical space and the inhabitants, Morrison’s use of metonymy here implies that the space itself disrupts the Perkins family’s attempts to present themselves as higher class. Although not directly linked with language in the same way as Lizer’s identity, Morrison still indicates in ‘Behind the Shade’ that the poor’s ability to construct their own identities is inhibited by slum environments.

In ‘That Brute Simmons’, Morrison aligns linguistic distortion with immorality. At the beginning of the story, the narrator states that

Simmons’s infamous behaviour toward his wife is still a matter for profound wonderment among the neighbours. The other women had all along regarded him as a model husband, and certainly Mrs Simmons was a most conscientious wife. She toiled and slaved for that man, as any woman in the whole street would have maintained, far more than any husband had a right to expect. And now this was what she got for it. Perhaps he had suddenly gone mad. (p. 97)

As in ‘Behind the Shade’, Morrison emphasises the gap between the neighbours’ understanding of Simmons’s character as a ‘model husband’ and the truth of his ‘mad’ treatment of Mrs Simmons. Morrison places ‘That Brute Simmons’ directly before ‘Behind the Shade’, exaggerating the disjunctions between public perceptions and private lifestyles that occur in both stories. The narration in this section also creates a sense of linguistic distortion. Simmons is characterised as a ‘model husband’ who had ‘suddenly gone mad’. The narrator presents Simmons cryptically and mysteriously; at the beginning of the narrative, the reader is unaware of what Simmons’s ‘mad’ actions are beyond the title’s suggestion of ‘brut[al]’ domestic violence. As with Lizer’s name and the Perkins’s shade of fruit, language fails to truthfully and clearly articulate the truth behind Simmons’s actions.

As in ‘Lizerunt’, disrupted linguistics and identities reappear throughout ‘That Brute Simmons’. The narrator reveals that Mrs Simmons ‘had been the widowed Mrs Ford’, and that ‘twelve years as Mrs Ford had left her still childless, and childless she remained as Mrs Simmons’ (p. 97). Much like Lizer, Mrs Simmons’s identity is presented as linguistically unstable as it shifts from Ford to Simmons; this is further emphasised by Morrison’s decision

not to provide Mrs Simmons with a first name. In addition, Morrison characterises Mrs Simmons in relation to her persistent ‘childless[ness]’ which recalls the regressive stasis visible in ‘A Street’ (pp. 24 – 25). Mrs Simmons’s childless state remains static, even though her linguistic identity continues to change. As the story unfolds, it becomes apparent that Mrs Simmons’s unstable identity is the cause of Simmons’s ‘mad[ness]’. Her ex-husband, the allegedly deceased Bob Ford, returns from his career sailing on a ‘tramp steamer’ (p. 97) and confronts Simmons. Bob is entirely characterised as a disruptive force: he threatens to force Mrs Simmons to remarry him unless Simmons should pay an unattainable fee of ‘five pound’ (p. 109). Bob’s speech is distorted and often grammatically incorrect. He introduces himself as ‘ol’ Bob Ford’ and states that ‘ain’t done for [...] I’ve ‘ad a few years o’ knockin’ about [...] an’ now [...] I’ve come back to see my wife’ (p. 107). Bob’s language reflects his threats to disrupt Simmons’s marriage. Words like ‘ol’ and ‘ad’ are elliptical, and his use of the informal contraction ‘ain’t’ breaks typical grammatical constructions. Unable to pay Ford’s price, Simmons decides to ‘scuttl[e]’ away from his home and leaves Mrs Simmons with Ford; in turn, Ford ‘thr[ows]’ himself from a window and ‘disappear[s] into the gloom’ and is ‘seen by no living soul’ (p. 111). Here, Morrison breaks the reader’s expectation of domestic violence as both men escape without harming Mrs Simmons, and the narrator concludes that Simmons’s and Ford’s ‘base desertion’ is ‘an astonishment to the neighbours’ (p. 111). The disrupted linguistics in Bob’s threats to Simmons, the public and private perceptions of the Simmons couple, and Mrs Simmons’s instable marriage status all culminate in this final section. The narrator’s reference to the neighbours’ perception of the Simmons family cyclically returns to the opening of the story while also disrupting the indication of ‘brute’ violence suggested by the title. Much like Lizer, Mrs Simmons is left alone and without a clear identity. As both of her husbands have disappeared, she is left without a reference point for either her Mrs Ford or Mrs Simmons identities. In ‘Lizerunt’, ‘Behind the Shade’, and ‘That Brute Simmons’, language is corrupted and unstable. In each of these stories, Morrison’s central characters are left without a stable identity and experience either a literal or metaphorical death that is directly connected with various forms distorted meanings and linguistics.

Furthermore, Morrison’s use of the short story form itself embodies disruption. ‘Lizerunt’, ‘A Street’, ‘Without Visible Means’, and ‘Behind the Shade’ all end with a sentence that rejects the possibility of a fully-formed narrative or a ‘finished picture’. Morrison maps the titular mean streets through poor conditions and language fragmentation, opposing them with the lifestyles and linguistic logics of more affluent environments.

Morrison's mapmaking, therefore, enables what Foucault calls a *raison d'état*; the linguistic and environmental space is placed in a 'false' category in opposition to 'true' or positive social norms (p. 20). Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* represents a 'regime of truth' (Foucault, 1979, p. 18) as he maps poor life as a 'false' experience of environment and language, depicting it in opposition to dominant, middle-class environments. The 'raw fact' of pauper experience that Morrison portrays in *Tales of Mean Streets* is consistently represented as a disruptive form of 'true' experience, as evident in the distorted linguistics of 'Lizerunt'.

The broken linguistics and identities seen in Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* are reflected throughout his oeuvre. In *A Child of the Jago*, Morrison's characterisation of Dicky Perrott echoes the linguistic disruption experienced by Lizer, Mrs Simmons, and the Perkins family. Tim Youngs (2013) argues that in *A Child of the Jago* language undergoes a 'transformation' which sees Morrison represent the 'broken dialect of the slum-dwellers' (p. 51). This dialect is represented beyond Morrison's reproduction of pauper speech as he also epitomises its 'broken' nature through the slum environment and the poor. Dicky is initially introduced to the reader as 'a slight child, by whose size you might have judged his age at five' despite the fact that his 'face was of a serious and troubled age' (p. 14). This acts as synecdoche for the Jago's broken language, as the signification of Dicky's physical appearance is contradictory; Dicky's true age is legible only to the poor inhabitants of the East End, as only 'one who knew the children of the Jago, and could tell, might held him eight, or from that to nine' (p. 14). This initial description of Dicky illustrates a shared, broken, and contradictory experience of meaning in the slums. Like *Tales of Mean Streets*, this is also emphasised by the speech of the poor. In Dicky's first instance direct speech, he asks his mother if she has 'got anythink to eat?' to which she responds 'p'raps there's a bit of bread in the cupboard. I don't want nothing' (p. 15). Dicky's elliptical question, which begins with 'got', as well as his mother's contradictory use of the phrase 'I don't want nothing' further emphasises the lack of linguistic stability and certainty in the Jago. As Youngs argues, this uncertainty is epitomised in the final scenes of the novel in which Dicky is stabbed and killed in a fight between rival slum factions (p. 52). In this final section of the novel, the narrator skips four years of Dicky's life and notes that on his seventeenth birthday he had 'grown his utmost, and stood at five feet two' (p. 151). His small size recalls his 'slight' frame at the onset of the narrative, and indicates a sense of stasis seen in the slums of *Tales of Mean Streets*. During his subsequent death, Dicky is left 'gasping' (p. 181). In his final breath, he states that 'there's 'nother way out – better' (p. 182). Dicky's 'truncated

words match his stunted physique', directly drawing together his broken dialect, the contradiction of his physical appearance, and his loss of self at the novel's dénouement (Youngs, 2013, p. 52). Much like Lizer and Mrs Simmons/Ford in *Tales of Mean Streets*, Dicky experiences a stunting of the self that is reflected in his disrupted speech and the loss of his life at the end of the novel. Furthermore, the suggestion that death is a 'way out' of the slums connects his truncated speech and life with the spatial oppression of the Jago. Dicky's final line of dialogue is the last sentence of the novel. As such, the novel ends abruptly. This sudden ending symbolises Dicky's similarly shortened life, and in turn echoes the abrupt final sequence of 'Lizerunt' in which the narrator states that 'the door slammed, and Lizer Chope was in the windy street' (p. 62). *A Child of the Jago* develops directly out of Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets*: linguistic, physical, and personal truncation are abundant in both texts, thus illustrating that for Morrison distortion is an integral element in mapping slum environments and pauper experiences.

Linguistic Netherworlds: Morrison's Slums as False Spaces

Morrison maps the space of the poor by indicating ways in which they disrupt the language and norms of the richer classes, placing them within a 'false' category. As a mapmaker, Morrison portrays slum space as a linguistic netherworld that counters his intellectual community at the People's Palace. As seen in 'A Street', the slums are static and unable to progress or change; the slums and the poor also have distorted and broken linguistics, as evidenced in the heteroglossia of 'Lizerunt' and 'That Brute Simmons'. Linguistic netherworlds are decadent spaces that represent the distortion, disruption, or subversion of the mapmaker's point of view. Bourget's decadent concept of 'decomposition' is visible in Morrison's depiction of the poor's speech, in which 'Correct Language' falls apart (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 263). The 'independence' of 'phrase' and 'word' is visible within Morrison's use of the short story structure; each narrative is 'independent', even if it contributes to Morrison's overall mapping of his linguistic netherworld. Furthermore, Symons's characterisation of decadence through its 'ingenious deformation of language' (p. 6) is also visible in Morrison's work; this is seen throughout *Tales of Mean Streets*, but is most clear in 'Lizerunt' as the protagonist experiences a loss of self as a result of her experiences of the slum environment. Throughout the short stories, numerous references are made to failed or misunderstood words: In 'A Street', 'poetry' is described as 'foreign' (p. 24) and in 'On the Stairs' the narrator notes that 'in the East End, when a woman has not enough money [...] she does not say so in plain words' (p. 202). The 'true' experiences of Morrison's raison

d'état are visible within his personal life as well as the artistic and intellectual groups he engages with; the linguistic netherworlds in *Tales of Mean Streets* are mapped as opposite, 'false' spaces through his imaginings of poor voices, linguistics, and environments. Considering his artistic, philanthropic, and intellectual influences reveals Morrison's mapmaking and formation of linguistic netherworlds to be ideological in a highly Foucauldian sense; the slums are positioned as 'forbidden places' that are considered in 'relation to society and to the human environment' in which Morrison lives (1984, p. 4). Morrison's mapmaking is highly subjective; despite his attempts to make legible the experiences of the poor that he researched and spent time with, his literary maps position his ideas of normality and 'true' experience by presenting the slums as linguistically opposite to his own spatial perceptions.

Through linguistic distortion and his mapping of static slum spaces, Morrison imagines London's East End streets as netherworlds. As noted, this term 'netherworld' was used most prominently in Gissing's slum novel *The Nether World* and refers to a space 'beneath the earth; of, belonging to, or native to hell or the underworld' (*OED*, 2003). As an underworld, the slums embody a disruption of conventional morality and an inversion of 'true' experience. These slum netherworlds are fundamentally decadent, characterised by their decomposition of speech, morality, and logic. Furthermore, by voicing the poor's experience through distorted linguistics Morrison portrays the slums as 'contradictory space[s]' (Jerram, 2013, p. 316) that operate in a separate logic to middle- and upper-class environments. The intellectual community that Morrison operates in within the early 1890s indicates at least part of what this 'true' experience is and can be used to illustrate how his slum netherworlds invert the norms of his artistic group.⁷² Morrison's time at the People's Palace provided a creatively stimulating community for him during his research in the East End. During his time as the sub-editor of the People's Palace weekly periodical, *The Palace Journal*, Morrison would have been fully engaged in and invested in the Palace's intellectual

⁷² A sense of camaraderie and shared moral values is also seen in Charles Booth's research network. Rosemary O'Day and David Englander (1993) highlight that Booth's team of researchers formed an 'intellectual world' (p. 16). This world enabled 'immense opportunities for the newly educated woman [...] or the young ambitious graduate', and Booth's team used the knowledge and intellectual abilities at their disposal (p. 12). Using Toynbee Hall as a 'work station', this intellectual world was easily able to enter the poorer spaces of the East End and gain materials for their research (p. 12). O'Day and Englander's comments here are somewhat applicable to Morrison's own 'world' in the early 1890s, and Toynbee Hall's close proximity to the People's Palace indicates that there was likely a strong dialogue between the two.

community.⁷³ As Cubitt evidences, Morrison embodied the values of the People's Palace and reflected the ideologies of Besant in his work (2020, p. 73); as sub-editor, Morrison himself comments on a sense of 'Institute Patriotism', or an 'unselfish individual devotion to the general good', which illuminates his enthusiasm for the ideology of the People's Palace and its journal (Morrison, 1889, p. 947; Cubitt, 2020, p. 73). *The Palace Journal* makes numerous references to the surrounding East End streets as a conflicting world. In the first issue, Besant notes that the People's Palace brought into 'the very heart of the 'Joyless City [...] amusement and recreation' (1887, p. 2). Besant's use of the phrase 'Joyless City' here references the East End. Later in an article published on March 13th 1889, Morrison describes the inhabitants of and visitors to the Palace as 'WestEnders' who take it upon themselves to make judgements on the poor's habits and behaviours (p. 950). In both these examples, East End inhabitants are spatially and morally set apart from 'WestEnders'.

The Palace Journal's general focus on moral progress, knowledge, and theatrical concerts also sets the Palace space apart from the East End when considered in conjunction with Morrison's 'A Street'; the inhabitants of the titular street lack access to entertainments like the 'theatre' (p. 24), and they are unaffected by progress due to their apparent 'stasis' (p. 17). The practice of positioning the slums as a place where culture and progress undergo 'decompos[ition]' (Bourget, 1884, p. 180) also further evidences the use of a decadent mode in Morrison's slum writing. As noted, the narrator begins by leading the reader 'down' through Cornhill, indicating a shift from the comfort and morals of Cornhill Street – the use of the verb 'down' connotes the hellish nature of a netherworld. The last narrative in the collection, "'All That Messuage'", briefly returns to Cornhill in its opening paragraph. The narrative follows Old Jack Randall, a working-class man, who uses his life's savings to

⁷³ Founded by chief editor Walter Besant, the journal acted as a 'special organ' for the Palace in its foundational years and promised to provide a 'chronicle of the rise and progress and the onward march of the Palace' (Besant, 1887, p. 1). Throughout its publication history, the journal was sold at the cost of one penny, but offered additional discounts to Palace members. The journal contained literature, lifestyle advice, musings on art and culture alongside articles covering national news and local East End events. Reader engagement was key to *The Palace Journal's* success. Each issue of the journal featured a section entitled 'Competitions, Puzzles, and Prizes' in which readers could win prizes of up to fifteen shillings by submitting correct answers to crosswords, word squares, and number puzzles, that were published alongside a series of "Letters to the Editor" from members of the Palace. *The Palace Journal* represents a key intersection between the Palace's intellectual community and East End cultures and lifestyles, offering an insight into the ideas and concepts that informed the development of the People's Palace. Morrison and Besant met as a result of a flattering article Morrison had written on 'The People's Palace' in a January issue of *The People* (1889). As Cubitt notes, the article praises Besant's 'sympathetic novels' and the philanthropic work of the People's Palace member Edmund Hay Currie (2020, p. 72). His article in *The People* was no doubt 'instrumental in his appointment as Besant's subeditor on the journal in March of that year' (p. 72).

acquire a mortgage and become a landlord in the East End. Old Jack fails in his role as a landlord due to an inability to understand the legal wording and tax regulations that come with owning a building, and he ultimately nearly dies due to the stress of being a landlord; a local worker's strike leaves his poor tenants unable to pay rent, resulting in Old Jack becoming 'helpless [...] with nothing in hand' (p. 301). The legal language of the mortgage is intimately intertwined with the West End, and more specifically Cornhill. At the beginning of the narrative, the narrator notes that Old Jack spends 'half-an-hour of helpless stupefaction in a solicitor's office in Cornhill' to receive a mortgage from 'the Indubitable Perpetual Building Society' (p. 274). Jack's 'helpless stupefaction' in understanding the legal terminology of his mortgage signifies a linguistic gap between Cornhill and Jack's understanding of language. The name of the building society further emphasises this through the satirically excessive use of adjectives 'Indubitable' and 'Perpetual'. Cornhill is intellectually separated from Jack's East End, mapping a spatial and linguistic gap between the two; this problematises, 'interrogate[s]', and 'explore[s]' (Dowling, 2014, p. ix) the slums as spaces where language is distorted and misunderstood. While Morrison deliberately satirises the bloated nature of legal lexis and does not advocate it as 'true' experience, he still presents linguistic differences between West End and East End cultures that are reflective of the discourse of *The Palace Journal*. The West End community of the People's Palace is progressive and 'Joy[ful]', compositing the 'true' in Morrison's *raison d'état*; the East End is a netherworld that is linguistically distorted and 'false'. The language and norms of the poor are always defined through their disruption of the norms of Morrison's "progressive" intellectual community.

Morrison's construction of poor voices throughout *Tales of Mean Streets* further emphasises the position of the slums as a linguistic netherworld. The title of "'All That Messuage'" derives from Old Jack's lease which the narrator quotes at the beginning of the narrative. The lease states 'All that messuage dwelling-house and premises now standing on the said parcel of ground', and the narrator goes on to say that 'the phrase was a very fine one, and, with others more intricate, lent not a little to the triumph and the perplexity the transaction filled old Jack Randall withal' (p. 273). The non-sensical fragment of the quotation from the lease echoes Jack's 'stupefaction' and 'perplexity' when listening to the solicitor's utterances. The use of 'All that messuage' in the title further disrupts this already meaningless phrase, evidencing that Jack's understanding of language is separate from the language used in Cornhill. Standing outside of the solicitor's office, Old Jack declares to his wife 'well, mother, we done it' to which his wife responds by stating 'Yus, fa', you're a

lan'lord now' (p. 275). The shift from the legal language at the beginning of "All That Messuage" to Jack's direct speech is a form of heteroglossia, illustrating a 'multiplicity of social voices' in a short passage of the text. For Bakhtin, the use of different voices creates a 'mutual understanding' between reader and author and 'crystalis[es a] unity' between the two – the 'unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, [or] "Correct Language"' (1981, p. 270). In Morrison's work, this unity between author and reader is visible in the narrator's use of Cornhill as a symbol of shared comfort.

Unlike Bakhtin, however, I am not arguing that these 'compositional unities' are all-encompassing; Morrison's inclusion of poor voices presents them as linguistically disjunctive in comparison to the "correct language" of the narrator.⁷⁴ This maps slum spaces as distorted environments and further differentiates the voices of the poor from the richer classes. Morrison's heteroglossia distinguishes social classes rather than unifying them, much in the same way that Booth's class categories separate the poor and rich by characteristics and income. When Old Jack interrupts a strike to complain that the workers have failed to pay rent, violence and immorality are directly linked with the language of the poor. Old Jack 'growl[s] sulkily' at the strike workers, ordering them to 'pay what you owe me' (p. 299). In response, the leader of the strike states to the group that Jack is 'more than a greedy, thievin', overfed lan'lord, my frien's [...] 'E's a dirty, crawlin' blackleg' (p. 299). The narrator's description of Jack 'growling' portrays his utterance in animalistic terms, and the voice of the strike leader employs elliptical words like 'frien's' to indicate a sense of language disruption similarly to 'Lizerunt'. The use of the term 'blackleg', a term coined in the 1840s to refer to a 'person who continues to work despite a ban or strike by a trade union' (*OED*, 2011), is employed to heteroglossic effect; the use of East End dialect further separates the language of the poor and that of the reader. The strike leader ends his speech to the crowd by shouting 'that bleedin' blackleg!— blackleg!— blackleg!—' (p. 300). The repetition of East End dialect and the broken nature of the speech further indicates linguistic disruption. Following this, the narrator notes that Old Jack 'was down. A dozen heavy boots

⁷⁴ Many critics have engaged with heteroglossia in the Victorian novel specifically. Wendell V. Harris (1990) highlights the novels of Dickens and George Eliot, arguing that 'each person [in the novel] experiences, thinks, and speaks partially as a reflection of social status, regional background, nationality, and professional training. Unique combinations of ideological and idiolectical forces in each person produce the manifold variety of ways in which thought is expressed: the result is what Bakhtin calls "heteroglossia."' (p. 446). As the most 'well-developed' voice within a text, the narrator becomes aligned with standard English and the language of the reader; the voices of working-class characters reinforce conflicts between social groups through linguistic differences (p. 451).

were at work about his head and belly’ and states that ‘over the shoulders of the kickers whirled the buckle-end of a belt. “One for the old cow”, said a voice’ (p. 300). The narrator’s description aligns this escalating violence with the broken and idiomatic speech of the strike leader, and the unattributed voice at the end of this scene emphasises the link between dialect and violence suggested by Morrison. The narrator indicates in the final paragraph of “‘All That Messuage’” that Old Jack’s beating is ultimately an indirect result of his ‘building society mortgage’ (p. 301), returning to the linguistic ‘stupefaction’ (p. 274) that occurs at the beginning of the narrative. “‘All That Messuage’” exemplifies Morrison’s emphasis on linguistic disruption and misunderstanding in slum spaces, and embodies a descent into what is perceived as a linguistic netherworld by his intellectual community.

Conclusion

Throughout *Tales of Mean Streets*, Morrison imagines the poor and the titular East End streets as decadent, linguistic netherworlds where language decomposes and becomes distorted. Morrison’s slums are hellish spaces in which pauper identities and speech fail to function, which epitomises a descent from his own intellectual community of ‘Westenders’. His organisation of the poor into ‘false’ or inversive positions, which Morrison constructs through disrupted linguistics and a presentation of the slums as static spaces, is visible in his use of heteroglossia; the juxtaposition of poor dialects and the narrator’s voice creates a distinction between poor voices and linguistics that are perceived as “‘Correct’” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 263). In addition, Morrison maps the slums and their gradients of poverty with a sense of pessimism towards environmental reform. The spatial relations of the linguistic netherworlds featured throughout *Tales of Mean Streets* position slum spaces as static; they remain decadent spaces of violence, misunderstanding, and disorder. As a mapmaker, Morrison makes these relations visible and legible to his audience; in doing so, he further emphasises the cultural differences between his intellectual community at the People’s Palace and the slum dwellers described throughout the novel. In *Children of the Ghetto*, Zangwill also represents the slums through linguistics; in Zangwill’s case, however, linguistics are not distorted or subverted, but rather they are used to represent the spatial experience of East End Jews and to write against anti-immigration discourses.

2.2 – Cockney-Yiddish Spaces and the Cockney Jew in Israel Zangwill's *The Children of the Ghetto* (1892)

Israel Zangwill's novel *The Children of the Ghetto* (1892), like Morrison's work, illustrates relationships between slum spaces and the linguistics of poor communities. Unlike Morrison, however, Zangwill's text does not attempt to map the gradations of poverty through a linguistic netherworld. Instead, Zangwill utilises language, specifically a hybrid of East End dialects and Yiddish, to re-write narratives surrounding East End Jewish communities in the turbulent period preceding the 1905 Aliens Act. In *Children of the Ghetto*, the language used within the titular space acts as a synecdoche for Jewish communities in the East End as well as the hybrid identity of the 'Cockney Jew' (Nahshon, 2006, p. 6). Zangwill deconstructs the images of London's Jewish population seen in earlier novels by representing this identity through spatial relations in the East End. As Emma Francis and Nadia Valman (2011) describe, from the 1880s onwards London's slums became an 'area of dense Jewish settlement' and 'beliefs about racial difference crucially informed debate about urban degeneration in the late-Victorian period' (p. 4). In these debates East End Jews were 'simultaneously idealized and denigrated' (p. 5). Philanthropists like Beatrice Webb (1889) considered East End Jews to be 'courte[ous]' and 'tender', praising their ambition to 'rise in the social scale' (p. 564); other writers, like Jack London (1903), stressed the 'undesirable' nature of growing numbers of Jewish inhabitants in spaces which were already 'crowded' (p. 210). The increasingly public debates surrounding Jewish identity and migration became known as 'The Jewish Question'. Jewish author and journalist Laurie Magnus (1902) defines the Jewish Question as the discussion of the 'progress and reform' of Jewish culture following mass migration from a variety of countries; as such, this issue became an 'international one' as well as an interrogation into Jewish communities in London (p. 8).⁷⁵ Numerous solutions to the Jewish Question were suggested in political, social, and economic debates in the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth, placing Jewish identities at the forefront of discussions of London's slum spaces.

⁷⁵ Magnus's text, *Aspects of the Jewish Question*, is an extremely in-depth study of the titular Question in relation to Zionism and antisemitism. Magnus particularly critiques the 'lack [of] breadth and precision of view' of 'non-Jewish' writers in engaging with this question, while also praising Zangwill's ability to encapsulate a whole picture of Jewish culture beyond Zionist ideals. Magnus refers to Zangwill throughout the text as both a figure of authority and as an important Jewish literary celebrity, often simply referring to him as 'Mr. Zangwill'.

The slums of the East End were a primary object of study in the dialogues surrounding the Jewish Question, illustrating a connection between spatiality, community, and Jewish identity. As Seth Koven (2010) indicates, the ‘social question and the Jewish question – and their representation – converged in the slums of late-Victorian East London as each functioned as the doppelganger for the other’ (p. 1). At the same moment in which ‘thousands of impoverished Russo-Polish Jews fled pogroms in Eastern Europe and Imperial Russia for the [...] squalor of East London’, the Ripper murders made the East End notorious as a space of physical and sexual danger (p. 38). As a consequence, the late 1880s saw a rise in journalism, photography and other art forms attempting to satisfy the public’s desire for slumming via a composite spectacle of danger, poverty, and the immigrant as other (p. 38).⁷⁶ The convergence of poverty and Jewishness accentuated concerns regarding overcrowding in the slums, further fuelling discussions of the Jewish Question. The 1905 Aliens Act intended to provide answers to the Question. As David Glover (2012) describes, this ‘amendment was more than the slight adjustment to an existing body of legislation that its name implied’; the Act brought about a ‘radical overhaul of the state’s procedures in dealing with foreign nationals seeking entry to Britain’ (p. 1). As Glover goes on to discuss, the Act was the first recognisably modern law that ‘sought permanently to restrict immigration into Britain according to systematic bureaucratic criteria that were initially administered and interpreted by a new kind of public functionary: the immigration officer’ (p. 1). This Act encouraged immigration officers to make judgments on which immigrants should be allowed to migrate into Britain. In many ways, this system is not dissimilar to the desire to differentiate between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor that was encouraged by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act (Mayhew, 1851, p. 5).⁷⁷ In his report on the 1905 Aliens

⁷⁶ The Jewish Question and the Ripper murders were conflated in the investigation of the murders as well as in the media’s response. As Sara Blair (1996) describes, it was ‘repeatedly asserted that no Englishman could have perpetrated such a horrible crime as that of Hanbury Street, and that it must have been done by a Jew’ (p. 489). She notes that on a wall in ‘Goulston Street, near the spot where a bloody apron connected with the Ripper had been found, a message was scrawled: “The Juwes are The men That Will not be Blamed for nothing” (p. 489). This graffito, combined with the general belief that the Ripper murderer must have been an immigrant, fueled antisemitism; police investigators searched for a ‘man of “age 37,” with a “rather dark beard and moustache, dark jacket and trousers,” and “black felt hat,” who “spoke with a foreign accent,” while the *Illustrated Police News*, a popular crime sheet, pictured the suspect in virtual caricatures of the semitic “type”’ (p. 490). Polish Jew and barber Aaron Kosminski is often cited as one of the suspects of the Ripper murders (Knepper, 2008; Monk, 2012).

⁷⁷ Immigrants would be able to provide the immigration officer with ‘evidence’ of their requirement to migrate to England; one such example is that proof that they were escaping political or religious persecution was often required upon entry (Glover, 2012, p. 5). Likewise, admission into a workhouse required ‘involved a theatrical display of needs, rights and obligations that sometimes took place in the public gaze’ (Green 2010, p. 165).

Act, Henry Henriques (1906) notes that the legislation aimed to tackle the ‘greatest increase of alien immigration that had taken place since the Wars of the Roses’, and emphasises the importance of distinguishing ‘alien friends’ from ‘alien enemies’ (p. 2).⁷⁸ According to Henriques’s work, an immigrant could be judged as a ‘friend’ or ‘enemy’ depending on their ability to anglicise their religious and cultural norms (p. 194). Jewish figures and identities were therefore constantly scrutinised at the fin de siècle, whether by the gaze of pleasure-seeking slummers or the legislative judgement of the immigration officer.

The convergence of East End space and Jewish identity is not only visible in forms of observation; the space itself becomes a method of articulating and building Jewish communities. Discussing the slums around Whitechapel and Spitalfields, Neil Bullman et al (2012) describe how

the area [...] became known as the refuge of swelling immigrant communities: over the course of centuries, layers of newcomers – Huguenots, Irish and Germans, Italians and Chinese, Flemings and Poles – had made their homes in the East End. In particular, a Jewish population of more than 10,000 had come to Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century fleeing religious persecution in Russia and eastern Europe. This Jewish community was concentrated in and around Shoreditch, Spitalfields and Whitechapel, to such an extent that the street signs in these neighbourhoods were written in Yiddish; the former Huguenot chapel on Brick Lane became a synagogue. [...] the fact that immigrant ethnic groups tended to live in tight-knit communities, and that they took on some of the most unpleasant jobs made them even more objects of contempt and fear. (pp. 144 – 145)⁷⁹

This statement illustrates how spaces like Spitalfields were used to forge new Jewish communities in the East End. The Yiddish street signs here illustrate the formation of a linguistic community able to partake in a shared understanding. As Beatrice Webb writes in her report on ‘The Jewish Community’, the ‘prints of Hebrew’ and Yiddish maintain a sense of Jewishness even in the face of antisemitism, anglicisation, and poverty (1889, p. 584).

⁷⁸ While Henriques does not directly refer to Jewish immigrants in his report, his earlier book on *The Return of the Jews to England, Being a Chapter in the History of the English Law* (1905) indicates a concern with Jewish migration specifically.

⁷⁹ Whitechapel and Spitalfields, among other places in the East End, continue to be spaces inhabited by immigrant communities. Maureen Heyns (2008) argues that these areas continue to be populated by immigrant communities from the 1600s onwards as they ‘constituted a point of entry into London for political refugees and economic immigrants, not only due to its reputation of hosting nonconformity and its accessible yet highly competitive economy of (street) markets and small-scale workshops, but also because of its proximity to the Pool of London – the point of immigrant disembarkation – its cheap, speculative housing and its mixed, densely built fabric’ (p. 227). Since the 1890s numerous cultures have found home in these spaces, including Bangladeshi and Somali communities; as Heyns argues, this has led Whitechapel and Spitalfields to become a ‘mosaic of divergent micro-worlds etched upon a layered historical landscape’ in the twenty-first century. For more on these spaces in relation to immigrant communities, see Heyns’s ‘“Rubbing the magic lamp” Heterotopian strategies in London’s eastern City fringe’ in Dehaene, M. and Caeter, L. D. (eds.) *Heterotopia and the City* (2008).

Expanding on this, Webb praises the socialist attitudes of both the poorer and richer Jews within these communities; this attitude develops from their ability to hold onto their culture and language, creating a sense of care among groups of ‘co-religionists’ (p. 589).⁸⁰ As Benjamin Gidley (2014) argues, Jewish communities were often naturally aligned with socialist values through ‘Jewish cultural traditions’ and ‘Yiddish political spaces’ (p. 62); the ghetto space accentuated these socialist values through an intense ‘moral community’ (p. 76). Socialists in these communities were not ‘radicals who simply happened to be Jewish’ – Jewish ghetto culture naturally converged with socialist values and practices.⁸¹ Webb’s admiration for Jewish groups develops from the socialism inherent to these spaces, both in response to the conditions of the East End and as a result of religious tradition.

While East End spaces enabled Jewish communities to craft a sense of self, the growth of these slums contributed to the sense of anxiety and ‘fear’ felt by outsiders. Charles Booth’s 1902 work on streets ‘North of the Thames’ describes ‘poor, ignorant, half-civilized foreign Jews [who form] no part of “heathen” London’ (p. 7); according to Booth, their apparently ‘half-civilized’ nature results from their inability to integrate into English cultural practises (p. 9).⁸² Booth’s statement here is indicative of a wider antisemitism that grew in response to developing Jewish slum communities in the lead-up to the 1905 Aliens Act.⁸³ This debate also featured heavily in journals and periodicals. The Conservative newspaper *St. James Gazette* featured a hostile article by an anonymous writer entitled ‘Jewish East London’ (1887), in which they argued that the Jewish ‘colonies’ in East London would lead to ‘moral and physical degradation’ if their culture, language, and religion were not forced to undergo anglicisation (p. 5).⁸⁴ Ultimately, the writer calls for action within London to stop

⁸⁰ Webb’s report features in Vol. 1 of Booth’s *Life and Labour of the People in London*.

⁸¹ Charitable giving was a key part of Jewish culture. In Jewish communities, tax-paying or richer Jews would financially support poorer Jews and their schools (Feldman, 2011, p. 7). Gidley concludes that Jewish migrant history and socialist histories are convergent, further emphasising the link between the two. He calls for a history of Jewish socialism that does not focus on socialists ‘who simply happened to be Jewish’ but rather on the intense influences and connections between Jewish and socialist groups (p. 76). For more on the links between socialism and Jewish history, see his article ‘Towards a cosmopolitan account of Jewish socialism: class, identity and immigration in Edwardian London’.

⁸² Webb ceased writing for Booth after Vol. 2 of *Life and Labour* (1891) to partake in other philanthropic research efforts (Bhullar, 2016), so this may somewhat account in the shift from the sympathy for Jewish communities in Webb’s report to the antisemitic perspective seen in this later volume.

⁸³ For more on the disseminated and wide-spread nature of antisemitism in nineteenth-century popular culture, see Kathy Lavezzo’s (2016) ‘Coda’ in *The Accommodated Jew: English Antisemitism from Bede to Milton*. In Chapter 1.1, I engage with Lavezzo’s ideas in my reading of Dickens’s Fagin as a visual spectacle.

