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‘The Remorseless Fangs of the Law’:

The Newgate Novel, 1722-2012

A thesis

submitted in fulfilment

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Abstract

The Newgate novel is a fascinating sub-genre of crime fiction which emerged in the 1830s as a response to contemporary issues within the social, legal and penal systems of Victorian London. This thesis is split into four distinct Parts which, using both critical research and original interventions, summarise developments in the Newgate novel from 1722-2012. The introductory section provides a foundation to this thesis by looking at the most significant contributors to the rise of the Newgate novel: genre, historical context, and the *Newgate Calendar*. The influences of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding and William Godwin's works are then analysed, as are their similarities to the Newgate school. Consequently, this thesis analyses whether or not they may be termed Newgate novels in their own right. The literature of the 1830s forms the core of my thesis, with the focus on works by the most popular Newgate novelists: Edward Bulwer-Lytton and William Ainsworth. Using examples from these authors this thesis establishes a comprehensive definition of what a Newgate novel is — focusing on the uses of sympathy, sensation and social protest — before moving on to look at William Thackeray's anti-Newgate novel, *Catherine*. The thesis finishes by redefining the boundaries of the Newgate novel. Using Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* as a springboard, the thesis looks at the twenty-first-century works of Bernard Cornwell and Deborah Challinor to further stretch the definition of a Newgate novel; also suggesting that a sub-genre of the Newgate novel exists in the form of the transportation novel.

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For those of you who sympathised with me
as my sympathy was devoted to others

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List of Abbreviations

All references will be to these editions.

- BS* Challinor, Deborah, *Behind the Sun* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2012)
- C* Thackeray, William Makepeace, *Catherine: A Story* (Teddington, Middlesex: Echo Library, 2008)
- CW* Godwin, William, *Caleb Williams*, ed. by Gary Handwerk and A. A. Markley (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000)
- EA* Bulwer-Lytton, Edward, *Eugene Aram* (Rockville, MD: Wildside Press, 2008)
- GT* Cornwell, Bernard, *Gallows Thief* (London: HarperCollins, 2002)
- JS* Ainsworth, William, *Jack Sheppard* (London: Penguin, 2010)
- JW* Fielding, Henry, *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, ed. by David Nokes (Middlesex: Penguin, 1982)
- JW (DD)* Defoe, Daniel, *The True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild*, in *The Life of Jonathan Wild The Great*, by Henry Fielding, ed. by David Nokes (Middlesex: Penguin, 1982), pp. 221-257
- MF* Defoe, Daniel, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders*, ed. by G. A. Starr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

- NC Pelham, Camden, *The Chronicles of Crime; or The New Newgate Calendar* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1841)
- OT Dickens, Charles, *Oliver Twist*, ed. by Ella Westland (London: Wordsworth, 2000)
- PC Bulwer-Lytton, Edward, *Paul Clifford* (London: Penguin, 2010)

Preface

In central London there is a small horseshoe-shaped street named Amen Court; “Amen”, one might assume, as it once marked the end of the line’:

At the back of this quiet tree-lined court, a small playground has been built in the ivy-latticed shadow of a massive stone wall, the sombre countenance of which rises incongruously against the swings and seesaws that echo with afternoon laughter. None of the residents here seem to know — I’ve asked — that beneath the tanbark and sand where the children in this isolated corner of central London play on slides and swings, lie fragments of the long-forgotten remains of countless murderers and madmen, poisoners and pickpockets, highwaymen and thieves.¹

What seemed most surprising to me as I wrote this thesis was how very few people knew that Newgate Gaol ever existed. As with every graduate student, I was often asked “what is your thesis on?” and time and time again I would find myself having to explain the simplest part of my thesis: that such a prison existed, and that it was rather notorious. I was quick to forgive my white, middle-class family and friends who, understandably, had limited knowledge of the history of Victorian London. However, when I read Kelly Grovier’s introduction to her book, *The Gaol: The Story of Newgate, London’s Most Notorious Prison*, cited above, and realised that this ignorance of Newgate Gaol was not limited to New

¹ Kelly Grovier, *The Gaol: The Story of Newgate, London’s Most Notorious Prison* (London: John Murray, 2008), pp. xiii-xiv.

Zealand, but extended as far as London itself, I must say, I was very surprised. Newgate Gaol is repeatedly described, such as in the case of Grovier's choice of title, as 'London's most notorious prison', or as in the title of Stephen Halliday's book, 'London's prototype of hell'; why then has such a formidable structure been forgotten in the public consciousness? Is it because throughout history societies have always ignored the cries of criminals and instead followed like sheep the words of the rich and powerful? Is it because criminals have never really had a voice before, so why give them one now? Or is it because we simply choose not to pay attention to their words?

The term "Newgate novel" was established in the 1830s to help group together novels which were attempting to give such a voice to criminals, primarily those incarcerated in Newgate Gaol. The beginning of the nineteenth century saw crime permeate almost every aspect of life in London city and consequently, laws were tightened and expanded to fight back against a growing criminal class.² However, what authorities failed to acknowledge was that alongside a rising criminal class was a growing class of poor and unemployed; the connection of which is obvious to an historian, but not to the upper class who remained unaffected by the rapid increase of the population and the poverty which resulted from it. Nevertheless, lawyers and politicians were not the only ones with a voice; authors began to pick up their pens and write about the social and legal injustices of their societies; and, in doing so, created fictional representations of the horrors surrounding Newgate Gaol: the Newgate novel.

² Jerry White, *London in the 19th Century* (London: Vintage Books, 2007), p. 2.

Introduction

It has been said that when the infamous Jack Sheppard landed on the street outside Newgate Gaol after his fourth and final prison escape in 1724, 'he launched Newgate into a new era of cultural meaning'.¹ Newgate had always been at the forefront of London's public consciousness, acting as a metaphor for corruption and the consequences of greed and power. With its frightening gallows and awful stench of human waste and decomposing bodies, it is no wonder that Newgate Gaol has always been described as a notorious and domineering structure of London city since it first appeared in the records in 1188² to its demolition in 1902.³ However, Sheppard represents the start of a particularly fascinating period of Newgate's history, when the criminal becomes the hero as well as the villain of fiction. This thesis looks at the Newgate novel, a sub-genre of crime fiction, which was established in the 1830s in order to protest against these awful conditions at Newgate Gaol, as well as the social and legal injustices that the authors saw within their societies. It analyses the cultural meanings behind Newgate and the role that criminals such as Sheppard played in creating both sensation and social problem fiction.

This thesis is partly based on what is already known about the Newgate novel; and rather a lot has been written on a genre that apparently became extinct almost two centuries ago. I must therefore acknowledge the works of Grovier and Halliday, who have written fantastic books on the history of

¹ Grovier, p. 117.

² Stephen Halliday, *Newgate: London's Prototype of Hell* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2009), p. 113.

³ Halliday, p. 172.

Newgate Gaol, and Keith Hollingsworth, whose book on the Newgate novel was incredibly useful in writing Parts One and Three of this thesis. However, I have used this research as a foundation for my discussion on these novels, and then provide my own ideas and interpretations, with the hope of extending the traditional definition of the Newgate novel. Such an extension I believe is necessary as the traditional definition of a Newgate novel is quite restrictive, and therefore no longer practical. If we want Newgate Gaol to remain in the public consciousness then we must be prepared to acknowledge the way in which authors continue to use Newgate in their fiction, and how they too are using the prison as a symbol of injustice.

In Part One of this thesis, I will discuss the origins of the Newgate novel. I will consider the genres that influenced it; the historical context that led to its necessity; and the most influential piece of Newgate material: the *Newgate Calendar*. The *Calendar* will be referred to throughout my thesis as all these texts can be traced back to it in some way, with three of the most significant characters of Newgate fiction — Jack Sheppard, Jonathan Wild and Eugene Aram — stemming directly from the *Calendar*.

Part Two will look at the eighteenth century and Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1721), Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (1743) and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). I will discuss how these texts helped to establish many of the key tropes of the Newgate novel, and how they can consequently be considered either pre-Newgate novels, or Newgate novels in their own right.

Part Three is the core section of this thesis, as it discusses the three most significant Newgate novels: Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Paul Clifford* (1830) and

Eugene Aram (1832), and William Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* (1839). Using examples from these three novels, I will construct a thorough and conclusive definition of a Newgate novel; what aspects it must include and what issues it must address. At the end of Part Three, I will touch on the contemporary reception of these novels and discuss William Thackeray's *Catherine*, an anti-Newgate novel which acts as a fictional representation of the harsh critical reception that Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth's novels received.

Finally, in Part Four, I will take the definition that I established in Part Three and attempt to redefine its boundaries. Although Newgate Gaol has been largely forgotten by the general public, it is still used today by many authors and I will prove that the Newgate novel as a genre is not extinct; while it may have adapted to new societies and new centuries it still lives on in modern fiction. To prove this I will look at three texts: firstly, Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837), which will provide a link between the traditional Newgate novels of the 1830s and the Newgate novels of the twenty-first century; secondly, Bernard Cornwell's *Gallows Thief* (2001); and thirdly, Deborah Challinor's *Behind the Sun*, which I will also use to define a sub-genre of the Newgate novel: the transportation novel.

Part 1: The Rise of the Newgate Novel

‘Newgate Prison loomed in the British imagination like no other structure before or since’. — Kelly Grovier¹

Before I begin an analysis on the characteristics of the Newgate novel, it is first necessary to introduce this genre with a survey on the origins of crime fiction and the rise of the Newgate novel. First and foremost, I will touch on some predecessors of the Newgate novelist and of Newgate themes by briefly considering the various genres which influenced the Newgate school: detective fiction, Gothic literature, Romantic literature and historical fiction. Following this introduction, I will discuss the most significant publication, or more correctly series of publications, of Newgate material: the *Newgate Calendar*.

The Newgate Novel and Genre

The establishment of any new genre may be viewed as the result of continual interlinking between two or more existing genres within a piece of fiction. As the lines began to blur between the various genres at work within a text, authors and critics are forced to find new terms to describe what a piece of fiction is and where it belongs. The creation of the term Newgate novel is no different, and can be traced back to several influential genres: detective fiction, gothic literature and historical fiction.

¹ Grovier, p. xiv.

Detective Fiction

The rise of the Newgate novel is linked to the origins of early detective fiction as the two genres formed around the same time, with the first novel to be considered a detective story, Thomas Gaspey's *Richmond* (1827), also being considered by many to be the first Newgate novel.² This concurrent formation gives a distinct indication of the techniques and narrative characteristics shared by the two genres. Detective fiction, to borrow Heta Pyrhönen's definition, 'refers to a narrative whose principal action concerns the attempt by an investigator to solve a crime and to bring a criminal to justice'.³ There are, however, two varying forms of detective fiction which have been outlined by Charles Rzepka that I would like to briefly describe. Firstly, there are *detective* stories which 'refer to any story that contains a major character undertaking the investigation of a mysterious crime or similar transgression'; so a story in which our sympathies lie with the detective protagonist who is attempting to solve a crime; such as in Edgar Allen Poe's short story 'Murders on the Rue Morgue' or, to provide a modern example of the same technique, in Cornwell's *Gallows Thief*, which I will discuss in Part Five of this thesis. Secondly, there are *detection* stories that contain 'the puzzle element' which 'directly engages the reader's attention and powers of inference'.⁴ The most well-known examples of this form of detective fiction are Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and Arthur Conan Doyle's 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'. This second form of *detection* fiction is most

² Charles J. Rzepka, *Detective Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 67.

³ Heta Pyrhönen, 'Criticism and Theory', in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Lee Horsley and Charles J. Rzepka (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 43-56 (p. 43).

⁴ Rzepka, p. 12.

useful in discussing the rise of the Newgate novel as it does not exclude stories in which the protagonist is not a detective, but instead focuses on the story's ability to involve the reader in the detection process. For the purposes of this discussion I will continue to call this literature detective fiction, as that term is more widely used and accepted to cover all literature involving detective elements.

Detective fiction is primarily concerned with “whodunit?” and is structured around an attempt to solve that question; it typically ‘opens with the problem of crime and closes with its solution’.⁵ Pyrhönen goes on to argue, however, that the narrative structure of such stories is not always that straightforward:

Often the consequences of crime are revealed well before the events that led up to it become known. Typically, this situation structures detective fiction — but backwards: its plot aims at a linear, chronological sequence of events that will explain its baffling initial situation. It is especially agreed that form and especially plot structure make the detective story the kind of narrative it is.⁶

This narrative structure is the key aspect of detective fiction that Newgate novelists amalgamated into the defining characteristics of their works, and perhaps in reverse, was the key characteristic that detective fiction writers concurrently appropriated from the Newgate novel. The plot structure of *Jack Sheppard*, for example, begins with Jack as an infant — a very iconic Victorian beginning — and describes his destitute situation. From the start of his story Sheppard's death on the gallows is foreshadowed, primarily through remarks

⁵ Pyrhönen, p. 44.

⁶ Pyrhönen, p. 44.

made by other characters, so it is apparent where the story will end. Furthermore, and, perhaps more importantly, the consequences of his crimes are already known at the beginning of the novel because contemporary readers would have known the story of the real Jack Sheppard from the accounts presented about him in the *Newgate Calendar*. By using real accounts as the basis of their novels, many Newgate novelists retained the narrative structure of detective fiction and ensured — in part — that their texts remained *detection* stories, as it is the reader's job to fill in the blanks as the plot progresses.

Of course, the use of a criminal as the protagonist, rather than a detective, also ensures that the *detection* elements of the genre are emphasised. Rather than following the point of view of the detective who is solving the crime, the Newgate novels primarily follow the perspective of the criminal about whom the crimes and mystery circulate, but who are not necessarily actively trying to solve the mystery. The mystery too, does not circulate around solving the crime, but solving the reasons behind the crime and discovering the criminal's history and whether or not the punishment they receive is just. Nevertheless, all the Newgate novels do retain a detective figure, even if they are not a detective by profession. Lord Mauleverer in *Paul Clifford* may be considered a detective in his search for Clifford's real identity, as can Mr Brownlow in *Oliver Twist*, or any of the various high-standing members of society — rich landowners and the like — who are searching for justice or vengeance. These figures, though not paid detectives, do fulfil the detective function needed to move the plot forwards to the impending resolution at the end.

Gothic Literature

While early detective fiction offered a template for the roles of some of the characters, the criminals themselves originated from the Gothic traditions of the Byronic hero. The Byronic hero, with his dark mystique and brooding passions, was a popular character in Gothic and Romantic literature. Typically, he is a gentleman who has fallen from a respectable position in society due to the unfortunate doings of others. Conrad in Lord Byron's *The Corsair*, for example, fits this mould perfectly as he is 'an intelligent, high-spirited young man' who becomes a pirate after being betrayed by a corrupt society.⁷ This plot structure is particularly evident in *Paul Clifford*, as Clifford succumbs to the life of a highwayman after becoming the victim of a corrupt justice system. The qualities of a Byronic hero are evident in the criminal protagonists of the various Newgate novels, as almost all of them are gentlemen either by birth (though that is unknown until late in the plot), or through their respectable positions in society as professional men.

Crime fiction, and consequently the Newgate novel, also emerged from the sensational elements of Gothic literature — provided by eighteenth-century texts such as Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* — with its 'dark passions, fearful villains, exotic locales, and suspenseful plotting'.⁸ While exotic locales are rarely featured in the Newgate novel — as it is most often set in London and Newgate Gaol — fearful villains, passionate love stories and suspenseful plotting are most

⁷ Lauren Gillingham, 'The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook', in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Lee Horsley and Charles J. Rzepka (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 93-104 (pp. 96-97).

⁸ Gillingham, 'The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook', p. 96.

definitely exhibited, and are some of the key elements which provide sensation in these texts. Furthermore, depictions of criminal characters follow Gothic literature's interest in psychological analysis.⁹ This is most clearly demonstrated by Dickens, in his analysis of Fagin's time in the condemned cell at Newgate Gaol. Nevertheless, all these texts show an interest in the motivations behind crime and in the psychological state of criminals.

Romantic Literature

The origins of the crime novel can also be traced back to the writings of the Romantic authors Byron and Sir Walter Scott. Lauren Gillingham argues that these novelists paved the way for future authors by writing 'influential narrative models for mapping social and historical change, analysing social institutions and customs, and staging the identity formation of both transgressive heroes and ordinary individuals'.¹⁰ These literary characteristics are crucial to the Newgate novel, as a large part of the purpose of such novels is to provide a critique of social institutions — such as prisons — and the social injustices which emerge from economic disparity.

Furthermore, Scott's Waverley novels offer crime writers two important narrative techniques. Firstly, 'how an individual criminal case might derive from the social, economic, political, and juridical structures prevalent in a given historical moment'; and secondly, 'that one could neutralize the representation

⁹ Joel Black, 'Crime Fiction and the Literary Canon', in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Lee Horsley and Charles J. Rzepka (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 76-89 (p. 81).

¹⁰ Gillingham, 'The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook', p. 96.

of social transgressions or political insurrection by containing such forces within the arena of a pre-modern age'.¹¹ The first point is crucial when considering how the Newgate novel was used as a form of social propaganda against the injustices of the current structures featured within the novel; for example, the use of poverty and low social standing as grounds for criminal behaviour in *Moll Flanders* or *Jack Sheppard*. Similarly, the second point is crucial when discussing these novels as social problem novels as they were often set in the past to avoid political confrontation. For example, the political manoeuvring of *Waverley's* Fergus Mac-Ivor is set alongside the unsuccessful Jacobite uprising of 1745. Similarly, *Jack Sheppard* is set in the eighteenth century in order to contrast the lawlessness of that period with the — apparently — effective policing of his day; in essence, Ainsworth attempts to reassure his readers that a Jack Sheppard character would not be possible in modern London.

Historical Fiction

This use of historical settings is important as it offers contrasting ideas on the use of these types of novels as social problem novels. On the one hand, they can be seen as protesting against the inhumane and unjust actions of the previous generations, while praising modern society for how far it has come. More importantly though, they do not succeed in congratulating their own societies, but instead, demonstrate the extent to which crime was prevalent in the social consciousness and, therefore, how prevalent crime was at the time. In this light, these novels can be seen to be using historical fiction to avoid political

¹¹ Gillingham, 'The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook', p. 97.

confrontation, but not to show how modern society had resolved social, political and penal issues. As Avrom Fleishman states, ‘the historical novel, like all historical writing, is engaged with — if it is not necessarily compromised by — the present’.¹²

The rise of Newgate novel may be partly attributed to the popularity of historical fiction, as ‘the historical novel enjoyed great prestige in the Victorian period’.¹³ The nineteenth century was a period ‘of increased historical consciousness’ as it was the first time in which people were becoming aware that the past was ‘profoundly different from the present’.¹⁴ However, history was not yet part of the curriculum in most schools (for those children who did receive an education), and the biographies and ‘proper histories’ were less accessible than the public desired. Consequently, historical romance became the primary source for historical knowledge for the general public.¹⁵ This ‘light history’ of the historical romance ‘dominated the fiction market’, a market to which the popularity of the Newgate novel significantly contributed.¹⁶

Historical Context

The increase in crime fiction in the early nineteenth century is also attributed to the prevalent belief in a crime “crisis”. Many inhabitants of London, such as Jerome K. Jerome, lived in a constant state of fear: ““Terror lived in every street,

¹² Avrom Feishman, *The English Historical Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 14.

¹³ Louis James, *The Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 197.

¹⁴ James C. Simmons, ‘The Novelist as Historian: An Unexplored Tract of Victorian Historiography’, *Victorian Studies*, 14.3 (1971), 293-305 (p. 294).

¹⁵ Simmons, p. 294.

¹⁶ Simmons, p. 293.

hid, waiting for me, round each corner”’.¹⁷ Londoners believed ‘that crime was constant, bubbling under, always waiting to erupt’; this was to an extent true, as a large portion of crime during the Victorian period was the result of poverty, with many people becoming ‘so poor that they stole to live’.¹⁸ The rapid increase in population that occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth century — the population of England doubled between 1800 and 1850¹⁹ — coupled with rapid urbanisation, meant that poverty was an unfortunate reality for many inhabitants of London. As poverty increased, so too did the criminal population. The resulting fear of a large criminal class found its vent in popular literature; as Lucy Sussex describes it, writers saw ‘an all-pervasive social content in search of literary form’ which encouraged the popularity of crime fiction and criminal stories in all forms of literary print, from the newspaper to the novel.²⁰ The infiltration of crime tropes into the Victorian novel was thorough: ‘It is rather a challenge to try to think of a Victorian novel that does not in some way turn on criminal activity’.²¹

The immense popularity of crime fiction in the Victorian period, furthermore, mirrored not only the extensive fears surrounding criminal conduct, but also the pressures surrounding legal and penal reform at the time. From the late eighteenth century reformers began to consider ‘the causes of criminal

¹⁷ White, p. 127.

¹⁸ Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. xxi.

¹⁹ Judith Flanders, *The Victorian City: Everyday Life in Dickens’ London* (London: Atlantic Books, 2012), p. 167.

²⁰ Lucy Sussex, ‘Edward Bulwer-Lytton and the Development of the English Crime Novel’, *Clues*, 16.1 (2008), 8-21 (p. 9).

²¹ F. S. Schwazbach, ‘Newgate Novel to Detective Fiction’, in *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pp. 227-243 (p. 229).

behaviour’ — including drink and poverty — and ‘the effects of imprisonment’ on criminals in London, and in England as a whole. The demands and pressures of the reformers, who spoke publicly about their concerns, ensured, argues Gillingham, that ‘issues of justice, crime, punishment and prison conditions’ would remain topics of interest until the 1840s when ‘sufficient social and penal reform had been enacted’.²² In order to fully understand the significance of these issues, it is important here to briefly describe the state of criminal law at this time.

The “Bloody Code”

The “Bloody Code”, an awful nickname for the list of capital offences, was responsible for the deaths of many innocent men, women and children. The “Bloody Code” was introduced in the late seventeenth century in order to combat the over-population of prisons by raising the number of capital offences from fifty, as it was in 1688, to hundreds.²³ The “Bloody Code” was extreme:

Beyond murder and treason ... the death penalty could be inflicted for burglary, robbery, breaking and entering, arson, and for stealing from a house or vessel to the value of five shillings. It was a capital offence to steal a horse, a cow, or a ship (but not a pig or a donkey); to make or utter false coin; to forge almost any sort of paper; to incite to mutiny in army or navy; to show false lights to cause shipwreck; or to return before the end of a term of transportation ...

²² Lauren Gillingham, ‘Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* and the Crimes of History’, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 49.4 (2009), 879-906 (p. 881).

²³ Halliday, p. 76.

It was a capital offence to cut the back of sea or river, to drain a fishpond, to be disguised in the Mint, to go about at night disguised or with the face blackened, to steal cloth from bleaching greens, to steal or destroy game, to cut down a tree not one's own, to impersonate a Greenwich pensioner — the list went on and on.²⁴

These unsympathetic statutes essentially protected all sorts of property 'at the expense of life'.²⁵ It was, noticeably, a war primarily fought between the rich and the poor. As Peter Linebaugh points out, 'the authors of the death statutes belonged to the ruling and propertied classes. Those who suffered at Tyburn belonged to the property-less and the oppressed'.²⁶ It was in the midst of this war between the rich and the poor, the propertied and the property-less, that the Newgate novel was formed.