⁸⁴ The *St. James Gazette* was an evening newspaper founded and run by Conservative MP Henry Hicks Gibbs. The newspaper supported Britain’s colonial behaviours abroad and was often outspoken about migration. For more on the newspaper, see Alan J. Lee (1975) *The origins of the popular press in England, 1855-1914*.

the ‘demoralization’ of the East End (p. 5). An 1884 article in the Jewish-socialist journal *The Polish Yidel*, written by editor Morris Winchevsky, illustrates the damaging nature of such imperial perspectives. Winchevsky asks the reader: ‘do the people think [Jews are] equal to all others? Do the people say, as well, that a Jew is just as good as a Christian? Do the people like the Jews?’, before answering with the exclamative ‘we must say: No!’ (p. 69). He concludes his article by stating that Jewish slum communities experience prejudice not only because of their heritage but also due to their poverty; he warns that imperial and class-based attitudes could lead East End spaces to ‘be bloodier and more terrible than a pogrom in Balta’ (p. 70). As Winchevsky’s conclusion illustrates, slums like those in Whitechapel and Spitalfields became inseparable from the debates on social class and Jewish identity that eventually led to the 1905 Aliens Act.

Israel Zangwill’s novels, plays, poems, essays, and political pamphlets represent the experiences of East End Jews at the fin de siècle. Zangwill was born in Whitechapel to eastern European immigrants and went on to be educated at the Jews’ Free School, also in the East End (Hess et al, 2013, p. 356). Much like Arthur Morrison, Zangwill experienced East End life first-hand; he also would have understood the duality of living in a tight-knit, supportive Jewish community while also facing antisemitic prejudices from outsiders. His personal connection with the East End is reflected in his repeated returns to the Jewish slum or ‘ghetto’ in his work: his novels *The Children of the Ghetto*, *The Grandchildren of the Ghetto* (1892), *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (1898), *Ghetto Tragedies* (1899) and *Ghetto Comedies* (1907) illustrate a consistent preoccupation with Jewish spatial experience, and his stage adaptation of *Children of the Ghetto* in 1899 illustrates his engagement with East End spaces in a variety of narrative forms. Zangwill’s representation of spatial relations is not only visible in his fiction; throughout his career he also engaged with politicised concepts and understandings of space. As Jonathan Hess, Maurice Samuels, and Nadia Valman (2013) discuss, during the mid-1890s he became an ‘ardent supporter of Zionism, representing Britain at several Zionist conferences’ (p. 357).⁸⁵ He later removed himself from mainstream Zionism and founded the Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO), which ‘sought to establish an autonomous homeland for the Jews anywhere that unsettled land

⁸⁵ Movement founded by Theodore Herzl in 1896. The Zionist movement aimed to create Jewish settlements within Palestine through diplomatic strategies (Sher, 2017, p. 235). Key members of the Zionist movement Chaim Weizmann and Richard Gottheil indicate in the beginning of their 1918 pamphlet that achieving settlement space in Palestine would be the final answer to the ‘Jewish Problem’ by providing Jews with a singular ‘nationhood’ (p. 3). Throughout his life, Zangwill would publish works challenging both the Zionist movement and Herzl himself (Faris, 1975, p. 74).

could be obtained' (p. 357).⁸⁶ Both Zangwill's literary and wider works operate in relation to concepts of space. Zangwill's frequent interrogation of the East End 'ghetto' in his fiction, a term referring to a 'quarter in a city, esp. a thickly populated slum area, inhabited by a minority group or groups, usually as a result of economic or social pressures' (*OED*, 1899), indicates his engagement with concepts of homelessness and space through the slum novel. Comparing Zangwill's narrative technique to hinged-mirror photography, Amanda K. Sharick (2015) suggests that *Children of the Ghetto* features 'technological modes of representation that have a deeper political significance' (p. 119). Hinged-mirror photography involves a five-hinge mirror with a subject in the centre, normally a person, which allows for the subject to be seen from all angles; as Sharick argues, Zangwill's text achieves this same effect by presenting the 'illusion of one image where there are actually many', thus exposing 'narratives of identity as constructions' (p. 120).⁸⁷ Sharick argues that in creating this effect Zangwill self-consciously 'challenge[s] or manipulate[s] typologies' of Jewishness and deconstructs attempts to conceptualise Jewish culture as homogenous (p. 120).⁸⁸ Seen in this way Zangwill's representation of the ghetto is reflective of many aspects of late-nineteenth-century Jewish identity, intersecting with several themes including his own experiences in the East End, his dialogue with Zionism, and his wider engagements with spatiality and Jewish culture.

Zangwill's work uses spatial relations to complicate one-dimensional stereotypes of Jewishness, and this is reflected in Zangwill's self-definition as a 'Cockney Jew'. In a memorial lecture given at the *Jewish Historical Society of England*, Joseph Leftwich (1952) notes that Zangwill often stated that 'I am a Jew, of course [...] But I am not an alien. I am a pure Cockney' (p. 86). Leftwich goes on to state that Zangwill's self-identification as a 'Cockney Jew' was often used against him, especially in opposition to his Zionist writings and his work with the ITO. Leftwich provides the example of an anonymously written article

⁸⁶ Hess et al also note that Zangwill was an outspoken supporter of both women's suffrage and of worldwide pacificism (2013, p. 357).

⁸⁷ Sharick's article begins with a hinged-mirror photograph taken of Zangwill himself, and goes on to describe that Zangwill was both interested in and sceptical of photographic art.

⁸⁸ As Sharick indicates in her article, many Victorian researchers attempted to discover a homogenous "'Jewish Type'" (p. 119). Sharick specifically highlights the work of Joseph Jacobs, a 'Jewish race scientist and colleague of Israel Zangwill's' (p. 113) during their time at the 'Wanderers' at Kilburn club, an 'informal circle of Jewish scholars who met at one another's homes for intellectual discussions on Jewish topics' (p. 113). In an 1885 article for the *Photographic News*, Jacobs explains that 'he took photographs of local Jewish schoolboys at the Jews' Free School and then [...] "compound[ed]" them into composite photographs of the "Jewish type"' (p. 115). Sharick reads *The Children of the Ghetto* as a 'counterargument' to Jacobs's "'type'", arguing that Zangwill's 'Study of Peculiar People' attempts to recognise Jewish identity as multifaceted and heterogeneous (p. 122).

published in a March 5th 1915 edition of the *Manchester Courier*. The writer states that they ‘object even to a Cockney Jew speaking otherwise than Imperially in the centre of an Empire that “does him so well”’ (Quoted in Leftwich, p. 86); As Leftwich notes, the phrasing used here illustrates how Zangwill’s Cockney-Jew identity was used to critique his anti-imperial position.⁸⁹ Despite these criticisms, Zangwill continued to identify as a Cockney Jew in his work and his personal life. As Edna Nahshon (2006) indicates, Zangwill’s Cockney Jew is an ‘identity composed of the polarised amalgamation of indigenusness and outsidersness’ (p. 5). Ultimately, then, Zangwill’s self-identification returns to the concept of spatiality; the Cockney Jew arises from the placement of Jewish culture within East End spaces, acting as an extension of the blending of cultures as described in Bullman et al’s depiction of Yiddish signs within Jewish East End spaces.

Zangwill reflects on the figure of the Cockney Jew throughout his work. For example, his unpublished play adaptation of his novel *The King of Schnorrers* (1918) calls for the ‘accent of the BEGGARS’ to be ‘varied ad lib, some more Yiddish, some more Cockney’ (p. 408). Later in the play, a character is introduced with the hybrid speech of ‘Cockney-Yiddish’ (p. 418). Zangwill’s engagement with ‘Cockney-Jew’ identities and ‘Cockney-Yiddish’ language illustrates a form of what Homi K. Bhabha (1994) terms ‘hybridity’. Bhabha describes hybridity as an identity where ‘cultural differences “contingently” and conflictually touch’ (p. 207). Representation and discussion of such identities resist ‘the binary opposition of racial and cultural groups [as a] homogenous polarized political consciousness’ (p. 207). Zangwill’s self-identification as a Cockney Jew exemplifies this politicised resistance. The depiction of the Cockney Jew and Cockney-Yiddish across his oeuvre resists distinctions made between the British poor and Jewish migrants in earlier slum novels; this dual identity enables Zangwill to craft an ‘in-between [social] space’ through the titular ‘ghetto’, which is used to explore cultural differences and overlaps within Cockney-Jew culture (p. 207). In his critical essay ‘Opinions of the Young Fogey’ (1896), Zangwill indicates that this engagement with hybrid East End Jewish

⁸⁹ Zangwill’s views on imperialism changed over the course of his career. David Feldman (2007) notes that Zangwill and his Zionist colleagues saw the British Empire as a tool that could aid in forming a new Jewish homeland; Zangwill particularly saw East African colonies as a potential place for a new Jewish space, especially as a refuge for persecuted Jews from the Russian empire (p. 86). In 1914, Jewish communities experienced a major crisis which led to disillusionment with forms of imperialism and its ability to help the Jewry: the actions of Habsburg, German, and Imperial Russian armies forced many Russian, Polish, and Austrian Jews to ‘endure [...] pogroms, hostage-taking, mass deportation’ and the uprooting of Jewish people who became refugees (Johnson, 2010, p. 95). After this point, Zangwill’s writings become strongly anti-war and anti-Imperialist (Bentwich, 1964, p. 122). It is these later, anti-imperialist writings that the *Manchester Courier* is responding to.

identities is a major component of his *Ghetto* texts. Challenging the ‘idea of Art for Art’s sake’, Zangwill states that ‘art has always to express the quintessence of something - be it a street, a life, a national movement’ (p. 114).⁹⁰ This triadic list of elements summarises the interwoven nature of East End urban culture, Zangwill’s personal life, and his work with the ITO in his representation of the Cockney Jew in his writings. The *Ghetto* series, as both slum fiction and a study of Jewish communities, engages with Cockney and Jewish cultures as inseparable entities in a way that resonates with Zangwill’s ‘Cockney-Jew’ identity.

At the time of *Children of the Ghetto*’s publication, tensions grew in Jewish communities in response to conflicting ideas surrounding religion, culture, anglicisation, and language. These debates were visible in the Jewish novels of the 1830s and 1840s; as Nadia Valman (2007) describes, these texts were written in response to ‘conversionist writings which provided [a] cultural challenge’ and contributed to ‘discursive battles’ in which the ideology and identity of Anglo Jewish writers came into question (p. 85). The pressure to anglicise continued well into the 1890s, and was a large factor in the creation of the 1905 Aliens Act. As noted, Jewish immigrants were perceived as either a ‘friend’ or ‘enemy’ depending on their ability to anglicise their religious and cultural norms (Henriques, 1906, p. 194). Under this system of prejudice, traditional Jewish values were perceived as outdated and degenerate. In this seminal work *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840 – 1914* (1994), David Feldman describes that these ideas were affirmed by anglicised Jews. Feldman argues that the conception of a Judaism ‘which Anglo-Jewish leaders had promoted presupposed another, traditional Judaism from which Anglo-Jewry was seen to have since evolved’ (p. 293). He then goes on to cite an article from the *Jewish Chronicle* which refers to traditional Jewish culture as ‘oriental shackles’ which encourage ‘un-English habits and thoughts’ (p. 293). The unknown author of the *Jewish Chronicle* piece also denounces Yiddish as a ‘nondescript Jargon of Hebrew and low German’ (p. 293). These prejudices, Feldman argues, are encapsulated in the nineteenth-century perception of Jewish East End communities as ‘ghettos’; whether ‘used as a

⁹⁰ ‘Art for Art’s Sake’ is a statement popularised by Walter Pater through his critical work *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), and often associated with the aesthetic movement of the late-nineteenth century (p. 239). This quotation comes from Zangwill’s ‘Opinions of the Young Fogey’, where Zangwill satirically depicts a fictional encounter with a literary critic and essayist, the titular ‘young fogey’; this figure is one who ‘give[s] out arrestive thoughts, and you are vastly impressed, but on longer acquaintance, or on returning to them after an interval, you find it is they who have been arrested by their thoughts’ (p. 97). Zangwill’s continues to critique the ‘Art for Art’s Sake’ movement in this essay in calling it a ‘Dead Sea-Fruit – rosy without, ashy within’ (p. 113), and continues with these criticisms in another essay in *Without Prejudice*, ‘Pater and Prose’.

pejorative term or as a sentimental one to evoke an authentic Jewry', the 'ghetto' represented a 'form of social life which was assuredly pre-modern' (p. 293). The politics of language within the London Jewish communities of the 1890s were therefore intimately intertwined with the ideas surrounding the East End ghetto.

Unlike the 'pre-modern' conceptualisation of the Jewish slum shared by many of Zangwill's contemporaries, the environments in his *Ghetto* series seem to signify spaces and identities that are empowered against anglicisation. Zangwill's protagonist of *Children of the Ghetto* and *Grandchildren of the Ghetto*, Esther Ansell, pens a satirical novel entitled 'Mordecai Josepfs' (Zangwill, 1892, p. 4); in the fictional text she 'writes a scathing critique of the materialism and desire for social prestige of [the] middle-class Anglo-Jewry', who in turn reject her from their circles (Valman, 2007, p. 207). Esther critiques the Anglo-Jewry on the basis that their anglicisation has caused them to become 'rich Jews' (1892, p. 15) who are ignorant to the experiences of the Jewish poor. Ultimately, Esther argues, the anglicised upper-middle-class Jews 'cramp [her] soul' (p. 148). For Esther, anglicisation is an oppressive force that attempts to negate her first-hand experience of immigration and her childhood in the slums. The experiences of East End Jews are replaced by anglicised 'petty prejudices and interests' (p. 56) which attempt to disrupt Esther's Cockney-Jew identity or her 'soul'.⁹¹ Throughout this chapter I argue that Zangwill presents ghetto experiences not as outdated or 'pre-modern' (Feldman, 1994, p. 293), but rather constructs his and Esther's time in the East End as an empowering foundation to the hybrid identity of the Cockney Jew.

Zangwill himself felt the tension between his Jewish identity and anglicisation.⁹² In her biography on Zangwill, Meri-Jane Rochelson (2008) describes that *Children of the Ghetto* brings the 'intracommunal conflicts that many in the Jewish community considered a private matter' to light, including 'petty family squabbles' as well as 'rivalries among

⁹¹ Later in this section I compare Esther's sentiments with Zangwill's 1903 poem 'Asti Spumante' to emphasise how he presents his Cockney-Jew identity as an antidote to the 'petty' interests of the anglicised Jewry.

⁹² Zangwill was not alone in his experience of anglicisation and identity conflict. Simon Rabinovitch (2009) describes that Jewish folklorist and anthropologist Joseph Jacobs (1854 – 1916) had many anxieties surrounding the identity of the Anglo-Jewry. On the one hand, 'Jacobs argued through racial anthropology that the Jews were indeed a race apart from the rest of Europe, and due to environmental factors were in some ways even physically deficient' (p. 120); on the other hand, Jacob's desire for 'cultural inclusion in England is evident in his work for the English Folk-lore Society and also in his attempt to portray Judaism as inherently at odds with irrational folk-lore' (p. 120). For more on Jacob's career and identity conflict, see Rabinovitch's chapter 'Jews, Englishmen, and Folklorists: The Scholarship of Joseph Jacobs and Moses Gaster' in Bar-Yosef, E. and Valman, N. (eds.) *'The Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture*.

Sephardic, Polish, Lithuanian, and Dutch Jews' (p. 56). As such the novel represents the 'tensions that arose from interactions with a larger Jewish community eager for their "anglicisation"' (p. 56). Rochelson continues to state that Zangwill himself 'experienced in many ways the East End of his novel's immigrant children' (p. 10) with its various cultural, religious, and linguistic anxieties. Zangwill could not avoid 'facing issues of identity formation in a society that urged acculturation'; as such, the conflicts that were experienced by the London Jewry, and later represented in his *Ghetto* novels, were made 'vivid in his own home' (p. 10). These tensions within Jewish communities were ultimately the product of a wider social attitude towards immigrants, namely a 'antisemitism of tolerance' in which Jews were expected to become "'British" as quickly as possible' and 'shed their distinctiveness' in order to fit in (p. 57). This sentiment, itself a result of a xenophobic fear of Jewish immigrants, further fuelled the aggressive response of 'anti-alien groups' who would go on to call for the 1905 Aliens Act. As Rochelson indicates, West End Jews in the 1880s believed it to be in immigrants' interests to 'minimize differences and become "English" as quickly as possible' (p. 57); Zangwill writes against and analyses this tension in *Children of the Ghetto*, emphasising the 'precariousness' of Jewish life in the leadup to the 1905 Aliens Act while also attempting to paint a humanised cross-section of an East End Jewish community.⁹³ Zangwill's own experiences therefore inform his presentation of intercommunal conflicts in *Children of the Ghetto*.

Throughout his oeuvre Zangwill places specific emphasis on the anxieties and conflicts surrounding the language used in Jewish communities. In her article 'Language, Gender, and Ethnic Anxiety in Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto*', Rochelson (1988) argues that

In his ambivalent attitude toward the Yiddish language, in his choice of female protagonists, and in his hesitations, as author, in resolving their fates, Zangwill creates a work of fiction whose very structure figures forth the dilemmas and anxieties of a "hyphenated" writer. *Children of the Ghetto* is thus more than a compelling picture of life among nineteenth-century London Jews; it is also a document in the language of literary marginality, a product and illustration of the dilemmas it describes. (p. 400)

⁹³ This is particularly evident in his characterisation of Esther's own struggles against anglicisation in her schooling, and her eventual return to her experiences of the ghetto and the values it has instilled in her. This is discussed further later in this section; I compare Esther's experiences with Zangwill's, highlighting that their time in the East End ultimately empowers them against the forces of anglicisation seen in, and approved by, the West End Jewry.

This ‘ambivalent attitude’ towards Yiddish is seen throughout the novel, particularly in Zangwill’s characterisation of Melchisedek Pinchas; as such, his novel embodies the linguistic conflicts in 1890s Jewish communities that influence his position as a “hyphenated” or hybrid Cockney Jew.⁹⁴ Throughout the *Ghetto* series Zangwill re-creates the ‘language of the ghetto’, Yiddish; this creates, as Rochelson notes, a tension in which the narrator is utilising language in a different way to the poor Jewish characters depicted in the novel as Yiddish is treated as an ‘outside’ language to the reader/narrator. The narrator refers to Yiddish as the ‘most hopelessly corrupt and hybrid jargon ever evolved’ (p. 29). In the novel’s preface, however, Zangwill argues that Yiddish is a fundamental element of Jewish identity and is necessary for a true representation of ghetto experience (p. vi). This tension can be seen throughout *Children of the Ghetto*. Language, therefore, is an integral element in Zangwill’s expression of his Cockney-Jew identity.

Zangwill’s own thoughts on Yiddish and the language conflicts within nineteenth-century Jewish communities are evident throughout *Children of the Ghetto*. In his 1893 article ‘My First Book’, Zangwill describes the reception to his first published story.⁹⁵ He states that

My first book (price one penny nett) went well. It was loudly denounced by Jews, and widely bought by them; it was hawked about the streets. One little shop in Whitechapel sold four hundred copies. It was event on Smith’s bookstalls. There was a great curiosity among Jews to know the name of the writer. Owing to my anonymity, I was enabled to see those enjoying its perusal, who were afterwards to explain to me their horror and disgust at its illiteracy and vulgarity. By vulgarity vulgar Jews mean the reproduction of the Hebrew words with which the poor and the old-fashioned interlard their conversation. It is as if English-speaking Scotchmen and Irishmen should object to “dialect” novels reproducing the idiom of their “uncultured” countrymen. I do not possess a copy of my first book, but somehow or other I discovered the MS. when writing *Children of the Ghetto*. The description of market-day in Jewry was transferred bodily from the MS. of my first book, and is now generally admired. (p. 632)

Zangwill writes against over-anglicisation while emphasising the importance of representing Yiddish in fiction. By using the phrase ‘vulgar’ to describe the Jewish readers of this short story, Zangwill undercuts their own perception of the East End Yiddish dialect as ‘vulgar’; he also presents the ‘denounce[ment]’ of the story by Jews as illogical by drawing a

⁹⁴ The characterisation of Melchisedek Pinchas is interrogated at length later in this section.

⁹⁵ Zangwill’s first story was published in a ‘coverless pamphlet form’, and was written by Zangwill to fund a comic paper entitled *Grimaldi* (1893, pp. 631 – 632). The story describes a Jewish market street in the East End.

connection to Scottish and Irish dialect novels and their reproduction of language. For Zangwill, Yiddish is a natural part of Jewish identity and is integral to representing their East End communities authentically. Zangwill's inclusion of this short story in *Children of the Ghetto*'s description of the Spitalfields's marketplace directly connects the novel with his view of Yiddish as an important dialect of London's Jewry even as it is perceived as 'pre-modern' (Feldman, 1994, p. 293).

Other critics have also recognised how Zangwill's *Ghetto* texts feature a mixture of English and Yiddish in order to express his own hybrid identity. Rochelson (1999) argues that Zangwill's fluid interwoven use of English and Yiddish creates a 'picture of a minority culture in a relatively tolerant nation struggling with the instability of dual identity' (p. 94). Likewise, Jessica Valdez (2014) argues that Zangwill 'brings the multilingualism of most nineteenth-century Yiddish speakers to a novel written predominantly in English', consequently 'thematis[ing] how language marks hybrid otherness' (p. 316). Valdez concludes that Zangwill 'problematizes compartmentalized Jewish and English identities in order to foster a tenuous intermingling' (p. 317). Throughout this chapter, I engage with Valdez's and Rochelson's ideas to illustrate how Zangwill engages with ideas of language, community, and identity to express his Cockney-Jew identity in a way that writes against anglicisation and binarised conceptualisations of immigrant selfhood.

Zangwill's depiction of East End Jewish lifestyles and selfhoods also marks a development in literary representations of pauper Jews. In his work *Jewish Characters in Fiction: English Literature*, Rabbi Harry Levi (1903) argues that

History is "a systematic record of past events." Fiction, in a literary sense, is "narrative in prose form, in which the incidents, characters and scenes, are partly or wholly imagined." The difference is vital. In history we are concerned with facts, in fiction merely with fancy erected on a foundation of fact. Even historic fiction, though trying to depict fact in interesting form, justifies its title, by using the imagination freely. The Jew in English fiction is not a historic Jew. He is scarcely a possible Jew. Yet he is interesting, because he is so unreal, because the pictures

drawn of him show us what the world believed (and believes) of Jewish thought and Jewish life. (p. 7)⁹⁶

Levi's distinction between history and literature here brings fictional representations of Jewishness into question. As Levi goes on to describe, earlier novels in the century present the Jew as a 'freak' (p. 8). *Oliver Twist* is one of the examples given by Levi; as I note in section 1.1, Dickens conflates the representation of Fagin with the 'slimy' slums in a way that embodies what has been described as 'widespread English revulsion' towards Jewishness in the nineteenth century (Lavezzo, 2016, p. 250).⁹⁷ Later in the text, Levi suggests that there has been a shift away from the antisemitic representations of earlier novels, particularly in the works of Zangwill and Amy Levy.⁹⁸ He directly praises these works for 'open[ing] the eyes of the world to the injustice, the iniquity, the absurdity of its anti-Jewish attitude', and declares that 'the Jew was never so well understood as he is to-day' (p. 105). While Levi is discussing the novel more generally here, he credits the popularity of the Anglo-Jewish slum novel as a major influence in the shift away from anti-

⁹⁶ Levi's text is intended to be a course book and an introduction to Jewish representations in literature. He offers comprehensive studies of major texts featuring Jewish characters from 1590 to 1901. A few notable examples include Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1590), Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864), Israel Disraeli's *Tancred* (1847), George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), and Emma Wolf's *Heirs of Yesterday* (1900). In discussing his selection of texts, Levi states that 'since Marlowe's day, fiction has made free use of the Jew. To-day, indeed, he is a popular figure in literature. Whether it be an illustration of tardy justice, or an effort to obey the demands of the curious, the Jew of English fiction is becoming daily more prominent and, what is even more gratifying and encouraging, is becoming more and more a man and less and less a freak' (p. 8).

⁹⁷ Not all representations of Jewishness created by non-Jewish authors are wholly negative. George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) is a key shifting point in the movement from antisemitism to sympathy towards Jews in fiction. David Glover (2012) notes that Eliot's novel shows great sympathy for the Zionist movement, and a good understanding of the migration crisis of Jewish communities seeking a home nation (p. 17). Levi praises Eliot's ability to write 'without prejudice' and notes that her representations of Jewish life are not 'superficial observation[s]'; Eliot's research into Jewish culture is clear throughout the text (p. 82). Despite this, Levi recognises that Eliot's representations of Jewishness are sometimes inaccurate. He particularly takes issue with the treatment of national identity through the novel's Jewish characters, Mordecai and Mirah, noting that the suggestion that the Jew is only fixated on his homeland 'threatens to become as monotonous, as in parts it is untrue' (p. 83). Such representations, he concludes, fail to account for the experience of migrating Jews and their enthusiasm for the 'fusion of differing nationalities' occurring in their new identities (p. 84).

⁹⁸ Amy Levy was a Jewish, feminist, and lesbian writer whose works include poetry, novels, and essays. Naomi Hetherington and Nadia Valman (2010) note that Levy was among the first women to enrol in Cambridge's newly opened Newnham college in 1879, taking a degree in languages (p. 3). Levy knew or was friends with many of the reformers featured in this thesis, including Olive Schreiner, Eleanor Marx, Beatrice Webb, and Margaret Harkness (p. 4); she also wrote numerous passionate poems to Vernon Lee, which Lee responded to with rejection (Goody, 2010, p. 175). On September 10th 1889, Levy 'died of charcoal gas inhalation [...] two months before her twenty-eighth birthday' (Hetherington and Valman, 2010, p. 4). Hetherington and Valman suggest that Esther, the protagonist of *Children of the Ghetto*, is inspired by Levy; as a successful writer, Esther acts as a symbol of the 'synthesis of intellectuality and spirituality [which] lead [the] Anglo-Jewry into the future' (p. 20).

semitic prejudices in fiction. As a 'product of East London', Zangwill can illustrate that there is 'more than one side to Jewish life' through his encapsulation of ghetto experience (p. 118). In Zangwill's slum novel, spatial relations and identity are intertwined to present Jewish experiences of the East End. Unlike Dickens, Zangwill does not conflate his Jewish characters with the slum environment to formulate an alien and grotesque spectacle; instead, Zangwill's presentation of Cockney-Jew culture operates to show an active dialogue between Jewish identity, experience, and the slum spaces they inhabit. As Heidi Kaufman (2015) argues, Zangwill portrays the 'ghetto as a space with a proclivity for holding its inhabitants not through economic, legal, or cultural pressure – all features of earlier Victorian writing of the ghetto – but through its affective power' (p. 91). In Zangwill's slum fiction, the 'ghetto's power to grip and anchor its inhabitants [...] is not the product of architecture or legal sanctions but stems from an emotional power born of cultural distinctiveness and communal cohesion' (p. 92). Zangwill's ghetto moves away from the 'freak[ish]' presentation of Jews in earlier slum fiction; this movement has wide implications in the period before the Aliens Act and its attempts to discriminate against non-anglicised Jews. Hybrid identities, language, and the ghetto space itself combine to formulate a more realistic and sympathetic representation of East End Jewish culture, actioning a major shift in the position of the Jew in slum fiction.

Slum Space, Novel Space, and Language

For Zangwill, representing the ghetto space enables a fictionalised articulation of the East End Jewish experience. In his preface to the third edition of *Children of the Ghetto*, Zangwill reflects on the inclusion of a glossary in the later editions of the novel. He states that

At the request of numerous readers I have reluctantly added a glossary of 'Yiddish' words and phrases, based on one supplied to the American edition by another hand. I have omitted only those words which occur but once and are then explained in the text; and to each word I have added an indication of the language from which it was drawn. This may please those who share Mr. Andrew Lang's and Miss Rosa Dartle's desire for information. It will be seen that most of these despised words are pure

Hebrew; a language which never died off the lips of men, and which is the medium in which books are written all the world over even unto this day. (p. vi)⁹⁹

Zangwill's comments here illustrate a concern with the linguistics of Jewish communities, in this case the use of Yiddish in 'Cockney-Yiddish' dialects. His reluctance to define Yiddish words for unknowing readers illustrates the importance of linguistic and cultural authenticity in the text; the unknowing reader is not meant to fully understand the dialect of East End Jewish communities, as the insular linguistic norms of the ghetto are a key part of what Zangwill terms as a 'terra incognita' (p. vii). As *terra incognita* or 'an unknown or unexplored region' (*OED*, 2019), Zangwill's slums are spaces defined by their dialect and community that is different from other communities in both the East and West Ends of London. Zangwill's ghetto functions as what Bill Ashcroft (2014) conceptualises as a 'metonymic gap', acting as the 'part that stands for the whole' and 'metonymically signify[ing] difference' (p. 52). Ashcroft develops this concept by stating that

The dual dynamic of saying "I am me" in another's language and "I am other" in my own language captures precisely the dual achievement of the second-language writer. For such a writer, while emphasizing the way in which the space between author and reader is closed within the demands of meanability, also demonstrates in heightened form the writer's negotiation of the forces brought to bear on language. (pp. 54 – 55)¹⁰⁰

The 'closed' system of Yiddish in *Children of the Ghetto* forms a metonymic gap; Zangwill's dual use of English and Yiddish acts as a strategy to negotiate a space for his idiosyncratic identity in the slum novel. Zangwill's suggestion that outsiders like Andrew

⁹⁹ Andrew Lang was a Scottish poet and contributor to *The Palace Journal* during Arthur Morrison's tenure as sub-editor. For more on the intellectual community of the People's Palace and its relationship with the slums, see '2.1 - Arthur Morrison's Mean Streets: Mapping and Linguistic Netherworlds in Fin-de-Siècle Slum Fiction'. 'Miss Rosa Dartle' is most likely a reference to the 'malign' (Dickens, 1849, p. 86) Rosa Dartle from Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849). Barbara Black (1998) suggests that Rosa's defining characteristics are a combination of 'rage' and 'beauty' (p. 91). Ultimately, these characteristics leave Rosa 'incarcerated' as a form of punishment for her transgression of the beautiful, feminine role (p. 103). Zangwill is likely using this intertextual reference to present the critics of his texts as ignorant; his use of Lang's real name, however, presents an antagonistic response to his female readers specifically. Zangwill repeats this reference to Dickens's Rosa Dartle in a similar comment on critical female readers in 'The Penalties of Fame' from his essay collection *Without Prejudice* (p. 237).

¹⁰⁰ Much like Bhabha, Ashcroft is a post-colonial theorist. His work on the metonymic gap accurately represents the way in which Zangwill enacts linguistic strategies to represent the experiences of the Cockney Jew. Concluding on the metonymic gap, Ashcroft argues that it is 'far more powerful in signifying cultural difference than most critics of global English acknowledge. But it is also true that this is a particular function of literary language because literary language resists that process of which Moore complains, that the spread of global English through the Internet leeches out the cultural specificity of world Englishes. Literature does this because it has free rein to use the aesthetic and creative dimensions of literary writing. This makes the metonymic gap something more than a gap in interpretation because the language variance achieves a culturally different atmosphere' (pp. 59 – 60).

Lang should not be able to properly understand Yiddish beyond what is ‘explained in the text’, hence his reluctance to add a glossary, enacts a metonymic gap. This is further emphasised in the opening ‘Proem’. The narrator describes how the ghetto has ‘yet no lack of signs external by which one may know it’ (p. 1). This further reflects the alienation of the unknowing observer from Jewish space as the signs here allude to the Yiddish street signs seen throughout Whitechapel and Spitalfields during the 1890s. Zangwill also distinguishes this from the ‘Othering’ inherent to wider slum novels and slumming practices; the ghetto is situated amid the ‘uncleanness and squalor’ of the poorer districts of the East End, and yet it still carries an ‘inner world of dreams, fantastic and poetic as the mirage of the Orient where they were woven’ (p. 1). Unlike Morrison’s linguistic netherworlds, Zangwill’s spaces are not defined as simply other to the logic to the reader. The ghetto operates through a different but cohesive logic of ‘signs’, which includes the Cockney-Yiddish linguistics and the ‘inner world of dreams’. The use of the ‘mirage’ metaphor reflects the loss of Jewish spaces outside the East End; the shifting of these ‘inner dreams’ to the ghetto symbolically reflects the cultural and physical migration of Jewish communities in the late nineteenth century. The lack of a Yiddish glossary in earlier editions, as well as Zangwill’s distinction between Jewish communities and the squalor of the East End, illustrates an attempt to use the novel space as a literary method of ‘establish[ing] an autonomous homeland for the Jews’, reflecting Zangwill’s work with the ITO (Hess et al, 2013, p. 357). The ‘Proem’ and the exclusion of the glossary in earlier versions of the text enable Zangwill to depict the distinct nature of Jewish experiences in the East End; it also positions the ghetto as a new space for reinventing the ‘dreams’ of immigrant Jews from a wide variety of national and cultural backgrounds.

Zangwill’s refusal to implement a glossary in earlier editions of *Children of the Ghetto* is indicative of his use of novel space to portray the multiculturalism of the East End Jewish environment. Meri-Jane Rochelson (1988) argues that ‘by first denying the need for a glossary and then by defending his foreign expressions in this way’, Zangwill ‘attempts to naturalize Yiddish, to assert it as simply a logical extension of his English readers’ culture’ (p. 401). As Rochelson goes on to suggest, however, the ‘denial and the defense only underscore further Zangwill’s sense of its and his “other”-ness’ (p. 401). In a later work, Rochelson (1999) builds on this argument by concluding that *Children of the Ghetto* is ‘not as easy to categorize as Zangwill’s later play, *The Melting Pot*, which came down unabashedly in favour of assimilation’ (p. 94). Zangwill’s novel instead paints a ‘picture of a minority culture in a relatively tolerant nation struggling with the instability of dual

identity' (p. 94).¹⁰¹ The text itself illustrates this instability of identities and languages through the dialogues between the main protagonist of the novel, Esther Ansell, and her grandmother.¹⁰² The grandmother, referred to by the Yiddish word 'Bube', explains to Esther the integral need for her to take up work to avoid 'starvation' (p. 15). The narrator notes that the 'Bube explained the situation in voluble Yiddish [that] made Esther wince' and that the 'old beldame expended enough Oriental metaphor on the accident to fit up a minor poet' (p. 15). The use of the adjective 'voluble' indicates the Bube's fluency in Yiddish, while Esther's 'wince' and the narrator's indication that the Bube uses excessive 'Oriental metaphor' implies a linguistic gap between grandmother and granddaughter. The specific reference to 'Oriental metaphor' also recalls Zangwill's reference to a 'mirage' of the 'Orient', indicating both a national and generational gap between the two through the references to the cultural heritage of the Ansell. This conflict between languages is intimately tied with the threat of starvation in the ghetto, connecting the textual slippages between the Bube's Yiddish and Esther's English with slum space. The instability of Jewish experiences of the East End is therefore represented in exchanges between the Bube and Esther. Throughout the text, the Bube uses the phrase 'méshe' (p. 60; p. 137) and frequently uses the archaic pronoun 'thou' (p. 137). 'Méshe' is not defined in either the glossary or in the text, and this combined with the use of archaic pronouns further alienates both the reader and Esther, despite the Bube's dialogue mostly being presented in English.¹⁰³ As Jessica Valdez (2014) notes, Zangwill's text utilises an 'English Yiddish hybrid' which 'alienates both Yiddish and English-speaking readers, since the Yiddish grammar makes the dialogue sound archaic, particularly through the word "thou"' (p. 324). This emphasises the generational gap between Esther as a Cockney Jew and the traditional Bube while also

¹⁰¹ Published in 1908, Zangwill's *The Melting Pot* focusses on a Russian Jew named David Quiano who travels to America following the death of his family in the Kishinev pogrom. As Joe Kraus (1999) argues, the title of the play 'offer[ed] a valid label for what was taking place (and would be taking place) within the audiences that were viewing it'; Zangwill's play popularized the use of the phrase 'Melting Pot' to describe the growing multiculturalism in New York and across America (pp. 14 – 15).