The Old Bailey

The Old Bailey — London's criminal courthouse — is crucial to any discussion of Newgate Gaol, as the two buildings were inextricably linked; the Old Bailey had been built to 'serve the demands of Newgate'.²⁷ The Old Bailey is a prominent setting within the Newgate novels I will be discussing, as all the criminal trials presented in the texts are conducted there. As well as being a popular setting within literature, the Old Bailey served to promote the popularity of Newgate literature and the sensational atmosphere that surrounded crime in Victorian

²⁴ Keith Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel, 1830-1847: Bulwer, Ainsworth, Dickens, & Thackeray* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), p. 20.

²⁵ Hollingsworth, p. 20.

²⁶ Linebaugh, p. 74.

²⁷ Grovier, p. 16.

London, as it was viewed as an unofficial theatre. After the Great Fire of 1666, the Old Bailey was rebuilt with an open-roofed design. This design highlighted the way in which the courthouse and its neighbour Newgate Gaol were unofficial theatres of the city, alongside buildings such as the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane.²⁸

This idea of the courtroom as an “unofficial theatre” is further highlighted by the notion that ‘anyone who was anyone wanted to be in court while a notorious trial was proceeding’, with tickets being sold for particularly notorious trials, much like a ticket for the screening of a popular movie today.²⁹ The popularity of attending a trial or execution, and consequently the immense sizes of the crowd, adds to the idea of crime and criminal punishment as a form of public entertainment. Large crowds — “‘compos’d of, perhaps, a Baker’s Boy, a Journeyman-Shoemaker, a Butcher’s-Prenticed, and a Bailiff’s follower”³⁰ — would pack themselves into the courtyard on trial days in an attempt to witness what was occurring at the bar and, if they were lucky, to have an effect on the jury’s decision. The popularity of trials and, perhaps more importantly, executions, was cultivated by authorities as they believed that if they did not draw spectators then they did not serve their purpose of presenting ‘the final power of the law’.³¹

Inside the Old Bailey, the prisoners ‘were kept herded in readiness’ for the quick succession of trials:

²⁸ Grovier, p. 16.

²⁹ Liza Picard, *Victorian London: The Life of a City 1840-1870* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2005), p. 274.

³⁰ Linebaugh, p. 86.

³¹ Hollingsworth, p. 3.

... cases were run through with dizzy rapidity. The anonymous author of *Old Bailey Experience* (1830) gave an average time of eight and one-half minutes; a reviewer of the book thought this was not quite accurate — he calculated an average of twenty-two. Such haste could not but produce inequities.³²

Despite varying opinions on the length of trials at the Old Bailey, it is widely understood that no trial could extend beyond one day. This idea is supported by the belief that the judge and jurymen's dinners were more important than an "unworthy" life; as Alexander Pope famously states, 'The hungry judges soon the sentence sign, / And wretches hang that jurymen may dine'.³³ This sentiment is clearly exemplified in Bulwer-Lytton's *Paul Clifford* when Lord Mauleverer, in a note to Judge Brandon inviting him to dinner, writes:

*Make haste and hang this poor fellow, that I may see you the sooner;
and it is bad for both of us to wait long for a regular meal like dinner (PC,
p. 505).*

The consequences of such hasty trials may clearly be imagined, especially when we consider that many prisoners were unable to afford legal assistance and were not given the opportunity to have their own witnesses at hand; as Hollingsworth states, 'he was in the grip of an engine designed to convict him'.³⁴

³² Hollingsworth, p. 22.

³³ Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, ed. by Geoffrey Tillotson (London: Routledge, 1989), Canto 3, lines 21-22.

³⁴ Hollingsworth, p. 22.

The Execution

Once convicted, the prisoner would be led back to Newgate Gaol and placed within a condemned cell — like Fagin in *Oliver Twist* — to await execution. After a 1752 Act, those felons who were ‘found guilty of murder were taken to execution within forty-eight hours of the sentence’, while those convicted of lesser crimes were given on average about a week before their execution; there was no Appeal Court at this time so there appeared to those of authority no reason for delay.³⁵ The process of the convicted criminal’s execution began on the preceding Sunday — executions being held on Monday mornings — with the condemned sermon. The Ordinary of Newgate held the service, in which he attempted to coerce the criminals to repent. Often a coffin (to be used the following day) would be displayed in front of the condemned pew in order ‘to emphasise the solemnity of the occasion’.³⁶ The repentance of a prisoner was considered important to the authorities as it showed the latter’s dominance and power over rebellious criminals. As well as holding various church services, the Ordinary made a significant profit from publishing “accounts” of the prisoner’s confessions during the condemned sermon or while at the gallows, and so it was to his interest to force one from the condemned man or woman.³⁷ These “accounts” were published cheaply and poorly, but very quickly, and may be considered the first form of Newgate literature.

The ritual, however, did not end with the Ordinary’s chapel service. Since 1605 a bell — which a wealthy citizen had conferred upon the city — was rung at

³⁵ Halliday, p. 80.

³⁶ Halliday, p. 86.

³⁷ Halliday, p. 82.

midnight outside the condemned cell, 'thus waking them from any slumber they managed to achieve'. The bell was 'accompanied by a recital of a verse' spoken by the sexton of St Sepulchre's Church, across the road from Newgate:

All you that in the condemned hold do lie,
 Prepare you, for tomorrow you shall die;
 Watch all and pray: the hour is drawing near
 That you before the Almighty must appear;
 Examine well yourselves; in time repent,
 That you may not to eternal flames be sent.
 And when St Sepulchre's bell in the morning tolls,
 The Lord above have mercy on your souls.³⁸

This recital ended the Sunday ritual and the prisoner was left to consider repentance until the morning, or more often than not, get heavily drunk after 'having been plied with fortifying liquors ... by sympathetic inmates'.³⁹

On the morning of his execution the prisoner would have his chains replaced with the hemp rope which would soon end his days; he would be led either to Tyburn or, from 1783, outside the Debtor's Door of Newgate Gaol to the temporary scaffold that had been erected the previous night. The procession to Tyburn, rather than a hanging at Newgate itself, was a popular choice for many of the Newgate novelists as it was a rather notorious affair; the procession and hanging of Sheppard was the most sensational of all. The procession to Tyburn 'consisted of a line of carts containing the prisoners, their coffins, the

³⁸ Halliday, p. 87.

³⁹ Halliday, p. 88.

hangman and the Ordinary, a strict order of precedence being observed', with highwaymen at the front, and lesser criminals in the rear; traitors 'were denied the dignity of a cart, being dragged instead on hurdles'.⁴⁰ The procession was observed by hundreds of Londoners who were gathered along the route between Newgate and Tyburn. During the procession, prisoners were given the opportunity to 'make speeches and exchange witticisms with the crowd'; some particularly famous criminals were begged by the onlookers 'for a lock of their hair or a fragment of their clothing in a manner reminiscent of the later treatment of popular musicians or sportsmen'.⁴¹ Furthermore, the prisoners were allowed to make a final speech while standing upon the 'Triple Tree'; since they were about to die, it was believed no further harm could come of it, 'and a good, defiant speech was looked upon with favour by the crowd as part of the entertainment'.⁴²

As the moment of execution drew near 'the prisoners would be blindfolded and hooded', the hangman would place the noose around their necks, while the Ordinary would continue to pray for their souls until the cart was 'drawn away, leaving the condemned swinging from the scaffold'.⁴³ While it could be assumed that this would be the end for the prisoner it was only the beginning of their real punishment. Most prisoners did not die from a broken neck, as was common in later hangings, but instead died slowly and painfully from strangulation. This, sadly, was seen by the audience as further entertainment; the prisoners' 'cries

⁴⁰ Halliday, p. 88.

⁴¹ Halliday, p. 90.

⁴² Halliday, p. 92.

⁴³ Halliday, p. 94.

and contortions being applauded by the crowd'.⁴⁴ Some prisoners were fortunate enough — if that word can be used in such a horrific context — to have their sufferings ended more quickly, through the help of 'relatives or sympathisers who, by pulling their legs, broke their necks', or alternatively, a compassionate hangman — or more likely one who had been paid beforehand — 'would jump on the shoulders of the victim to bring a swifter end'.⁴⁵ Those who were less fortunate, however, could be left strangling to death for up to half an hour.

This brief description of the trials and executions of criminals in Victorian London is a crucial introduction to the Newgate novel for several reasons. Firstly, Newgate literature, in all its forms, was highly sensationalised; therefore it is important to lay the foundation of historical fact in order to easily compare the fiction with the historical record. Secondly, the idea of criminal trials and executions as a form of public entertainment and the public's desire to see men hang for the crimes of which they feared, exemplifies the enduring human hunger for crime stories. Thirdly, the need for Newgate literature — which acts as social problem fiction — is exemplified by the unjust situation of convicted criminals, particularly through the trial process. And lastly, it is important to observe how this appetite for crime stories resulted in the publication and popularity of the most important predecessor of the Newgate novel: the *Newgate Calendar*.

⁴⁴ Halliday, pp. 94-95.

⁴⁵ Halliday, p. 95.

The Newgate Calendar

The *Newgate Calendar* was originally a list of names — compiled each month by the keeper of Newgate — of all those who entered the gaol: ‘in effect a gaol register’.⁴⁶ From there it progressed to a series of reports or accounts written by the Ordinary. As stated earlier, the Ordinary of Newgate wrote “‘Accounts’ ... of the lives, crimes, confessions, and executions of the criminals under his care’, in order to supplement his wages.⁴⁷ The first man to publish such accounts was Paul Lorraine, the Ordinary at Newgate from 1698 to 1719. His broadsheets, which claimed to ‘contain the true histories of the condemned criminals incarcerated there’ — though, of course, they were rather sensationalised — sold well and helped to instigate a phenomenon of *Calendars* to come, both real and knock-offs.⁴⁸

The various editions of the *Newgate Calendar* were immensely popular throughout the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries:

It is said that by the end of the eighteenth century, *The Newgate Calendar* had joined the King James version of the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, *Pilgrim’s Progress* and Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, as being the five titles ‘most likely to be found’ in even less well-read households.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Halliday, p. 252.

⁴⁷ Heather Worthington, ‘From *The Newgate Calendar* to Sherlock Holmes’, in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Lee Horsley and Charles J. Rzepka (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 13-27 (p. 14).

⁴⁸ Rzepka, p. 51.

⁴⁹ Grovier, p. 183.

The popularity of the *Newgate Calendar* resulted from two key factors. First of all, the immense interest in crime stories at the time allowed the *Calendars* to be presented and read as a form of news which satisfied public interest. Secondly, ‘the development of printing technology made possible the rapid publication’ of such material.⁵⁰ While the various *Calendars* may be regarded as news, the relationship between historical fact and sensational fiction cannot be ignored.

Most entries in the *Newgate Calendar* were rather short, ‘amounting to two or three pages of the most alarming facts’: the exception to this being that the most infamous criminals — such as Jonathan Wild, Jack Sheppard and Eugene Aram — were given longer accounts to match their notoriety.⁵¹ This short, concise style meant that only the most sensational and relevant details were recorded, limiting the historical accuracy of the report. Furthermore, the authors exhibited a ‘rampant disregard for accuracy’ and were more concerned with ‘keep[ing] pace with public demand’ than honouring the truth.⁵² The stories themselves were selectively chosen by the authors of the *Calendar* for two key purposes: to provide entertainment and moral instruction. The *Newgate Calendar* also serve a third purpose — often overlooked by critics — to provide evidence of the injustices of the law. My discussion will draw on a few representative examples from Camden Pelham’s 1840 *The New Newgate Calendar*.

⁵⁰ Worthington, p. 15.

⁵¹ Halliday, p. 255.

⁵² Grovier, p. 185.

Entertainment and Sensation

The stories contained within the *Newgate Calendar* placed a significant 'emphasis on entertainment', to the point that it became 'increasingly unclear' as to what was fact and what was fiction.⁵³ 'Starting with whatever was known or could be invented about the birth and upbringing of the convict concerned, the works would go on to detail spiced-up circumstances' about the criminal's life, trial and execution.⁵⁴ The purpose of these accounts, at a fundamental level, was to sell large quantities and make a profit for the author and publisher; to do this, they had to be sensational: in other words, they had to 'elicit a reaction, a *sensation*, from the reader'.⁵⁵ The people, the events, the confessions and the executions must all be sensational. In fact, 'many versions of the *Newgate Calendar* did not feel obliged to confine their accounts to crimes which had any connection with the prison' as long as the stories were interesting enough to be included.⁵⁶

The stories that the authors of the various *Newgate Calendars* chose to include in their collections can be organised into three categories. The first are those stories which tell of "popular" crimes that produced the most reaction from their audience. The most notable "popular" crime was murdering a family member, such as the stories of Catherine Hayes (*NC*, pp. 65-71), Amy Hutchinson (*NC*, p. 133) or Martha Alden (*NC*, pp. 445-447), who were either burnt or hung

⁵³ Worthington, p. 15.

⁵⁴ Grovier, p. 185.

⁵⁵ Christopher Pittard, 'From Sensation to the *Strand*', in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Lee Horsley and Charles J. Rzepka (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 105-116 (p. 107).

⁵⁶ Halliday, p. 255.

for murdering their husbands. Or men like Charles Drew, who murdered his father (*NC*, pp. 102-103), Matthew Henderson, who murdered his mistress (*NC*, pp. 116-118), or Nicol Brown, who murdered his wife (*NC*, pp. 157-158). The second category were those crimes which were particularly unusual: such as John Holmes and Peter Williams, who were 'whipped for stealing dead bodies' (*NC*, pp. 273-274), Francis Smith, who was 'condemned for the murder of a supposed ghost' (*NC*, pp. 399-410) or Elizabeth Fenning who was 'executed for attempting to poison a family' (*NC*, pp. 569-575). Finally, the third category includes accounts of infamous criminals, such as Richard Turpin, Jack Ketch, and, of course, Sheppard, Wild and Aram, which were sensational in the way that they played on the contemporary popularity of those criminals: 'The name of this notorious offender must be familiar to all' (Appendix A.ii, p. 193).

This attempt to create sensation can also be seen in the events which the authors chose to describe in detail, horrifying executions being the most common:

Informed of the dreadful sentence, he composedly laid himself down upon his back on a strong cross, on which, with his arms and legs extended, he was fastened by ropes. The executioner, also a black man, having now a hatchet chopped off his left hand, next took up a heavy iron bar, with which, by repeated blows, he broke his bones to shivers, till the marrow, blood, and splinters flew about the field; but the prisoner never uttered a groan nor a sigh! (*NC*, p. 29).

This rather sickening punishment is but one example of the executions Pelham chose to include within his collection, a choice undoubtedly made in an attempt

to provoke a strong reaction. In addition to his selection of stories, the style in which Pelham wrote the *Calendar* accounts also played a significant part in its sensationalism. I have already mentioned the concise length of the entries and therefore the way in which they were packed full of the most interesting details, but I would also like to mention here the use of particularly exciting and emotive words. In his accounts Pelham, like the other authors of the various *Newgate Calendars*, uses words and phrases such as ‘extraordinary’ (NC, p. 349), ‘disgusting’ (NC, p. 342), ‘shocking crime’ (NC, p. 236), ‘most heart-rending and melancholy’ (NC, p. 319), and ‘horribly atrocious’ (NC, p. 450) to try and evoke the strongest emotional response from the audience that he could. Despite the distinct attempts at sensationalism within the *Newgate Calendar*, it was not, however, its main purpose — at least in the eyes of the author.

Moral Instruction

In the Preface to his *Newgate Calendar* Pelham declares his hope that ‘the work will be found no less interesting than instructive’; ‘combing these two most important qualities’, he states, will ‘secure its success’ (NC, p. vi). From this statement it is clear that his version of the *Newgate Calendar* has two apparent purposes; to provide an interesting yet instructive read. Pelham’s belief that moral instruction was a key purpose of the *Calendar* is supported by modern critics such as Grovier and Heather Worthington. Grovier places the *Newgate Calendars* amongst ‘what became known as “improving literature”’, noting that the works belonged ‘alongside the Bible as a reminder of the consequences of

drifting too far from the teachings of Scripture'.⁵⁷ Worthington further argues that they 'were overtly and heavily moralistic' narratives.⁵⁸

This moral instruction is formed, for the most part, through narrative voice which is interspersed throughout the accounts. To begin the account of David Brown Dignum, for example, Pelham writes, 'the case of this offender may be well looked upon as a warning to many...' (*NC*, p. 268); a rather clear-cut instruction to the reader. Pelham also provided short discourses on his doubts as to how any man could be driven to commit such atrocious crimes, such as in the case of 'Renwick Williams commonly called "the monster"':

The mind is utterly at a loss to conceive any reason which could urge this unnatural brute to the commission of the crimes which upon his trial were distinctly proved against him (*NC*, p. 320).

At the end of many entries, Pelham provided moral commentary by either, in rare cases, showing the confession and repentance of the prisoner — 'he died, professing his charity to all the world, and his hopes of salvation through the merits of his Redeemer' (*NC*, p. 6) — or, in almost all of the cases, by showing the consequences of crime and the success of the law. 'The necessity for punishment as the consequence of crime', Pelham states in his Preface, 'can neither be doubted nor denied':

If then, example be the object of punishment, and peace and good order, nay, the binding together of the community, be its effects, how useful must be a work, whose intention is to hold out that

⁵⁷ Grovier, p. 186.

⁵⁸ Worthington, p. 14.

example which must be presumed to be the foundation of a well-ordered society! (*NC*, p. viii).

It is evident from this paragraph that Pelham believed his work to be of moral benefit to the community by providing examples of the consequences of crime and the necessity of punishment.

Moreover, Pelham's *Calendar* also exemplifies the certainty of those consequences — in essence the efficiency of the penal system — such as in the case of Richard Patch:

The case of this offender is one of those which fully prove, that the most wicked caution, the most deliberately planned scheme, or the most artful preparatory measures to attach suspicion to some other than the real cause, or to make it fall upon the guiltless, will never conceal murder (*NC*, p. 430).

Together, these cautionary words and warnings provide a continuous stream of moral teachings throughout the *Calendar*.

The Injustices of the Law

While it is apparent that entertainment and moral instruction are key purposes of the *Newgate Calendar*, I argue that there is a third purpose to the *Calendar* — whether intentional or not — of providing instances of the injustices of the law. To begin with, the *Calendar* provides somewhat sympathetic accounts of the causes of crime, such as being 'the son of poor parents' (*NC*, p. 394) or because 'of the absence of the effect of example' (*NC*, p. 27). The *Calendar* also includes examples of the unjust trial system through its retelling of cases wherein the jury

acted unfairly. For example, William Duncan was found guilty by the jury, despite ‘witnesses ... be[ing] called, who gave the prisoner an excellent character’ (*NC*, p. 437), or conversely, William Elby, who was convicted after the sole evidence of ‘a woman with whom he cohabited’ (*NC*, p. 10). These legal injustices are further highlighted by several instances of late reprieves, such as in the case of John Smith, who ‘had hung near fifteen minutes, [when] the people present cried out “A reprieve!”’ (*NC*, p. 11). Cases such as Smith’s exemplify the consequences of such a short interval between the conviction and execution of criminals, as it provided little time for a reprieve to be gained. Lastly, the *Calendar* demonstrates injustices of the law in regard to minors. Joseph and Thomas Underwood were twin brothers who were ‘but fourteen years of age’ when they were executed at Newgate ... apparently insensible of their dreadful situation’ (*NC*, p. 325). Cases such as the Underwood’s and other young children exhibit the disregard that authorities — and, in turn, the public — held for any chance of rehabilitation for convicted criminals.

These injustices, as well as the moral and sensational aspects of the *Newgate Calendars*, are essential to a discussion of the Newgate novel, as many of the same themes and styles were used by the Newgate novelists to similar effect. It is from various entries in the *Newgate Calendar* that authors such as Fielding, Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth drew their inspiration for their characters — the crimes of the real persons of Wild, Aram and Sheppard all having been recorded in the *Calendar* — as it was easy for these authors to profit from ‘the astonishing fame that these mythic malefactors continued to enjoy in popular

culture'.⁵⁹ Naturally, these criminal heroes brought with them all the key issues of the *Newgate Calendar*, such as the causes of crime, the injustices of the law, the harsh punishments and the sensational execution scenes.

⁵⁹ Grovier, p. 287.

Part 2: The Newgate Novel in the Eighteenth Century

‘There is no ingredient that so essentially contributes to a virtuous character as a sense of justice.’ — William Godwin¹

While the term Newgate novel is primarily associated with novels written in the 1830s, several texts from the 1700s can be viewed as “Pre-Newgate novels”, as they are similar in the techniques they use and the issues that they deal with. This section will focus on Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* (1722), Henry Fielding’s *Jonathan Wild* (1743), and William Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* (1794). It will also use Defoe’s *The True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild* (1725) as a comparison to Fielding’s *Jonathan Wild* when discussing the *Newgate Calendar*. To compare these novels to the Newgate novels of the 1830s that I will be discussing in Part Three, I will provide several examples of how these authors used the *Newgate Calendar* — or earlier publications of similar material — as inspiration for their characters, and discuss their various purposes as crime narratives.

The Newgate Calendar and Eighteenth-Century Fiction

The *Newgate Calendar* was a popular source of inspiration for criminal biographies well before the pinnacle of Newgate literature in the nineteenth century. All Newgate novelists (for the purpose of this statement, any author

¹ William Godwin, ‘From William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* (1793)’, in *Caleb Williams*, by William Godwin, ed. by Gary Handwerk and A. A. Markley (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000), pp. 483-491 (p. 486).

who uses a criminal as a key character), would have looked to the *Newgate Calendar* — or the earlier Ordinary's accounts — as inspiration for their criminal characters, although the extent of that inspiration varies. There are three ways in which novelists typically used material from the *Calendar*: firstly, by using a real criminal from the *Calendar* and attempting to retell their story faithfully; secondly, by using a real criminal, but highly fictionalising the criminal's story for their own purpose; or thirdly, by using details from the *Calendar* — or other real-life stories — to help create an entirely new fictional character, but one who could have been in the *Calendar* had they been real.

Jonathan Wild

The most significant eighteenth-century texts which feature a criminal from the *Newgate Calendar* are Defoe's and Fielding's representations of the notorious criminal Jonathan Wild (Wild's excerpt from Pelham's *Calendar* can be seen in Appendix A.ii, pp. 193-220), who is also a significant character in William Ainsworth's 1839 novel *Jack Sheppard*. Before I discuss these representations of Wild's life, it is useful and necessary to first know about the real man, and why his life has been so widely re-told. The real Wild abandoned his position as an apprentice shoe-maker when he was a young man, and moved to London where he quickly ran into debt and was imprisoned; the consequence of which was his introduction into the criminal underworld (Appendix A.ii, pp. 193-194). After his release from prison, Wild began his infamous career as an 'intermediary

between the victims and culprits of crime'.² Wild's career had two distinct sides; one in favour of criminals, and one in favour of the law. On the one hand, Wild protected criminals by returning stolen goods to their owners for a reward, rather than risk being caught selling them to a pawn-broker:

He proposed, therefore, that when they made prize of anything, they should deliver it to him, instead of carrying it to the pawnbroker, saying, that he would restore the goods to the owners, by which means greater sums might be raised, while the thieves would remain perfectly secure from detection (Appendix A.ii, p. 195).

While on the other hand, Wild's criminal career as "thief-taker" enabled him to finish a criminal's 'career in the most speedy and efficacious manner, by the gallows' if he no longer 'proved profitable' (Appendix A.ii, p. 193).