¹⁰² While Zangwill uses the generational differences between Esther and the Bube to mark cultural conflicts between traditional Jewish and Cockney-Jewish identities, Zangwill's other narratives subvert expectations surrounding aging. Alice Crossley (2021) argues that in a 'range of [his] short stories, which reflect on the ways in which fin-de-siècle culture tends to align later life with decline and diminishment, Zangwill reveals the paradoxes of ageing by playing with such assumptions' (p. 1). Crossley concludes that his fiction highlights the 'complexity of age and provokes reflection on how ageing at the fin de siècle may be calculated, defined, recognized, and performed' (p. 27) and 'subvert[s] gerontophobic cultural tendencies by offering possibilities beyond fatigue, decline, and the presumed stagnation of old age at the century's end (p. 27). Through these methods, Zangwill posits 'ways of ageing queerly' (p. 27).

¹⁰³ It is likely that this word in part emerges from the Yiddish words 'Meshugass', meaning 'crazy antics' or 'madness, and 'Mesugeh', meaning 'crazy' (Kogos, 1968, p. 55). The Bube's use of this term in *Children of the Ghetto* is normally in response to the actions of a member of the younger generation of East End Jews.

indicating the linguistic multiculturalism of East End space. Building directly on Rochelson's earlier work, Valdez argues that Zangwill's resistance to the glossary 'suggests that he thought that Yiddish could not be properly translated into English, and that the novel was playing with the possibilities and impossibilities of translation' (p. 323). Zangwill carefully 'signals when characters switch between languages, even if these languages are represented in the English language' (p. 332). The Bube's dialogue, though written in English, still retains untranslated phrases and grammar; language in the ghetto space is therefore constantly slipping between multiple dialogues, symbolically representing the instability of Jewish identity in the East End.

Zangwill continues to link slum space and the language of Jewish East End communities throughout the novel. Early on in the text, the narrator describes an engagement party that takes place in the centre of the community. The narrator begins by reiterating that the novel takes place in the 'East End, where a spade is a spade, a buttonhole is a buttonhole, and not a primrose or a pansy' (p. 15). While this quotation indicates a logic and stability to language, it is quickly followed by the Bube's 'voluble Yiddish' and an event where

remarks, grave and facetious, flew about in Yiddish, with phrases of Polish and Russian thrown in for auld lang syne, and cups and jugs were broken in reminder of the transiency of things mortal. (p. 16)

The idiomatic use of the phrase 'where a spade is a spade' is Cockney-esque; in his 1895 article, Reginald Pelham Bolton notes that a key element of Cockney dialect is the persistent, self-conscious 'love of allegory' in everyday speech (p. 223).¹⁰⁴ By directly following this use of idiom with a mixture of Polish, Russian, Yiddish, 'auld lang syne', and the implied phonetics of 'broken [...] cups and jugs' Zangwill illustrates the chaotic mixture of sounds and dialects in Jewish East End Space. Following this, the narrator describes that 'German Jews gravitate to Polish and Russian; and French Jews mostly stay in France' and states that '*Ici on ne parle pas Français* is the only lingual certainty in the London Ghetto, which is a cosmopolitan quarter' (p. 17). The linguistic '[un]certainty' of the ghetto space ties directly into Zangwill's glossary and his use of novel space. The multilingual and unstable nature of language is key to the image of the ghetto Zangwill presents in the novel; in providing a

¹⁰⁴ Bolton's 'The Cockney and His Dialect' primarily focusses on the phonetic aspects of Cockney speech. Bolton suggests that the primary purpose of his article is to illustrate that Cockney dialect is 'not mere vulgarism but a traditional relic of centuries standing' (p. 223), and he concludes that it has 'show[n the] good points of the Cockney character [in their] language, and [has made] virtues out of his grammatical lapses and self-conscious solecisms' (p. 229).

glossary simply to fulfil the reader's 'desire for information' the language is made digestible and understandable, threatening the linguistic authenticity of the text.

In a 1902 essay, Zangwill indicates the necessity of representing the multilingualism of Cockney-Jewish speech when authentically displaying East End communities. He states that

Writers and journalists, poets and novelists and merchants, professors and men of professions — types that once sought to slough their Jewish skins and mimic, on Darwinian principles, the colours of the environment, but that now, with some tardy sense of futility or stir of pride, proclaim their brotherhood in Zion — they are come from many places; from far lands and from near; from uncouth, unknown villages of Bukowina and the Caucasus, and from the great European capitals; thickest from the pales of persecution, in rare units from the free realms of England and America — a strange phantasmagoria of faces. (Zangwill quoted in Magnus, p. 22)

His call for writers to deconstruct 'types' is key to what I am arguing is the purpose of his engagement with East End spaces not only in *Children of the Ghetto* but also in the *Ghetto* series as a whole. Zangwill's statement shifts from 'Darwinian' mimicry to 'unknown villages' and a variety of 'European capitals', illustrating a movement away from anglicisation towards a multicultural method of writing the Jewish experience. Zangwill's use of the phrase a 'strange phantasmagoria of faces' also has a strong resonance with the *Children of the Ghetto*'s subtitle, a 'Study of Peculiar People'. Zangwill notes in the third edition preface that this subtitle is 'restored' in later editions, having been removed due to 'some criticisms upon its artistic form' (p. vi). He also indicates the importance of the subtitle is key to the novel's intent as a 'study through typical figures of a race whose persistence is the most remarkable fact in the history of the world' (p. vi). While the glossary may reduce the authentic multilingualism of Zangwill's slum space, the restoration of the subtitle highlights the heterogeneousness of Jewish culture which may seem 'peculiar' or 'strange' in comparison to other spaces in London. Zangwill's ghetto is an environment of linguistic uncertainty; the novel itself is a space in which he can represent this multiculturalism and multilingualism, as evident in the text and the paratextual elements added to or removed from it within the first three editions of *Children of the Ghetto*.

Hybridity and the Cockney Jew

Zangwill's engagement with a multilingual ghetto space enables him to represent hybrid Cockney-Jew identities. As noted, Zangwill referred to himself as a 'Cockney Jew' (Leftwich, 1952, p. 86). This hybrid identity is reflected throughout the *Ghetto* texts and his numerous critical essays. In his biography on Zangwill, Leftwich (1957) further emphasises

Zangwill's self-identification as a 'Cockney Jew' as well as its use by others to describe him 'even when the term was not intended to be a compliment to him' (p. 37). According to Leftwich, Zangwill's *Ghetto* novels become a primary spot to express this identity, particularly when they are considered as 'dialect novels' (p. 31). Leftwich notes that Zangwill's use of 'Yiddish English' is akin to 'the Cockney dialect in fiction, set to a tragic theme by realists like Arthur Morrison and Somerset Maugham' but with a 'delightfully humorous turn made by Barry Pain, Pett Ridge and Edwin Pugh' (p. 31). He goes on to place this within Zangwill's role as a 'slum-writer' and cites Barnett Litvinoff's observation that 'Zangwill's stories of East End life were so authentic in the truest sense, [...] that they were lifted right out of their Jewish context' (p. 31). Zangwill's slum writings are therefore representative of this Cockney-Jew identity; Jewish, East End, Yiddish, and English contexts intermingle and mix throughout. As such, highlighting a singular context in Zangwill's work is an impossibility as the experience of East End Jews involves a blending of languages, spaces, and communities. In *Children of the Ghetto*, Zangwill recognises the complexities of navigating Cockney-Jew identity, as well as its 'delightfully humorous' potential, through his characters' engagement with language in the slum space. Early in the text, Pesach exclaims 'England! [...] 'What a country! Daddle-doo is a language, and gingerbeer a liquor' (p. 23). The narrator states directly after this that 'Daddle-doo' was Pesach's way of saying 'That'll do [...] it was one of the first English idioms he picked up, and its puerility made him facetious' (p. 23). Zangwill uses free indirect discourse to voice Pesach's perspective: the narrator goes on to state that 'when a nation expressed its soul thus, the existence of a beverage like ginger beer could occasion no further surprise' (p. 23). The indication that Pesach has phonetically but incorrectly captured the phrase 'that'll do' delivers a humorous tone, while his disbelief at the existence of 'ginger beer' acts as a synecdoche for his wider misunderstanding of English culture. In the nineteenth century, ginger beer was considered a form of 'imposter' alcohol; in 1855, Jewish politician and author Benjamin Disraeli suggested that Lord Palmerston was 'an imposter utterly exhausted, at the best only ginger beer and not champagne' (Quoted in Brasher, 1968, p.

78).¹⁰⁵ Pesach, however, appears to be misunderstanding it as a form of alcohol in this quotation. The suggestion that he categorises the ‘nation[‘s] soul’ due to minutiae like ‘gingerbeer’ and phrases like ‘that’ll do’, which he culturally and phonically misunderstands, adds to the humorous tone here. The comedic effect arises from Pesach’s observation of the idiosyncrasies of English cultures; simultaneously, however, the reader is guided to find humour in Pesach’s not wholly accurate understandings of the phrases and customs of London. The humour here is therefore itself formed by Pesach’s assimilation into English culture conflicting with his Jewish cultural perspective. Through Pesach’s difficulty in accurately navigating English culture, Zangwill indicates the difficulties of integration and of forming a Cockney-Jew identity.

Hybrid languages and identities appear throughout *Children of the Ghetto*, particularly in relation to concepts of instability. As noted, Zangwill’s initial refusal to include a glossary is indicative of his desire to represent the unstable nature of multilingual communities where inhabitants slip between languages; this is particularly clear in Zangwill’s representation of Yiddish-English, the ghetto space, and the engagement of the Cockney Jew with these elements of East End Jewish experience. In *Children of the Ghetto*, Esther’s father Moses is described navigating the ghetto. Moses reads various posters and signs, ‘many [of which] were in Yiddish’ (p. 29). The narrator describes that ‘even when the language was English the letters were Hebrew’ and notes that ‘Moses stopped to read these hybrid posters’ (p. 29). Bhabha’s theory of hybridity is particularly relevant here: the signs appear as hybrid objects where ‘cultural differences “contingently” and conflictually touch’ (1994, p. 207), and as such the blending of English and Hebrew appears as a ‘corrupt’ language. As noted, Jewish East End spaces often featured ‘tight-knit communities’ with

¹⁰⁵ Disraeli himself was a novelist and was particularly concerned with social class and social relations. Robert O’Kell (2013) indicates that Disraeli’s most popular novel *Sybil* (1845) represents a fairly idiosyncratic view of the poverty and social problem novels at the time; Disraeli is less interested in ‘making us feel sorry about the poor’ and more in ‘proving them to be mistaken’ (p. 260). Despite this, O’Kell argues, Disraeli encourages pathos in his representation of the working classes while also rejecting the Chartism movement (p. 260). Jonathan Perry (2017) has argued that Disraeli’s attitude toward Jewishness is ‘ambiguous’ and ‘elastic’ (p. 571). Referring specifically to Disraeli’s novel *Tancred* (1847), Perry notes that the novel acts as a ‘personal manifesto’ for Jewish identity while also focussing on the ‘need to abandon partisanship for synthesis in western and eastern politics and religion, if a chaotic world is to be brought to order’ (p. 604). Disraeli’s novels do focus on social class and Jewish identities, but only at the periphery of wider political and socio-cultural debates. Despite this, Disraeli explicitly marked his Jewish heritage throughout his career. In his posthumous publication *The Inner Life of the House of Common*, ex-door keeper and journalist William White (1904) stated that ‘Mr. Disraeli [...] did not attempt to conceal his race when he began his political career; on the contrary, he openly avowed that he was a Jew – boasted of the fact, gloried in it; threw down the gauntlet to all other races, asserting that his is superior to them all, and will survive them all’ (p. 84). Disraeli served as Prime Minister twice in the second half of the nineteenth century.

signs written in both Yiddish and English (Bullman et al, 2012, p. 145). By representing this in the text, Zangwill illustrates that the Cockney Jew experiences a linguistic hybridity that is intrinsically linked with the navigation of ghetto space.

Throughout the text Esther Ansell, the novel's protagonist and one of the titular *Children of the Ghetto*, embodies the Cockney-Jew identity and reflects Zangwill's own experiences as an Anglo-Jewish author. In *Children of the Ghetto* and its sequel, *Grandchildren of the Ghetto*, Esther develops an interest in fiction and becomes a writer. This process is both an extension of Moses's navigation of hybridity in the ghetto space and Zangwill's publishing career. In *Children of the Ghetto*, the narrator describes that Esther 'led a double life, just as she spoke two tongues' (p. 83). The narrator notes that she is actively aware 'that she [is] a Jewish child, whose people had had a special history', despite the indication that 'far more vividly did she realise she was an English girl' (p. 83). Esther moves between Englishness and Jewishness throughout this section. The narrator goes on to state that Esther 'absorbed' culture 'from the school reading-book', placing a particular emphasis on her awareness that 'English was the noblest in the world, and men speaking it had invented railway trains [...] and everything worth inventing' (p. 83). At the end of this section, however, Zangwill describes Esther as being 'most sensitive to the old impressions' of her Jewish heritage (p. 83). Zangwill still focuses on language here, as in his discussion on the glossary in the preface and the description of Moses in the text. Esther's experience of Cockney-Jew identity is also culturally rooted. Esther undergoes a form of anglicisation through her 'absorbed' knowledge at school but also retains the cultural traditions of her Jewish heritage. The switch between her 'more vivid' understanding of herself as English to her 'most sensitive' identification with Jewish culture reintroduces the sense of instability in Cockney-Yiddish dialects and roots it within Esther's position as a Cockney Jew. The slippages between Cockney and Jewish identities resonate further with Bhabha's definition of hybridity. For Bhabha, hybridity 'does not produce a mirror where the self apprehends itself; it is always the split screen of the self and its doubling' (p. 114). Sharick's argument that Zangwill's texts provide the 'illusion of one image where there are actually many' and expose 'narratives of identity as constructions' (2015, p. 120) reflects Bhabha's statement here, as Zangwill's novels feature representations of the self that are not dissimilar to five-hinge mirror photography. Seen through Esther's characterisation, the Cockney-Jew identity is constantly shifting between English/Jewish values and Cockney/Yiddish dialects, leading to a similar 'split[ing]' and 'doubling'. In *Grandchildren of the Ghetto*, this is made clearer

in Esther's artistic philosophy when she reflects on her writing process. Esther states that she is

a curious mixture. In art I have discovered in myself two conflicting tastes, and neither is for the modern realism, which I yet admire in literature. I like poetic pictures impregnated with vague romantic melancholy, and I like the white lucidity of classic statuary. (p. 79)

Esther's two conflicting 'tastes' recall the instability of her Cockney-Jew identity in *Children of the Ghetto*. The indication that she likes 'poetic [and] romantic' images is reminiscent of the 'fantastic and poetic' Jewish tradition described by Zangwill in the opening 'Proem' to *Children of the Ghetto*. Esther's interest in 'classic statuary' echoes the interests of the English decadent movement; as Patricia Pulham (2021) notes, such images proliferate the works of Charles Algernon Swinburne, Walter Pater, and Olive Custance, (p. 176). As a writer, Esther's Cockney-Jew identity is reflected in her dual interests in both a Jewish poetic tradition and a decadent English tradition. In his essay 'The Indestructibles' (1896) Zangwill reflects on his literary interests. In the conclusion to Zangwill's essay, he praises Henry James's 'aesthetic soul' and 'melodrama' and declares that 'as for truth and realism – fie on them! We can create a much nicer world than nature's. Why be plagiarists, when we can make universes of our own?' (p. 64). Much like Esther, Zangwill has no 'taste' for 'the modern realism', and instead has a duality of interests in both aestheticism and melodrama, a highly popular form of fiction among Jewish communities and authors (Carruthers, 2020, p. 146).¹⁰⁶ The parallels between Esther's and Zangwill's literary interests, which illustrate a duality of both English and Jewish cultures, evidence that Esther's characterisation throughout both *Children of the Ghetto* and *Grandchildren of the Ghetto* is reflective of Zangwill's experiences as a Cockney-Jewish author. Much like Esther, Zangwill also has 'two tongues' (1892, p. 3), which is emphasised by the glossary and the Cockney-Yiddish dialect present throughout the *Ghetto* series. Zangwill utilises the novel form in these texts to express Jewish life in the East End of London and to epitomise the personal complexities of a Cockney-Jewish selfhood.

Both Zangwill's and Esther's repeated returns to the ghetto space illustrate a form of cultural nostalgia which is integral to the hybrid identity of the Cockney Jew. As Rochelson

¹⁰⁶ Melodrama was highly popular in the Jewish ghetto, and was often played within Yiddish theatres. Jo Carruthers (2020) notes that spaces like the New Royal Pavilion Theatre on Whitechapel Road were extremely popular, and notes that the New Royal Pavilion became both the 'home of melodrama' and the 'home of Yiddish theatre in London' (p. 146).

(1988) argues, although ‘many of *Children*’s characters in some way speak for their author, Esther is most clearly his surrogate as a Jew in conflict with her Jewish identity’ (p. 402).¹⁰⁷ In addition to the connection between Esther’s and Zangwill’s literary tastes and their Cockney-Jew identities, Rochelson highlights multiple parallels between Esther and Zangwill throughout the text: Esther is noted to have a ‘sceptical instinct’, she simultaneously loves Jewish traditions while holding a ‘disgust with modern Jewry’, and religiously both Esther and Zangwill support a blending of Judaism and Christianity (p. 403). To add further to Rochelson’s analysis, both Zangwill’s and Esther’s repeated departures and returns to the ghetto illuminate how spatial relations inform Cockney-Jew identities. Zangwill expresses his nostalgia for ghetto spaces in his other works. In his poem ‘Asti Spumante’ (1903), Zangwill describes the consumption of wine at a West End social gathering. He notes that ‘its pop excites my fellow-diners’ glances / With images of reckless revelry’ (ll. 1 – 2) and leads them to muse on ‘Nature’s tropic labour’ (l. 7); for the speaker, it only leaves them with thoughts of ‘childhood’ (l. 19). The final stanza reads:

Prate on, O friends, of Nature, Art and Dante,
Nor note my tears are weakening the wine
Your world is as stale as yesterday’s Spumante,
My Ghetto sparkles youthfully divine. (ll. 37 – 40)

Despite referring to Zangwill’s past, the ghetto remains youthful and ‘sparkl[ing]’. By comparison, the space of ‘Nature [and] Art’ is ‘stale’. Zangwill’s poem encapsulates a nostalgia for the ghetto of his childhood, which propels his continued additions to the *Ghetto* series of novels from 1892 to 1907. He also further illustrates the tensions of the Cockney Jew in having to inhabit two worlds, one formed of London cultural interests and the other an East End Jewish community. Like the speaker in Zangwill’s ‘Asti Spumante’, throughout *Children of the Ghetto*’s final chapter, ‘Seder Night’, Esther is described as experiencing a cultural split. During the celebrations, Esther is described as taking part in ‘special Hebrew melodies and verses’ while only ‘vaguely [...] co-ordinat[ing] the celebration with the history of the race enshrined in it or with the prospective history of her race’ (p. 225). Instead, Esther imagines the event as a ‘tale out of the fairy-books’ (p. 255). Esther has a tenuous connection with her Jewish heritage despite the religious celebrations, imagining it through the lens of the fiction she has ‘absorbed’ at school (p. 83). While seemingly opposite to Zangwill’s alienation from the discussions on ‘Art’ in ‘Asti Spumante’, Esther’s

¹⁰⁷ Rochelson also argues that Esther’s characterisation and development allows Zangwill to represent his ‘serious political feminis[m]’ and to reflect his active involvement in the suffrage movement as well as his outspoken support for ‘the necessity for equal rights for women’ (p. 402).

understanding of her heritage through a fictional imagination of the Seder Night celebrations illustrates a similar removal from the concrete events taking place around her within the text.

Zangwill characterises Esther with an attachment to the ghetto which mirrors his remembrance of the ‘Ghetto’ as a space that ‘sparkles youthfully’. In the final paragraph of the novel, the narrator states that

The rain fell faster, the wind grew shriller, but the Children of the Ghetto basked by their firesides in faith and hope and contentment. Hunted from shore to shore through the ages, they had found the national aspiration – Peace – in a country where Passover came without menace of blood. In the garret of No. 1 Royal Street little Esther Ansell sat brooding, her heart full of a vague tender poetry, and penetrated by the beauties of Judaism, which, please God, she would always cling to, her childish vision looking forward hopefully to the larger life that the years would bring. (p. 237)

The phrases ‘she would always cling to’ and her ‘childish vision looking forward hopefully’ act as anaphoric referencing to Esther’s return to the ghetto in *Grandchildren of the Ghetto*. Esther reenters the space at the beginning of the narrative, and while she leaves for a ‘New World’ at the end of *Grandchildren* she reiterates that she remains one of the ‘Children of the Ghetto’ (p. 245). This evidences Kaufman’s argument that Zangwill’s ghetto ‘hold[s]’ its inhabitants emotionally through an ‘affective power’ (2015, p. 91) while also illustrating the importance of nostalgia in both Zangwill’s and Esther’s Cockney-Jew identities. Reading nineteenth-century immigrant letters, David A Gerber (2015) highlights nostalgia as an integral part of immigrant experience. He posits that ‘symbolic representations of the personal past inscribed creatively in letter-writing may function, or alternatively fail to function, to provide associations that bridge the gaps between past and present’ (p. 291). Using literary, sociological, and philosophical work, he concludes that nostalgia enables ‘mental images of pleasant circumstances involving people, places and events’ (p. 291). These images serve as ‘metaphoric building blocks by which the mind may ultimately place the individual in new circumstances, now made more familiar by virtue of their comparability to the past’ (p. 291). Zangwill’s and Esther’s nostalgia for the ghetto consolidates their positions as Cockney Jews and as ‘children of the ghetto’. As this titular phrase suggests, both Zangwill and Esther are symbolically ‘birthed’ by a slum space that is simultaneously Jewish and Cockney. Nostalgia, embodied through Esther’s return to the ghetto and Zangwill’s repeated writings on ghetto space, is a method by which these cultural divisions are ‘metaphoric[ally]’ formulated into Cockney Jewishness.

Reshaping Understandings of Jewishness in the Slum Novel

By recognising the affective power of the ghetto space and in representing the Cockney Jew, Zangwill deconstructs the '[im]possible Jew' (Levi, 1903, p. 3) seen in earlier slum novels. As Bhabha notes, simply recognising the valid existence of hybrid identities resists 'the binary opposition of racial and cultural groups [as a] homogenous polarized political consciousness' (p. 207). Zangwill's ghetto fiction marks a clear development from earlier slum texts which represent Jewishness in the East End; as noted in Section 1.1, Dickens's representation of Fagin in *Oliver Twist* exemplifies the 'widespread [...] revulsion' towards London's Jewry in the early nineteenth century (Lavezzo, 2016, p. 250). Levi reflects on *Oliver Twist*, describing a letter written to Dickens by Eliza Davis which criticises him on the basis that, while his 'works plead so eloquently for the oppressed of his country', they ultimately have 'encouraged a vile prejudice against the despised Hebrew' (p. 51).¹⁰⁸ Levi's statement that Anglo-Jewish slum fiction 'open[ed] the eyes of the world to the injustice, the iniquity, the absurdity of its anti-Jewish attitude' (1903, p. 105) illustrates a shift from this antisemitic depiction in earlier slum texts, even as prejudices against migrant groups were rising in the period before the 1905 Aliens Act. Presenting Fagin as a 'villainous-looking [...] Jew' (1837, p. 68), Dickens places his Jewishness within the 'binary opposition of racial and cultural groups' that Zangwill's representation of Cockney-Jew identities resists. Zangwill actively acknowledges the unknown nature of the Jew in earlier slum fiction in *Children of the Ghetto* by engaging with metafictional and intertextual elements throughout the novel. The opening 'Proem' concludes with the statement that

The folk who compose our pictures are Children of the Ghetto. Their faults are bred of its hovering miasma of persecution, their virtues straitened and intensified by the narrowness of its horizon. And they who have won their way beyond its boundaries must still play their parts in tragedies and comedies – tragedies of spiritual struggles, comedies of marital ambition – which are the aftermath of its centuries of dominance, the sequel of that long cruel night in Jewry which coincides with the Christian era. If they are not the Children, they are at least the Grandchildren of the Ghetto. (p. 1)

Four of the entries in Zangwill's *Ghetto* series are alluded to in this section: *Children of the Ghetto*, *Grandchildren of the Ghetto*, *Ghetto Tragedies*, and *Ghetto Comedies*. Although both the *Tragedies* and *Comedies* were published after 1892, Zangwill's depiction of ghetto inhabitants 'play[ing] their parts in tragedies and comedies', alongside references to both

¹⁰⁸ Eliza Davis was an Anglo-Jewish letter writer who frequently discussed the representation of Fagin with Dickens via correspondence. In 'The Significance of Fagin's Jewishness', Robert D. Butterworth (2009) engages with Davis's letter to indicate Dickens's antisemitic perspective.

the novel itself and its sequel, include an element of metafiction within the narrative. Zangwill also seems to allude to a literary heritage here, acknowledging a ‘persecution’ that occurs under the ‘miasma’ of the slums and the existence of ‘boundaries’ that dictate the ‘part’ the Jewry plays in East End culture. By positioning his text in the ‘aftermath’ and by alluding intertextually to the *Ghetto* series, Zangwill’s novel appears as a new era of representing Jewishness in slum fiction. Levi argues that Dickens ‘created his Fagin not because he hated the Jew, but because he did not know him’ (p. 52); Zangwill’s ‘pictures’ in *Children of the Ghetto* are a method of allowing the reader to ‘know’ the Jew. Zangwill shows an awareness of this literary context in the opening ‘Proem’, and his representation of Cockney-Jew hybrid identities illustrates his attempts to make the East End Jewry visible in a way uninhibited from binarised understandings of culture and race.

Zangwill presents intertextual references to other authors and novels throughout *Children of the Ghetto*, most notably in his representation of Esther’s literary influences within the ghetto space. Esther’s engagement with literature is where the concepts of Cockney-Jew identities, Cockney-Yiddish linguistic conflicts, and Zangwill’s construction of East End Jewish space intersect within the novel. Esther’s primary artistic influence is her brother, Benjy. Benjy returns to the ghetto after spending four years at an Orphan Asylum where ‘he had read and read and read English books, absorbed himself in English composition, heard nothing but English spoken about him’ (p. 129). Benjy represents the extremes of anglicisation; he calls Yiddish ‘beastly’ despite Esther’s argument for its beauty (p. 130), and not long after he expresses his constant consumption of ‘Dickens, Mayne Reid, George Eliot, Captain Marryat, [and] Thackeray’ (p. 132).¹⁰⁹ Benjy also returns to the ghetto with ‘disgust’ and fixates on its ‘unspeakably poverty-stricken’ nature’ (p. 128). His rejection of Yiddish and the ghetto space itself, a direct contrast to Esther’s admiration for both Cockney-Yiddish and the East End, is represented as having developed from the anglicisation of his literary interests. Benjy tells Esther he is going to be a ‘very rich man’ by becoming a writer, noting that he is ‘going to write books – like Dickens and those

¹⁰⁹ As noted, Levi critiques Dickens’s lack of knowledge of authentic Jewishness while praising Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* (p. 82). Levi does not discuss the other authors in Benjy’s list. Adventure novelist Thomas Mayne Reid’s *The Maroon* (1862) features anti-semitic depictions of Jewishness, particularly a ‘cruel old Jew’ (p. 335) character who appears throughout the novel; Reid’s anti-semitism is quite similar to Dickens’s in that he demarcates his entire character by calling him the ‘old Jew’ and uses this as a pejorative term throughout. Navy officer and novelist Frederick Marryat offers a similar image of the early 1800s Portsmouth Jewry in *Peter Simple* (1834). In *Israel at Vanity Fair: Jews and Judaism in the Writings of W.M. Thackeray*, Siegbert Salomon Prawer (1992) argues that Thackeray’s writings throughout his career include ‘literary and social stereotypes’ of Jewishness along with their ‘occasional subversion’ (p. 6). For more on Thackeray’s engagement with Jewish cultures see Prawer’s text.

fellows. Dickens made a pile of money just by writing down plain everyday things going on around' (p. 133). He also notes that he and the other children at the Orphan Asylum are producing a journal named '*Our Own*', which Benjy edits (p. 133). After describing his literary ambitions, Benjy once again states that 'Hebrew's no good to anyone' and declares that he will move the Ansell family away from the 'beastly cold' of the ghetto (p. 134). Benjy is characterised by his rejection of Jewish linguistics, spaces, and culture. This is fundamentally linked to his mimicry of Dickens and his reading at school, indicating that these texts result in Jewishness becoming '[un]known' (Levi, 1903, p. 52). Later in the narrative, Benjy dies after an illness that starts with a 'slight cold' (p. 194). The narrator notes that

Alas! The four years of plenty and country breezes had not counteracted the eight and three-quarter years of privation and foul air, especially in a lad more intent on emulating Dickens and Thackeray than on profiting by the advantages of his situation. (p. 194)

Benjy's illness recalls the 'beastly cold' of the ghetto that disgusts him earlier in the narrative, adding a sense of irony to his death in the country. The narrator also suggests that Benjy's desire to 'emulat[e]' Dickens is partially responsible for his death; his anglicisation leads to both a metaphorical loss of his Jewish heritage in his rejection of 'beastly' Yiddish and a literal death in the Orphan Asylum. Zangwill's statement that Jewish authors no longer need to 'slough their Jewish skins and mimic, on Darwinian principles, the colours of the environment' and can now 'proclaim their brotherhood in Zion' (p. 22) is illustrated in the description of Benjy's demise, and Esther's later success as a writer. Benjy metaphorically sacrifices his Jewish life in an attempt to mimic anglicised literary culture. Esther, however, includes both 'classic statuary' and 'poetic pictures' in her writing (p. 79) and thus expresses her idiosyncratic Cockney-Jew identity.

Zangwill continues to directly engage with literary culture through his characterisation of Melchisedek Pinchas, an intense Zionist and Yiddish playwright. Pinchas's 'Holy Land League' is a Zionist organisation that rejects the 'stupid' Anglo-Jewry (p. 140) while also attempting to gain funds to form a traditional Jewish community in the 'Holy Land' (p. 139). Pinchas creates a play that aims to represent the league's ideology, promising to 'write a satirical picture [...] of Anglo-Jewish society' (p. 198). When Pinchas is asked where his comedy will be played, he replies

At the Jargon Theatre, the great theatre in Princes' Street, the only real national theatre in England. The English stage – Drury Lane – pooh! It is not in harmony with the people; it does not express them. (p. 198)

The term 'Jargon' is used throughout the text to describe Yiddish. Pinchas rejects the English language as a method of expressing Jewishness, and this is spatially linked with the Jargon Theatre. Pinchas consistently uses archaic terms like 'wilt', 'thou', and 'thee' (p. 200) in a manner reflective of Esther's Bube. Zangwill, therefore, emphasises the outdatedness of Pinchas's intense Zionist beliefs and his language through his direct speech. The audience response to his play further indicates the ineffectiveness of Pinchas's use of language. The narrator notes that

No one could make head or tail of the piece, with its incessant play of occult satire against clergymen with four mistresses, Rabbis who sold their daughter, stockbrokers ignorant of Hebrew and destitute of English, greengrocers blowing Messianic and their own trumpets, labour leaders embezzling funds, and the like. [...] The hall, empty of its usual crowd, was fuller of derisive laughter. At last the spectators tired of laughter, and the rafters re-echoed with hoots. At the end of the second act Melchitzedek Pinchas addressed the audience from the stage, in his ample petticoats, his brow streaming with paint and perspiration. He spoke of the great English conspiracy, and expressed his grief and astonishment at finding it had infected the entire Ghetto.

There was no third act. It was the poet's first, and last, appearance on any stage. (p. 202)

In a manner comparable to Benjy's metaphorical and literal death of self as a result of his 'emula[tion]' of Dickens, Pinchas's focus on utilising only Yiddish and Hebrew forms of literary expression removes him from his role as a playwright and leaves the play truncated without a final act. Although Pinchas suggests that English 'does not express' East End Jewish culture, his use of archaic Jewish languages also fails to represent that experience and instead is non-sensical. Zangwill's plays express linguistic hybridity and more accurately epitomise East End Jewish experiences through their marked use of a dialect 'varied ad lib, some more Yiddish, some more Cockney' (1918, p. 408). In *The Principle of Nationalities* (1917), Zangwill's reflections on the arbitrary nature of national identity and the need for balance when expressing heritage reflects his representation of Pinchas's traditionalism. Zangwill states that 'if the Jew demands sympathy for Zionism it is not because he has beaten St. Paul [,] if pseudo-romance we must; we must neither dig up dead dialects nor re-animate them' (p. 88). Zangwill concludes that 'when humanity grows up' to allow multicultural beliefs and ideologies to exist simultaneously without prejudice, a 'great [...] League of the Peoples' will form and create 'Perpetual Peace' (1917, p. 91). This

quotation illustrates Zangwill's ideological movement from traditionalism to multiculturalism seen in his shift from mainstream Zionism to the ITO; it also highlights Pinchas's excessive use of 'dead' dialects and how they resist progress, as indicated in the lack of a third act in his performance.¹¹⁰ Like Benjy's total anglicisation and emulation of Dickens, the excessive traditionalism of Pinchas's dialect is unable to exist within the East End ghetto.