This system proved beneficial to Wild for two reasons. First of all, Wild would often receive rewards for returning stolen goods; amusingly 'in 1720 the Privy Council consulted him about ways and means of checking the increase in highway robberies. He immediately advised an increase in the rewards paid'.³ Secondly, Wild could remove members of his gang of thieves who had disobeyed or annoyed him by framing them and turning them in to the law. By closely associating himself with both the lawful and the unlawful, Wild ensured complete control over London's criminal world up until the time of his arrest and consequent execution:

² Halliday, p. 119.

³ David Nokes, 'Introduction', in *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, by Henry Fielding, ed. by David Nokes (Middlesex: Penguin, 1982), pp. 7-24 (p. 10).

It is true, he had an inimitable boldness in his behaviour and by detecting some criminals, he assumed a kind of power to protect others, only the difference lay here, namely that he did the first publicly, and the last privately. So that in a word, he served the public in the first, and abused the public in the second, and was only deceived in this, that he thought his being useful in the first, would protect him in being criminal in the last (*JW (DD)*, p. 268).

This was the case for sixteen years, until Wild — now aged 42 — was eventually betrayed by fellow criminals and arrested for his crimes. After a miserable confinement in Newgate Gaol, Wild was executed at Tyburn on 24 May 1725 in front of a loathing crowd: ‘In all that innumerable crowd, there was not one pitying eye to be seen, nor one compassionate word to be heard’.⁴

While this crowd held ‘universal detestation’ for Wild, they also seemed to hold a collective interest in his life and crimes:

The death of Wild the man was only the beginning of Wild the legend. For several weeks the press was full of elegies, epitaphs, ‘last farewells’, narratives, histories and lives of Wild.⁵

Defoe was the first to profit from the life of this infamous man with his *The True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild*, published only a fortnight after Wild’s execution. Defoe’s account claims, in its subtitle, to ‘not be made up of fiction and fable, but taken from his own mouth, and collected from paper of his own writing’ (*JW (DD)*, p. 221). Furthermore, in the

⁴ Nokes, p. 7.

⁵ Nokes, p. 7.

Preface, Defoe argues that his account is dissimilar to the ‘several absurd and ridiculous accounts which have been published’ about the ‘infamous creature’ Wild (*JW* (DD), p. 225); though how he managed to discover the truth when no one else did is questionable. While Defoe’s account of Wild’s life does not draw on an account from the *Newgate Calendar* specifically (as Defoe’s narrative was written so soon after Wild’s death), his assertions of historical truth do parallel those of the *Calendar* — whose various authors claimed to be relating true histories and facts — and clearly represents the first use of a *Calendar* account: to provide a “historically accurate” narrative on a real person.

Perhaps because the legend of Wild was more firmly set within popular culture and criminal narratives, by the time Fielding wrote his interpretation of Wild’s life, *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, in 1743, his account diverges far more from the truth than Defoe’s earlier account. Jenny Davidson writes that ‘the protagonist of Fielding’s novel is less a historical than an allegorical figure’.⁶ This statement clearly summarises Fielding’s attitude towards his character, as he himself admits that:

... my design is not to enter the lists with that excellent historian [Defoe], who from authentic papers and records, etc., hath already given so satisfactory an account of the life and actions of this great man (*JW*, p. 29).

Choosing instead to focus far more on political satire — which I shall discuss further shortly — than historical truth, Fielding uses ‘such actions which he might

⁶ Jenny Davidson, ‘Jonathan Wild’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Henry Fielding*, ed. by Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 65-79 (p. 66).

have performed, or would, or should have performed, than what he really did' to produce a narrative on greatness (*JW*, p. 29). Clearly, Fielding's purpose was not to provide an extended *Calendar* account as Defoe did, but instead to produce an essentially new story while still benefiting from the name of Jonathan Wild, and the popularity associated with it. Fielding's highly fictionalised interpretation of Wild exemplifies the second key use of a *Calendar* account: a real person as the foundation for a fictional crime narrative. Fielding's interpretation of the truth for his own satirical purposes provides a vital — yet exaggerated — example of the flexibility with which Newgate novelists regarded the truth of history and the lives they were representing.

Moll Flanders and Caleb Williams

The third way in which criminal protagonists relate to the *Newgate Calendar* are those 'fictional characters who could have appeared in such publications'.⁷ It has been suggested that the thief Moll Flanders was based on various real-life criminals, in particular Moll King: other female criminals such as Callico Sarah have also been suggested, but with less conviction.⁸ However, despite no concrete trace of one particular criminal as the basis for Moll, Defoe's interest in Newgate, and interviews with 'real-life' prisoners incarcerated there, allowed

⁷ Gillingham, 'Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* and the Crimes of History', p. 883.

⁸ G. A. Starr, 'Introduction', in *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders*, by Daniel Defoe, ed. by G. A. Starr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. vii-xxii (p. 10).

him to accurately depict ‘his underworld lore’ and ‘portray crime vividly and sympathetically from the criminal’s point of view’.⁹

Similarly, Godwin did not base his characters, Caleb or Falkland, on any particular character from the *Newgate Calendar*, but did claim to be ‘extremely conversant with the “Newgate Calendar”’ while writing his novel (*CW*, p. 449). In particular, the story of Aram — which Edward Bulwer-Lytton would later turn into a novel — and ‘the notion of a person pursued by a past crime’, seemed to resonate with Godwin.¹⁰ Furthermore, Godwin uses specific details from the famous prison escapes of Jack Sheppard in describing Caleb’s own escapes from Newgate Gaol. Defoe’s and Godwin’s uses of real-life prisoners as inspiration for their characters, whether their inspiration came from one or many criminals, demonstrates how Newgate novelists present convincing criminal characters by creating characters who could have come from the *Newgate Calendar*.

The Purposes of a Newgate Novel

An unnamed reviewer of *Caleb Williams* wrote in 1795 that ‘the two great objectives of fictitious narrative are entertainment and instruction’, a statement which appears to be quite true for all Newgate novels.¹¹ As I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, Newgate narratives serve two distinct purposes: to be

⁹ Starr, pp. xiii-xiv.

¹⁰ Maximillian E. Novak, “‘Appearances of Truth’: The Literature of Crime as a Narrative System (1660-1841)”, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 11 (1981), 29-48 (p. 45).

¹¹ ‘From the *Analytical Review* 21 (January 1795): 166-75’, in *Caleb Williams*, by William Godwin, ed. by Gary Handwerk and A. A. Markley (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000), pp. 562- 564 (p. 563).

sensational — and, therefore, entertaining — and to provide social critique, by exemplifying social, legal or political injustices apparent within their society.

Sensation Fiction

Sensationalism or entertainment is a key purpose of Newgate novels. Critics argue that the sensation novel as a genre did not emerge until the 1860s, however, the definition given by critics — in this case Christopher Pittard — of a sensation novel does apply to all Newgate novels and their uses of sensation:

The sensation novel, with its emphasis on female criminality and often with its criminals portrayed sympathetically, caused controversy not only because of a potential glamorizing of crime along the lines of the penny dreadful, but also in terms of its treatment of the middle-class family as the site of destructive mystery.¹²

This description of sensation fiction clearly describes a Newgate novel in many senses; even these Newgate novels written over a century before the sensation novel apparently became a distinguished genre. The female criminal is most clearly represented by Moll Flanders, but also includes later characters such as Egde worth Bess in *Jack Sheppard*. The sympathetic portrayal of criminals, as I will argue, is one of the most critical aspects of a Newgate novel. The penny dreadful was a precursor and smaller form of the *Newgate Calendar*, so it may be seen as an antecedent of the Newgate novel as well. The controversy which surrounded the Newgate novel will be examined in Part Three of this thesis. As for their

¹² Pittard, p. 107.

'treatment of the middle-class family as the site of destructive mystery', Robert's family — with whom Moll spends her teenage years — or Tyrrel and his niece Emily in *Caleb Williams*, exemplify the way in which familial groups are used to create drama. Pittard expands on his definition of a sensation novel further, to state that:

The genre can be defined not only in terms of content but also in terms of reader response. One of the leading characteristics of the sensation novel is the author's intention of eliciting a reaction, a *sensation*, from the reader.¹³

This second part of the definition is most crucial to the Newgate novel, as it is often the author's desire to create such a reaction or sensation from the reader. Sensation is primarily created through four types of events: crime, capture, escape, and death. Crime is, obviously, apparent within all of these novels, as is capture. Escape is most clearly exhibited in *Caleb Williams*, whose flight from Newgate Gaol is a mirroring of Sheppard's final escape from the prison (which I will discuss in detail in Part Three). Death is also used in all three of these texts, although *Jonathan Wild* is the only one which includes an execution. While I have used only minimal details with these examples (instead leaving an in-depth analysis of these techniques to Part Three) it should be clear that together these four aspects would produce sensation in any novel.

¹³ Pittard, p. 107.

Social Injustice

Godwin wrote in his 1832 'Preface' to *Caleb Williams* that it was, essentially, his sole purpose to write an influential and instructive tale:

I said to myself a thousand times, "I will write a tale, that shall constitute an epoch in the mind of the reader, that no one, after he has read it, shall ever be exactly the same man he was before" (CW, p. 447).

Similarly, he wrote in his 1795 'Account of the Novel's Aims' that 'the books must speak for themselves: if they will not obtain credit for the benevolence of their purposes, any professions of mine would be of little avail', thereby arguing that if a book is not able to serve a purpose, then there is no point in having books at all.¹⁴ This purpose, then, is not just to be entertaining, but also to provide social protest. By choosing a criminal for the protagonists of their respective novels these authors were able to protest against the social, legal and political injustices of their societies — while also discoursing on Newgate Gaol and the treatment of criminals — as they were able to examine in-depth the reasons for crime, and whether or not the consequent punishments faced by their protagonists were just. Furthermore, by giving their criminal heroes sympathetic qualities, these author's are more likely to encourage their reader empathise with their purpose and, in doing so, create a successful piece of social problem fiction.

¹⁴ William Godwin, 'Godwin's essay, "Of History and Romance" (1797), from *Political and Philosophical Writings*, vol. 5, ed. Pamela Clemit (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1993)', in *Caleb Williams*, by William Godwin, ed. by Gary Handwerk and A. A. Markley (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000), pp. 453-467 (p. 453).

Godwin's publication of his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* in 1793 'made him one of the most prominent political philosophers in Britain'.¹⁵ While Godwin's essay was published well after *Moll Flanders* and *Jonathan Wild* (and one year before *Caleb Williams*) it provides an appropriate entry point into a discussion of justice, as it brings to light many of the core issues at the heart of political (and in doing so, social and legal) justice. From a theoretical standpoint, Gary Handwerk and A. A. Markley argues that, '*Political Justice* develops an empirical critique of current political systems, analysing the psychological consequences of the imbalances of power and inequities of wealth that characterized every contemporary political order'.¹⁶ So, in essence, the consequences of economic inequality, discussed above, are attributed to politics because of its role in creating and then extending that division.

This relationship between the rich and the poor, and the political and legal power that wealth gives to the upper classes, is an important argument of *Political Justice* which is also used in *Caleb Williams* and other Newgate novels:

... justice is frequently a matter of expensive purchase, and the man with the longest purse is proverbially victorious. A consciousness of these facts must be expected to render the rich little cautious of offence in his dealings with the poor, and to inspire him with a temper overbearing, dictatorial, and tyrannical ... The rich are in all such countries directly or indirectly the legislators of the state; and of

¹⁵ Handwerk and Markley, p. 10.

¹⁶ Handwerk and Markley, p. 21.

consequence are perpetually reducing oppression into a system, and depriving the poor of that commonage of nature as it were, which might otherwise still have remained to them.¹⁷

The idea of justice being purchasable is a significant concept in Newgate novels, and it is often the case that the criminal concerned has suffered, or is suffering from, poverty and, therefore, cannot purchase justice. It is particularly relevant to *Caleb Williams* as Caleb, a poor country lad, is pursued by the rich landowner Falkland (who is the real criminal in this story). It is also a key theme in *Moll Flanders*, as Moll experiences instances of the perversion of justice due to money, both in her favour and against it. This passage, furthermore, supports my discussion earlier that the propertied write the laws over the property-less; as Godwin states that the rich are ‘the legislators of the state’. This idea is vital to remember when we read of the harsh consequences of crimes against property; as Godwin goes on to state, ‘legislation is in almost every country grossly the favourer of the rich against the poor’.¹⁸ In this single passage, Godwin has summarised nicely the social, political and legal issues which are central to the Newgate novel.

A logical place to start an analysis of these ideas in fiction is with Godwin’s own *Caleb Williams*. ‘Having long ruminated upon the principles of Political Justice’, Godwin writes in his 1832 Preface, ‘I persuaded myself that I could offer to the public, in a treatise on this subject, things at once new, true and important’ (CW, p. 445). After the successful reception of *Political Justice*,

¹⁷ Godwin, ‘*Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*’, p. 483.

¹⁸ Godwin, ‘*Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*’, p. 483.

Godwin was encouraged 'to strive to carry his political beliefs to a wider audience of readers'.¹⁹ The basis of Godwin's discussion on political justice in *Caleb Williams* stems from his comment on the class system in England, where one man is given control over another:

The most destructive of all excesses, is that, where one man shall dictate to another, or undertake to compel him to do, or refrain from doing, any thing ... otherwise than with his own consent. Hence it follows that the distribution of wealth in every community, must be left to depend upon the sentiments of the individuals of that community.²⁰

The sentiment clearly introduces the foundation of Godwin's discussions on justice; that is, the class system and distribution of wealth; in particular, the consequences of such economic disparity.

Godwin uses the relationship between the lower-class Caleb and the wealthy Falkland to compare the attitudes of, and attitudes towards, the rich versus the poor. During Caleb's trial, Caleb requests his audience to hear him and to fight against this subversion of justice:

"Fellow-servants! Mr. Falkland is a man of rank and fortune; he is your master. I am a poor country lad, without a friend in the world. That is a ground of a real difference to a certain extent; but it is not a sufficient ground for the subversion of justice" (*CW*, p. 255).

¹⁹ Handwerk and Markley, p. 28.

²⁰ Godwin, '*Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*', p. 497.

This passage clearly exemplifies two issues of injustice: the division between the rich and the poor, and the threat that division poses to justice. From Caleb's statement that the disparity between his poverty and Falkland's wealth is "a ground of real difference", it is clear that this division is common, and to an extent, accepted by the poor. However, it is when that division begins to subvert justice that it can no longer be accepted, for society has caused a great injustice to those in need. Furthermore, Caleb understands the power of money as a shield that rich men can hide behind: 'Six thousand a year shall protect a man from accusation' (CW, p. 378). Not only does Godwin present instances of rich men using their power over the poor, but also of men using such power to escape the justice of the law. Overall, *Caleb Williams* may be viewed, as Halliday argues, as a 'novel of crime and detection and a powerful satire on the oppression of the honest and weak by the vicious and strong'.²¹ Evidently, *Caleb Williams* offers a fictional interpretation of the issues of political justice presented in Godwin's *Enquiry*.

Economic disparity and the exploitation of the poor are also core social issues at the heart of *Moll Flanders*. Defoe uses Moll's childhood innocence to introduce the division between the rich and the poor, as Moll misunderstands what it means to be a gentlewoman:

Now all this while, my good old Nurse, Mrs. *Mayoress*, and all the rest of them did not understand me at all, for they meant one Sort of thing, by the Word Gentlewoman, and I meant quite another; for alas, all I understood by being a Gentlewoman, was to be able to

²¹ Halliday, p. 262.

Work for myself, and get enough to keep me without that terrible Bug-bear *going to Service*, whereas they meant to live Great, Rich, and High, and I know not what (*MF*, p. 13).

This passage clearly depicts the extreme differences between the perception of success — if that is to be a gentlewoman — of the poor and the rich. For the poor, being a successful gentlewoman (at least in the eyes of Moll) means earning enough money to keep herself without having to go into service. Conversely, the rich — who are represented by the mayor's wife and daughters — seem to laugh at her puny ideas of success, and instead view a gentlewoman as someone who is excessively rich, glamorous, and a high-standing member of society. From this point onwards the division between rich and poor is continually emphasised, as Moll is driven to increasingly desperate measures — from marriage to crime — in order to survive.

While Moll's need for money and support is an important theme of the text, it is the reaction of other characters to her money, or lack of it, that I find particularly interesting:

When Mr. *Alderman* saw my Money, *he said*, well Madam, now I am satisfy'd you were wrong'd, and it was for this Reason, that I mov'd you should buy the Spoons ... for if you had not had Money to pay for them, I should have suspected that you did not come into the Shop with an intent to buy, for indeed the sort of People who come upon those Designs that you have been Charg'd with, are seldom troubl'd with much Gold in their Pockets, as I see you are (*MF*, pp. 271-272).

This scene is significant for two reasons; firstly, it shows the differences in the way that Londoners — in Defoe’s opinion — treated the poor over the rich; and secondly, how wealth acted as a shield of morality. Before the scene relayed above, a ‘Fellow’, who had seen Moll entering the shop, seized her violently and made the accusation ‘that [she] came not to buy, but to steal’ (*MF*, p. 269). This man’s aggressive reaction to Moll can be explained by his belief that she was poor, as it is not until they have seen inside her wallet that they agree on her innocence. As Moll states, ‘I ow’d something of his favour to my Money’ (*MF*, p. 272). Moll’s money, then (like Falkland’s), can be viewed as a “shield of morality”; meaning that while she has fine clothes, jewellery, and money in her purse, the public will not consider her a threat to the safety of their property. As Godwin stated in *Political Justice*, ‘robbery and other offences, which the wealthier part of the community have no temptation to commit, are treated as capital crimes’.²² Here Godwin is clearly protesting, once again, not about the division between the rich and the poor — as it is inevitable — but about the consequences of that division on the poor, as the laws against property, which only the poor have the necessity to commit, are punished the most strongly. Ironically in *Moll Flanders* though, Moll, even when she does become rich, is a threat to their property — if only because of her introduction into a criminal life due to poverty.

While Fielding’s *Jonathan Wild* holds a much heavier political purpose, it too is not free from protest against the distribution of wealth and the power of

²² Godwin, ‘*Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*’, p. 484.

money. Fielding, like Defoe and Godwin, emphasises the division between the rich and the poor when he writes with heavy irony:

It is well said of us, the higher order of mortals, that we are born only to devour the fruits of the earth; and it may be as well said of the lower class, that they are born only to produce them for us (*JW*, p. 61).

While this statement is presented from the point of view of the rich, rather than the poor, it does indicate that this division exists, and hints that this division favours the wealthy far more than the poor, who, presumably, are only on this earth to work for the rich. Additionally, Fielding portrays the power of money when he writes that, Wild, after conceiving a new scheme, is unable to 'put it in immediate execution' until he has 'that which is indeed the beginning as well as the end of all human devices: I mean money' (*JW*, p. 80). Fielding presents money as a tool of corruption in the literal sense for criminals, but also, through the use of satire, he implies that money is a tool of corruption for those who hold political power.

Political Injustice

Fielding's chief purpose in writing *Jonathan Wild* was to provide a political satire; a satire heavily targeted at the former Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole. The similarities between Walpole and Wild 'had been identified by Opposition writers' as soon as the latter was hanged; 'Like Wild (the analogy went), Walpole plundered the public; like Wild, his proper fate, if only the public could be

roused, was the gallows'.²³ Fielding's novel features 'the exploits of a monstrous real-life criminal with an immensely satiric style'; a style 'which blurs the distinctions between criminals and heroes'.²⁴ By comparing and blurring these lines, Fielding critiques 'the hypocrisy that lets a society execute a thief for house-breaking while rewarding men in high office for pillaging the national treasury'.²⁵ Alongside the comparisons between Wild and Walpole, Fielding uses the distinction between greatness and goodness to question political justice.

'No two things', Fielding writes of greatness and goodness, 'can possibly be more distinct from each other, for greatness consists in bringing all manner of mischief on mankind, and goodness in removing it from them' (*JW*, p. 40). Fielding describes great men as those with 'power, pride' (*JW*, p. 21), 'undaunted courage', 'ambition' (*JW*, p. 160), 'ostentation, insolence, cruelty, and every kind of villainy' (*JW*, p. 32), and who are 'entirely free from those low vices of modesty and good-nature' (*JW*, p. 215). Wild, in Fielding's opinion, 'was truly great' (*JW*, p. 218), with 'nowhere ... any spark of goodness' (*JW*, p. 41). In his satire Fielding uses such descriptions of greatness, and the evident lack of goodness, to mock his political target. Furthermore, Fielding solidifies his political satire by stating in his Preface that 'Newgate [is] no other than human nature with its mask off ... [and] the splendid palaces of the great are often no other than Newgate with the mask on' (*JW*, p. 30). Fielding does not use his novel simply to protest against the injustices of his society and its legal systems, but

²³ Martin C. Battestin with Ruth R. Battestin, *Henry Fielding: A Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 281.

²⁴ Martin Priestman, *Detective Fiction and Literature: The Figure on the Carpet* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 3.

²⁵ Davidson, p. 69.

instead, by comparing so relentlessly people in power with criminals, he creates a satire which thoroughly condemns corrupt politicians, as much as Newgate itself condemns those criminals incarcerated inside. Just because the crimes of those in Newgate are brought into the public sphere, this does not mean they are more or less criminal than those crimes which are committed behind closed doors: 'A Great Man ought to do his business by others; to employ hands ... to his purposes, and keep himself as much behind the curtain as possible' (*JW*, p. 154).

While Fielding writes a very probing attack on greatness, he does find the need to apologise for his use of the word:

But perhaps some apology may be required of me, for having used the word *Greatness*, to which the world have affixed such honourable ideas, in so disgraceful and contemptuous a light. Now if the fact be, that the greatness which is so commonly worshipped is really of that kind which I have here represented, the fault seems rather to lie in those who have ascribed it to those honours, to which it hath not in reality the least claim (*JW*, p. 31).

This statement from Fielding takes his novel back to a form of social, rather than political, protest. While the politicians are responsible for the corrupt and hypocritical way that they act, it is also society's fault for believing that these men are somehow great, when men like Wild are described as villains. In their introduction to the novel, Handwerk and Markley argue that *Jonathan Wild* is not just an attack on corruption, but also on 'the deeply paradoxical nature of our responses to power', as 'the best way to deceive people is to tell them the

truth, and the best way to be believed is to tell really monstrous lies'.²⁶ Fielding, then, is also emphasising the gullibility of his society and its misguided trust. By providing these instances of the power of money, the corrupt and selfish acts of great men, and the inherent similarities between criminal and political activities, Fielding has created a successful attack on all forms of corruption, hypocrisy, and abuses of power in his society.

Legal Injustice

The legal implications of such corruption are also apparent within *Caleb Williams*, a novel which is concerned not only with the disparities of wealth discussed previously, but also 'with judgment and justice'.²⁷ The law in *Caleb Williams*, John Reed argues, 'is represented as being the creature of hierarchical, largely aristocratic power, and legal institutions as the devices by which tyrannical authority preserves its power'.²⁸ As in *Jonathan Wild*, those who hold political and legal power in *Caleb Williams* are compared to criminals, as Caleb notes: "'We, who are thieves without a licence, are at open war with another set of men who are thieves according to law'" (CW, p. 307). Godwin's novel provides excellent examples of the injustices of the law, as its protagonist, Caleb, is innocent of the crimes with which he is charged. Because of his innocence, Caleb believes that he should have 'a right to expect assistance; but every heart was

²⁶ Handwerk and Markley, p. 24.

²⁷ Tilottama Rajan, 'Judging Justice: Godwin's Critique of Judgement in *Caleb Williams* and Other Novels', *The Eighteenth Century*, 51.3 (2010), 341-362 (p. 345).