As a writer, Esther represents the need for a balance between both Cockney and Jewish styles of representation in the ghetto novel. In *Children of the Ghetto*, Zangwill highlights the issues that arise from attempts to truthfully represent Cockney-Jew experiences in the slum novel; the sequel *Grandchildren of the Ghetto* indicates that as a result of her interactions with both Benjy and Pinchas, Esther removes these implications by achieving a balance of Yiddish and Cockney in her novel '*Mordecai Josephs*' (p. 6). Written under the pseudonym of 'Edward Armitage' (p. 16) Esther's novel parodies higher class Jews and is described as having 'scandalised West-End Judaism' (p. 6). This description of '*Mordecai Josephs*' is positioned at the beginning of chapter one. Although the reader is unaware at this point that the writer is Esther, it is made evident through this rejection of the West-End affluent Jewry that the writer is from a position that is resistant to the upper classes. The text opens at the 'upper middle class' Goldsmith family's Christmas party, where Esther's novel is discussed (p. 4). The Goldsmiths contextualise the novel in relation to other texts featuring Jewish figures, noting that 'there is more actuality in it than in *Daniel Deronda* and *Nathan der Weise*' (p. 4). They still take offence, however, at its criticisms of the West-End Jewry, and one of the guests, Raphael, argues that

We have always been treated badly in literature [...] We are made either angels or devils. On the one hand, Lessing and George Eliot; on the other, the stick dramatist and novelist, with their low-comedy villain. (p. 14)

¹¹⁰ This shift is significant to Zangwill's life as well as the history of Jewish nationalism. In his 1919 article 'The Territorial Solution of the Jewish Question', Zangwill discusses the role of the ITO in relation to Zionism. Zangwill argues that 'piercing through all the confusion, prejudice, and cowardice of modern Jewry, the formula struck out by the ITO (the Jewish Territorial Organisation) at its foundation came like a ray of sunlight. It was the first clear and statesmanlike contribution to the political solution of the Jewish question, and will be increasingly recognised as the only possible programme, even for Zionism itself, once that movement comes to grips with reality. Our formula, like Aaron's rod, must swallow all the others' (p. 732). Laura Almagor (2018) highlights the legacy of the ITO. She notes that Zangwill's 'break away was a reaction to the Zionist rejection of British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain's offer of the Guas Ngishu Plateau (better-known as the Uganda Proposal), situated in modern day Kenya, for the establishment of a Jewish settlement. From that moment onwards the Jewish Territorialists searched for areas outside Palestine in which to create settlements of Jews. Zangwill disbanded the ITO in 1925, but a second 'wave' of organised Territorialism followed with the founding in 1934 of the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation, in Warsaw and Paris' (p. 353).

While these comments engage with the contexts of antisemitism visible in *Oliver Twist* and other slum texts, Zangwill undercuts this statement in the specific context of the Goldsmiths's high society gathering. The narrator exclaims 'poor rich Jews!' and states that 'the upper middle classes had every reason for being angry' before listing their access to 'novels, magazines, reading circles, operas, symphonies, politics, volunteer regiments, Show Sunday and Corporation banquets' (p. 15). Zangwill aligns himself with Esther's novel here, illustrating the lack of perspective amongst the upper-middle-class Jewry. Esther's '*Mordecai Josephs*' ultimately develops from her experiences in the ghetto; the employment of a Jewish name in the title and the parody of Anglo-Jewish circles evokes Pinchas's play in *Children of the Ghetto*, while the use of a penname that enables Esther to become a 'literary celebri[ty]' (p. 13) reflects Benjy's anglicised literary ambitions. Esther's novel is about West End culture, yet it communicates a deeper understanding of the hardships of ghetto life. This is made clearer when Esther reveals to Raphael that she is the writer of '*Mordecai Josephs*'. Esther states that

I have known the worst that life can offer. I can stand alone – yes, and face the whole world [...] yes, I. I am Edward Armitage. Did those initials never strike you? I wrote it, and I glory in it. Though all Jewry cry out the picture is false, I say it is true [...] Too long they have cramped my soul. Now at last I am going to cut myself free – from them and from you and all your petty prejudices and interests. Good-bye for ever! (p. 148)

By revealing her literary identity, Esther returns to her authentic sense of self. Her statement opens with her experience of the 'worst that life can offer', grounding her critique of West End culture directly within her ghetto experience. The title of *Grandchildren of the Ghetto* emphasises a generational gap first evident in Esther's interactions with the Bube in *Children of the Ghetto*. The fusion of the Esther Ansell and Edward Armitage identities closes this gap, as Esther reminds Raphael afterwards that 'we are both children of the ghetto' (p. 244). Esther's simultaneous experiences of Cockney and Jewish life enable her to critique West End culture and to define her unique Cockney-Jew identity by 'cut[ing herself] free' from attempts to 'cramp' her selfhood. Her reclaiming of self is emphasised during Raphael's rereading of Esther's novel. He notes that 'Esther stared at him from every page', and that 'she was the heroine of her own book; yes, and the hero, too, for he was but another side of herself translated into the masculine' (p. 149). Esther's unique and hybrid identity, fashioned by her time in the ghetto as well as her literary influences under Pinchas and Benjy, is intrinsically connected with her position as a novelist. By achieving a balance

between both Cockney and Jewish cultures in their texts, both Zangwill and Esther re-invent slum space and its relationship with Jewish identity by representing the experiences of ghetto life.

Conclusion

In characterising Esther as an author, Zangwill encourages the reader to draw further parallels between Esther and his own literary identity. In much the same way that Edward Armitage is ‘another side of herself translated into the masculine’, Zangwill translates himself into the *Ghetto* novels through Esther’s characterisation. As noted, her literature is reflective of both her Cockney and her Jewish experiences, reflecting Zangwill’s identification as a Cockney Jew. By including these metafictional elements in *Children of the Ghetto* and threading them into Esther’s authentic realisation of self in *Grandchildren of the Ghetto*, Zangwill reconstructs the Jew in the slum novel and consequently represents the East End Jewry in a way that makes them ‘understood’ (Levi, 1903, p. 105). By accepting various forms of hybridity without binarising Jewish and Cockney experiences, a positive and accurate representation of ghetto life can replace previous representations in slum fiction. Zangwill particularly actions this shift by demonstrating the nuances between East End and Yiddish dialects; by depicting the metonymic gaps between Yiddish and English, Zangwill intensifies the overlaps and conflicts of these dialects that underpin Cockney-Jew identity. This use of language characterises the ghetto symbolically: characters in the space navigate both dialects, which manifests itself literally through street signs and conflicting environments like the Jargon Theatre. Cockney Jewishness is heavily expressed in Zangwill’s representation of Esther’s literary voice and his portrayal of community dialects.

Both *Tales of Mean Streets* and *Children of the Ghetto* engage with spatial relations to illustrate the experiences of slum inhabitants and to transform slums spaces into ‘legible’ environments (Moretti, 1999, p. 79). Despite this key similarity, Zangwill’s and Morrison’s backgrounds and intentions for writing their texts differ enormously. For Morrison, engaging with slum spaces is a method of mapping the East End and its gradients of poverty in a way that differs from the People’s Palace. The result is an ‘ethnograph[ic]’ (Maltz, 2011, p. 1) and ‘pseudo-sociological’ (Wise, 2022, p. 2) work of fiction that situates slum spaces as decadent, linguistic netherworlds. For Zangwill, the slum spaces are nostalgic and highly personal environments. Cockney-Yiddish dialects, Cockney-Jew identities, and the hybridity of the ghetto space itself all feature throughout the *Ghetto* series, presenting an experience of East End Jewishness without the need to ‘mimic’ (Zangwill quoted in Magnus,

p. 22) or ‘dig up dead dialects’ (Zangwill, 1917, p. 88). Although the 1905 Aliens Act would introduce policies to reduce the number of Jewish communities throughout England, Zangwill suggests that accepting hybridity is one of the answers to the Jewish Question. His statement that ‘I am a Jew, of course [...] But I am not an alien. I am a pure Cockney’ (p. 86) illustrates his resistance to the concepts of alienation aimed at Jewish communities in the leadup to the Act, as he asserts his Cockney-Jewish selfhood. *Children of the Ghetto* represents its titular space as an environment of linguistic and individual hybridity, re-inventing the Jew in the slum novel while anticipating and rejecting later suggestions that London’s Jewry is separate or ‘Alien’ from East End space. In Vernon Lee’s *Miss Brown* and Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Mary*, these themes of alienation and oppression emerge in relation to the treatment of poor women through the surveying gazes of male artists and philanthropists. In these novels, the surveillance of paupers becomes the primary object of critique rather than the environmental factors that impact their experiences. Although writing thirty-two years apart, Lee and Braddon both focus on the experiences of poor and working-class women under repressive surveillance strategies while reflecting on the aestheticisation of poverty, slumming practices, and the moral obligation of artists to act philanthropically in poor spaces.

Chapter 3: Surveillance

3.1 - Art, Philanthropy, and the Surveillance of Pauper Life in Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown* (1884)

In Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown*, pauper life is at the periphery of a narrative primarily concerned with the aesthetic movement and the aesthete; as such, poverty is surveyed through an aesthetic lens. I argue that the competing ideologies of aestheticism and socialism are both critiqued in *Miss Brown*, particularly through Lee's characterisation of Walter Hamlin and Richard Brown. Their treatment of the novel's protagonist, Anne Brown, illustrates Lee's belief that the surveillance present in aesthetic and philanthropic groups is reductive and ineffective. Lee posits that Sapphic philanthropic communities enact a form of sympathetic surveillance which breaks away from Hamlin's and Richard's beliefs and act as a positive force for slum rejuvenation. In doing so, she also critiques the foundational aesthetic theories of Walter Pater and his focus on surveillance and artistic value. Considering *Miss Brown* in connection with Lee's travel writings and art criticism, this chapter identifies how Lee deconstructs frameworks that produce visions of poverty as either a 'mysterious' beauty (p. 232) or a 'scientific' fact to be analysed (p. 61).

Anne epitomises Lee's belief that socialising in aesthetic circles should be practised alongside philanthropy. This balance reflects Lee's later career and associations with Toynbee Hall (Maltz, 2006), an institution founded by cleric Samuel Barnett in 1885 to remedy 'the mass of the people liv[ing] without knowledge, without hope, and often without health' by offering a space for them to 'come home to open minds and consciences' (Barnett, 1909, p. 285). Toynbee Hall was posthumously named after historian and reformer Arnold Toynbee; Barnett's institution reflected Toynbee's socialist principles. In a lecture given to Oxford's Cooperative Congress in May 1882, Toynbee states that access to education would improve the living standards of

the citizen, with a view to showing what are his duties to his fellow-men and in what way union with them is possible. The mere vague impulse in a man to do his duty is barren without the knowledge which enables him to perceive what his duties are, and how to perform them. (Toynbee, quoted in Briggs, p. 4)

In the same vein as Toynbee's sentiments, the Hall attempted to reverse slumming practices; as Asa Briggs (1984) argues, Barnett and his network founded the Hall in the East End not to act as 'missioners' but rather to set up a space where the poorer classes could come to

gaze at the well-to-do while developing their knowledge of culture and the arts (p. 22).¹¹¹ It is in this context that Lee's philanthropic actions took place. In her essay 'Without Leisure' (1897) Lee discusses the concept of leisure as a 'superabundance not only of time but of the energy needed to spend time pleasantly' (p. 153).¹¹² Lee argues that 'art, literature, and philanthropy are notoriously expressions no longer of men's and women's thoughts and feelings, but of their dread of finding themselves without thoughts to think or feelings to feel', acting as the most enriching forms of leisure for the 'well-to-do' (p. 142). Art is not only connected to philanthropy through this triadic list. Lee goes to state that 'Leisure' involves being 'active from an inner impulse instead of a necessity'; the practitioner of leisurely acts moves like a 'dancer or skater for the sake of one's inner rhythm instead of moving, like a ploughman or an errand-boy, for the sake of the wages you get for it' (p. 153). Lee concludes that 'for this reason, the type of all Leisure is art' (p. 153), a statement that ultimately positions philanthropy as an art form in itself. I argue throughout this section that *Miss Brown* anticipates Lee's work with the Hall while also acting as synecdoche for the relationship between 'art, literature, and philanthropy' that she expresses in 'Without Leisure'. Furthermore, the novel enables Lee to critique the amorality and lack of philanthropic action amongst aesthetic circles, embodying her beliefs that art should be used to evoke the 'human need for sympathy or consolation' (Lee, 1912, p. 225).

Unlike Morrison and Zangwill, Lee's childhood had no connection with the East End. Instead, Lee's family led a nomadic life, living primarily in various parts of France and Germany.¹¹³ Lee began publishing at the age of 14, and in her later life, she began to make frequent visits to London to engage in the literary and artistic scene.¹¹⁴ As Patricia Pulham and Catherine Maxwell (2006) describe, Lee's

¹¹¹ As Briggs notes, Toynbee Hall was not the only institution to give the working and poorer classes access to such spaces; The People's Palace and Lord Rosebery's 'Whitechapel Art Palace' promised similar access for the poor (p. 24).

¹¹² 'Without Leisure' is published *Limbo, and Other Essays* (1897).

¹¹³ Vernon Lee was born Violet Paget on October 14th, 1856. As Vineta Colby (2003) notes, "'Vernon Lee" was born when Violet Paget assumed the name of a series of articles that she published in the Italian journal *La Rivista Europea* in 1875' (p. 2). Colby also notes that the change to a masculine pseudonym was a necessity for a young woman writing on 'weighty subjects' (p. 2). Colby writes that the masculine pen name she assumed at the beginning of her publishing career 'was appropriate because it identified her as a strong, independent woman of letters' (p. xi). Lee never abandoned her birthname; she used it in her personal correspondence interchangeably with Vernon Lee and 'some of her friends referred to her as Violet or Miss Paget until her last days' (p. xi).

¹¹⁴ Lee's first published work, 'Les Aventures d'une pièce de monnaie', was printed in *La Famillie* in 1870. Pulham and Maxwell describe that the 'story employs the narrative device of a coin, bearing the image of the emperor Hadrian, which relates its journey as it passes from hand to hand through various historical periods' (2006, p. xvi).

Summers were spent visiting friends [and] moving in literary circles in London where she could promote her work, make important contacts and establish her reputation as a leading writer and critic. There is no doubt that this strategy was successful and that Lee, who met and fostered relationships with luminaries such as Robert Browning, Walter Pater, and Henry James, achieved literary celebrity during the 1880s and 1890s for an ambitious and impressive stream of productions which included collections of short stories, novels, historical biography, philosophical dialogues, volumes on the Italian Renaissance, travel writing, and numerous essays on ethics, aesthetics, art and music. (p. 1)

Lee was especially influenced by Walter Pater's aesthetic theories. Laurel Brake (2006) argues that *Miss Brown* grows directly out of this relationship with Pater, and she emphasises that the text is part of a group of novels published over six months from 1884-1885; included in this cluster is *Miss Brown*, Mary Ward's *Miss Bretherton* (1884), and Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* (1885).¹¹⁵ Brake describes that, ultimately, *Miss Brown* is a roman à clef that represents 'the Pater Circle', the aesthetic group that included Lee. She argues that as a result of the 'crude formal techniques of masking the originals' of her roman à clef 'through transparent admixtures of names or initials, character traits, creative work, and physical features, *Miss Brown* was guaranteed to offend almost everyone she knew in London' (p. 45).¹¹⁶ The novel also parodies the Pre-Raphaelite school: the novel's primary artist figure Walter Hamlin appears as a satirical image of the painters and poets that formed the movement.¹¹⁷ The novel is therefore highly informed by the aesthetic groups Lee was operating in, satirising and interrogating the state of aestheticism in the 1880s.

Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) is a foundational text in aestheticism. Pater popularised the phrase 'art for art's sake' that characterised the aesthetic movement (p. 235), arguing that 'art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass' and should be produced and consumed for its

¹¹⁵ Mary Augusta Ward, novelist, philanthropist, and anti-suffragist. She published *Miss Bretherton* under the name Mrs. Humphrey Ward; at the time she was within Pater's and Lee's social circle (Brake, 2006, p. 41). Maroula Joannou (2005) describes Ward as 'the best-known of the anti-suffragists' (p. 562). For more on the contradictions and complications of Ward's anti-suffragist writings, see Joannou's article 'Mary Augusta Ward (Mrs Humphry) and the opposition to women's suffrage'.

¹¹⁶ Lee's and Pater's relationship survived the rift created by *Miss Brown*; their friendship continued until Pater's death in 1894 (Brake, 2006, p. 55).

¹¹⁷ The Pre-Raphaelites were a group of art critics, painters, and poets founded in the 1840s. As Florence Boos (2019) describes, the group focussed on 'the grotesque and wild forms of imagination' and their works often featured the body, flesh, nature, and excessive emotion (p. 419). Well-known Pre-Raphaelites include Christina Rossetti, Effie Millais, Elizabeth Siddell, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and John Everett Millais. In criticism of *Miss Brown*, whether Lee is parodying the Pater circle or the Pre-Raphaelites seems to be in constant question; this chapter considers both of these readings to be present throughout the novel.

intrinsic value (p. 236).¹¹⁸ Pater argues that the aesthetic critic aims to answer particular questions regarding art, including

What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to me? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? And if so, what sort or degree of pleasure? How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence? (p. x)

Pater's aestheticism focuses on the experience of art, particularly in relation to concepts of pleasure. Pater goes on to note that the aesthetic critic must avoid focussing on the abstract (p. x), and instead consider how art responds to 'fairer forms of nature and human life, as powers or forces producing pleasurable sensations' (p. xi). This preoccupation with 'pleasure' through spectatorship is highly reminiscent of the erotics underlying slumming as a leisure pursuit, as both Pater's aesthetics and slumming are led by 'desires' to gaze at people, objects, or spaces (Koven, 2004, p. 30); as I will argue, this same preoccupation with pleasure and slumming is visible in Lee's travel writing and throughout *Miss Brown*.

Lee makes key contributions to the decadent literature of the 1890s, and her work embodies its characteristics of representing 'rarefied, arcane, unorthodox or controversial subject matter[s]' which in turn 'give [...] rise to the cultivation of new, unusual and extreme sensations, perceptions and emotions, ideally communicated in correspondingly concentrated, highly-wrought, refined forms of expression' (Pulham and Maxwell, 2006, p. 7). While elements of decadence appear in Morrison's mapping of his titular *Mean Streets*, Lee's work engages in theories of art and aestheticism in her fiction as well as her numerous essays and travel pieces.¹¹⁹ Referring to Lee's essays on art throughout my analysis of *Miss Brown*, I argue that Lee presents the role of the artist in conjunction with methods of surveillance to interrogate the relationship between hostile observation strategies and the surveying aesthete. The presence of these images illustrates an intertwining of slumming, surveillance, and aesthetic theory throughout the novel.

¹¹⁸ While Pater can be accredited with popularising the concept of 'art for art's sake' amongst his aesthetic circles, he by no means invented the phrase. As Gene H. Bell-Villada (1996) notes, the earliest example appears in French in the preface to Théophile Gautier's 1835 novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (p. 203). Later, Poe's posthumous essay 'The Poetic Principle' (1850) would express similar sentiments in his statement that no 'work [is] more thoroughly dignified' than the 'poem written solely for the poem's sake' (Poe, 1850, p. 468; Bell-Villada, 1996, p. 100). Pater expands greatly on the use of the phrase and its meaning throughout his essays on aestheticism.

¹¹⁹ *Limbo, and Other Essays* (1897), *The Enchanted Woods* (1905), *Renaissance Fancies and Studies* (1909), *Vital Lies: Studies of Some Varieties of Recent Obscurantism* (1912), and *The Handling of Woods* (1923) are a few of Lee's non-fiction texts that I interrogate in my analysis of *Miss Brown*.

Miss Brown begins with a focus on Walter Hamlin, an aesthete who travels to Italy to renew his artistic inspiration. Hamlin meets Anne Brown during his travels, a working-class servant who is half English and half Italian. Hamlin becomes infatuated with Anne and her statuesque ‘mysterious’ beauty (p. 232), and decides to provide her with an education in England with the intention of marrying her. Anne enters the aesthetic world of London through Hamlin, while also reuniting with her cousin and socialist Richard Brown. Richard owns a factory and seeks to improve the lives of his workers via socialist acts. Anne commits herself to socialism by rejuvenating the Cold Fremley slum which sits on land owned and mismanaged by Hamlin, who believes the poverty and degradation of the space carry aesthetic qualities (p. 164). Anne is initially perceived as an art object among Hamlin’s circle; as she develops through her education she becomes increasingly active and engaged in philanthropy. During her charitable work, she forges Sapphic bonds with the Leigh sisters and with Hamlin’s flirtatious cousin Sacha Elaguine.¹²⁰ Anne eventually renounces her socialist ambitions to marry Hamlin, not as a result of genuine love, but instead to ‘save’ him from a ‘sin[ful]’ life and marriage to Sacha as well as to recover his ‘depraved’ status following his failed attempts at artistic success (p. 283).

Lee’s critiques of aesthetic and artistic circles in *Miss Brown* are partially responsible for the negative reception the novel received upon its publication in 1884. An anonymous reviewer in *The Spectator* describes the novel as ‘too repulsive’ and ‘intolerable’ (1884, p. 1670). They note that while the novel has ‘pure’ intentions in depicting a ‘chaste’ Anglo-Italian working-class woman navigating the ‘vileness of the London fleshly school’, her novel derives from a place of ‘hate and scorn’ (p. 1670). The reviewer also critiques Lee on the basis that she ‘is not a poet, but only a strong writer overloaded with knowledge’, she ‘overexaggerates the area of sexual question in life’, and that she ‘does not always know what is good to say or leave unsaid’ (p. 1670). A review in *The Athenaeum* offers a more mixed yet still mostly negative opinion. The reviewer notes that the first half of the text is of ‘uncommon excellence’ and praises the characterisation of Anne (p. 730). They argue, however, that in ‘the second half there is a perceptible falling off’ (p. 730). The reviewer also takes particular issue with the character of Sacha Elaguine, who they view as ‘disagreeable’ and ‘unnatural’, and suggest that Lee’s satire is ‘ignorant’ of the true nature

¹²⁰ These Sapphic bonds anticipate the slums sisterhoods that Harkness focusses on in *In Darkest London*. Lee suggests that Sapphic dialogues enable both the amoral surveillance frameworks of male aesthetes to be deconstructed and philanthropic change to be enacted; Harkness similarly utilises the spectacle of slum sisterhoods to illustrate the transformative potential of Sapphic bonds. Both texts therefore represent the threats posed to slum sisters while also emphasising their contributions to philanthropic progress.

of aesthetic culture and that she ‘should get some of her friends to enlighten her’ (p. 730). Sacha is a key figure in the text, and one of Anne’s Sapphic connections. As Pulham and Maxwell note, Sacha features in a passionate love triangle involving Anne and Hamlin (2006, p. 3). Her ‘unnatural’ character could be seen as a comment on her implicit involvement in same-sex desire, indicating further prejudice towards Lee’s engagement with sexuality and Sapphism in her novels.

Lee’s work often engages with concepts of gender and sexuality. In her literary biography of Lee, Vineta Colby (2003) notes that many critics have read her texts as an extension of her lesbianism, particularly her relationships with the poet Mary Robinson (p. 51) and later with Clementina “Kit” Anstruther-Thomson (p. 123). Lee’s passionate relationships with women were known and acknowledged within her social circle; John Addington Symonds, a fellow critic and aesthete, and his close friend Havelock Ellis discussed the possibility that Lee and Robinson ‘might serve as a possible case-history for the section on Lesbianism in *Sexual Inversion*’ (Symonds quoted in Colby, n.d, p. 51).¹²¹ Colby argues, however, Lee’s lesbianism remained ‘repressed’ (p. 182).¹²² As many critics have noted, Lee’s sexuality often appears in encoded terms in her written work. Dennis Denisoff (2020) highlights a ‘queer ecology’ throughout her travel writing, focussing on Lee’s concept of ‘limbo’ as an environmental experience in which ‘evanescent desire[s]’ are ‘stimulated but not satisfied’ (p. 155). For Lee, travelling stimulates pleasure; Lee’s Italian travels are therefore codified with hints of sexual and emotional desire (p. 153). Likewise, Sally Newman (2005) reads Lee’s letters from Mary Robinson as ‘coded representations of lesbian desire’ (p. 54). Newman critiques readings like Colby’s and others that suggested Lee’s lesbian sexuality was repressed. When considered through a reconfigured model of

¹²¹ While Lee does not write overtly about lesbian desires, her letters show that she was engaged in and devoted to passionate relationships with women. The extent to which Lee’s sexuality is repressed is also frequently debated in criticism. I discuss this further in the introduction to this section, but for more on Lee’s sexuality see Vinita Colby’s *Vernon Lee: A Literary Biography* (2003) for comments on Lee’s ‘repressed’ sexuality and Sally Newman’s ‘The Archival Traces of Desire: Vernon Lee’s Failed Sexuality and the Interpretation of Letters in Lesbian History’ (2005) for a direct response and critique of Colby’s comments.

¹²² This assertion has been challenged by many critics (Vicinus, 2004; Newman, 2005; Pulham and Maxwell, 2006). While Lee does not write overtly about lesbian desire, her letters show that she was engaged in passionate friendships; as scholars will never truly unearth Lee’s private life, Colby’s assertion that the physical aspects of her sexuality are ‘repressed’ is unprovable.

reading sexuality, Lee's letters reveal that she was fully invested in the romantic nature of her relationships with Robinson and Anstruther-Thomson (p. 72).¹²³

Lee's lesbian desires can be read and decoded throughout her work - *Miss Brown* is no exception. Speaking more generally on the late nineteenth-century slum novel, Seth Koven (2004) argues that 'novels constitute one rich set of sources that historians can use in reconstructing the sexual dynamics of women's romances with the slums and with one another in late Victorian London' (p. 278). As I argue in section 1.2, Margaret Harkness illustrates the role of Sapphic relationships in her slum novel by positioning sisterhoods as the central spectacle of *In Darkest London*. Sapphism reappears again in *Miss Brown*, in part codified as an extension of Lee's same-sex desires. I argue that such dialogues appear in Anne's Sapphic relationship with Mary Leigh, particularly when they discuss the hardships experienced in the Cold Fremley slum at the centre of the novel's debates on charity. Koven argues that *Miss Brown* specifically illustrates that 'dirt, sex, cross-class sisterhood, and female emancipation were all too clearly – and lamentably – joined together' (p. 301). To add to this, Lee's novel also intertwines these elements in her argument that the artist has a moral obligation to assist the poor, as well as in her criticisms of the methods of social, cultural, and political surveillance occurring within aesthetic communities.¹²⁴ Lee's sexuality, as well as her general engagement with constructions of gender, is intertwined with her representation of sororal philanthropic work and the methods of surveillance underpinning it.

In his comparative analysis of *Miss Brown* and L.T Meade's *A Princess of the Gutter* (1896), Koven notes that such texts 'can give us access to cultural attitudes – and fantasies

¹²³ Newman directly responds to Colby in her critique of heteronormative letter reading. She argues that 'by unthinkingly accepting a heteronormative (and male-focused) framework for interpreting Lee's sexuality, "a value system that can only ever take female sexuality as object, as external, and as alien to the only set of perspectives presenting themselves as true - men's," embedded as it is with a focus on the "visible" and on a heterosexually biased "standard of proof," Colby can only represent Lee's sexuality as that of a "failed" lesbian. Until we interrogate the assumptions involved in these types of constructions, we seem doomed to the restrictive and unnecessary sex/no sex dualism that I have outlined' (p. 61). See Newman's 'The Archival Traces of Desire: Vernon Lee's Failed Sexuality and the Interpretation of Letters in Lesbian History' for more on the restrictions of heteronormative letter reading.

¹²⁴ As I discuss later in this chapter, Pater highlights the importance of surveillance in his aesthetic theories. Other critics have also indicated links between surveillance and aestheticism. John Allen Quintus (1980) outlines a complex relationship between Wilde's aestheticism and surveillance. Wilde's criticism and fiction 'satirizes the destructiveness of impulses which show no regard for art or culture' by critically surveying them while also arguing for amoral and apolitical art (p. 573). Andrew Stephenson (2001) highlights the importance of various social contexts to aestheticism, including the 'intensified' nature of 'public surveillance of public spaces' post-Ripper murders and the 'New Woman' (p. 16). As such, aestheticism featured both a policing of what works of art are to be termed 'aesthetic' and a sense of self-policing while male and female aesthetes considered their shifting social roles.

– about urban dirt and female sexual desire, which may allow us to reread and put greater pressure on our traditional historical sources’ (2004, p. 279). Lee’s novel was received so negatively for its satire of aesthetic circles and its representation of Sapphic relationships that it was removed from circulating libraries. Koven reflects on a particular incident involving novelist and playwright George Moore which makes the literary response to *Miss Brown* particularly relevant to literary slumming and its depiction of ‘dirtiness’. Koven describes how Moore

attempted (without Lee’s permission) to include excerpts from *Miss Brown* in an anthology of “the most improper” writings that, unlike his own, had escaped the ever-vigilant censors at Mudie’s famous circulating library. Lee met Moore over dinner at the home of the parents of her beloved Mary Robinson; Mary set Moore straight and succeeded in removing *Miss Brown* entirely from Moore’s “dirty collection”. (p. 285)

Lee’s novel was therefore recognised as and considered by some to be a ‘dirty’ novel. Moore’s desire to feature the novel in his collection illustrates the perception of Lee’s *Miss Brown* as a highly sexual text. Her perceived ‘overexaggerat[ion of the] the sexual question in life’ exemplifies the concern of reviewers that her novel would evoke sexual pleasures in her readership; this undercurrent of pleasure is, as I have noted throughout this thesis, a trait shared with the slum novel. I argue that the hyper-sexualisation of Anne through Hamlin’s perspective is intended to critique the gaze of the male aesthete. Furthermore, while the slums are at the periphery of *Miss Brown*’s narrative, the distaste for the novel on sexual grounds meant that readers were perhaps likely to read the novel for the pleasure of the grotesque much in the same way that readers engaged with literary slumming. As such, Lee’s decadent writing engages with ‘unorthodox or controversial subject matter[s]’ (Pulham and Maxwell, 2006, p. 7), while also producing a “dirty” novel that evokes aesthetic pleasure through satirical, sexual, and emotional content.

Lee’s travel writings also engage with slum imagery in tantalising and erotic ways: Lee reproduces the poorer classes as art in her travel writing. In *Genius Loci: Notes on Places* (1907), Lee describes Italy’s ‘poor in purse and humble in spirit’ (p. 22). She goes on to describe ‘a bench full of very old paupers, inmates of an almshouse’ who are ‘[un]washed’, ‘blind’, and ‘infirm’ (p. 22). Towards the conclusion of the collection, Lee notes that the ‘poor human creatures’ she has seen on her travels remind her of the young pauper crossing-sweeper Jo from Dickens’s *Bleak House* (1853), specifically referencing Jo’s direct speech in which he states that he ‘never knowed nothink about anythink’ (p. 205). Lee evokes the Dickensian heritage of slum writing here while emphasising the poor’s

‘humble [...] spirit’ through her comparison to Jo’s lack of knowledge, engaging in slumming practices as she takes pleasure in ‘penetrating’ poor spaces and highlighting the poor’s ‘ignorance’ (Koven, 2004, p. 30). Throughout *The Enchanted Woods* (1905) Lee frequently reflects on the poor with sympathy; she refers to them as ‘melancholy’ (p. 45), ‘charming’ (p. 106), ‘tired’ (p. 233), and ‘down-at-heel’ (p. 305) people whose quality of life is reliant on access to ‘labour’ (p. 308). While Lee is primarily reflecting on the Italian poor, her use of language here is far more sympathetic and empathetic to poverty than writers like Morrison who present the poor as ‘creeping things’ in *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894, p. 7). However, Lee does aestheticise the poor, and makes them available to the reader as they experience armchair slumming; the semantic field of poverty and degradation throughout *The Enchanted Woods* and *Genius Loci* illustrates Lee’s aestheticisation of poverty. She emphasises the bleakness of these scenes through the use of descriptors like ‘tired’, ‘unwashed’ (1905, p. 304), ‘bleariness’ (p. 304), and ‘draggletailedness’ (p. 304) to present the sense of dirtiness that, as Koven notes, lies at the heart of the grotesque pleasures of slumming (2004, p. 279). This form of poverty is seen throughout the descriptions of Cold Fremley in *Miss Brown*; the space is described as having

huddled roofs dark in the distance, the curl of smoke—that was the place. Anne felt dizzy. [She] had read enough about shame and sin, heaven knows; the poems of the poets of the set were full of allusions to such things. But she had never realised that they could be realities; they had been so many artistic dabs of horror, imaginary, or belonging vaguely to some distant, dim world, as unreal as the beautiful haunted woods and mysterious castles, the pale unsubstantial gods and heroes, and men and women of the pictures of Rossetti and Burne Jones, of the poems of Swinburne and Morris, and Hamlin and Chough. But that abominations like these should be here, close at hand, in sordid, filthy reality, reality under this same sun, swept by this same wind, reality through which she had unconsciously walked; this seemed impossible. (p. 165)

Lee uses a semantic field of poverty through lexis like ‘filthy’ and ‘sordid’. In this passage, however, she challenges the aestheticisation of poverty; through Anne, Lee accentuates that artistic depictions of poverty detract from the ‘filthy [...] reality’ of the slums, and contextualises this by referring to the names of the major pre-Raphaelite poets of the period alongside Hamlin. In *Miss Brown*, slum imagery is therefore featured not purely to enable armchair slumming; rather, it challenges artistic discourses which reduce poverty to an image of aesthetic pleasure.