²⁸ John R. Reed, 'Laws, the Legal World, and Politics', in *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 155-171 (p. 165).

steeled against me' (CW, p. 268). Caleb quickly realises that innocence matters very little in the fight between the powerful and the powerless, but that money and influence are instead the key to justice. He also quickly learns that the law itself does not hold any particular influence, as 'when two squires lay their heads together, they do not much matter law, you know; or else they twist it to their own ends' (CW, p. 331).

Caleb also notes the unjust nature of the criminal trial — or the 'remorseless fangs of the law' (CW, p. 372) as he terms it — as innocence or guilt seems to play no part in the decision of the judge:

Who ever thinks, when he is apprehended for trial, of his innocence or guilt as being at all material to the issue? Who ever was fool enough to volunteer a trial, where those who are to decide think more of the horror of the thing which he is accused, than whether he were the person that did it; and where the nature of our motives is to be collected from a set of ignorant witnesses, that no wise man would trust for a fair representation of the most indifferent action of his life? (CW, p. 316).

This description of Caleb's experiences with the trial process shows the reader three distinct problems with the criminal trial. First of all, there appears to be little concern on the judge's part with the innocence or guilt of the convicted man or woman. Again, this exemplifies the corrupt power of rich men — as undoubtedly the judge would be a rich man — over the poor man who stands on the pew. Secondly, the idea of the judge caring more about the crime that was committed than the innocence or guilt of the convicted demonstrates how 'it

was of more benefit to his majesty's government' to sacrifice one or a few innocent men, rather than to, 'out of mistaken tenderness', let a criminal go free (CW, p. 340). The third injustice is the use of 'ignorant witnesses'. In respect to *Caleb Williams*, the primary witness is Falkland, whom Caleb describes as 'unprincipled enough to assert what he knew to be false' (CW, p. 300). Again, the law seems to come down to the voice of one man over another, and once again, it is the rich man's voice which is ultimately listened to. The unjust use of witnesses at a criminal trial is also used in *Moll Flanders*:

The witnesses were the two Wenches, a Couple of hard Mouth'd Jades indeed, for tho' the thing was Truth in the main, yet they aggravated it to the utmost extremity (MF, p. 284).

From just this small excerpt regarding the witnesses at Moll's trial, two discriminatory factors come to light. First of all, the witnesses themselves are presented as less-than-admirable characters themselves. As shown in many Newgate novels — in particular those novels featuring Wild — it was not unusual for the witnesses at trials to be criminals themselves. I am not suggesting that these 'Wenches' were criminals, although it is implied that they are not honest women. The second injustice portrayed in this scene is that witnesses were taken at their word, so that the truth could easily be manipulated for someone else's end. This is clearly apparent in this case, as the two wenches seem set on convicting Moll of robbery; though what they will benefit from her arrest we are not told.

Further injustices of the law are seen in *Moll Flanders*, particularly upon Moll's arrest. While the reader knows that Moll had the full intention of stealing the goods, her argument on arrest is justifiable:

But I pleaded that I had stole nothing, they had lost nothing, that the Door was open, and I went in seeing the Goods lye there, and with Design to buy, if seeing no Body in the House, I had taken any of them up in my Hand, it cou'd not be concluded that I intended to steal them, for I never carried them farther then the Door to look on them with better Light (*MF*, p. 285)

She goes on to beg for mercy at her trial, saying that 'I had broken no Doors, had carried nothing off, that no Body had lost any thing' (*MF*, p. 285). Despite her intent being otherwise, Moll does tell the circumstances of this affair truthfully, suggesting that she was not arrested for robbing the goods but for intending to rob the goods. The fact that she is later charged with the crime provides a very clear instance of the subversion of justice, as she is essentially charged with a crime which she had not — yet — committed.

A further injustice presented in *Moll Flanders* is when Moll is convicted of being an "old offender", despite never have been officially charged or put to trial before:

... so ill was I beholding to Fame, and so prevailing was the fatal Report of being an old Offender, tho' in that they did not do me strict Justice, for I was not in the Sense of the Law an old Offender, whatever I was in the Eye of the Judge; for I had never been before them in a judicial way before, so the Judges could not Charge me

with being an old Offender, but the Recorder was pleas'd to represent my Case as he thought fit (*MF*, p. 293).

This passage needs little explanation, as the injustice of her situation is quite clear. She is not an old offender, in the sense that she has never been to trial before; but despite this her infamy as a suspected thief means that she is perceived by the eyes of the law as an old offender; a view that results in her receiving the death sentence.

As Moll is hearing the charge against her, Defoe uses strong emotive language to further suggest the harshness of British law: 'The Judges ... Pronounc'd the Sentence of Death upon me; a Sentence that was to me like Death itself' (*MF*, p. 286). For Moll, the death sentence, in many senses, is more fatal to her than a hanging: 'I had no more Spirit left in me, I had no Tongue to speak or Eyes to look up either to God or Man' (*MF*, p. 286). Similarly, after receiving her Dead Warrant Moll 'swoon'd away twice' and 'spoke not a word' (*MF*, p. 289). These instances of unconsciousness (either of fainting or of her spirit leaving her) exemplify the death sentence as a "near-death" experience; both in the respect that their time of death is near, but also how the shock of receiving such a sentence can bring someone into the unconscious realm, and therefore, near death. This association of the law and sentencing with death in both its literal and implied forms further emphasises the harshness of the law and the resulting injustices of callous sentencing.

Representations of Newgate Gaol

This harshness is also implied through representations of Newgate Gaol: ‘the grimy axle around which London slowly twisted’.²⁹ Defoe, Fielding and Godwin all represent Newgate and the lives of the criminals incarcerated there with varying degrees of truth and sensationalism; though with the horrors that did occur in that place false sensationalism is hardly needed.

Generally these authors depict Newgate as a horrible place, full of misery; as ‘an Emblem of Hell itself’ (*MF*, p. 274). During his time in Newgate Gaol, Caleb exclaims ‘that misery, more pure than that which I now endured, had never fallen to the lot of a human being’ (*CW*, p. 267), while Moll describes the ‘horrors of that dismal Place’ (*MF*, p. 273). More specifically, the physical aspects of Newgate are described, such as Caleb’s description of ‘the massy doors, the resounding locks, the gloomy passages, the grated windows’, and the ‘squalidness and filth’ (*CW*, p. 262). The people — both prisoners and staff — are also featured within these novels: Moll describes the ‘*Newgate-Bird*’ as ‘Wicked’ and ‘Outragious’ (*MF*, p. 279), and has a poor opinion of the Ordinary whom she finds, after preaching for confession that morning, ‘drunk with Brandy and Spirits by Noon’, which makes her begin ‘to Nauseate the Man more’ (*MF*, pp. 277-278). Caleb seems to hold an even stronger view of the gaolers at Newgate, stating that:

They felt no man’s sorrow; they were of all men least capable of any sort of feeling. They had a barbarous and sullen pleasure in issuing

²⁹ Grovier, p. xv.

their detested mandates, and observing the mournful reluctance with which they were obeyed (*CW*, p. 265).

Among these orders were the issuing and putting on of fetters — the pain of which is intolerable for Caleb³⁰ — and, most significantly for these texts, the collecting of monetary charges and bribes.

Once again, the importance of money plays a significant role in the wellbeing of an individual. In *Jonathan Wild*, Friendly ‘advanced every shilling he had in his pocket, ‘to procure a room in the press-yard for his friend’ after the turnkey threatened to confine Heartfree in the common wards (*JW*, p. 157). Similarly, Moll, ‘obtain’d the Favour by the help of Money, nothing being to be done in that Place without it’ in order to sleep in a private ward, rather than the ‘Condemn’d Hole’ (*MF*, p. 290). In *Caleb Williams* too, money is used to bribe the turnkey for assistance, this time for medical assistance: ‘I slipped a shilling into his hand, stating at the same time, “My good fellow, for God’s sake, go to the surgeon; I am sure you do not wish me to perish for want of assistance”’ (*CW*, p. 285). The immense desire for self-gain exhibited by the Newgate staff is symptomatic of what Fielding describes as the ‘great roguery [that] was daily committed within the walls of Newgate’ (*JW*, p. 204). While these are but a few examples of these authors’ representations of Newgate Gaol, they do provide an insight into the overly negative opinion that these authors had about the prison.

³⁰ Quentin Bailey, ‘Extraordinary and Dangerous Powers: Prisons, Police, and Literature in Godwin’s *Caleb Williams*’, *Eighteenth Century Fiction*, 22.3 (2010), 525-548 (p. 534).

Endings of a Newgate Novel

How the criminal leaves Newgate Gaol and, often as a result, how the narrative ends, is another key way in which a Newgate novelist emphasises the injustices of the law and the unfair treatment of criminals. There are four key ways for a Newgate novel to end: execution, transportation, repentance, or with the restoration of justice. The use of execution as the ending of a Newgate narrative is popular for several reasons; the most obvious is that, as many of the novels were based on true stories in which the men were hanged for their crimes, it was logical that their fictional counterparts would also die at the gallows. Furthermore, a death at the gallows is symbolic of two vital ideas: a deserved death at the hands of the law or a noble death with the support of the populace lying with criminal rather than the law. Exhibiting the power of the law is evident throughout the *Newgate Calendar* with its emphasis on the 'extreme penalty of the law' (NC, p. 311) and the 'suffer[ing]' (NC, p. 419) of the convicted criminals. This symbolic use of the gallows is also used in Defoe's *Jonathan Wild*, as he is at last 'brought to justice' and 'finished at the gallows' (JW (DD), p. 257). This also exhibited later in *Oliver Twist*, and although Sikes does not die on the gallows, his unintended self-hanging in front of the large crowd of Londoners is indicative of a formal execution. Several Newgate novelists, such as Fielding and Ainsworth, however, use the gallows as the final stage on which their protagonist's heroic personality can shine; a brave death being regarded as a culmination of their inherent innocence and injustice at the hands of the law. The execution of Wild in Fielding's novel is presented as a great and honourable end: 'Thus fell Jonathan Wild the Great, by a death as glorious as his life had been' (JW, p. 214).

While Fielding does depict Wild's hanging as a 'glorious' affair, his overtones of satire throughout his novel warrant suspicion over his portrayal of an execution as a 'great' death, and so I shall leave it to Ainsworth and Sheppard to provide a more adequate example.

The second and third most common endings of a Newgate narrative, transportation or repentance, are both clearly exhibited in the final lines of *Moll Flanders*:

... we are now grown Old: I am come back to England ... having served much more than the limited Terms of my Transportation ... he is come over to England also, where we resolve to spend the Remainder of our Years in sincere Penitence, for the wicked Lives we have lived (*MF*, pp. 342-343).

The transportation system, which was used from the late-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, offered judges an alternative to the death penalty by exiling the criminal out of England for either a term — usually seven or fourteen years — or for life. While transportation was a grim prospect for many men and women, it did offer them 'some chance, however illusory, of making a new life'.³¹ While some entries in the *Newgate Calendar* end with the sentence of transportation, novelists such as Defoe used this opportunity of a fresh start to exemplify how rehabilitation and repentance were possible.

The final ending used by Newgate novelists is the restoration of justice — which serves to show the injustices of the law, rather than the power of the law — which can be seen in Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, and later in Bulwer-Lytton's

³¹ Picard, p. 278.

Paul Clifford. *Caleb Williams* ends with the restoration of justice through Falkland's confessional speech:

"Williams," said he, "you have conquered! ... I confess that it is to my fault and not yours, that it is to the excess of jealousy ... that I owe my ruin. ... I stand now completely detected. My name will be consecrated to infamy, while your heroism, your patience, and your virtues will be for ever admired. ... And now, — turning to the magistrate — and now, do with me as you please. I am prepared to suffer all the vengeance of the law" (CW, pp. 431-432).