Lee’s engagements with aesthetic constructions of social class are reflected in her characterisation of Anne Brown and her working-class heritage. In addition to her

engagement in artistic communities, Lee was involved in numerous philanthropic groups; these included the Salvation Army, the Fabian Society, the Fellowship of the New Life, the Socialist League, the Social Democratic Federation, and Toynbee Hall (Koven, 2004, p. 281). Mary Robinson, her companion throughout the 1880s, ran a club for working-class girls which itself was affiliated with the Working Men's College (Koven, 2004, p. 283). Anne appears to be an extension of Lee's concerns with working-class cultures; Anne is a servant in Italy to Mrs Melton Perry, a 'lank, limp, lantern-jawed leering creature with a Sapphic profile' (p. 9). Anne was born in Scotland, and her father was a dock worker and mechanic (p. 27). From the outset of the text, Anne is connected with Mrs Perry as a figure persistently described as 'Sapphic' (p. 9; p. 10; p. 11) and presented in a working-class profession as a servant. This affinity with poorer class cultures is continued by the appearance of Anne's socialist cousin later in the narrative. In these early sections of the novel, Anne's characterisation becomes inseparable from art. Invited to Italy by Mrs Perry, Walter Hamlin is an aesthete who feels that 'the aesthetic factory had been choking him of late' (p. 8). Lee once again recalls working-class cultures through the metaphorical factory, yet inverts these class connotations by describing the artistic struggles of a 'handsome, effeminate, æsthetic aristocrat' (p. 176). Hamlin's artistic 'choking' is remedied by his desire to paint Anne's 'strange [and] beautiful' features and to recover the 'negation of youth' that he believes has resulted from her livelihood (p. 13). In these early sections of the novel, Anne becomes inseparable from her role as an aesthetic object in Hamlin's perception of her: she is described as a 'strange statue' with a 'head of Parian marble', ultimately appearing as a 'beautiful and sombre idol of the heathen' (p. 24). Described as a 'statue' or 'idol' in Hamlin's aesthetic imagination, Anne's working-class life and her 'negation of youth' is objectified. As Patricia Pulham (2021) notes, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood that Hamlin's characterisation partially satirises had a 'penchant for working-class women [...] who could be transformed into idealised forms in art and educated beyond their social origins' (p. 62). Hamlin 'elevate[s]' (Pulham, 2021, p. 62) Anne socially and aesthetically in a manner that reflects this practice. The inverse metaphor of the 'aesthetic factory' satirically emphasises a class divide between Hamlin and Anne, as Lee deliberately juxtaposes Hamlin's struggle to create art (p. 8) with Anne's experience of 'liv[ing] hand to mouth' during her father's alcoholism and unstable career as a mechanic (p. 42). Lee places artistic struggles in perspective, critiquing the shallowness of Hamlin's aristocratic nature. In doing so, she also intimately connects Anne's working-class heritage with art and the artist.

Through his gaze, Hamlin reconstructs Anne's identity. He calls her 'Miss Brown', to which Anne responds with 'wonder' as 'no one had ever called her Miss Brown before' (p. 54). Hamlin's reference to Anne as Miss Brown illustrates respect for her beyond her working-class status. It also constitutes another attempt by Hamlin to reshape Anne's identity. In this case, he perceives Anne in a way most familiar to Lee's reader in recalling the novel's title. Lee crafts the novel *Miss Brown*; Hamlin attempts to construct 'Miss Brown' as an aesthetic object. This is further emphasised by Hamlin's initial desire to have her sit for a painting, marking an attempt to transform her body into art. In an act simultaneously philanthropic and seductive, Hamlin declares to Anne that

"I cannot let you go," answered Hamlin calmly, standing before the door, "until you have listened to me. Will you let me provide for your future, send you to school, and then place you in the care of my aunt? Will you let me act as if I were your guardian for the next three years, and at the end of them you shall have enough to live and marry as befits a lady, and be as free as air, or become my wife—whichever you shall choose? Answer me, for I am serious." (p. 153)

Hamlin utilises regimes of power-knowledge here; he uses his awareness of Anne's working-class heritage to offer her schooling in a manner that is intermingled with a marriage proposal. While Hamlin provides Anne with a choice of 'free[dom]' or marriage, his imperative 'answer me' characterises him with an aggression that is evocative of the 'hostile [...] social authority' of Pater's aesthete (Adams, 1992, p. 43). Anne's subsequent involvement in Hamlin's aesthetic circles and her later marriage to Hamlin reflects his seductive power over her. Hamlin's apparently philanthropic intent, his seduction of Anne, and his construction of her as an aesthetic object also act as synecdoche for a deeper relationship between art, literature, and charity as in Lee's 'Without Leisure'. For Lee, however, the 'inner impulse' of philanthropy is to act on sympathies for the poor and is an art form itself; for Hamlin, this act of charity towards Anne is an attempt to seduce and eroticise her body, and ultimately to convert her into art. This is led by Hamlin's desires for Anne rather than his sympathies, as indicated in the excessive attention paid by Hamlin to her statue-esque features. The metafictional parallels between Lee's writing of *Miss Brown* and Hamlin's naming of Anne also create a connection between art and philanthropy; Lee represents Anne as an aesthetic object and a recipient of Hamlin's charity simultaneously. Lee's *Miss Brown* is a novel that untangles the relationship between art, sympathy, and philanthropy, while Hamlin's construction of Anne as 'Miss Brown' directly follows his attempts to reduce her to a sexualised statue or idol.

Art, Literature, and Philanthropy: Anne Brown and Walter Hamlin's 'charity'

Much like Dickens, Morrison, and Zangwill, Lee subjects the poor to a *raison d'état*, particularly in her travel writing. In *Miss Brown*, however, artistic communities also come under her surveillance and critique. Foucault's concept of 'dispositif' as an 'apparatus [...] of knowledge-power that effectively marks out in reality that which does not exist and legitimately submits it to the division between true and false' is visible in most forms of literary slumming (1979, p. 19). This concept of 'knowledge-power' is also deeply embedded in the aesthetic circles that Lee was a member of. Commenting on the goals of aesthetic criticism, Pater argues that the critic must search for 'aesthetic value' which they should then seek to 'define' and 'discriminate' from more common, less valued forms of art (1873, p. 20). A *raison d'état* and forms of *dispositif* are present here: the aesthetic critic organises work based on its 'true' value and gives it an artistic power by defining it against other 'false' works. As James Eli Adams (1992) argues, Pater's vision of the aesthete 'unites the figures of the gentleman, dandy, and priest as he attempts to construct new forms of charisma through an active solicitation of hostile surveillance' (p. 443). For Pater, the aesthete offers 'new strategies and hence new forms of social authority' (p. 443). Adams illustrates that this role of artistic and social authority is Foucauldian, noting that Pater's theories form a 'disciplinary order' by stating what the aesthete should and should not do in their work (p. 452). Pater's aesthetic theories emphasise the role of surveillance in aesthetic works; as a member of his circle, Lee reflects this throughout her oeuvre. In *Miss Brown*, the aesthetic and erotic values Hamlin applies to Anne are reflected in the perspectives of his artistic circle. Hamlin's aesthetic group fixates on her 'marvellous beauty: strange, mysterious, Amazonian' (p. 232); the other young women at her school envision her as a 'solemn and tragic girl dressed in the most draggled aesthetic manner, surrounded by a circle of young aesthetes copied out of "Punch"' (p. 215). Anne is constantly under surveillance as a result of Hamlin's philanthropy, appearing as either an Amazonian 'other' to Hamlin's group or as an archetypal working-class aesthetic model who could be 'transformed into idealised forms' (Pulham, 2021, p. 62). In Volume Two of the novel, Anne reflects on herself as a 'mere beggar living off' Hamlin (p. 209) as she feels 'dependent [...] on a man's charity' (p. 225). Lee uses language of entrapment here, and the use of 'beggar' as a metaphor suggests that Anne feels poorer than the working classes under Hamlin's guardianship. This emphasises her sense of objectification, both as a working-class aesthetic object and as a woman dependent on Hamlin. Hamlin's charity as well as his group's perception of her develops from the values attached to Anne's 'mysterious qualities'. Hamlin's social

authority enables a constant ‘hostile surveillance’ of Anne both within his circle and at her school. Anne’s working-class background leads her to be entrapped and ‘surrounded’, effectively aestheticising her poverty and further emphasising her objectification.

As noted, Lee also aestheticises the poor; she describes the ‘down-at-heel’ (1905, p. 305) in *The Enchanted Woods* and builds on a Dickensian aesthetic of poverty in *Genius Loci*. Yet throughout Lee’s travel writing, there is a sense of sympathy for pauper and working-class lifestyles that is not present in Hamlin’s treatment of Anne in the earlier sections of the novel. Her reference to Jo in Dickens’s *Bleak House* may be an attempt by Lee to evoke his ‘painted’ spectacle of the ‘cold, wet [and] shelterless’ poor (1850d, p. viii) throughout *Oliver Twist*, through which he attempts to gain a sympathetic response from the reader for the ‘deserving’ or ‘down-at-heel’ poor.¹²⁵ Many critics have discussed the importance of empathy and sympathy in Lee’s oeuvre.¹²⁶ Kirsty Martin (2013) evidences that Lee’s conceptualisation of sympathy involves a complex mixture of ‘empathy, intuition, understanding, love, sensitivity, and attention’ (p. 10). In *Miss Brown* particularly, Lee ‘rejects an ideal of sympathy as involving detailed, perceptive knowledge of another in favour of something more bodily, energetic, and direct’ (p. 41). In denying knowledge-based sympathy, Lee rejects dispositif; this is evident in the sense of entrapment Anne feels under Hamlin’s aesthetic and objectifying gaze, which reduces Anne’s sense of self to that of a ‘beggar’ (p. 255). Symbolically rejecting aesthetic objects, Anne declares to Hamlin that ‘I don’t want all these beautiful things in order to be happy’, and states that she would rather commit herself to philanthropic work to achieve ‘one evil the less in the world’ (p. 209). In this sense, Hamlin is what Lee later describes as an Obscurantist in her 1912 essay *Vital Lies: Studies of Recent Obscurantism*. Lee describes ‘Obscurantists’ as a group who oversubscribe to a Nietzschean ‘Will to Believe’ which views ‘Truth’ as an ‘obscure’ problem created only through belief (p. 35). Lee rejects these ideas, noting that sympathy and understanding among people is a concrete, emotional truth that is not arbitrary but rather naturally connected to the human condition (p. 36).

The final section of *Vital Lies* illustrates that art should turn to uncover emotion rather than to reject ‘truth’. Lee describes a visit to a church where people are

¹²⁵ As argued in section 1.1.

¹²⁶ The second half of this section engages more directly with these debates and concepts. Some of these critics include Dennis Denisoff (2006), Stefano Evangelista (2006), Carolyn Burdett (2011), and Kirsty Martin (2013). Lee also discusses empathy and sympathy herself, particularly in her collaborative work written alongside Anstruther-Thomson entitled *Beauty and Ugliness* (1912).

side by side with unseen fellow-creatures stripped by this darkness of all vain work-a-day personality, reduced to mere similar souls, suffering or hopeful, human, with a common human need for sympathy or consolation; the human being in its weakness and sadness, the ghosts that lurks in each of us, but shrouded in the majestic impersonal forms of that church, of its half- visible aisles and arches. [...] the sense of those other men and women unseen, nameless, and almost shapeless, who murmur or chant the same (even unheard) words of supplication or thanksgiving, must leave the certainty that there is, brooding like the dusky architecture, shining out mysteriously like the distant altar, a great Reality who hears and answers. (p. 255)

Lee suggests that through sympathy the artist may represent 'Reality'. Her description of the church here illustrates the necessity for a 'shared [...] sympathy or consolation' to understand key aspects of the human condition. Lee directly follows this by stating that 'the power of Art' is the 'quiver of sympathy' which allows authors and readers to 'glance into a soul's depth' (p. 255). The Obscurantist 'Will to Believe' does not allow personal and social truths to be revealed as it focuses too highly on fetishising the unknown; Lee rejects this in describing sympathy as a fundamental truth of cultures and communities.¹²⁷ Hamlin's philanthropy and art are dedicated to representing Anne's 'mystery', rather than sympathetically improving the life of his 'fellow-creatures' through art (Lee, 1909, p. 255). Hamlin's Obscurantist beliefs are reflected in his obsession with Anne's apparently 'strange, mysterious, Amazonian' (p. 232) qualities, as well as his numerous descriptions of Anne in relation to concepts of the unknown (p. 64; p. 130; p. 164).¹²⁸ In addition, his apparently philanthropic intention to adopt Anne at the beginning of the text is again void of emotional sympathy; his charity is an attempt to seduce Anne into marriage, as indicated earlier in the novel by his desire to transform her body into art (p. 153). For Lee, art should act as a 'quiver of sympathy' rather than objectifying and mystifying the subjects that fall under the artist's gaze. Hamlin represents the antithesis to Lee's sympathetic aestheticism. Hamlin's efforts to understand Anne's othered 'mysteries', alongside his objectification of her working-class heritage and body, act as a form of 'hostile' surveillance as he tries to convert her identity into an aesthetic, eroticised artform. Lee critiques this and instead aestheticises the poor not to objectify them but to humanise them as her 'fellow-creatures'.

¹²⁷ Lee objects to the Obscurantists on the grounds that they 'have attached themselves, without exception, to the philosophical school which makes Life the central and ultimate and paramount mystery' (p. viii). She also notes that its philosophy expresses itself through 'continual ambiguities, revokes of statements, quibbles and distortions of meaning' and is expressed in 'such tentative disingenuousness as is not easily detected by others and perhaps not easily suspected by oneself' (p. 37).

¹²⁸ A particularly notable instance of this description appears in Vol 1, Chapter II: 'There was, [Hamlin] felt, something strange there—something which corresponded with the magnificent and mysterious outside,—a possibility of thought and emotion enclosed like the bud in its case of young leaves—a potential passion, good or bad, of some sort. At Anne Brown's actual character it was difficult to get' (p. 164).

Anne bridges art and philanthropy, acting as an antidote to the amorality of Hamlin's aesthetic community. Through Anne's characterisation, Lee emphasises the artist's moral obligation to assist the poor. As noted, Lee simultaneously operated within philanthropic and artistic circles; in 'Without Leisure', she emphasises that her art is inseparable from her philanthropy. Similarly, Lee also indicates that literature is inseparable from morality and empathy. In *Beauty and Ugliness* (1912), a piece written in collaboration with Anstruther-Thomson, Lee states that literature appeals to 'memory impression' and therefore has a 'moral power' that is distinct from other art mediums (p. 266). She provides the contrasting example of gazing at a statue, which 'holds us by *its* reality, the less moral (or immoral) feelings we shall have' (p. 266, emphasis Lee). In fiction, the 'word' enables conceptual elements like empathy and morality to be visible; in statuary, the tangible 'form' is a gateway to more concrete, physical responses (p. 266). Lee and Anstruther-Thomson conclude that if 'men have been in love with statues, it is because they have substituted for them the flesh and blood images of their memory' (p. 266). This final statement reflects Hamlin's description of Anne as a 'strange statue', once again positioning her as an erotic object (p. 232). Beyond the gaze of Hamlin and his group, however, Anne is far more representative of morality and philanthropy.

Midway through the text, Anne discovers that Hamlin has sole ownership over a village named Cold Fremley, a 'cluster of houses half-way to Eggleston, in the middle of the fen, by the river' (p. 162). Anne's friend and fellow philanthropist, Marjory Leigh, describes that a

girl with an illegitimate baby—a very common occurrence in those parts—had turned up for assistance at the vicarage, and, while deprecating the wretched creature's fault, the vicar's wife had revealed [...] a jealously hidden stain in her parish; namely, that in the hamlet to which the girl belonged, a mishap, as she termed it, like hers was a trifle, and indeed could scarcely be considered a fault at all, compared with the condition of brutish sin in which rolled, cynically huddled together in cabins no better than sties, the whole small population of that foul little fen village. (p. 160)

The simile of dwellings 'no better than sties' presents a dehumanising environment; the space itself resonates with concepts of neglect, and the adjectives 'foul' and 'stain' suggest that Cold Fremley is an environment of poverty due to Hamlin's mismanagement. Anne describes this discovery as a 'nightmare' (p. 164) and reflects on a moment earlier in the novel in which the space appears as an aesthetically pleasurable set of 'huddled roofs dark in the distance' (p. 164). This description of 'huddled roofs' is undoubtedly evocative of Gustave Doré's *Over London – By Rail* (1872), the most famous of Doré's engravings.

Doré's image depicts the slums from above, placing emphasis specifically on the huddled roofings of the tightly compact slum area. By this allusion, Lee indicates that the aestheticisation of such a space only operates to hide the 'cynically huddled' nature of these dwellings; the added premodifier 'cynically' makes this shift from aesthetic pleasure to Anne's horror at Cold Fremley more evident to the reader.¹²⁹ Hearing Marjory's description, Anne empathises with the inhabitants in a way that transforms the outwardly pleasing look of the space into a 'hideous' slum in her mind (p. 163). As in Lee's *Vital Lies*, Anne's empathetic understanding of life in Cold Fremley creates a 'shared [...] sympathy or consolation' (1912, p. 255) with the poor and results in her disdain towards Hamlin's lack of morality. Marjory's story holds a 'moral power' that affects Anne's aesthetic memory of the space (1912, p. 266), illustrating a similar function to Lee and Anstruther-Thomson's conceptualisation of literature. Anne's shift from an aesthetic view of Cold Fremley to an empathic understanding of its inhabitants echoes her movement from being Hamlin's objectified 'statue' to an active participant in philanthropy. In representing this through literature itself, Lee positions sympathetic understandings of slum life as the correct approach. As such she rejects Hamlin's objectification of Anne as a working-class woman under his hostile surveillance, and she critiques his failure to fulfil his moral obligations as an artist.

Anne's desire to break from aesthetic life and move towards philanthropic reform illustrates the potential for a new, sympathetic aestheticism. As noted in section 1.2, the New Woman appeared at the fin de siècle 'as a sister figure [that] represented a challenge to Victorian femininity in centring her identity in a woman-centred space that is both familial and professional' (Hager, 2007, p. 461). The New Woman is intimately tied with the development of philanthropic sisterhoods; by 1893 over half a million women in Britain were 'occupied continuously' or 'professionally' in philanthropic work (Poole, 2014, p. 3). Published nearly ten years before, *Miss Brown* anticipates the growing significance of the New Woman to philanthropic endeavours. Anne's rejection of the 'beautiful things'

¹²⁹ Doré's images were created for publication in journalist Blanchard Jerrold's *London: A Pilgrimage* (1872). Doré's engravings became intertwined with the public imagination of the slums, particularly among the middle classes; as Tanushree Ghosh (2013) argues, this is likely due to the fact the images 'produce the pleasures of liberal guilt; they not only gratify reformist desire to eradicate social injustice but also produce pleasure in finding more injustice to be eradicated' (p. 92). The pleasure of Doré's images derives from its production of a cyclical need for social justice, which ultimately results in a lack of a true understanding of the conditions the poor experience. Lee's emotional empathy works against this surface level aesthetic injustice. For more on cycles of social justice, see Ghosh's 'Gifting Pain: The Pleasures of Liberal Guilt in *London, a Pilgrimage* and *Street Life in London*'.

purchased for her by Hamlin epitomises her movement away from his aestheticism in favour of philanthropic action. Stefano Evangelista (2006) argues that Anne stands as an ‘antidote’ to ‘the worn-out aphorism’ of aestheticism. Evangelista argues that Anne’s ‘desire to sympathize and help stands in clear didactic contrast to the aesthetic set’s moral debauchery and morbid taste’ (p. 101). The phrase ‘worn-out aphorism’ is the description given by the narrator of *Miss Brown* following Hamlin’s statement that ‘everything is legitimate for the sake of an artistic effect’ (p. 94). As Evangelista indicates, Anne’s desire for philanthropic reform acts as an ‘antidote’ to Hamlin’s ‘art for art’s sake’ aesthetic ideology: directly after his comments on artistic effect Anne questions Hamlin by asking whether it is acceptable ‘to do a disgraceful thing?’ in his pursuit of creating art, referring to the immoral content of his poems (p. 94). Anne is propelled to challenge his discourse by the realisation that for Hamlin, Cold Fremley is a Doré-esque aesthetic location rather than a space requiring reform. Once again, Anne’s beliefs on art are intrinsically linked with her philanthropic morality. She goes on to declare that

You intimated just now that a man may pretend to do anything for the sake of an artistic effect. And now you are trying to make me believe that you really have felt and thought those horrible things. It is of no use. (p. 94)

Here, Anne embodies Lee’s turn from Pater’s ‘art for art’s sake’ mentality (1873, p. 252) towards a conceptualisation of ‘art for life’s [...] sake’ (Pulham and Maxwell, 2006, p. 9). Anne’s emphasis on Hamlin’s lack of authenticity indicates a moral obligation to represent reality. As it only depicts ‘horrible things’ for the sake of artistic effect, Hamlin’s art is incredulous to Anne. By breaking away from Hamlin’s school of aestheticism and taking up philanthropy, Anne’s characterisation indicates the capacity of the New Woman to achieve social *and* aesthetic reform. As in ‘Without Leisure’, Anne’s suggestion that art should represent truths is intertwined with philanthropic actions. Moving away from Hamlin’s perception of her as a ‘beggar’ and as a working-class aesthetic object, Anne develops agency to achieve social reform while also deconstructing the surveillance techniques of Hamlin’s circle.

Walter Hamlin and Richard Brown: Bridging Art and Socialism

Anne’s development throughout the text acts as a synecdoche for Lee’s attempts to reconcile ‘art for art’s sake’ aestheticism with her philanthropic and empathetic interests. As Diana Maltz (2006) notes, Lee somewhat bridges the gaps between the two through her work with Toynbee Hall. Lee and Anstruther-Thomson gave talks on Italian art to the working classes

as part of the Hall's philanthropic efforts, and many of these talks were based on 'the aesthetics of Pater' (p. 81). Lee herself reflects on these efforts in her introduction to Anstruther-Thomson's posthumously published *Art and Man*. Lee describes that the 'idea came to Kit of "making it her business, [...] to show the galleries to the East End People"', and concludes that this likely developed from their shared connection with Toynbee Hall (p. 26). Following Anstruther-Thomson's leadership, Lee assisted in making the 'accumulated treasures of art [...] accessible to the less privileged classes' which was 'compassed by explaining the manner in which works of art act on our spirit' (p. 27). As well-to-do artists, both felt it their moral obligation to provide a 'service to the community' (p. 27). Hamlin's charity towards Anne at the beginning of the novel seems to somewhat illustrate this form of charity; he promises not just a 'fortune', but also that Anne will be able to receive an education (p. 151). Yet Lee presents Hamlin's actions not as philanthropy but as a form of seductive entrapment. Even Hamlin's initial idea to provide Anne with money and education involves her objectification as an aesthetic, sexualised object under the surveillance of his artistic circle. Hamlin states that either 'Anne Brown must turn into a sordid nursery-governess, or into the avowedly most beautiful woman in England—that is to say, in the particular pre-Raphaelite society which constituted England to him' (p. 118). Vol 1. of the novel ends with Mrs Spencer, a high profile member of Hamlin's group, declaring to Anne that 'I think you are not aware, my dear girl, that you are the most beautiful woman Walter has ever seen' (p. 311). Here, Mrs Spencer illustrates a form of knowledge-power in asserting a fact that Anne does not know; her use of the superlative 'most' indicates that Hamlin's vision of Anne as the 'most beautiful woman' in his circle has been realised, which in turn subjects Anne to the 'hostile surveillance' of aestheticism (Adams, 1992, p. 443). Through this presentation of the relationship Lee indicates that while the artist can and should have a positive influence on the lower classes, the poor should not be subjected to an objectifying aesthetic gaze.

Socialism appears as the binary opposite to Hamlin's amorality. Anne's cousin Richard Brown is a socialist. In the earlier sections of the novel, Richard anticipates Anne's sense of oppression under Hamlin's charity. He asks Anne

will you be happy taken out of your own sphere of life, knowing yourself to be bound in gratitude to this man, who will always continue to feel your superior, to look down upon you as a beggar whom he has fed, or a chattel which he has bought? [...] You know what marriage means. It means being a man's chattel, more than his beast of burden, his plaything, the toy of his caprice and sensuality. It means, also, that you

must smother all love for a worthier man, or degrade yourself in your own eyes. (pp. 189 - 191)

The use of the 'beggar' metaphor, later used by Anne to describe her position, situates Richard against the immorality of Hamlin's aesthetic group. Richard's understanding of Anne's lack of freedom through the repeated 'chattel' metaphor also involves a sense of empathy that is omitted from Hamlin's dialogue with Anne. Richard particularly reflects the definition of empathy that Lee and Anstruther-Thompson voice in *Beauty and Ugliness*. They define empathy as the experience of 'putting oneself in place of some one, of imagining, of experiencing, the feelings of some one or something' (1912, p. 46). In imagining Anne's experience within Hamlin's circle, Richard engages with this form of empathy that they suggest is integral to true emotional reflection (1912, p. 46). Richard later describes Hamlin and his group as 'selfish, mean, weak, [and] shallow', further separating his capacity for empathy and apparent selflessness from Hamlin's aesthetic group (p. 65). For Richard, Hamlin's artistic circle illustrates immorality and a lack of empathy that results in Anne's sense of entrapment. Dennis Denisoff (2006) argues that Lee's decadence turns away from the situations of 'social crises represented by Decadence within a bloodless concern with the conceptual structure of western epistemology' as it 'risk[s] erasing the abuse suffered by the environment, and especially by the working poor' (p. 81). Instead, Lee's decadence 'arises from a vision of England's economy as a materialist value system run by a myopic elite' (p. 81). Denisoff argues that in Lee's texts *Miss Brown, Baldwin* (1886), and *Althea* (1894), privileged members of society are 'chastised for leading lives of pleasure and excess that depend on the labour of others who are not themselves given any opportunity for cultural growth or refined aesthetic knowledge' (p. 81). Lee emphasises the need for artists to ethically engage in philanthropy, especially as they navigate elite, artistic, and aesthetic groups, and Richard's empathetic characterisation reflects this necessity.

Richard's engagement in socialism influences Anne, enabling her to simultaneously operate within philanthropic and artistic spaces. Richard repeats the phrase 'work and be proud' (p. 189), which he states originates with Jane's father and his working-class experiences. Richard is therefore connected with Anne's working-class background despite his upper-middle-class ownership of a factory, once again dichotomising him from Hamlin's aristocratic heritage and aesthetic surveillance. Richard and Anne go slumming, travelling in 'silence through the black oozy streets' of Cold Fremley while discussing socialism (p. 58). They reflect on Hamlin's group, concluding that the income they receive from producing art should be used to build dwellings for the poor (p. 59). Directly following this

conclusion, Richard states that he aims to ‘give [himself] up entirely to studying social questions’ (p. 60). Their discussions on these social questions and the philanthropic obligations of the well-to-do ultimately drive Anne to rejuvenate Cold Fremley. Richard’s empathetic and moralistic socialism reflects that of Toynbee Hall. In his 1893 article ‘Is Slumming Played Out?’, Reverend James Adderley describes the aims of the Hall and interrogates the concept of slumming.¹³⁰ Adderley begins his article by asking the titular question, noting that ‘thanks to Mr Charles Booth, Mr Barnett, Dr Billing, and others, [the East End] is no longer a sufficiently mysterious place to explore’; he goes on to state that the rich are often now ‘disappointed because it is not “slummy” enough’ (p. 834).¹³¹ Toynbee Hall, Adderley argues, is the result of a ‘new philanthropy’ that developed after the period in which slumming was at its most popular as a leisure pursuit (p. 849). The Hall ‘provide[s] education and recreation and to afford opportunities for a special study of the condition of the poor’ (p. 835), which Adderley argues is a marked shift from outdated slumming practices as the poor consent to their surveillance in Toynbee Hall during their free education. He concludes by stating that ‘the deeper good will be done by thoughtful students and sympathetic dwellers among the poor’ who ‘want not plans and programmes but principles and knowledge’ to ‘pick holes in social schemes’ (p. 841). While Richard and Anne navigate the ‘oozy streets’ of Cold Fremley leisurely, their aim is similar to that of Toynbee Hall in that they attempt to accurately discuss solutions to slum life through surveillance: Richard himself evidences this in his statement that reform has been ‘too much the leisure-time amusement of men’ and that ‘we must find the scientific basis for our art’ (p. 61). The metaphorical use of ‘art’ here further indicates the link between art and philanthropy made by Lee in ‘Without Leisure’ while also reflecting the knowledge-based principles of Toynbee Hall. Hamlin’s ‘worn-out aphorism’, art for art’s sake, is also somewhat reflected in the belief of Richard’s socialist circles. They believe in the ‘value of

¹³⁰ James Granville Adderley was an author, intellectual, and cleric who worked in the slum districts in and around London’s East End. Along with fellow Catholics, Adderley pushed for religious support for laborers in the 1889 dock strike; Adderley developed a reputation for being a highly-tolerant, anti-materialist Catholic, and would often spend weeks ‘sleeping rough’ on the streets as an apparent act of compassion and sympathy (Koven, 2004, p. 21). He supported Oscar Wilde and championed his works even after his conviction for ‘gross indecency’ in 1895 (Koven, 2004, p. 21). Adderley’s legacy continued beyond his death in 1942 through the continued work of Toynbee Hall.

¹³¹ Dr. Robert Claudius Billing, Bishop of Bedford from 1860 – 1895. His obituary in the *Western Gazette* remarks that his work in ‘Spitalfields was so conspicuous’ that he was appointed ‘Bishop of Bedford, suffragan for North and East London’ (1898, p. 2). As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Samuel Barnett was the founder of Toynbee Hall. For more on Charles Booth, see section 2.1 on Arthur Morrison and the importance of mapping.

each good impulse', which is effectively a call for philanthropy for philanthropy's sake (p. 54). Hamlin's characterisation is highly evocative of Lee's engagement in the Pater circle; Richard's socialist concepts anticipate Lee's engagement with Toynbee Hall and her charitable work throughout the 1880s and 1890s. As in 'Without Leisure', art and philanthropy are consistently interlinked in *Miss Brown* through Hamlin's and Richard's simultaneous mirroring and conflicting characterisations - Anne Brown stands at the centre of each of their ideological circles.

The relationship between Richard, Hamlin, and Anne can be seen as a form of triangulation that emphasises a 'rivalry between the two active [male] members of an erotic triangle' (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 3).¹³² Many critics have identified this erotic triangulation in *Miss Brown* (Pulham and Maxwell, 2006; Denisoff, 2006; Sutton, 2010). Although this relationship between the three is undoubtedly fuelled by an erotic attraction to Anne, the triangulation here illustrates not simply desire but also the presence of 'hostile surveillance' (Adams, 1992, p. 443) in both Hamlin's circle and Richard's brand of socialism. As noted, Richard wishes to use a 'scientific' approach to philanthropy; this already implicates dispositor in his work in much the same way Lee represents knowledge-power in Hamlin's objectification of Anne. It also indicates yet another example of the knowledge-based sympathy that Lee rejects in her critical work (Martin, 2013, p. 10). Although Richard seems to echo the principles of Toynbee Hall, his belief in a scientific approach to his philanthropy positions him against Lee's theory of empathy as the act of 'imagining, of experiencing, the feelings of some one or something' (1912, p. 46). Lee further encourages a critique of Richard and his fact-based philanthropy by illustrating his controlling nature, once again mirroring his socialist perspective with Hamlin's aesthetic entrapment of Anne. Directly after their discussion on philanthropy, Richard says to her

You are equivocating, Anne. [...] You find that Hamlin drags you down, freezes all your best aspirations. [...] Do you know what you are giving him in return for what you call his generosity?—that is to say, in return for the whim which made him educate a beautiful woman, that he might show her off and have a beautiful wife, if he chose. Do you know what it is? Your love, eh? You have none to give; you have said so yourself. Your body? your honour? Nay, every prostitute, every kitchen slut can give him that. And I suppose such things do not exist for a delicately nurtured lady, a ward of Mr Walter Hamlin's. No; you are giving him your soul, selling it to him, prostituting it as any common woman would prostitute her body. [...] I *can* make you listen. (pp. 65 – 69)

¹³² Triangulation is discussed at length in section 1.2.

Directly after this, Anne laughs and refers to Richard's removal of her agency in her decisions as one of the many 'usual generalisations about women' (p. 71). Richard is controlling: he uses modal verbs of certainty and imperative declarations such as 'you are', 'you find', 'you are giving', and 'I *can* make you listen'. He also considers Anne in material terms, using prostitution as an extended metaphor to illustrate his intense fixation on working-class 'common' behaviour. While rejecting Hamlin's aesthetic surveillance of Anne, Richard continues to construct her within the materialistic values of his scientific philanthropy. His final declarative that he 'can make' Anne listen to him echoes Hamlin's earlier imperative to Anne to 'answer [him], for [he is] serious', creating a textual link between both forms of entrapment. As Denisoff notes, Richard's 'motivations are based on both a desire to possess and control and an admiration for material progress that is as disreputable as the inaction of dandy-aesthetes' (Denisoff, 2006, p. 81). Anne's dismissal of Richard's 'generalisations' illustrates a move away from her objectification within both aesthetic and philanthropic circles. Lee further acknowledges an interplay between art and philanthropy. In this instance, however, it is through a critique of art and socialism as agents of surveillance, objectification, and control. Lee acknowledges through these criticisms that aestheticism and socialism lack an emotion-based empathy; Richard's 'scientific' approach leaves no space to imagine the feelings of the poor, while the amorality of Hamlin's art fails to allow readers and artists access to true experiences of poverty.

Cold Fremley, Sapphic Circles, and Anne Brown's Empathetic Gaze

Anne's work at Cold Fremley illustrates a new form of empathetically led surveillance, separating her from both Hamlin's aesthetic gaze and Richard's knowledge-based socialism. Anne's gateway to this form of philanthropy is her Sapphic relationships with Mary and Marjory Leigh. Mary's description of life at Cold Fremley is the driving force of Anne's philanthropic pursuits. As noted in section 1.2, Sapphic relations 'involve ideas of a community, of learning, teaching, writing and study as activities occurring among women' which are carried out via 'passionate dialogue[s]' (Vanita, 1996, p. 2). Anne's partnership with her 'philanthropic friend' particularly evidences such a relationship; Mary tells Anne of the 'pools of sin which stagnated among the starving, unwashed, and unlettered million' (p. 197) which elicits a 'haunting desire' in Anne to achieve social reform (p. 225). The 'desire' awakened in Anne implies a sense of passion in her dialogue with Mary surrounding Cold Fremley. Anne's Sapphic desires are alluded to as ghostly and repressed through the premodifier 'haunting'. This reflects both the 'haunting' nature of the 'sin' in Cold Fremley,

and also alludes to a suppressed, deeper desire that is echoed in Colby's description of Lee's 'repressed' sexuality (2003, p. 51). In *The Apparitional Lesbian*, Terry Castle (1993) indicates a 'ghost effect' in the representation of lesbianisms in fiction (p. 2). Lesbians and Sapphic relationships are 'elusive, vaporous, difficult to spot', reflecting the social repression of lesbianism as it appears in codified terms (p. 2). Castle's argument is visible in Anne's 'haunting', as she experiences her Sapphic connections in ghostly and elusive terms. Lee also appears to encode her Sapphic relationships in Mary's naming. Her surname is phonetically similar to Lee's, creating a link between Mary and the author in the reader's imagination. Her forename is also directly indicative of Lee's own 'philanthropic friend' and romantic partner Mary Robinson.¹³³ These personal, metafictional references emphasise the role of Mary Leigh as Anne's primary Sapphic relationship in the text, which ultimately connects desire and passion with Anne's philanthropy.

Desire and philanthropy are further connected with the Leighs through Marjory's relationship with an East End curate, Harry Collett. The narrator describes that

Anne and Mary Leigh used often to laugh over the intensely serious flirtations which were carried on between Marjory and the East End curate—flirtations of which both parties were perfectly unaware—earnestly discussing charity reorganisation, ventilation, primary instruction, and so forth; but which was nevertheless destined to result, soon after the general return to town, in a long engagement between Marjory and Harry Collett. Harry was already back at his post in the East End; but Marjory, being unable to discuss philanthropy with him, went daily to help his mother in her work. Thus it was that Anne gradually became acquainted with the petty miseries of village life, its dull indifference, mistaken by poets for innocence, and beneath which lies so much possibility of stupid misery and stupid crime. "All that must be improved some day," Anne used to say. (p. 158)

It is partly through this association with Harry and Marjory that Anne is first made aware of her potential for philanthropic action. The notion that Marjory and Harry were 'unaware' of their 'intensely serious flirtations' suggests a subconsciously passionate desire that occurs in philanthropic groups, and this is immediately connected with Mary and Anne 'laugh[ing]' over the relationship itself. Anne also begins to distance herself from Hamlin's aesthetic school through this relationship, separating the hardships of poverty from the 'ignorance' assumed by aesthetic poets. Sapphic desire runs through Mary's and Anne's relationship, which is ultimately connected with philanthropy. In *In Darkest London*, sororal relationships

¹³³ In 'Maverick Modernists: Sapphic Trajectories from Vernon Lee to D.H. Lawrence', Sondeep Kandola (2019) casts doubt on whether Lee herself would have accepted 'the Sapphic nomenclature' (p. 97). While true, Lee's relationships with women, romantic or otherwise, still keenly represent the sense of learning, writing, and living together that is inherent to Vanita's definition of the Sapphic in literary circles.

are the solution to the ideological divide between socialist and salvationist philanthropies; in *Miss Brown*, Sapphic sisterhood is the answer to deconstructing the hostile, scientific-based surveillance of Richard's socialism, as well as the aestheticisation of poverty within Hamlin's poetic circle. This is evident in Anne's realisation that the aesthetic assumption of ignorance among the poor is unauthentic as she develops her philanthropic ideals.

Marjory attempts to dissuade Anne from rejuvenating Cold Fremley. She argues that working against Hamlin's aesthetic desire to retain the 'huddled' nature of the space would be 'morbid, and dangerous, and unworthy' (p. 167). She concludes by telling Anne that it is improper to influence a 'man who is in love with you', and states that 'you think you will, but you can't' (p. 170). Marjory's passionate speech influences Anne's determination to convince Hamlin to rejuvenate the space despite Marjory's claims that Anne will be unsuccessful. Anne reflects on Mary's story of Cold Fremley, noting that her knowledge of slum life there is 'too horrible' and that 'everything in the world seems tarnished' (p. 167). Anne's knowledge of the impoverished conditions 'haunt[s]' her, leading her to conclude that

"What must be done, must be done," answered Anne. "It's not a question of liking or disliking. Mr Hamlin's a man, and I am a woman, and I daresay men and women don't talk about such things. But Mr Hamlin is the proprietor of Cold Fremley, and that's all I have to do with."

The Leighs looked at her with incredulous astonishment. It seemed so simple to her. (p. 170)

Sexual relationships are again linked with philanthropic acts, yet in this case, it is Anne's rejection of the relationship between herself and Hamlin which propels her to try and influence his treatment of Cold Fremley. Although it leaves the Leighs 'astonished', their passionate dialogues with Anne result in a charitable act that also rejects the gendered power dynamics present in her relationship with Hamlin. Anne eventually succeeds in remedying the slum and provides its poor inhabitants with employment. This results not only from her Sapphic dialogues but also through the knowledge passed to Anne through Mary's surveillance, enacting a form of knowledge-power amongst Anne and the Leighs. In this case, this knowledge is not used as a form of hostility towards the poor but rather as an instigator for Anne's attempts to convince Hamlin to enact social change.

In addition to the knowledge-power enabled by their shared dialogues, the sororal charity enacted by Anne, Mary, and Marjory also illustrates a form of philanthropy led by emotional empathy rather than aesthetics or fact-orientated socialism. In *The Handling of*

Words (1923), Lee embodies this form of empathy in her conceptualisation of the ‘Poor in Spirit’ (p. 94). Lee describes how literature ‘requires the co-operation of the Reader with the Writer’, noting that the reader ‘must bring all his experience to the business, all his imagination and sympathy’ (p. 94). Here, Lee is further imbuing her writing with an empathetic and emotional function similar to that seen in ‘Without Leisure’ and *Beauty and Ugliness*, thus breaking away from the ‘hostile’ gaze of both Pater’s and Hamlin’s aestheticism. Following this statement, she reflects on the poorer classes who lack access to literature and art. She notes that

They invest their energies in necessary or unnecessary work and virtue, and rarely have a penn’orth to spare. They are, in the most literal sense, the Poor in Spirit; I use these words respectfully and in view of certain items of blessedness and future glory attendant on that state. For are they not the reserve material of mankind’s to-morrow? and even if they do not toil in mines and mills and offices, have they not fostered those virtues and those inventions which apery now and then were thrust upon them by the riotously living spirits of the past? [...] Of course, as the world progresses and less energy is spent in exhausting labour, unintelligent learning, useless duty and dull relaxation, the number of the Poor in Spirit, as of the poor in health, money or virtue, may gradually diminish; and inferior or even unwholesome literature, like bad eating and worse drinking, will tend to disappear. (p. 95)¹³⁴

Lee’s comments here echo her reflections on the time she spent at Toynbee Hall, where she states that her goal was to teach the poorer classes how ‘works of art act on our spirit’ (1924, p. 27). Lee also shows sympathy for the ‘exhausting’ labour undertaken by the lower classes and their lack of access to art. Richard’s science-based socialism, itself reflecting Toynbee Hall’s aim to conduct a ‘special study’ of the poor (Adderley, 1893, p. 384), is vastly different to Lee’s approach to philanthropy. Lee’s argument also marks a departure from Pater’s suggestion that the artist should avoid focussing on abstract concepts and consider the tangible ‘forms’ of ‘human life’, emphasising the conceptual spiritual self of the poor (1873, pp. x – xi). Lee’s focus lies with the ‘spirit’ of the poor which remains subject to surveillance, as the surveyor is responsible for ensuring they experience ‘wholesome’ literature; Lee’s and Anstruther-Thomson’s talks on Italian art are an example of this impulse to provide a cultural knowledge for those experiencing poverty. Lee’s conceptualisation of the poor in terms of their ‘spirit’, however, removes the aesthetic and

¹³⁴ Lee’s reference to ‘unwholesome literature’ refers to the sensation or melodrama novel. While Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Mary* (1916) does not follow the typical conventions of the sensation novel, Braddon is closely associated with the form and pioneered its popularity. As such, I engage with the context of the sensation novel further in section 3.2 ‘Possessing the Pauper’s Body: Philanthropic Surveillance in Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Mary* (1916)’.

scientific elements from surveying the poor and instead focuses on advancing their personal development through art.

Conclusion

While Anne's role in building new dwellings in Cold Fremley is far more tangible and concrete than Lee's teachings on art, her passionate Sapphic dialogues with the Leighs illustrates a spiritual and emotional empathy for the poor that is absent in both Hamlin's and Richard's circles. Anne reads Richard's books on socialism and states that 'I don't much believe in your religion—positivism, I suppose it is' (p. 331). She also encourages Hamlin to provide financial assistance in renovating Cold Fremley by illustrating how his vision of poverty as 'very picturesque and grand' is amoral (p. 212). In doing so, she rejects the lack of empathy present in aesthetics and positivist socialism. The narrator notes that Anne

had dreamed of raising the lower classes, of spreading higher knowledge and ideals among them, of awakening the more fortunate parts of society to their sense of responsibility,—she whose whole energy had been taken up in silent projects for bettering, no matter how little, the world, bettering the poor by making them think and enjoy, bettering the rich by making them feel; giving the shop-girls of the Women's Club a glimpse into the world of imagination, and giving Hamlin a glimpse into the world of reality [...] Talking with the Leighs and her cousin, she used shyly, and with a desire to deceive very foreign to her, to put questions, seemingly purely abstract, as to what a poor girl with a certain amount of education could best do. (pp. 319 – 320)

Lee reiterates that Anne can improve the conditions of the poor, as well as modify the beliefs of Hamlin's circle by encouraging them to 'feel' sympathy for the impoverished, as a direct result of her Sapphic relationship with the Leighs. Anne develops a Sapphic form of surveillance that can 'rais[e]' the lower classes and 'better' the higher classes through empathetic understanding. Anne's effect on aestheticism is particularly clear in the final image of the novel; Hamlin asks Anne if she is cold, before rushing to 'put his arm round her shoulder' (p. 317). This final image, while seemingly separate from the philanthropic elements of the novel, illustrates a shift in Hamlin's character development. Here he shows an empathetic response to Anne's feelings or 'spirit' that is distinct from his entrapment of her in the earlier sections of the novel. Anne marries Hamlin despite 'loath[ing] aesthetes like' him (p. 271), feeling she has to 'sacrifice [...] herself' to halt Hamlin's potentially disastrous marriage to Sacha Elaguine (p. 283). At first glance, it appears that Hamlin has succeeded in objectifying Anne as she 'sacrifice[s]' her sense of self in her marriage to him. Anne does give up her 'soul' and her socialist studies to marry Hamlin, but in doing so she

reforms Hamlin's sympathies. As Brake argues, Anne 'marries' Hamlin, the symbol of aestheticism, to 'reshape [his] moral framework' (2006, p. 14). Anne, therefore, continues reformist acts at the text's dénouement, even while in a position of entrapment. Throughout the text, Anne rejuvenates Cold Fremley as she shifts Hamlin's amoral and unempathetic aesthetic beliefs.

Anne's sympathetically rooted philanthropy subverts Hamlin's amoral aestheticism and illustrates the embodiment of decadence in Lee's work as both Anne and Lee cultivate 'new, unusual and extreme sensations, perceptions and emotions' (Pulham and Maxwell, 2006, p. 7). Lee does aestheticise poverty for the pleasure of her readership, as I have illustrated in her descriptions of Cold Fremley and extracts from her travel writing. Yet this aestheticisation exists not simply for its own 'sake', but rather to encourage sympathy and understanding for the poor. In this sense, Lee positions the empathetic gaze developed through Anne's Sapphic connections as a potential remedy to the 'hostile surveillance' of Pater's aestheticism and the positivist, fact-based socialism later expressed by Adderley, even as Anne has to sacrifice herself to marriage. In *Miss Brown*, Lee illustrates that by avoiding the objectification of poverty and instead surveying the emotional and spiritual experiences of the poor, the philanthropist can reform poverty, socialism, and aestheticism. Lee's critiques of aesthetic and philanthropic cultures are developed in Braddon's *Mary*, which interrogates male philanthropists, their pursuit of slumming practices, and their objectifying gazes.

3.2 - Possessing the Pauper's Body: Philanthropic Surveillance in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Mary* (1916)

Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Mary* (1916) interrogates the relationship between the slum philanthropist and the pauper. Throughout the text, Braddon considers the role of surveillance in philanthropy and its potential to be an apparatus of control. I argue that Braddon particularly highlights the importance of gender in the surveillance of poor bodies. Mary, the novel's protagonist, experiences oppression not only because she is poor, but more specifically because she is a poor woman; through Mary's experiences Braddon critiques the possessive, surveying gaze of the male philanthropist. *Mary* was published one year after Braddon's death, marking the end of a long literary career; her success as an author began in the 1860s with *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) and *Aurora Floyd* (1863), and throughout her career she acted as editor on several successful periodicals including *Belgravia: A London Magazine* from 1866 to 1876.¹³⁵ Braddon was a prolific writer, and many of her texts feature philanthropist characters, images of poverty, and interrogations of class relations. *Lady Audley's Secret* and *Rough Justice* (1898) feature images of impoverishment, financial struggle, and class struggle, while *The Conflict* (1903), *The White House* (1906), *Miranda* (1913), and *Mary* all feature philanthropists and charitable actions as major plot points.¹³⁶ Braddon represents the poor, the working classes, and philanthropic work throughout her oeuvre, and illustrates the social good that could be enacted by her readers as well as members of her social circle. As Anne-Marie Beller (2012) argues, philanthropy appears as a major theme in Braddon's later novels alongside 'Christian faith' and 'wealth' (p. 118).¹³⁷ Braddon herself contributed to numerous charities, and her 1891 subscription list includes

¹³⁵ The close proximity of her most successful novels and the founding of *Belgravia* magazine propelled Braddon to literary stardom. As Beth Palmer (2008) notes, the popularity of Braddon as author-editor created both an adoring readership of her works and an elite set of critics rallying against her writings by positioning them as 'unthinking' literature. I engage with this dichotomy by discussing the role of sensation literature in Braddon's career while also highlighting how *Mary* departs from her more sensational works.

¹³⁶ In *Lady Audley's Secret*, the titular character subverts not just morality in the apparent murder of her ex-husband, George, but also social class. Catherine Quirk (2018) argues that Lucy Audley 'acts in order to circumvent the system and infiltrate the upper classes' and to 'to guarantee her individual identity, and to survive in the world' (p. 8). She concludes that Lucy's 'plots, masks, and performances all work towards guaranteeing her own individual social mobility and her access to and control of her own identity' (p. 8). *Lady Audley's Secret* therefore illustrates Braddon's willingness to interrogate and deconstruct social class in even the early stages of her career.

¹³⁷ This change seems to coincide roughly with her movement away from sensation novels that occurred in the 1880s (Wagner, 2012, p. 177), although *Lady Audley's Secret* does engage with images of poverty. As Beller argues, philanthropy appears less often in her pre-1880 works (2012, p. 118). I discuss Braddon's literary developments further throughout this introduction.

the Boys' Christian Institute and Lord Kinnaird's Lock Hospital and Asylum.¹³⁸ Considering Braddon's attitude towards charity through *The White House*, Robert Lee Wolff (1979) argues that Braddon likely felt that excessive 'charity must be curbed', and that if philanthropic groups are to grow in influence their focus would be 'best directed toward people who are already at work' (p. 392).¹³⁹ For Braddon, assisting what Booth labels as the 'lowest' classes in 'chronic want' (1889) is a dangerous act that creates further poverty in the slums.¹⁴⁰ Braddon's contentious and sometimes ambiguous relationship with philanthropy is present throughout *Mary*; this is visible in her critique of the male philanthropic gaze in the text as well as her sympathetic depiction of the novel's eponymous character.

Mary was written and published amid major reforms and debates surrounding the Poor Law in the early twentieth century. While Braddon affirms a 'deserving/undeserving' poor dichotomy in her rejection of philanthropy for the unemployed poor (Wolff, 1979, p. 392), the PLAA underwent major changes between the publication of Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and Braddon's *Mary*. As Michael E. Rose (1985) argues, the development of the Charity Organisation Society (COS) in 1868 led to the slow disassembly of the Poor Law's parish and workhouse system (p. 11). The COS regulated and encouraged charities outside of government legalisation, which contributed to the growth of philanthropy in the second half of the nineteenth century (p. 11). In 1869 the COS's effect on the Poor Law was clear; G.J Goschen, President of the Poor Law Board, argued that cooperation with charities promoting outdoor relief would help to remedy the 'lax practices' of the Poor Law system (p. 11).¹⁴¹ By 1911 the PLAA seemed less effective, and the new Relief Regulation Order shifted pauper philanthropy almost entirely to that endorsed by COS; in addition, the First

¹³⁸ Both examples illustrate Braddon's philanthropic interests in Christian values and public health, which is consistent throughout her subscriptions. Her 1891 subscription list is currently held at the International Centre for Victorian Women Writers archive.

¹³⁹ Wolff utilises close analysis of *The White House* and Braddon's other novels of the early 1900s to uncover her relationship with poverty. Wolff names this period Braddon's 'Years of Fulfillment'. For more of Wolff's analyses of Braddon's views via her literary work, see *Sensational Victorian: the life and fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon*.

¹⁴⁰ This danger is epitomized in Braddon's detective novel *Rough Justice*, where the murderer of Lisa Rayner is revealed to be the philanthropist and political radical Oliver Greswold. As Beller argues, Greswold's 'political and philosophical beliefs, coupled with his atheism, are presented as dangerous, and the murder he commits is shown to be the logical extension of such beliefs' (2012, p. 82).

¹⁴¹ Michael J. D Roberts (2003) reflects on the intended purpose of the COS, noting that its 'morally-conditioned quest for a reliable point of distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor seemed to embody the key social policy concern of the age: its insistence on disciplining the charitable to observe professionally-certified and co-ordinated methods of relief-giving seemed to signal the ultimate refinement of a system committed to the reconciliation of Christian duty with the precepts of a market-organised society' (p. 40).

World War dramatically reduced the ‘problem of unemployment’ through conscription efforts (p. 13).¹⁴² It is in this post-Poor Law context that Braddon wrote *Mary*. This shift in the 1910s produced an active debate about the form slum philanthropy should take. Edward Abbott Parry’s *The Law and the Poor* (1914) endeavours to summarise the relationship between poverty and legislation, while Jacob A. Riis’s earlier *The Battle with the Slums* (1902) utilises the extended metaphor of war throughout the piece to represent the slums as an ‘enemy’ that the middle and upper classes should ‘join forces’ against (p. 1).¹⁴³

Absent from these pieces, however, is the experience of poor women under the COS regulated system of charity. In *Modern Women: Her Intentions*, Florence Farr (1910) indicates that the unequal treatment of male and female homelessness is tied intrinsically to the patriarchal oppression of women as a whole; dependent on men for support and unable to achieve ‘good positions’ independently, patriarchy produces homelessness among women (p. 18).¹⁴⁴ Farr exclaims that to escape this cyclical treatment, women must become ‘determined to cry halt and make a fight’ (p. 21). For Farr, the ‘battle’ is not just with the slum environment as it is in Riis’s text, but also with unequal gendered structures. These structures lead to a gender gap in the experiences of homelessness that worsened throughout the fin de siècle and early twentieth century. While the redevelopment of the slums and the dissolution of the PLAA led to better conditions overall, women were subject to special surveillance in spaces like the Peabody Buildings as they were expected to keep the spaces immaculately clean and births were required to be reported immediately (Picard, 2013, pp. 44 – 45). Women involved in sex work were particularly vulnerable to patriarchal surveillance strategies. As Abe Oudshoorn, Amy Van Berkum, and Colleen Van Loon (2018) argue, homes for poor female sex workers were often labelled as spaces for the ‘fallen’ or ‘depraved’ (p. 8). These homes often focussed on ‘re-train[ing] women on how to fit “appropriately” within society by encouraging marriage’ and their fulfilment of a ‘domestic role within the family unit’ (p. 8). As such, these houses emphasised that a woman

¹⁴² This effect was short lived, however – the 1920s saw the return and growth of the slums. Rose notes that Poplar and West Ham became particularly notorious London slum districts during this decade (p. 13).

¹⁴³ Edward Abbott Parry was a judge and dramatist (1863 – 1943). Parry wrote many monographs on social topics, including *The Battle with the Slums* and *The Law and the Poor* (1914). Parry primarily discusses New York slums, but in this section he calls for both London and New York to ‘battle’ against poor spaces (p. 1).

¹⁴⁴ Florence Farr was an actress, producer, dramatist, essayist, and activist. Farr is well-known for her contributions to early feminism; Muriel Pécastaing-Boissière (2014) notes that a ‘significant number of the Victorian and Edwardian women who fought for women’s rights and took part in socialist debates, also converted to alternative and often pagan forms of spirituality’ (p. 2). They go on to note that ‘Annie Besant probably was the most famous among them, but so was Florence Farr’ (p. 2). Farr made major contributions to feminism, theatre, and Modernist paganism throughout her career.

‘working independently was in need of reform, even if it meant removing her from her current home’ (p. 8).¹⁴⁵ This unequal system of relief is exactly the one experienced by the eponymous protagonist in *Mary*: Mary is taken into a brothel before meeting philanthropist Austin Sedgwick, who then places her in a home that promises to ‘raise’ Mary from her ‘fallen’ state (p. 8). From the onset of the narrative, Braddon critiques both the patriarchal nature of this system and its andro-centric philanthropy; Austin’s representation is directly influenced by changes to the Poor Law occurring while she was writing the novel.

As an editor, Braddon oversaw many essays, short stories, and articles with a diverse range of styles and genres; as a writer, her plots are varied, and she often deploys subversive acts in the dénouements of her narratives.¹⁴⁶ Despite the diversity of her narratives and genres, her fiction is often characterised as sensation fiction. Tabitha Sparks (2012) defines sensation as a genre that attempts to reject and subvert social norms, including gender, national identity, race, and social class. These subversions, however, are often neatly contained within the narrative and the endings usually see the restoration of the conventional social order (p. 73). The positioning of Braddon as a sensation writer develops from the popularity of both *Lady Audley’s Secret* and *Aurora Floyd*. As Jessica Cox (2012) argues, however, the ‘diversity of Braddon’s literary output renders the tendency to pigeonhole her as a Victorian sensation writer as problematic’ (p. 7). Her later works particularly break away from the sensation formula, further illustrating her reach beyond sensation (Cox, 2012, p. 7). *Mary* is one of Braddon’s post-sensation novels.¹⁴⁷ While published long after Braddon’s movement away from sensation fiction *Mary* engages with the debates surrounding the genre, especially concerning concepts of reading. The criticism Braddon experienced as a sensation author also no doubt influenced her critique of a scrutinising, male gaze throughout the novel. Braddon and the genre of sensation fiction were questioned on the morality of their allegedly ‘lowbrow’ narratives and content (Cox, 2012, p. 5). Published in an 1865 issue of *The North British Review*, William Fraser Rae’s ‘Sensation Novelists: Miss Braddon’ is representative of the moral panic incited by Braddon’s fiction.

¹⁴⁵ Oudshoorn et al note that female sex workers may have given some leniency in being committed to these homes rather than arrested, particularly as their work satisfied the sexual desires of men (p. 8). Despite this, these homes ultimately encouraged the restoration of patriarchal values in these apparently ‘fallen’ women.

¹⁴⁶ As I argue in this section, *Mary*’s ending represents a shift in how the titular character is surveyed as well as a growth in her financial and philanthropic power. Ultimately, she subverts the male philanthropic gaze and gains her own agency over her identity.

¹⁴⁷ Tamara S. Wagner (2012) indicates that Braddon’s works might be considered post-sensation from the 1880s onwards. She cites *The Fatal Three* (1888) as a key example of Braddon’s movement away from sensational detective fiction (p. 177).

He undercuts Braddon's literary value as a novelist throughout, beginning the article with the statement 'if the test of genius were success, we should rank Miss Braddon very high in the list of our great novelists' (p. 180). Rae places Braddon in opposition to intellectualism, and this continues in his declaration that Braddon's audience is an 'unthinking crowd' (p. 180). Rae places his own perceived 'genius' against Braddon's success throughout, stating that

there is a "faction" which does not think her "sensation novels" the most admirable product of this generation, and considers that, judged by a purely literary standard, they are unworthy of unqualified commendation. To that "faction" we belong. We shall purposely avoid applying a moral test to these productions [...] that which is bad in taste is usually bad in morals. (p. 181)

He goes on to disagree with the elements of 'feminine ill-usage' (p. 183), 'grave [...] ethical' faults (p. 187), 'unreality' (p. 190), and 'morbid tastes' (p. 196), noting that sensation 'is her Frankenstein' (p. 197). Rae concludes the piece by indicating his major moral concern: that Braddon has made the literature of the 'lowest of the social scale [and of the lowest] mental capacity' popular among the 'Drawing room' social classes (p. 204). In a sense, his criticisms contribute to the prejudice against poor women. For Rae, sensation encourages female agency, or 'feminine ill-usage' in his terms, and is particularly dangerous in its ability to circulate the 'lowest' morality and 'morbid tastes' of the poor among the higher classes. The social anxiety surrounding sensation fiction is therefore naturally connected to poverty and female identity in the 1860s. Sensation carried its connotations of intellectual poverty into the twentieth century: Vernon Lee (1912) described sensation novels as 'unwholesome literature' and compared them to practices of 'bad eating and worse drinking' amongst the 'Poor in Spirit' (p. 95).¹⁴⁸ The prejudices towards Braddon's distinctive style illustrate various forms of economic and patriarchal anxieties throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Despite shifting away from conventional sensation fiction, the genre remains connected to Braddon's style throughout her oeuvre. Braddon was aware of the perceived issues of sensation fiction; the genre is frequently mentioned by various authors throughout

¹⁴⁸ Braddon and Lee shared at least one key literary connection: Henry James. Originally published in *The Nation*, his article 'Miss Braddon' (1865) agrees mostly with Rae's school of thought before placing Braddon's work alongside Wilkie Collins's (p. 109). While critical in places, James describes Braddon as an 'artist' and extends this metaphor in stating that 'she knows how to paint' (p. 115). His praise is, however, persistently gendered; her artistic ability evolves from the fact that 'like all women, she has a turn for color' and he concludes by praising her 'woman's *finesse*' in conjunction with her 'strict regard to morality' (p. 116). Despite these criticisms, James remained a 'great admirer of Braddon and her work' throughout her career (Knowles, 2012, p. 156).

Belgravia during Braddon's run as editor. F.W. Robinson's *Stern Necessity*, serialised in the June 1870 edition of *Belgravia*, features one character who laments that 'young men [...] copy their manners and actions from sensation novels, and become a nuisance to society' (p. 56). This statement is quickly rejected as 'harping on' by another figure (p. 56). As the editor of the magazine, Braddon was no doubt aware of such playful engagements with criticisms of sensation. J. Campbell Smith's 1867 article 'Literary Criticism' challenges the move toward over-scrutiny in nineteenth-century literary criticism, arguing that

It is a common practice with many critics to pick out all the petty faults of an author, as if criticism consisted in fault-finding. [...] A true critic ought to dwell rather upon excellences than imperfection, to discover the concealed beauties of a writer, and communicate to the world such things as are worth their observation. [...] False criticism is attributable to many causes, and exhibited in many ways. (p. 264)

Again, Braddon's selection of Smith's article for publication illustrates an acknowledgement of her critics while also thoughtfully rejecting their concerns regarding the apparently 'morbid tastes' (Rae, 1865, p. 196) that her novels represent. Both examples from *Belgravia* also reject the formation of a *raison d'état* amongst critics and readers, and work against the knowledge-power relationship suggested by Rae and his 'faction'. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Foucault defines a *raison d'état* as the 'division between true and false' (p. 19). Smith's comments also reflect aesthetic criticism; Matthew Arnold (1864) similarly argues that aesthetic critics should not focus on 'analysis and discovery', but instead highlight the 'synthesis and exposition' of a literary work (p. 11). In doing so, the aesthetic critic will discover what makes a text a 'beautiful work' by representing the reader's response through a 'certain order of ideas' (p. 12).¹⁴⁹ In placing Smith's and Robinson's critical beliefs on a public platform, Braddon dismisses the ability of the critic to define literary value; instead, the value of art develops from the sense of 'beauty' in the artist's observations. As such, she defends her work and positions the patriarchal and class-based prejudices attached to her novels as methods of 'fault-finding' and false criticism. Class, gender, and methods of surveillance are therefore naturally linked throughout Braddon's career as an author-editor.

¹⁴⁹ Pater's concept of 'art for art's sake' is also reflected here, as Pater's aesthetic critic aims to consolidate the beauty of aesthetic art. Pater, however, does place an emphasis on art being judged by its 'aesthetic value', submitting it to the sort of 'analysis' that Arnold critiques. For more on Pater's aesthetic gaze and its function as a *raison d'état*, see section 3.1 'Art, Philanthropy, and the Surveillance of Pauper Life in Vernon Lee's *Miss Brown* (1884)'.

Braddon represents London's city streets throughout her oeuvre, particularly as a site for women to experience urban cultures away from a scrutinising male gaze. As Beth Palmer (2008) argues, *Belgravia*'s subtitle of *A London Magazine* illustrates an obsession with the city itself (p. 4). The magazine was produced 'with a female urban experience (or lack of experience) in mind', and Braddon 'co-opted some of her sensational narrative tactics into editorial strategies to mediate the city for her middle-class women readers' (p. 6). As noted, Morrison utilises the slum novel to transform previously illegible spaces into an organised *raison d'état* via literary mapping. *Belgravia* provides a similar function for Braddon's readers, yet it has the more direct function of mapping the city for women who lack the safety and freedoms of the 'male *flanêur*-figure' (p. 6). In doing so, *Belgravia* 'opened up the locus of nineteenth-century empire, culture, politics, and finance - the city of London - to navigation by middle-class women' (p. 19). In a similar way that *Belgravia* playfully undercuts the moral outrage against sensationalism, it also offers an alternative to male experiences of gazing and travelling the city. Braddon's readers were undoubtedly middle class, as the title's reference to the affluent Belgravia district suggests. The journal offered plenty of opportunities to partake in armchair slumming via fictional depictions of the East End. Braddon's short story 'The Dreaded Guest', published in the February 1872 edition of *Belgravia*, describes Dr Prestwich, a medical professional who practices in slums throughout the East End (p. 123).¹⁵⁰ Braddon is critical of Prestwich and his morality; he knowingly treats the 'criminal classes' but dismisses his moral concerns as his patients seem 'prompt' and 'flush with money' (p. 123). The ending sees Prestwich 'sick' and experiencing 'horror' that one of his 'criminal' acquaintances, the titular 'Dreaded Guest', has climbed the social ladder and become an 'eminently respectable gentleman' (p. 127). Despite his upward social mobility, the Dreaded Guest has maintained his corrupt morality and continues to pursue criminal enterprises. Here, Braddon echoes the earlier fears of Dickens and Mayhew of providing care to the 'undeserving poor' (Mayhew, 1851, p. v). The characterisation of Dr Prestwich also offers yet another example of a male, urban gaze that is submitted to critique by Braddon; these criticisms reappear in conjunction with her engagement with the city throughout *Mary*.¹⁵¹ As *Belgravia* illustrates, Braddon engages with the city in a way that prioritises and makes space for women's urban experiences.

¹⁵⁰ Other references to the slums and the East End are present throughout all volumes of *Belgravia* in texts by a variety of contributors. Named slums in 'The Dreaded Guest' include 'St. Giles' and 'Field-lane' (p. 123).

¹⁵¹ Dr. Prestwich considers himself to be in 'poverty' (p. 125), yet he is seen spending or trading money throughout the narrative; Braddon may well be making an additional comment on excessive spending here.

Braddon's critiques of the masculine critical gaze illustrate the importance of surveillance and policing in her novels. As Lyn Pykett (1992) describes, surveillance, the stylistic mode of 'sensation', and gendered power dynamics effectively form a triadic relationship in which debates surrounding 'women's legal status and identity, and the changing discourse in which it was conducted' could take place (p. 55). Pykett highlights concerns over 'improper' femininity and the patriarchal family, citing John Kemble's (1838) view that without familial structures women are like 'so many wild beasts' (p. 56). Kemble's simile is evoked in Rae's later disapproval of Braddon's 'feminine ill-usage' (p. 183), indicating that this concern surrounding women's identities persisted into the 1860s. Braddon undercuts the calls for strict surveillance of women throughout her most famous novel, *Lady Audley's Secret*; the eponymous character's use of self-policing and self-construction allows her to evade capture for her crimes throughout most of the novel, highlighting that 'femininity is itself duplicitous, and that it involves deception and dissembling' (Pykett, 1992, p. 90). In *Lady Audley's Secret*, the reveal that Lady Audley has attempted to murder her ex-husband is synonymous with the acknowledgement that she has socially climbed away from poverty (Book III, p. 169). Her subsequent incarceration in an asylum illustrates that the scrutinising male gaze succeeds in bringing her subversive acts to light, and that usurpation of social norms is 'contained' by the end of the narrative (Sparks, 2012, p. 73). Yet, as Pykett notes, Braddon still illustrates the potential for women to subvert surveillance and achieve social autonomy.

In many ways, elements of Lady Audley's character anticipate the arrival of the New Woman at the fin de siècle and the ability of New Women to subvert the limitations placed on them by the masculine gaze. *Mary*'s eponymous protagonist similarly evades the male gaze and achieves personal and social reforms. Unlike Lady Audley, however, Mary is not contained in the novel's dénouement. Instead, the novel ends by emphasising that Mary has achieved self-validation and has escaped the objectification of her poor body by numerous men throughout the narrative. Mary takes pleasure in 'solitude' away from the surveillance of London socialites and restores her sense of personal identity by returning to her birthplace of Cornwall to 'build almshouses for [...] fishermen's widows' (p. 231). Her successful evasion of surveying gazes is linked directly with philanthropic acts. Braddon therefore critiques the male gaze while also illustrating the potential for poor women to escape surveillance.

Braddon experienced literary suppression under the male gaze, and as such included forms of internalised self-surveillance in her writing. As Juliette Atkinson (2012) notes,

Braddon responds to discussions of ‘censorship both implicitly and explicitly, often parading her acts of self-policing’ (p. 144). This censorship features the ‘largely consistent punishing of villains and rewarding of heroes, announced heavy-handedly, [and] becomes a safeguard against charges of immorality’ (p. 145). At the same time, the moral panic created by critics like Rae denied Braddon ‘access to the literary canon and its formation’ by policing her work and suggesting it lacks the value of high art (p. 15). Braddon felt the pressure of these methods of surveillance; she wrote to Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton on April 13th 1863 to express that ‘the “behind the scenes” of literature has in a manner demoralised [her]’ (quoted in Wolff, 1974, p. 14). She goes on to state that

I want to serve two masters. I want to be artistic & [...] I want to be sensational, & to please Mudie’s subscribers.

Are these two things possible, or is the stern scriptural dictum not to be got over, “Thou canst not serve God & Mammon.” Can the sensational be elevated by art, & redeemed from its coarseness. (p. 14)

The use of the premodifier ‘stern’ reflects the suppression felt by Braddon under the scrutiny of the literary critic. By ‘serv[ing] two masters’, Braddon endeavours to subvert the perception of a gap between lowbrow fiction and high art to please readers of Mudie’s circulating library while remaining artistic; much like her fictional heroines, however, Braddon finds her aspirations contained by a masculine ‘scriptural dictum not to be got over’. Her later shift away from conventional sensationalist fiction illustrates an attempt to avoid this scrutinising gaze.

As noted, however, Braddon’s heroines are not subjected to male scrutiny simply because of their femininity: they are often also poor or working class. As Grace Wetzel (2012) argues, Braddon’s body of work emphasises that homelessness and poverty pose additional threats to women compared to men. Specifically analysing *Lady Audley’s Secret*, Wetzel identifies forms of ‘homelessness ranging from literal dispossession to metaphorical disconnection from the domestic spaces that house them’ (p. 76). For example, Lady Audley’s incarceration marks a literal shift to a homeless space and a ‘homelessness of the mind that festers to the point of mental illness’ (p. 87). Given the thematic significance of homeless women ‘who live [...] staging and seeking identity with little realization or deliverance’ (p. 91), Braddon was likely aware of the patriarchal nature of discourses surrounding female homelessness. *Mary* places this concern at the forefront of the narrative by opening the text with the titular character’s homelessness, which then becomes intertwined with discussions on art, reading, and patriarchal surveillance.

The Male Gaze: Slumming as Sexual and Financial Exchange Post-Poor Law

Mary begins with a description of Austin slumming in the East End that hints at sexuality and eroticism. The narrator describes how

It may have been a caprice of Austin Sedgwick's which brought him through Sanders Street [...] after a night spent curiously, the first half at a smart card-party, and the later hours in the East End, where this young man varied the monotony of a government office and the banalities of modern society by an occasional descent into nethermost depths, where people who, having known him first as a queer sort of bloke, who came prying about, and asking questions, had gradually learnt to look upon him as a friend and helper. (p. 1)

Although the narrator indicates Austin's philanthropic efforts by describing him as a 'friend and helper', the reader is fully aware that he is partaking in a leisure pursuit. Slumming is conflated with the 'smart card-party', while the slums themselves contrast Austin's 'banal' middle-class activities as they are described as a space that he has to 'descen[d]' into to escape 'monotony'. As noted in section 2.1, the conceptualisation of slums as 'netherworlds', which is evoked by Braddon in her description of the 'nethermost depths', presents them as spaces with oppositional logics and rules to that of the spectator. In *Mary*, however, Austin's slumming is deliberately encoded as a sexual and bodily activity. As Koven notes, the 'forbidden pleasures and dangers' experienced by the middle and upper classes during slumming are sexualised through their connections with equally socially forbidden 'queer' sexualities (2004, p. 36). This sense of sexualised queerness is visible through Braddon's description of Austin's perception of the slums. Braddon's employment of the balanced phrases 'common things strange and ugly things beautiful' illustrates an inversion of concepts of attractiveness, echoing Havelock Ellis's (1897) positioning of homosexuality as a 'sexual inversion' (p. 23). As Sarah Parker (2017) argues, throughout the late nineteenth century a common association was made between synaesthesia, the confusion of senses and impressions, and 'sexual perversity' (p. 122). By reflecting this association in the conflation of 'common/strange' and 'ugly/beautiful', Braddon evokes the connotations of synaesthesia. As Parker notes, these apparently 'inverted' and queered senses appear in decadent works in the conflation of perceptions and responses (p. 122).¹⁵² Austin's perceptions here therefore further allude to decadent artforms. Her characterisation of Austin's 'queer[ness]', which was established as a colloquial term for homosexuality by

¹⁵² Parker's analysis focusses on elements of synaesthesia as well as conflated terms and perceptions in the works of the decadent poets Michael Field. See Parker's 'Bittersweet: Michael Field's Sapphic Palate' in Jane Desmarais's and Alice Condé's *Decadence and the Senses* (2017).

1916 (OED, 2020), further presents his slumming in relation to sexuality.¹⁵³ Braddon also represents Sanders Street as a queered space through her representation of liminal temporalities, as Austin is slumming at a time between nighttime and sunrise; the description of ‘dim [...] streetlamps’ coexisting with the transitional ‘greenish-blue’ skyline during Austin’s travels places his exploration within a liminal temporal space (p. 1). Loren March (2021) argues that temporal liminality encourages ‘queer ways of thinking through unboundedness, spillage, fluidity, multiplicity, and processes of contingent, non-linear becoming, as well as the relations of power and regulation that seek their stability or closure’ (p. 455). March’s description of liminality as a method of presenting queerness is also present in the Victorian novel; Deborah Denenholz Morse (2017), for example, argues that *Jane Eyre* (1847) utilises liminal spaces and times to represent Sapphic relationships and queered gender norms (p. 10). Queer temporalities were also prevalent in decadent fiction. As Kate Flint (2009) notes, the ‘shadowy ambiguities of twilight have an important part to play, albeit a metaphorical one, in the final fifteen years of the nineteenth century’ (p. 689) as decadent fiction used the twilight hour as a synecdoche for same-sex desires which were painted as liminal ‘inversions’ (p. 694). Twilight, as a liminal temporality between light and dark, became an apt metaphor for same-sex desires in literary decadence.¹⁵⁴ In engaging with the twilight hour in this opening section to *Mary*, Braddon further forges a connection between same-sex erotics, decadent art, and Austin’s slumming. By sexualising Austin’s experience of Sanders Street Braddon presents his slumming gaze in connection with erotic pleasure.

Braddon’s representation of the Sanders Street slum is represented in a decadent style as its liminality represents the evocation of new ‘perceptions and emotions’ that are a key component in literary decadence (Pulham and Maxwell, 2006, p. 7). The queered temporality of Sanders Street is described by Braddon as an ‘hour in the twenty-four that has magic in it’, indicating a new ‘magical’ perception of the London cityscape (p. 1). While Lee and Morrison utilise decadence as natural components of their style, Braddon engages

¹⁵³ The *Oxford English Dictionary* credits the Marquess of Queensberry for using the word ‘queer’ in this context in 1892. John Sholto Douglas, the 9th Marquess of Queensberry, was responsible for Oscar Wilde’s trial for ‘gross indecency’ in the now infamous Queensbury Trials (Dellamora, 2004, p. 533). Queensberry’s use of the term is pejorative. Jennifer S. Kushnier (2002) argues that Braddon’s own thoughts on homosexuality are unclear from her correspondence and from her novels, but that homoeroticism features as an integral plot point of *Lady Audley’s Secret* (p. 61).

¹⁵⁴ Usually in relation to lesbian or Sapphic love. For more on the relationship between Sapphic love and twilight temporalities, see Flint’s ‘The “hour of pink twilight”: Lesbian Poetics and Queer Encounters on the Fin-de-siècle Street’ (2009)

with the movement intertextually here to further paint Austin's slumming experience as something sexual. Referring again to the 'magic [...] hour' between nighttime and sunrise, the narrator describes how

That strange light lent a certain artistic beauty to the decadence of Sanders Street, which once had dignity and even fashion, but was now a place of tenement houses and squalid shops – a street that had been slowly withering for a century, but had been the pink of respectability, though a little off colour as to fashion, a hundred years ago. (p. 1)

By including the phrase 'artistic beauty' in conjunction with the 'decadence of Sanders Street', Braddon references the decadent movement itself. The 'magic[al]' and 'enchanted' (p. 1) nature of these slums is also decadent. As Jane Desmarais and Alice Condé (2017) posit, spiritualism, mysticism, and magic often appear in decadent works as one method that the artist uses to conceptualise the relationship between the subject and their senses (p. 7). At the same time, the indication that Sanders Street is in a state of decay alludes to another decadent motif that focuses on the 'decompos[ition]' and degeneration (Bourget, 1884, p. 180) of artistic beauty.¹⁵⁵ In this initial passage of the novel, then, Braddon heavily encodes Austin's slumming with sexualised and decadent implications.

The erotics and the decadence of Austin's travels come together in Braddon's explicit and implicit references to a key decadent figure: Oscar Wilde.¹⁵⁶ In 1895, Wilde was found guilty of 'Gross Indecency' in the now infamous Queensbury Trials; the trials led to major debates on whether decadent and other innovative artforms might be one of the causes of moral and sexual 'degeneration' (Dellamora, 2004, p. 533).¹⁵⁷ Braddon's reference to both inversion and synaesthesia (Ellis, 1897, p. 23; Parker, 2017, p. 122), in conjunction with the references to decadent art in Austin's sensual experience of Sanders Street, create a connection between Austin's slumming and Wilde as a figure who represented discourses of both sexuality and art. Furthermore, the slippages between 'beauty' and what is perceived

¹⁵⁵ I discuss Bourget's decadent theories further in section 2.1 'Arthur Morrison's *Mean Streets*: Mapping and Linguistic Netherworlds in Fin-de-Siècle Slum Fiction'.

¹⁵⁶ Braddon and Wilde were close friends. Her post-Wilde trials novels often feature veiled references to Wilde and his treatment in court (Cox, 2012, p. 224). In 'Entirely Fresh Influences in Edwardian Wildeana: Queerness in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Rose of Life* (1905) and Julia Frankau's *The Sphinx's Lawyer* (1906)', Ana Markovic (2019) argues that Braddon's later works also feature a notably Wildean and decadent style (p. 107).

¹⁵⁷ This primarily results from the publication of Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892) a few years before the trials, which resurfaced as a major centre for debate post-Queensbury trials. For more on this discussion and the responses of artists like Vernon Lee and George Bernard Shaw, see Richard Dellamora's 'Productive Decadence: "The Queer Comradeship of Outlawed Thought": Vernon Lee, Max Nordau, and Oscar Wilde' (2004).

to be ‘ugly’ is evocative of Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890): Dorian remains a ‘graceful young man’ while his portrait becomes ‘old and wrinkled and ugly’ (Wilde, 1890, pp. 28 – 29). In the preface to *Dorian Gray*, Wilde declares that ‘those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming’ while ‘those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated’ (p. 5). In Austin’s experience of the slums, ‘ugly things [are made] beautiful’; this illustrates a reversal of Wilde’s statement on ugly meanings yet also connects Wilde and Austin further as he ‘find[s] beautiful meanings’ in Sanders Street. These connections are made far more explicit after Austin meets Mary. Austin asks Mary about her experiences at the home for ‘fallen’ women. They discuss her sense of entrapment, and Mary states that she

“Tramp[s] round the yard every morning, and think[s] of the prisoners in Reading Gaol.”

"You know that poem?"

"I know every heart-breaking word of it. My father knew the man who wrote it."

"Was your father by way of being literary?"

"He was steeped to the lips in literature."

He longed to question her more, but refrained. (p. 20)

This reference to Wilde’s poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898), written after his release from prison following the Queensbury trials, further connects Austin and Wilde; it also indicates Mary’s literary knowledge, which directly foreshadows how she is surveyed through her reading later in the narrative.¹⁵⁸ Austin functions as a Wilde-like figure, epitomising a connection between a perceived ‘sexual perversity’ (Parker, 2017, p. 122), art, and slumming.

Braddon presents a desire for knowledge of the poor as the driving force behind Austin’s sexualised slum travels. In ‘The Soul of Man under Socialism’, Wilde (1891) argues that ‘educated men’ must enter the East End to ‘stud[y]’ the poor, rather than acting solely on the ‘altruistic impulses of charity, benevolence, and the like’ (p. 3). He concludes that ‘charity creates a multitude of sins’, whereas research of poor communities enables the system of poverty to be understood and improvements to be made (p. 3). Wilde calls for a movement toward gaining knowledge of poor communities, rather than direct charitable action. Austin’s approach to Mary and the slums reflects a Wildean belief in knowledge, further encouraging connections between Wilde and Austin. As noted, Austin experiences a ‘long[ing] to question [Mary] more’ in their discussion of Wilde’s poem. The verb ‘longed’

¹⁵⁸ I discuss this later in reference to her role as ‘the reading girl’ (p. 33).

bears romantic connotations, referring to a 'yearning desire or strong wish for something' often in relation to courtship (*OED*, 2021). This desire for knowledge is further illustrated through Austin's male gaze during his initial meeting with Mary, which formulates a dichotomy between Austin as a problematic 'male flâneur-figure' (Palmer, 2008, p. 6) and Mary as a homeless woman 'who live[s] staging and seeking identity with little realization or deliverance' (Wetzel, 2012, p. 91). When Austin first meets Mary, he discovers

A girl [...] sitting on the doorstep, fast asleep, with her head drooping forward upon her knees, and her face hidden. The hand that hung limp and pale by her side was small – a lady's hand, Austin thought. She was not the kind of night-bird he expected to find upon a doorstep. [...] "Fashioned so slenderly, young and so fair." Slender she was assuredly, of a willowy slenderness as she leant against the railings, faint and wan. And she was young; but for the rest there was only the delicate modelling of her features, and the pathetic expression of grey eyes with long black lashes, to promise that under happier conditions she might be beautiful. (pp. 2 – 3)

The quotation 'Fashioned so slenderly, young and so fair' derives from Thomas Wood's poem 'The Bridge of Sighs' (1844), which describes the suicide of a homeless woman that takes place on Waterloo Bridge. Wood makes judgements on the woman, declaring that her suicide is a 'weakness' and 'evil behaviour' (ll. 103 – 104). The speaker repeatedly iterates a desire to know more about the woman, particularly in the stanza which asks

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all others? (ll. 36 – 42)

By referencing Wood's poem in this way, Braddon further emphasises Austin's desire to gain knowledge of Mary's life. It also places him within a literary tradition of a judgemental male gaze that positions women, in this case particularly poor women, under surveillance. The initial meeting between Austin and Mary also features repeated instances of bodily imagery: the narrator refers to her 'hand[s]', 'face', 'knees', 'head', 'eyes' and 'long black lashes' while also using the physical descriptors of 'pale', 'slender', and 'wan'. The imagery also implies a power relationship between the two, as Mary is 'sitting' while Austin stands above her and surveys her body. Austin's focus on Mary's body feeds directly into his desire to know her background and contributes further to Braddon's engagement with male, critical gazes.

In her pioneering work on the male gaze, Laura Mulvey (1988) describes that this form of surveillance is the product of a 'world structured by sexual imbalance' in which 'pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female' (p. 62). The male gaze 'projects its fantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly', and their appearance is 'coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness' (p. 62). Although Mulvey is discussing cinema throughout the late twentieth century, this relationship between the 'Woman as Image' and the 'Man as Bearer of the Look' (p. 62) has been recognised by critics in nineteenth-century art forms. Lynette Felber (2007) highlights Braddon's deconstruction and critique of the male gaze in *Lady Audley's Secret*, particularly through the male response to a pre-Raphaelite portrait of Lady Audley that features in the narrative. Felber argues that Braddon illustrates the 'fetishisation' of the female body under the male gaze, revealing the 'powerlessness of Victorian women subordinated by the male gaze' and exposing the 'dissimulation of those Victorian men who create empty fantasies, unable to confront the real objects of their desires and the true nature of their fears' (p. 477). In *Lady Audley's Secret*, the male gaze is illustrated by Robert Audley's rejection of Lucy's self-constructions and his desire to gain knowledge of the truth surrounding her ex-husband (p. 285). The same gaze is present in *Mary*, as Austin desires to gain knowledge of Mary's background and her experience of poverty.

In *Mary*, the influence of the male gaze is extended to encompass the power relation between Austin as a middle-class slummer and Mary as a homeless woman. As noted, Braddon illustrates an awareness of gender inequality in experiences of homelessness. Mary's fetishisation as a passive object derives from her poverty and her femininity. Braddon offers a critique of Austin's male gaze by depicting Mary's aggressive self-policing under his surveillance. Austin uses the imperative 'tell me your story', to which Mary responds with the exclamation that it 'is too horrible to be told' and states that 'there are many such women in London —going about like Satan, seeking whom they may devour. Not like roaring lions, but like creeping snakes. Loathsome, loathsome, loathsome!' (p. 4). Mary is forced into sex work by a woman who initially treats her kindly; she escapes to the streets, which is where Austin meets her. Her description of 'such women' as 'creeping snakes', and her impassioned repetition of 'loathsome', characterises Mary's self-policing under Austin's gaze. Furthermore, Mary reflects the language used by William Acton in his

1857 report on women's sex work, demonstrating an internalisation of male judgements and attitudes.¹⁵⁹ Acton describes

Such women, ministers of evil passions, [that] not only gratify desire, but also arouse it. Compelled by necessity to seek for customers, they throng our streets and public places, and suggest evil thoughts and desires which might otherwise remain undeveloped. (p. 186)

The phrase 'such women' and the predatory language of them 'suggest[ing] evil thoughts' and 'seek[ing] for customers' (p. 186) are reflected in Mary's direct speech. Directly after Mary's exclamation, the narrator notes that Austin 'persuaded her to eat, and he persuaded her to talk – to talk of that saddest of all subjects, her own history' (p. 5). By following Mary's self-policing with Austin 'persuad[ing]' her to reveal more of her history, Braddon parallels Austin's 'long[ing]' for knowledge with a sexual transaction; she also emphasises the effect of Austin's male gaze, and the repetition of the verb 'persuading' illustrates his control over Mary. This is initially illustrated through the sexual and decadent encoding of the slum space, and Braddon emphasises this further in Austin's persuasion of Mary for knowledge in exchange for food. Later in the text, rumours circulate amongst Austin's social circle regarding his relationship with Mary, and one member states they 'heard they go slumming together' (p. 284). Through this statement, Braddon suggests their shared slumming even acts as a sexual transaction worthy of secrecy or rumour, further emphasising the erotic nature of Austin's slumming practices. Under Austin's knowledge-seeking male gaze, Mary is forced to aggressively self-police her behaviour.

Through Austin, Mary comes under the employment of his uncle Conway Field and is also introduced to his cousin, George, whom she eventually marries. The initial meeting between Austin and Mary initiates an ongoing cycle of transactions between Mary and the male members of Austin's family, and her body is repeatedly subjected to an oppressive male gaze throughout the narrative.¹⁶⁰ George has a 'love of art and [a] talent for water-

¹⁵⁹ Acton's work was highly respected, and resulted in the Contagious Diseases Act of 1864. The Act 'provided that women suspected of prostitution in specified garrison and naval towns be arrested by plainclothes police, compelled to undergo a medical examination, and detained in a lock hospital if found to carry a venereal disease' (Claggett, 2011, p. 20). Shalyn Claggett (2011) argues, however, that Acton's study 'offered its nineteenth-century readers some highly persuasive misinformation – or, put another way, it was a fiction able to contour the reality it claimed to represent' (p. 19). Acton's text used false scientific facts to enforce misogynistic views of female sex workers, which had a strong hold on legislation and the Victorian public.

¹⁶⁰ To a lesser extent, Mary is also subjected to a critical, female gaze. Miss Field, Austin's aunt, is initially shocked by Mary's 'pale refined face, the grave grey eyes with dark lashes and arched brows, the soft silk gown, and delicate lace guimpe, the tout-ensemble [which] took her breath away' (p. 102). Mary's beauty leads Miss Field to distrust her, as she believes that her beauty will lure Conway Field into giving her a share

colour landscape' (p. 134) and is introduced to the reader as a thrill-seeker. George states that

We have run all the risks — seen all that the earth and sky in these regions can give us — all the colours and all the splendid accidents of sunrise and sunset from mountain tops. We have done the thing ad nauseam, and nothing less than the steepest peak in the Karakorum range could give me a thrill worth having. I swear there is more adventure to be had in a night in Poplar or Bethnal Green than in all these everlasting snows. If a man wants to live at high pressure he can do it in your London slums. I am dead sick of mountaineering. (p. 132)

There is an integral shift here in George's language; the 'everlasting snow' that George describes evokes the Romantic writings of John Ruskin, among others, who viewed the 'Alpine snow[s]' as 'mighty' and 'high' (1835, p. 368).¹⁶¹ The sublime of the Romantic writers, influenced in part by Edmund Burke's (1757) definition of the sublime as the 'principle of pleasure derived from sight' (p. 10), is experienced by George not in the natural environment but during a 'night in Poplar or Bethnal Green'. George's statement illustrates a shift towards an urban sublime. Den Tandt (1998) defines the urban sublime as a pursuit of 'exhilaration' in city spaces, which is facilitated by the large scale of urban landscapes and the 'multitudinous humanity' compacted within them (p. x). Tandt argues that the shift from Romantic to urban sublime occurs in the early twentieth century as city spaces grow and develop; George's dialogue represents these developments in the sublime, while also contextualising it within the practice of slumming as an 'exhilarating' experience with a 'thrill worth having'.

The narrator goes on to distinguish Austin from George. Austin is as 'nearly an altruist as a man can be, and yet [he lives] in the everyday world' (p. 133). While 'not a professed Socialist' he has an 'almost divine sense of brotherhood with all suffering creatures, down to the dregs and offscouring of society' (p. 133). In contrast, George is 'unsympathetic from want of understanding, rather than from want of heart' (p. 133). The binarisation of Austin's and George's sympathies is bridged by their shared practice of

of his will. Despite this, Mary's displacement from the home for fallen women, into Conway Field's employment, and into her marriage with George is unaffected by Miss Field's surveying gaze; her physical movement is confined within male dialogues and transactions.

¹⁶¹ John Ruskin's prose was intimately connected with the Romantic movement and notions of the sublime in the nineteenth century. In his article 'Mr Ruskin and his Theories-Sublime and Ridiculous' published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1856, John Blackwood describes that his works emphasise that "'high art" "consists neither in altering nor in improving nature"; that "ideal art" "concerns itself simply with things as they are, and accepts in all of them alike the evil and the good"' (p. 514). According to Blackwood, this is indicative in his wider theories of the sublime that find pleasure in natural environments without excessive or highly emotive description; the environment itself is thrilling without these embellishments (p. 515).

slumming, which is represented by Braddon as both a ‘thrill[ing]’, sublime experience and as a sexually encoded practice. The narrator notes that George had ‘been down into the depths with Austin more than once’ and had spent time in ‘workmen’s shelters and even in thieves’ kitchens’ (p. 133). The narrator goes on to note that ‘though their haggard faces had haunted him, and the sound of their raucous voices had mixed with his gloomy dreams, the experience had ended in nothing more than a twenty-pound cheque to Austin’ (p. 133). While elsewhere in the text George’s donation to Austin is suggested to be for philanthropic purposes, the sentence structure here suggests a financial transaction that takes place purely between Austin and George. Austin appears as a tour guide here, and the ‘twenty-pound cheque’ in exchange for an ‘experience’ emphasises this. Touring the East End not only enables a sublime thrill, but also appears in *Mary* as a form of urban tourism that holds monetary value. As noted in section 1.1, throughout the 1850s editions of *Tallis’s Illustrated London* listed the locations of workhouses that enabled London’s tourists to gaze at the poor. Later in the century, the more affluent classes would experience slumming via the safety of the omnibus (Koven, 2004, p. 29). This sense of slumming-as-tourism made its way into art; Amy Levy’s poem ‘Ballade of an Omnibus’ (1889) highlights the ‘pleasure deep and delicate’ (l. 23) that comes from gazing at ‘wandering minstrel[s], poor and free’ (l. 6), while the George du Maurier’s *Punch* illustration ‘In Slummibus’ (1884, Figure 8) features two middle-class slummers on foot, yet still refers to commercial slum tourism in its title’s blending of ‘slumming’ and ‘omnibus’. The monetary exchange between Austin and George alludes to the commercial element of slum travel, which is intertwined with the sexual encoding of the slum space and George’s pursuit of a ‘thrill’. It also implicates financial transactions in slumming practices: Austin’s discovery of Mary in Sanders Street is likened to the monetary exchange for urban tourism in this section, as both occur during journeys through the East End. In *Mary*, the male surveyor benefits from slumming either in gaining knowledge of the poor or in more literal economic transactions as evidenced in George’s and Austin’s financial exchange.

Art, Sensation, and *The Reading Girl*

Mary is traded between Austin’s male family members and ultimately entrapped in their gaze in literary and artistic terms. George is introduced to Mary by Austin, and he quickly becomes infatuated with her. Mary is again sexualised under his male gaze, and his obsession with her is comparable to his financial transaction with Austin. On their initial meeting, the narrator describes that George ‘listened while she talked; he watched her when

she was silent' (p. 144). The balanced sentence here emphasises his infatuation with Mary's face and voice. The narrator goes on to describe Mary through George's gaze, noting his attentiveness to Mary's 'pale complexion and smooth dark hair, the sculptured eyelids half veiling the depth of grave grey eyes' and her 'thin lips and small round chin, long throat and shell-like ear' (p. 145). While he notes that 'Mary Smith was not beautiful', his conclusion that she has a 'haunting face' illustrates a sense of obsession with her physical features (p. 145). Once again, this description is excessively bodily: Mary's 'eyelids', 'chin', 'throat', 'lips', 'eyes', 'hair', and 'face' are all perceived under George's gaze in quick succession. The descriptive language used throughout this passage is also reminiscent of classic statues: Mary is 'pale' and 'sculptured'. In *Miss Brown*, Anne is described in Hamlin's eyes as a 'strange statue' with a 'head of Parian marble' (p. 24) as he objectifies her working-class heritage. George's male gaze reflects Hamlin's objectification of Anne, as he transforms Mary metaphorically into a statue-esque figure through his surveillance of her bodily features. As such, George's fixation on Mary's 'sculptured' body reflects the pre-Raphaelite's 'penchant for working-class women [...] who could be transformed into idealised forms in art and educated beyond their social origins' (Pulham, 2021, p. 62). This alludes back to the 'artistic beauty' of Austin's slumming and George's 'love of art', and affirms similar associations between hostile surveillance and the aesthete figure as Lee does in her characterisation of Hamlin in *Miss Brown*.

Unlike Anne Brown, Mary's artistic qualities are not compared solely to statues and portraits; George also repeatedly considers Mary in literary terms and compares her to Becky Sharp, William Makepeace Thackeray's poor heroine from *Vanity Fair* (1847).¹⁶² George proclaims that Mary 'is a mystery', and then refers to her as 'Becky Sharp in excelsis' (p. 157). He goes on to state to his uncle Conway Field that 'you know how interesting Becky is even now, when she is more than half a century old' (p. 157). George refers to Mary as Becky Sharp continuously throughout the narrative (p. 97; p. 104; p. 146; p. 151; p. 157). Becky is a young woman who lives under 'shift, self, and poverty' (Thackeray, 1847, p. 90), and ambitiously tries to improve her social class by marrying a richer man through her connections with the wealthy Sedley family. As Becky 'vainly pursues social position' through her sexual encounters and flirtations with several men, Thackeray 'never wants the

¹⁶² Some critics have considered *Vanity Fair* to be a 'proto-sensation novel' (Steere, 2013, p. 167). Seen in this way, Braddon's reference to *Vanity Fair* here creates an interesting connection between her sensation novels in the mid 1800s and her post-sensation fiction. For more on *Vanity Fair* as proto-sensation, see Elizabeth Steere's 'The stuff of lurid fiction': Sensation Fiction in the Twenty-First Century' in *The Female Servant and Sensation Fiction* (2013).

reader to lose sympathy with her, to turn away from her in disgust'; despite this intent, some of Thackeray's readers and critics read Becky as a seductress or courtesan-type figure and therefore as a threat to the economic social order (Frazee, 1998, p. 239). In his review in *The Spectator*, Robert Rintoul (1848) argues that while Becky is 'save[d] from the contempt or disgust' of the reader she remains a 'woman scheming for self-advancement' (p. 709). In reflecting on Mary as a 'Becky Sharp in excelsis', George places her under his gaze in a sexual context by alluding to Thackeray's poor seductress figure. George's comments offer another instance of Mary being entrapped within a literary tradition of representing poor women, following the quotation from 'The Bridge of Sighs' that occurs to Austin on his initial meeting with Mary. Through George's implicitly sexualised references to Becky Sharp and Austin's echoing of the tragic poor woman of Wood's poem, Braddon encourages her readers to think critically on how archetypes are constructed by readers and authors alike.

Following Mary's introduction to Austin's family, conceptualisations of literature and reading become integral to how she is perceived under the male gaze. The novel emphasises these attitudes and brings them to the reader's attention for scrutiny. Braddon's article 'French Novels', published in the October 1867 issue of *Belgravia*, attempts to define the purpose of the novel form. Braddon opens the piece by asking 'what is a novel?' before defining it as

A picture representing, with more or less truth and faithfulness, the manners and customs of society. A work of fiction delineating dramatic or humorous characters. A web in which are skilfully brought the passions, emotions, or feelings, supposed to fill the human breast, as well as the incidents which bring them into play. (p. 78)

Braddon's use of the phrases 'manners' and 'customs' illuminate her awareness of the role that social constructs play in the formation of norms. The novel, according to Braddon, brings these constructions to light through its emotional and narrative 'web'. Austin's and George's sexualised depictions of Mary through past literature acknowledge a constantly reproduced cycle of surveying male gazes which entrap poor women in sexual and tragic terms. The archaic nature of this male gaze is further evident in Mary's employment under Conway Field, the oldest male in Austin's and George's family. Austin takes Mary to be interviewed by Field for the position of a 'reading girl' (p. 33) who will recite novels aloud to Field due to his poor sight. Mary notes the 'wealth and rank' and 'early Georgian' aesthetic of Field's home (p. 36) and is taken by Austin to view the gallery at the entrance to the house before she meets with Field. In the middle of the gallery is a statue, described by the narrator as

the figure of a girl seated on a rush-bottom chair, reading. She was only half dressed, as if she had stopped in the midst of her simple toilet, to read some absorbing book. A long plait of hair hung over her naked shoulder, and her shift and corset suggested the humblest rank of life. The face was thoughtful and sweet, of a pensive beauty, a face in repose, but a living face. The charm of the statue was its reality—a page out of the simple life. The girl, the chair she sat upon, the coarse shift and common stays, the scanty petticoat, all were the things seen every day in humble dwellings. The statue had made a sensation in the International Exhibition of 1862, and had been discovered later in Florence by Conway Field. (p. 38)

Field's statue is a facsimile of Pietro Magni's *The Reading Girl* (1861, Figure 9). The image here is highly sexualised: she is a 'half dressed [...] pensive beauty' with a 'naked shoulder'. The verb 'seated' and the repetition of the adjective 'humble' recall Austin's initial meeting with Mary where she is described as a 'girl [...] sitting on the doorstep'. The statue's humble appearance also recalls the pre-Raphaelite fascination with transforming working-class women into artforms (Pulham, 2021, p. 62). The Georgian exterior of Field's home, as well as his ownership of a statue made popular fifty-three years before *Mary's* publication, emphasises the archaic nature of his gaze. Directly after this description, Austin declares that the piece is his 'uncle's "Reading Girl", one of his most cherished acquisitions' (p. 38). The statue is sexualised in its depiction of a partially naked woman from a humble background, and is also given economic and artistic value as Field's 'acquisition'. This statue is continuously conflated with Mary in a similar manner to George's numerous references to Becky Sharp, as she is repeatedly referred to as Field's 'reading girl' following her employment (p. 33; p. 35; p. 39; p. 40; p. 41; p. 51; p. 61; p. 64; p. 97; p. 102; p. 103; p. 106; p. 143; p. 157; p. 160; p. 167; p. 170; p. 188; p. 189; p. 200). After the interview, Field encourages Mary to 'look at [his] reading girl as you go out', and notes that his previously employed reading girls were 'officious, troublesome, [and] stupid' (p. 36) compared to the values embodied in the statue. In suggesting that Mary should model herself on *The Reading Girl*, Field implies that she should continue self-policing in a manner akin to her comments on 'loathsome' sex work. *The Reading Girl*, therefore, represents a sexualised, masculine ideal of the working-class woman that is recycled throughout time and amongst the male members of the Sedgwick family. Braddon draws attention to this through the conflation of *The Reading Girl* with Mary, and by drawing the reader's attention to her objectification under this gaze Braddon uproots the patriarchal 'customs' and 'manners' that underly Mary's self-policing and sexualisation.

The parallels made between Mary and *The Reading Girl* further illustrate the power that male gazes hold over female working-class bodies, particularly through Field's control

over Mary's literary consumption. Mary feels as if she 'could have no secrets from [Field] - no choice of how much of her dismal story to tell or to withhold from him', and notes that Field 'could read her pitiful record as if her mind were an open book' (p. 38). Mary is surveyed to the extent that she feels her psyche and background is visible to Field, illustrating the power of his gaze in the narrative. The simile of the 'open book' acts to semantically connect her sense of being scrutinised with the act of reading, again creating a link with the passive, sexualised *Reading Girl*. Through Field's characterisation and his direct speech, discussions of reading and surveillance appear alongside each other in the novel. Austin promises Mary that in her position with Field she will have to read 'dull books, sometimes perhaps, but never stupid or vulgar books' (p. 34). The adjective 'vulgar' reflects the language used in the moral outcry against sensation novels, including Lee's claim that they are 'unwholesome' (1912, p. 95) and Rae's criticism that they represent 'morbid tastes' (1865, p. 196). This scrutiny over what is read by Mary continues in Field's interview: he asks Mary if she has ever read 'sensation novels' (p. 39), and responds positively to her statement that she is more familiar with the 'critic[al] and political' literature that was consumed by her father (p. 39). As a result, Field concludes that she exhibits 'intelligence and refinement' and asks 'will you give me a taste of your quality?' before offering her the position (p. 39). This further roots Field's surveillance in archaisms through his sentiments against sensation novels, as his criticisms reflect the discourses surrounding the genre in the 1860s. Mary's sense of fear at being 'an open book' possibly represents some of Braddon's anxieties in coming under scrutiny for her novels, and Mary's forename suggests that Braddon saw herself in the character's experiences under a scrutinising male gaze. The verb 'taste' depicts a predatory element to Field's desires. This further contextualises the position of the reading girl as one filtered through masculine values and gazes, as the sexualisation of *The Reading Girl* sculpture initially indicates. Through the presentation of Field's treatment of Mary, Braddon critiques a male gaze that sexualises the working-class woman and connects this with the aggressive policing under literary criticism she experienced throughout the 1860s. *The Reading Girl* becomes a central metaphor to the novel, symbolising Mary's objectification as well as the role that reading plays in affirming or rejecting particular 'customs' and 'manners'.

Disrupting the Sex/Gender System and Instigating Philanthropic Change

Mary's subjection to the passive, sexualised role of a reading girl functions as a metonymy for her oppressive experiences throughout the novel. Braddon particularly highlights the

‘customs’ and ‘manners’ of marriage as a space in which her objectification occurs. Marriage is mentioned in relation to Mary and three other male figures throughout the text: Austin, George, and Jack Rayner, a dock worker who becomes a ‘stock-exchange conjurer, who could shake slips of paper in a hat and turn them to ingots’ (p. 286). Jack is a figure from Mary’s past who leaves her pregnant and without funds, eventually resulting in her meeting with Austin in the slums. Austin’s and George’s involvement in Mary’s position as a reading girl under Field creates a semantic connection between their potential marriages and the concept of employment; this is reflected in the language surrounding Mary and marriage in the text, which illustrates another instance of a poor woman being treated in objectified and transactional terms. After Field’s death, Mary inherits his estate and his wealth. This leads Austin’s sisters to note that ‘if he were to marry Our Lady of the Slums [...] he would be ever so much richer’ (p. 289). In this instance, marriage is directly linked to a financial exchange. The use of the phrase ‘Our Lady of the Slums’ ties Mary back to her initial appearance at the start of the text, while the possessive ‘our’ suggests that she is owned by the Sedgwick family. George’s initial marriage proposal to Mary also illustrates a sense of possession. He holds her and attempts to propose, and the narrator notes that Mary ‘tried to release her hands, tried to stand up, but he held her with almost brutal strength, held her to him with an irresistible arm, that circled the slim form’ (p. 176). George tells her that he ‘began to struggle against [her] charm’, calls her a ‘sweet enchantress’, and declares that he wishes to marry her, to which Mary responds ‘very gently’ by asking him to ‘please let [her] go’ (p. 178). Braddon represents a strong sense of entrapment here, and George’s hyperbolic description of Mary as an ‘enchantress’ is made aggressive by his simultaneous ‘circl[ing]’ and ‘brutal’ control over her body. Likewise, Rayner forcefully proposes to Mary. Rayner says to her that she

will have to marry [him]. The world will make you. You may have a will of iron, you may have a soul of fire—but the world is too strong for any woman. The world will make you marry me. (p. 292)

Rayner attempts to psychologically entrap Mary by evoking societal policing, and his repeated use of the modal verb of certainty ‘will’ illustrates his attempts to dominate Mary’s actions. Between Austin, George, and Rayner, Mary is treated financially, physically, and psychologically as an object to be dominated and controlled. Braddon makes this abundantly clear through her depiction of forceful marriage proposals throughout the text.

Mary symbolises the objectification of working-class and poor women; as noted, Mary is involved in numerous social and financial transactions under the gaze of Austin,

George, Field, and Rayner. Marriage, her conflation with *The Reading Girl*, and her relationship with Austin's eroticised slumming all illustrate how Mary is transformed into a commodified object under male surveillance. In representing these relationships Braddon highlights the existence of a 'sex/gender system', defined by Gayle Rubin (1990) as a 'set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied' (p. 75). Rubin argues that marriage epitomises the commodification of women's bodies: after marriage, their wealth is 'converted into male wealth' (p. 107). This connection is directly implicated in Austin's sisters' statement that Mary would make Austin 'richer' through marriage, and this drive to gain Mary's inherited estate is the direct reason for Rayner's proposal. In addition, George's proposal develops directly out of his obsession over her 'enchant[ing]' qualities and her 'face that might prove more dangerous than beauty' (p. 145), commodifying her with language that reflects his earlier 'love of art'. Under George's gaze, Mary provides a thrill via her perceived sexual parallels to Becky Sharp and her 'dangerous' attractiveness (p. 145). Braddon emphasises this while also deliberately complicating this sex/gender relationship by allowing Mary to evade marriage throughout the text. When she does agree to marry George, he reminds her that 'it is in [her] power [...] to make [him] a better man' (p. 333), shifting away from his earlier 'brutal' proposal and providing her with the agency to alter his perceptions.

The failed proposals directed at Mary throughout the text disrupt the marital system and act to uproot the commodification of her body and wealth, reflecting debates on marriage throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In her 1888 essay on marriage, Mona Caird argues that women's bodies are 'chained' as they are subjected to powerlessness through the institution of marriage (p. 64). In marriage, Caird argues, women become 'property' (p. 90). The conflation of the novel's protagonist with statues and literary archetypes foreshadows the subsequent proposals to Mary, as they act as attempts to transform her into an object or 'product' (Rubin, 1990, p. 75). Likewise, Farr argues that 'the marriage tie is a way of keeping people together while they undergo the various disillusionments and jealousies that are inevitable', and argues that often women must 'be prepared to give way in everything' (1910, p. 36). By representing both Mary's objectification under the male gaze and the numerous failed attempts to propose to her, Braddon engages with these discourses surrounding marriage while also illustrating a sense of agency in Mary's character. Mary evades sex work at the beginning of the novel and

escapes marriage throughout. Braddon characterises her with control over her own body, even as the male gaze attempts to transform her into a ‘product’ (Rubin, 1990, p. 75).

This is further evidenced following Field’s death. Field leaves Mary his estate and money to thank her for acting as his ‘reading girl who saves [his] sight and soothes [his] ear’ (p. 143). The power dynamics in this quotation have already shifted: Field refers to his own body, rather than Mary’s, and describes her active agency in ‘sav[ing]’ his sight. Although she is still described by Field as ‘my reading girl’, her conflation with Magni’s statue becomes further unravelled after his death. The narrator notes that

All the splendour of the things [Field] had loved, pictures and statues, seemed to look at Mary and Austin with a cruel irony. They had helped him to bear that long disease — his life — and now he was gone it seemed as if the soul had gone out of them. They, too, were dead. (p. 206)

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

It is the finest private collection in London, perhaps in Europe, [...] for it is the knowledge of the man who buys and not just the money he spends, that makes a collection valuable; and I believe my uncle’s all-round knowledge of Art was unequalled. He had nothing else to think about for thirty years of his life, poor soul! (p. 207)

As noted, a desire for knowledge underlies Austin’s slumming earlier in the text. Field’s knowledge, though economically valuable as a ‘private collection’, is revealed by Austin to not be valuable at all in a personal or social sense; his collection is merely the result of having ‘nothing else to think about’. This accentuates Mary’s movement away from being a ‘passive’ reading girl, undercutting the knowledge-based power system that underlies Austin’s, George’s, and Field’s gazes. Despite their attempts to entrap Mary within artistic archetypes or as a sexualised ‘thrill’, Mary rejects their proposals of marriage and their attempted objectifications of her body. Austin’s statement that Field had ‘nothing else to think about’ also demonstrates an attempt by Braddon to satirise the gaze of her earlier, male critics. Rae’s criticisms of Braddon’s novels as ‘unthinking’ narratives places them in opposition to high art, creating a power-knowledge relationship over Braddon’s work.

Field's early scrutiny towards sensation novels conflates him with critics like Rae; the dismissal of Field's beliefs as obsessive and indicative of a life with 'nothing else to think about' illustrates a reflection on these critics and their definitions of high art. *The Reading Girl* was sculpted in 1861, placing it in the same period as Rae's criticisms. The suggestion that the statue's 'soul' is dead illustrates an escape from an oppressive male gaze which is an outdated power-knowledge system from the 1860s. The uprooting of this system after Field's death in the novel suggests a dismantling of these power relations by 1916, reflecting Caird's and Farr's debates on marriage and showing a shift in how women are perceived between the two periods.

The deconstruction of the male gaze that occurs following Field's death enables Mary to commit to philanthropic action while also re-establishing her sense of self. On inheriting Field's estate, Mary is removed from her objectification under his gaze and is able to reject the proposals of the men around her. She also shifts fully away from the poor economic status she is characterised by at the beginning of the text. Rather than curate art and literature like Field, Mary chooses to 'build almshouses for the fishermen's widows, and a home for their fatherless children, on the ground that was well situated for such a purpose' in her birthplace in Cornwall (p. 231). Her geographical movement from Field's estate near London to Cornwall signifies a return to self that exists before her poverty and Austin's discovery of her at the beginning of the text. As Ann C. Colley (1998) argues, nostalgic returns to birthplaces and origins appear in the Victorian novel as symbolism for a change in identity or restoration of the authentic self (p. 212).¹⁶³ Colley argues that nostalgia is a longing not only 'for the past but also for the self that was once able, unconsciously, to scramble among the hills and walk in the streets with the people one knew and who, in turn, recognized one' (p. 211). Nostalgia 'stabilizes and names what had once been familiar so that a picture of a previous moment stands out like a relief from the unshapely and confusing mass of the past' (p. 211). Mary's return to Cornwall therefore marks a return to self and an attempt to break away from her poverty and subjection to the male gaze. The sense of relief derived from her return home is symbolised by her literal charitable relief, as Mary desires to provide homes to alleviate these poor women and their children from poverty. The desire to exist 'unconsciously' is present in Mary's return to Cornwall, as she 'refuse[s] to be

¹⁶³ Colley offers many principles that underlie the concept of nostalgia in the nineteenth-century novel. For more see her 'Afterthoughts: Nostalgia and Recollection' in *Nostalgia and Recollection in the Victorian Novel* (1998).

presented' (p. 283) at London social events while enacting her charitable work. Reflecting on her choice to act philanthropically, Mary notes in her direct speech that

I was able to make Field's afflicted life just a little happier, and he flung his riches into my lap; but his death left me a lonely woman. For me a great fortune can be only a great responsibility. I came here because I wanted to see the people I had known when I was a child, and who had been kind to me, for my own sake, when I was a lonely girl, the old servants who took care of me, and some of the fishermen's wives that I knew, and I hope somehow I may be able to make their old age a little easier. (p. 231)

Her nostalgic return to her childhood community in Cornwall signifies an attempt to remedy her loneliness while she also strengthens and aids the space through her charitable acts. In revisiting and remaking spaces from her childhood, Mary reinvents her agency while also enacting her sense of responsibility.

In building almshouses for Cornish widows, Mary creates a female orientated community and promises to 'find room for them all' (p. 233). The home for 'fallen' women is somewhat evoked in Mary's creation of a space that enacts philanthropy for women, yet Mary's homes are not built to 're-train women on how to fit "appropriately" within society by encouraging [re]marriage' or to mark them as 'depraved' (Oudshoorn et al, 2018, p. 8). In returning to her birthplace and rejuvenating the space for the women to 'make their old age a little easier' (p. 231), Mary offers a different charitable model for female homelessness that is not built on a judgmental male gaze. Thus, Mary's almshouses reflect the creation of *Belgravia* as a space for articulating 'female urban experience' (Palmer, 2008, p. 6). While these almshouses are built in rural Cornwall rather than an urban space, Mary's philanthropy creates an environment for the protection and care of exclusively female paupers and their children. Throughout this section of the narrative, Braddon intimately ties Mary's philanthropic agency to the act of writing. The narrator states that Mary 'took little notes in her pocket-book of the things that were wanting in the shabby house and the clothes that were needed for the starved bodies', and describes that a 'day or two afterwards the children thought a fairy had been there, and the weeping mother talked of one of God's angels' (p. 285). Mary's 'little notes' as well as the comparisons between Mary and mythical or religious creatures provide her with a philanthropically rooted power; this marks a departure from her conflation with *The Reading Girl*, as Mary actively writes and is described as a supernatural surveyor.

This change in Mary's agency is recognised by Mary herself through the narrator's free indirect discourse following her inheritance of Field's wealth. Mary wishes to write

George a letter and remarks that ‘he would know her hand perhaps [...] he had seen letters she had written’ as she ‘was sometimes writing girl as well as reading girl’ (p. 186). As noted, Pykett argues that Braddon’s heroines can be characterised by their ability to deconstruct masculine surveillance strategies; she also argues that writing played a key role in empowering women during the sensation decade of the 1860s and at the fin de siècle (1992, p. ix). The mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries act as moments of ‘invasion of fiction by the feminine’ which interrogated and reconstructed the definition of womanhood (p. 4). Braddon writes during these points of ‘invasion’, indicating her awareness of the subversive power of writing. Braddon’s desire to ‘redeem [sensation] from its coarseness’ (1863, p. 14) exemplifies her belief that writing can be used to change preconceptions, particularly under a primarily masculine critical gaze. Until this point in the text, the narrator and the male characters place a strong emphasis on Mary’s role as the reading girl. By establishing herself as both the writing girl and the reading girl, Mary illustrates a sense of self beyond the way in which she is perceived through the male gaze.

At the end of the text, Mary travels to Rome on her own to escape ‘that overworked word “Society”’ (p. 320). The narrator describes that

Mary loved the lonely places, the byways of Rome, the spots that no tourist ever wanted to see, where no declamatory voice of the hired guide sounded loud and monotonous in the distance. Mary liked the places where there was nothing to see – dull streets that seemed forgotten by the life of to-day [...] Mary walked in such solitude as she could find for herself, and the lonely places, and the spring twilights had their soothing influences. (p. 320)

This description of ‘twilight’ is reminiscent of Austin’s slumming between nighttime and sunrise at the beginning of the text and carries the same association with ‘queer ways of thinking through unboundedness, spillage, fluidity, multiplicity, and processes of contingent, non-linear becoming’ (March, 2021, p. 455). Mary’s travels in urban spaces also carry sexualised connotations as they occur within the queered moment of twilight. Mary’s isolated travels carry a semantic field of pleasure, including ‘loved’, ‘liked’, and ‘soothing’, further contributing to their erotic connotations. Yet Mary’s pleasure does not revolve around the surveillance and knowledge of the poor like Austin’s slumming at the beginning of the text. By travelling in ‘lonely places’ where ‘there [is] nothing to see’ Mary evades ‘voice[s]’ and surveillance, resulting in a ‘soothing’ effect. Mary’s newfound sense of self is reflected in the narrator’s shift to nearly exclusively focalising her experience throughout the text’s free indirect discourse. The temporal allusions to the narrator’s description of Austin’s slumming in Sanders Street, which is heavily focussed on observations of Mary’s

body, accentuates this shift from spectating Mary as a poor woman to descriptions of her internal emotions and her desire for an un-surveyed solitude. The narrator later notes that the 'solitude suited her [...] she was facing the future - summoning all her force of mind and will' to halt Rayner's continued attempts to force her into marriage (p. 223). Mary's urban experiences allow her pleasure in escaping the male gaze, while also providing her with the 'solitude' she needs to overcome Rayner's objectifying attempts to marry her.

Mary's more positive experiences of urban environments at the end of the narrative result partially from her change in social class; her inherited wealth means she has become a member of the upper-middle-classes. At first glance, this seems to restore the class-based power dynamics of slumming, as she shifts from being gazed at during her poverty to being the middle-class spectator. Yet by reflecting Austin's slumming through 'twilight', the reader is reminded of her initial animalisation as a 'night-bird' and her internalised belief that she is 'loathsome' (p. 4). As such, Braddon actually highlights the inequality occurring between the female homeless and the middle classes. As noted, Braddon's works often engage with concepts of 'homelessness ranging from literal dispossession to metaphorical disconnection from the domestic spaces that house them' and highlights the additional threat posed to homeless women by masculine gazes (Wetzel, 2012, p. 76). Mary's newfound agency is drastically different from the initial image of her 'sitting' (p. 2) at the beginning of the novel, accentuating her ability to access power over how she is surveyed that was inaccessible to her as a poor woman. In addition, Braddon also illustrates the potential for poor women to act philanthropically and to contribute to making the lives of other women a 'little easier' (p. 231) if given the chance to climb the social scale. At the dénouement of the narrative, Braddon illustrates Mary's agency over her body as well as her subsequent disassembly of the male gaze. George proposes to Mary again, but this time journeys to her home in Cornwall; Mary agrees, and the narrator notes that

The wedding was to be very quiet - so quiet, indeed, that most people would only hear of it afterwards - no fuss or frills of any kind, by special request of the bridegroom. (p. 334)

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

Beauty was no longer paramount in his estimation of a woman. It was no longer beauty that could hold him. He had known a charm more subtle, an attraction not to be defined in words. (p. 317)

This statement rejects the emphasis placed on aesthetic beauty seen in George's earlier comments on the 'thrill' of the slums and in Field's pleasure in gazing at *The Reading Girl*. Unlike Anne Brown, Mary does not agree to marriage simply to maintain her husband's financial status – rather, she negotiates the relationship to move away from surveying gazes, as evidenced in the wedding. She also directly dismantles George's objectification of the female body. The final paragraph of the text indicates that 'Mary felt an exquisite thrill of pleasure' as the 'change in George had begun', and the narrator describes that 'life had for her a new purpose [...] the days of fear and doubt were over' (p. 336). The beginning of the narrative fixates intensely on Austin's pleasures as he travels the slums; the ending changes this to focus on Mary's own 'thrill' as she escapes hostile male surveillance and takes agency over her body.

Conclusion

Braddon begins *Mary*'s narrative by directly critiquing the erotic and decadent surveillance strategies of male philanthropists, and develops her criticisms to encompass artistic and literary gazes. The male gaze attempts to construct Mary through Victorian archetypes of poor women: *The Reading Girl*, Becky Sharp, and the early reference to 'The Bridge of Sighs' all illustrate examples of the novel's male characters attempting to place Mary within their preconceived understandings of poor or homeless women. Yet, Mary breaks these constructions and enacts social good, taking pleasure from evading surveillance in the process. Mary's rejection of an entrapping male gaze parallels Braddon's pigeonholing as a sensation novelist and as an author of 'unthinking' fiction (Rae, 1865, p. 180), as well as her successful move away from the genre to write works that are both 'artistic & [...] sensational' (Braddon, 1863, p. 14). More importantly, Braddon emphasises the potential for poor women to succeed in developing their agency and to make philanthropic changes themselves if given the chance. The frameworks of male surveillance that aim to possess the pauper's body, either sexually, artistically, or as a financial 'product', are archaic remnants from the mid-nineteenth century that must be deconstructed for poor women to be liberated. Braddon's *Mary* operates as a post-Poor Law text that dismantles the affective power of the male gaze over poor female bodies, moving away from the strict surveillance the workhouses and the board of guardians once represented. Surveillance appears in Braddon's novel as a system of power in need of subversion and change; unlike her earlier works, this

subversion is not reversed and the previous social order is not restored. Instead, Braddon's titular heroine utilises her newfound wealth to negotiate her marriage, take control over her body, and enact philanthropic action for other poor women.

In both *Miss Brown* and *Mary*, surveillance appears as a method to dominate and objectify poor bodies. The desire to classify and make judgments over poor bodies has emerged in my analyses of spectacle and space in the nineteenth century, particularly in Dickens's employment of imagery to present an undeserving/deserving poor dichotomy and Morrison's engagement with spatial relations to depict gradients of poverty. Directly working against such scrutinising surveillance strategies, Lee and Braddon navigate the oppression of poor women under male gazes, interrogating the male philanthropist's slumming practices and his attempts to limit female agency. Yet, in both texts, the eponymous women are shown to break away from the scrutinising gaze of male figures and to succeed in enacting social reform. By illustrating this deconstruction of the male gaze, both authors represent forms of pleasure through the slum novel. In *Miss Brown*, Sapphic philanthropy is presented as a form of pleasure. Likewise, Braddon's titular character finds pleasure in travelling urban space in solitude away from the scrutinising surveillance of the Sedgwick family. This relationship with surveillance, while emphasising the oppressive effect of the male gaze on poor women, actually reflects Lee's and Braddon's experiences of aesthetic and literary circles. As I have noted, both spectacle and space operate similarly as conduits for the author's worldviews, experiences, and relationships with the slums; in the case of Lee's and Braddon's work, slumming, philanthropy, and poverty are interrogated throughout their texts in ways that reflect on their experiences as women in the literary culture of the late nineteenth century.

Conclusion: Slumming in the Victorian Imagination

This thesis has argued that throughout the nineteenth century, slum novels operate at an intersection between slumming, pleasure, and the desire to represent the truth of poverty in a way that resonates throughout the Victorian imagination. Through my thematically organised chapters on ‘Spectacle’, ‘Space’, and ‘Surveillance’, I have considered how we might define a Victorian notion of poverty porn. Pornographic pleasure arises in many forms throughout the analyses conducted in this thesis; poverty porn is visible through each writer’s eroticisation of the grotesque (Sections 1.1 and 1.2), their expression and affirmation of their personal worldview (Sections 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2), the presentation of sexual or romantic fulfilment (Sections 1.2, 3.1, and 3.2), their construction of images of social reform amongst political or cultural unrest (Sections 1.2, 2.2, and 3.2), and their engagement in and depiction of decadent excess (Sections 2.1, 3.1, and 3.2). As such, I have illustrated that the slum fictions analysed in this thesis consistently implicate concepts of pleasure in their constructions of poverty. Broadly, pornographic presentations of poverty appear in three primary ways throughout my analyses:

- 1) As an extension of slumming practises, in which spectators take pleasure at gazing at the poor due to their grotesque, degenerative, and decadent nature in fiction.
- 2) Poverty and philanthropy in the East End are more literally conflated with sexual or romantic pleasure, especially amongst same-sex communities.
- 3) Images of poverty are pornographic as they provide the author and reader with a pleasurable affirmation of their pre-established beliefs surrounding poverty, or a sense of ‘self-location’.

In ‘Chapter 1: Spectacle’ and ‘Chapter 3: Surveillance’, I have illustrated that Dickens, Harkness, Lee, and Braddon all either directly or indirectly engage with slumming pursuits. In Dickens’s and Harkness’s work, literary slumming appears under the guise of charity in their formation of the East End as a spectacle. The form of their novels affirms and aligns with the beliefs and practices of slumming. In Lee’s and Braddon’s novels, however, slumming is directly critiqued and considered. They both still aestheticise poverty – yet they also suggest that gazing at the poor and travelling through slum spaces can be used to empower female philanthropists and to break through the scrutiny of aesthetic and philanthropic male gazes. Slumming appears not simply as a practice in Lee’s and Braddon’s work but as an apparatus of surveillance that can be reconfigured for the sake of social reform. In my sections on Harkness, Lee, and Braddon, I have demonstrated a literal

conflation of images of poverty and East End spaces with sexual pleasure. In Harkness's and Lee's work, philanthropic communities operate to cultivate intense, Sapphic relationships alongside a desire to reform. Apart from the oppressive male gazes of Westenders and male aesthetes, images of poverty become pornographic as they allow women to engage in intense, pleasurable, same-sex relationships. In Braddon's work, slumming is a queered practice, and her representation of poverty reflects this via images of liminal temporal spaces as well as references to her friend Oscar Wilde. Yet in Braddon's work, urban spaces also appear as environments of respite from the male gaze for the novel's titular protagonist. Finally, images of poverty become pornographic as they allow a sense of self-location for authors and their readership. Utilising the slums as a form of self-expression is present in each of my selected texts: In *Oliver Twist*, the beliefs and views of Dickens's readerly community are affirmed through a spectacle of poverty; in *In Darkest London*, Harkness encodes the texts with some of her own experiences with Sapphic philanthropic sisterhoods; in *Tales of Mean Streets*, Morrison builds a *raison d'état* which constructs slum spaces as a linguistic netherworld which opposes his intellectual community at the People's Palace; in *Children of the Ghetto*, Zangwill expresses his identity as a Cockney Jew and takes pleasure in his nostalgic returns to the titular ghetto; in *Miss Brown*, Lee encodes the text with references to her sexuality and her aesthetic circle alongside her personal attitudes towards aesthetics and poverty; in *Mary*, Braddon's representation of her protagonist's suffering reflects the scrutiny she felt under a critical literary male gaze, while Mary's eventual movement towards empowerment as a 'writing girl' illustrates the ability for critical gazes to be overturned. As expressions of self, slum novels become pornographic as they offer the pleasure of affirming what is already believed or 'known' by authors and readers alike. Poverty porn is therefore embedded in these novels for a variety of purposes and experiences, each linked with forms of pleasure. While this hardly offers a concise definition of nineteenth-century poverty porn, as a concept it is implanted in novels in complex and differentiating ways throughout the century, depending on the social, personal, political, and sexual context the author is writing in; as such, the appearance of poverty porn in the nineteenth-century slum novel is wide-ranging in its appearance and proliferates representations of poverty, social class, and philanthropy in the Victorian imaginary.

This thesis has also identified how slum novels operate in the context of surveillance, and how they might inform perceptions of the poor as 'deviant' or 'undeserving'. *Raison d'états* appear through the slum novels selected for analysis in this thesis. These naturally include forms of surveillance, as they become methods of 'knowing' the poor; despite

political and legislative developments between the publication of *Oliver Twist* in 1837 and of *Mary* in 1916, anxieties in discerning between the deserving and undeserving poor permeate the slum fiction included in this thesis. In *Children of the Ghetto*, signs of resistance are visible. In pushing against antisemitic visions of the Jew in slum fiction, Zangwill deconstructs the presentation of figures like Fagin as undeserving on the grounds of their race or culture. At the end of *Mary*, Braddon looks forward to the deconstruction of outmoded forms of surveillance and the dismantling of the male gaze through the journey of the novel's protagonist. Likewise, Lee's protagonist paves the way for the reform of surveillance even as she sacrifices herself to marriage. Extending the period of study or considering different texts or mediums may illustrate exceptions or breakages from a *raison d'état* of the deserving or undeserving poor; more intensely identifying these processes is beyond the scope of this thesis. Despite this, this thesis has recognised a dichotomisation of how the poor are presented that responds to regimes of philanthropy and charity.

Throughout this thesis, I have interrogated the extent to which slum novelists can represent working-class and pauper experiences of the slums authentically. In some cases, depictions of slum life are undoubtedly based on the real-life experiences of the author; Zangwill's presentation of ghetto space represents and epitomises his encounters with the East End as a Cockney Jew, while Morrison's childhood in Poplar influenced his fascination with the slums in both *A Child of the Jago* and *Tales of Mean Streets*. Yet in each of these texts, poverty is related to gothicised and sometimes decadent scenes of degeneration. The presentation of the slums as 'graveyard' like spaces (Mayhew, 1852, p. 258) persists in each of these texts, either to intensify their central spectacles of poverty, to construct the slums as linguistic netherworlds to express the author's sense of self, or to encourage the reader's understanding of their 'fellow-creatures' who suffer under harsh conditions (Lee, 1909, p. 255). While writers like Dickens, Harkness, Morrison, and Lee directly state their attempts to present 'truth' in their work, I have illustrated how their ideas of reality are grounded in the beliefs of their social class, artistic circles, philanthropic sisterhoods, and intellectual communities. The devotion of these writers to construct a *raison d'état* of poverty, either as a form of encouraging sympathy or conserving the pre-established beliefs of their circles, keeps their access to true authenticity at bay.

This thesis has also engaged with and expanded on the work of Seth Koven and Judith R. Walkowitz. As noted, Koven emphasises that slum literature is 'bound up in [the middle classes'] insistent eroticization of poverty' and is ultimately a way for readers to explore their own 'genders' and 'sexualities' (p. 4). In drawing connections between sororal

philanthropic communities and Sapphic dialogues in *In Darkest London*, *Miss Brown*, and *Mary*, I have illustrated how these authors' novels act as an expression of their own genders and sexualities. In addition, this thesis has illustrated how the contemporary phrase 'poverty porn' is evident in the slum novel; understanding pornography as a 'written or visual material that emphasizes the sensuous or sensational aspects of a non-sexual subject, appealing to its audience in a manner likened to the titillating effect of pornography' (*OED*, 2021), I have uncovered the various elements at play that contribute to this erotic component. These pleasurable elements include reader and author self-location, homoerotic relationships between philanthropists, the reproduction of the East End as an organised literary map, the empowerment of hybrid identities in which 'cultural differences "contingently" and conflictually touch' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 207), the relationship between decadence and the slums, and the objectification and subversive empowerment of working-class female bodies. In addition, this thesis has built on the work of Walkowitz to complicate the perception of the literary slums as a space of 'sexual and moral disorder' (p. 54). The slum novel offers a complex intermingling of concepts that stretches beyond these two aspects; for example, in Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* the East End is disruptive and disordered, yet Morrison goes to great lengths to contain this within the legible logic of his intellectual community at the People's Palace. Overall, this thesis has expanded on the work of Koven and Walkowitz in reaching a definition of Victorian poverty porn.

This thesis has illustrated that the slum novel is always embedded within the wider Victorian imagination of the slums: illustrations, photographs, and statues all contribute to and inform the slum novel. Dickens's *Oliver Twist* is particularly embedded in these wider visual cultures, having been influenced by Hogarth's engravings and also later informing the composition of Annan's photography. The sexualisation of working-class women under the gaze of male artists is particularly prevalent in *Miss Brown* and *Mary*. As suffrage and the position of the New Woman develop, male systems of surveillance, transaction, and objectification become deconstructed in the slum novel. Braddon critiques art criticism throughout *Mary*, particularly concerning acts of reading and writing, and Lee interrogates the hostile surveillance and lack of empathy present in Pater's aestheticism. The slum novels that this thesis interrogates function in tandem with a wider network of visual and critical texts to inform the Victorian imagination of poverty and slum spaces.

The interrogations and analyses that have featured throughout this thesis offer fruitful starting points for future research. As noted, Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* offers one example of a text that writes against typified representations of the poor; through

future study, more slum novels that deviate from general trends of representing poverty can be uncovered, considered, and interrogated. In future research, I aim to analyse and interrogate the writings of working-class poets that truly did live and experience the slums but have received little scholarly attention; in these analyses, I will aim to identify whether different voices that are more directly rooted in slum experience can accurately encapsulate life in the East End. In addition, I will aim to further untangle the relationship between popular artists and philanthropic work. Each of the authors whose works are analysed in this thesis has had some engagement with philanthropy, and considering figures who operate in both artistic and philanthropic circles offers the potential to uncover the social, political, and ideological function of these shared interests.

This thesis has defined and interrogated the meanings of poverty porn in the Victorian imagination by interrogating the functions of spectacle, space, and surveillance in the slum novel. In doing so, it has unearthed the multiplicity of functions that the slum novel carries throughout the nineteenth century. The slum novel gives voice to marginalised identities and illustrates the potential for philanthropic and charitable reform; at the same time, it reproduces beliefs of what constitutes the deserving or undeserving poor while eroticising the slums for the sake of literary slumming. This thesis has illustrated that both the slum novel and poverty porn are multifaceted and complex in the ways they engage with the social, political, and moral nineteenth-century imaginary.

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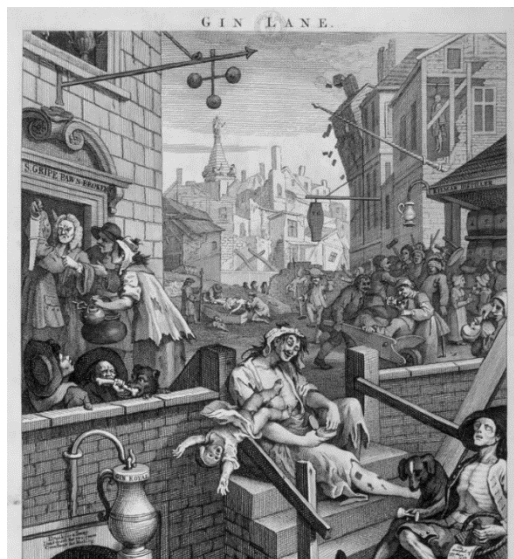
Appendix: Images

Figure 1



George Cruikshank, 'Oliver Asking for More', *Oliver Twist*, 1837, p. 13.

Figure 2



William Hogarth, *Gin Lane*, 1751.

Figure 3

Thomas Annan, 'Old Tunnel Off High Street', *The Closes and Wynds of Glasgow*, 1868.

Figure 4

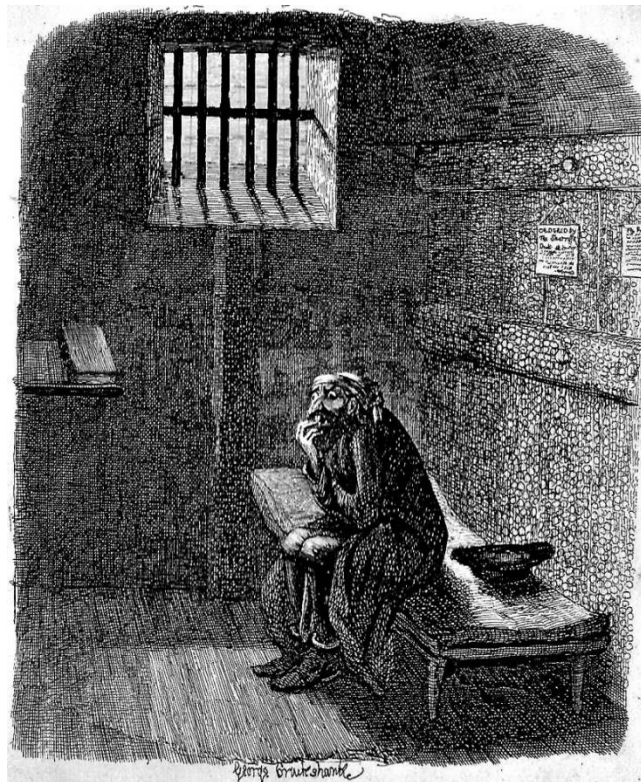
Thomas Annan, 'Broad Close', *The Closes and Wynds of Glasgow*, 1868.

Figure 5



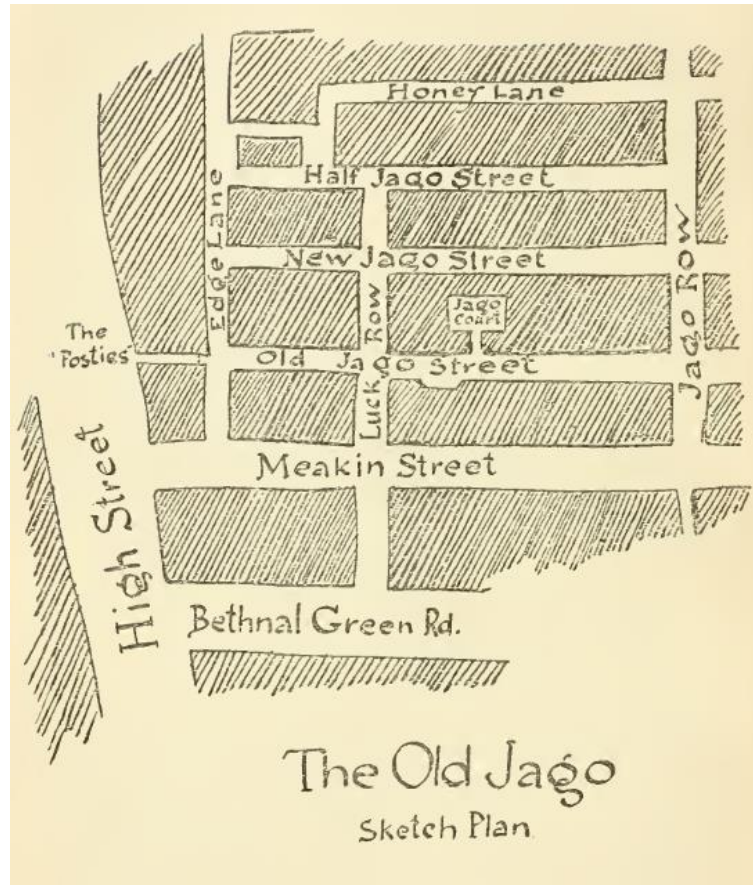
George Cruikshank, 'Oliver Introduced to the Respectable Old Gentleman', *Oliver Twist*, 1837, p. 60.

Figure 6



George Cruikshank, 'Fagin in the Condemned Cell', *Oliver Twist*, 1837, p. 431.

Figure 7



Arthur Morrison, Map sketch from the 3rd edn. of *A Child of the Jago*, 1897.

Figure 8



George du Maurier, 'In Slummibus', *Punch*, 1884, May 3rd.

Figure 9



Pietro Magni, *The Reading Girl*, 1861.