In this passage, the reader hears the murderer Falkland's admission of the cruel deeds he has done; not necessarily the murder of Tyrrel, but rather his abuse of money and power in his attempt to destroy Caleb (who knew of the murder). This restoration of justice is important as, by "saving the day", the consequences of social injustice and the support that innocent characters such as Caleb — and Clifford — ultimately deserve are emphasised.

Sympathy for the Criminal

These authors' use of a criminal, or convicted criminal, as the protagonist of their novels, combined with the various examples of the unjust nature of society, politics and the law, created immense sympathy for the criminal. G. A. Starr raises a valid point in his introduction to *Moll Flanders*, that 'we are invited from the Preface onwards to abjure the crime but not the criminal'.³² While Starr targeted this statement at *Moll Flanders* in particular, I believe it is also quite

³² Starr, p. 20.

applicable to *Caleb Williams*, as well as later Newgate novels. *Jonathan Wild* produces very little sympathy for the criminal in the plot itself, but it does create sympathy by comparing Wild to Walpole — and, by extension, criminals to politicians — to demonstrate that neither is better than the other, and yet society only condones one. Rather than targeting crime as a whole, these Newgate novels ask the reader to accept that criminals might be committing such crimes because of the various injustices done to them. Gary Hentzi sums up this idea nicely when he states that criminal protagonists ‘are placed in situations that make such transgressions inevitable, with the result that their various impulses toward survival and salvation are brought sharply into conflict with one another’.³³ Similarly, Starr states that Moll is ‘the product of her environment — many of her actions as orphan, widow, and criminal are traced back to the pressures of society on those who are its victims’.³⁴

Moll’s life transgresses through varying levels of societal victimisation, from the orphan being threatened into service, to the poor widow, who struggles to re-marry (though she manages it many times), until she is too old to rely on the aid of men, and so turns to crime in order to survive. The creation of sympathy here is clear, as it is only after Moll has failed at earning a living by honest means that she slowly descends into a criminal life. Furthermore, the fact that she only enters into crime (though she stays in it for less honest reasons) to survive — ‘the prospect of my own Starving, which grew every Day more frightful to me, harden’d my Heart by degrees’ (*MF*, p. 193) — evokes far more sympathy

³³ Gary Hentzi, ‘Holes in the Heart: Moll Flanders, Roxana, and “Agreeable Crime”’, *Boundary 2*, 18.1 (1991), 174-200 (p. 176).

³⁴ Starr, p. viii.

in the reader than the actions of a criminal who, say, committed a crime purely for the glory or enjoyment of it.

Caleb Williams produces sympathy for the criminal by comparing the criminal to the powerful. In Godwin's novel the "criminal" is presented as a consequence of corrupt power and, ultimately, less of a threat to society than the rich and powerful; Caleb, who is accused of being the criminal in this story, is innocent, while the rich landowner, Falkland, is the real criminal. Of course, Caleb's innocence in itself is a strong contributor to the sympathy that a reader feels for him. Godwin argues that it is the lack of justice that Caleb receives which damages his virtuous character, but which also, ultimately, allows the reader to sympathise with him: 'there is no ingredient that so essentially contributes to a virtuous character as a sense of justice'.³⁵ Furthermore, the awful treatment which Caleb receives — from Falkland and Jones, and while in Newgate Gaol — sets in stone the compassion we hold for Caleb.

As I have suggested throughout this and the previous sections, there are several key aspects to a Newgate novel. First of all, the protagonist of the novel either comes from, or could have come from, the *Newgate Calendar*. Secondly, the narrative provides instances of social, political and legal injustices. Thirdly, the author sets some scenes in Newgate Gaol, and in doing so, analyses the conditions of the prison, and the treatment of the criminals incarcerated there. Fourthly, the novel discusses the reasons that the criminal protagonist entered into a life of crime. And fifthly, drawing on points two, three and four, the author produces sympathy for the criminal, thereby protesting against injustice and the

³⁵ Godwin, 'Enquiry Concerning Political Justice', p. 486.

treatment of convicted criminals. All these aspects, I argue, are present within these novels, and consequently I believe they deserve to be termed Newgate novels. While the designation of these eighteenth-century texts as Newgate novels is a relatively original idea, some critics have supported the designation of *Caleb Williams* as a Newgate novel; at the least, they have appreciated the influence of Godwin's novel on later Newgate texts. Louis James, for example, looks at *Caleb Williams* as 'a precursor to the form' of the Newgate novel.³⁶ Similarly, Gillingham describes *Caleb Williams* a 'proto-Newgate novel'.³⁷ While I agree that *Caleb Williams* — as well as *Moll Flanders* and *Jonathan Wild* — did influence later Newgate literature through their use of the elements discussed above, I believe that these novels did not just inspire Newgate literature, but instead began it. As I will show in Part Three, there are in essence very few differences between these Newgate novels of the eighteenth century, and those novels written in the 1830s; it is fair then, that *Moll Flanders*, *Jonathan Wild* and *Caleb Williams* should be termed Newgate novels in their own right.

³⁶ James, p. 62.

³⁷ Gillingham, 'The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook', p. 96.

Part 3: The Newgate Novel in the 1830s

'Hanging is a bad fate, starving is worse...' — Edward Bulwer-Lytton¹

The 1830s tends to be a decade ignored by critics of nineteenth-century literature as, according to Gillingham, apart from the works of Dickens and Thackeray there seemed to be no major developments in the novel during this period.² Nevertheless, it is the decade in which criminal literature reached its peak in the form of the Newgate novel. While Dickens and Thackeray did play some part in the Newgate school — Thackeray did write his novel *Catherine* as an anti-Newgate novel, or attack on Newgate literature, and I will argue in Part Four that *Oliver Twist* can be considered a Newgate novel — it is really the more minor authors, Edward Bulwer-Lytton and William Ainsworth, who developed the Newgate novel as an independent and significant genre.

While I believe that the eighteenth-century texts I discussed previously may be considered Newgate novels, 'most critics point to Bulwer-Lytton's 1830 *Paul Clifford* as the first novel of the Newgate school'.³ F. S. Schwarzbach describes *Paul Clifford* as a 'how-to manual for the would-be Newgate author'.⁴ Following the success of *Paul Clifford*, Bulwer-Lytton wrote *Eugene Aram*, a fictional interpretation of a real-life eighteenth-century criminal. This trend was then picked up by Ainsworth with his novel, *Jack Sheppard*, which again focused

¹ *PC*, p. 67.

² Gillingham, 'Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* and the Crimes of History', p. 879.

³ Gillingham, 'The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook', p. 95.

⁴ Schwarzbach, p. 230.

on the exploits of a famous criminal.⁵ Other Newgate novels were of course written — such as Ainsworth’s *Rookwood* or Thomas Gaspey’s *Richmond* — though these novels were not as well received, and so contributed less to the development of the Newgate novel as a genre. *Paul Clifford*, *Eugene Aram* and *Jack Sheppard*, then, contain between them the primary features of the Newgate novel and will consequently form the core examples of my discussion. Firstly, I will discuss each author’s use of the *Newgate Calendar*, before discoursing on the three key purposes of their work; sensation, sympathy and protest.

The Newgate Calendar and the 1830s

As already established, the *Newgate Calendar* was a key piece of literature that influenced all novelists interested in Newgate Gaol or criminals. The term Newgate novel tends to be applied to those ‘novels published in the 1830s and ’40s that featured characters drawn directly from publications of criminal biography such as *The Newgate Calendar*, or that introduced fictional characters who could have appeared in such publications’.⁶ The characters of Aram and Sheppard stem directly from the *Calendar*, while Clifford falls under the criteria of a criminal who could have belonged in the *Calendar*.

Paul Clifford

Despite the fictional creation of Clifford, some aspects of the text may be identified within the *Calendar*; the greatest link is between Clifford and the

⁵ Gillingham, ‘The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook’, p. 95.

⁶ Gillingham, ‘Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* and the Crimes of History’, p. 883.

highwayman Richard (Dick) Turpin (*NC*, pp. 89-96). Bulwer-Lytton, it is argued, used the *Calendars* extensively 'for the general nature of Clifford's career as a highwayman' and it appears that, although Clifford's life does not correspond directly with one specific Newgate character, it was heavily influenced by Turpin's story.⁷ Turpin had a cave, though Clifford had a better one; Turpin is described as possessing 'remarkable gallantry and courage' (*NC*, p. 89), while Clifford too is 'associated with anecdotes of courage, courtesy, good humour, or forbearance' (*PC*, p. 271). The most significant relationship between Clifford and Turpin, however, exists in Clifford's reading of the *Calendar* as a child: 'Paul ... sat on a form at the opposite corner of the hearth, diligently employed in reading the life and adventures of the celebrated Richard Turpin' (*PC*, p. 11). Clifford too, it seems, used the *Calendar* as inspiration for his later acts as a criminal.

Furthermore, the *Newgate Calendar* is implied within *Paul Clifford* in the reaction to the arrest and trial of Clifford (alias Lovett):

The newspapers were not slow in recording the singular capture of the notorious Lovett. The boldness with which he had planned and executed the rescue of his comrades, joined to the suspense in which his wound for some time kept the public, as to his escape from one death by the postern gate of another, caused a very considerable ferment and excitation in the popular mind; and, to feed the impulse, the journalists were little slothful in retailing every anecdote true or false, which they could collect, touching the past adventures of the daring highwayman (*PC*, p. 429).

⁷ Hollingsworth, p. 68.

This passage shows the immense popularity and excitement that criminals produced in the public sphere and consequently, why so many publications were produced about them. Bulwer-Lytton is suggesting here that the sensational life, arrest and trial of Clifford is not only what made Clifford a popular figure but, also, what may have resulted in his inclusion in the *Calendar*.

Eugene Aram

Bulwer-Lytton 'must have read about Aram when he went through the Newgate Calendars in preparation for *Paul Clifford*'.⁸ Aram's case (see Appendix A.iii, pp. 221-243) is considered by the authors of the *Newgate Calendars* to be 'the most remarkable trial in our whole Calendar': 'The offender was a man of extraordinary endowments and of high education, and therefore little to be suspected of committing so foul a crime as that proved against him' (Appendix A.iii, p. 221). Aram's life as a remarkable scholar led many people to believe in his innocence; as the *Calendar* states, 'much has been written upon the subject of his murder, and attempts have been made, even of late years, to show the innocence of Aram' (Appendix A.iii, p. 221). Bulwer-Lytton's novel was one such attempt.

In the original edition of *Eugene Aram*, Aram was said to strike Daniel Clarke, but was not responsible for the blow which killed him. This interpretation is taken by the *Calendar* which states, 'Houseman (by the light of the moon) saw Aram strike Clarke several times' (Appendix A.iii, p. 227). In this respect Aram was seen as guilty of manslaughter, but not murder. However, this was not clear

⁸ Hollingsworth, p. 83.

enough for Bulwer-Lytton, who believed that Aram was entirely innocent. Therefore, in his 1849 edition of the novel, Bulwer-Lytton changed the event slightly to highlight Aram's innocence:

In this edition I have made one alteration somewhat more important than mere verbal correction. On going, with mature judgement, over all the evidences on which Aram was condemned, I have convinced myself that though an accomplice in the robbery of Clarke, he was free from both pre-meditated design and the actual deed of murder (EA, p. xvii).

Bulwer-Lytton's altered perspective on the case, as expressed here in the Preface, is shown in the text through Aram's confessional letter to Walter Lester, when he writes, 'I did not strike the blow, I never designed a murder. Crime enough in a robber's deed!' (EA, p. 408). This alteration shows the reader two things; first of all it highlights, and perhaps exaggerates, Aram's innocence and consequent mistreatment; and secondly, it shows the flexibility that authors like Bulwer-Lytton demonstrated when re-writing entries from the *Newgate Calendar*.

In the Preface to his original 1831 edition of *Eugene Aram*, Bulwer-Lytton admits to using Aram's entry in the *Calendar* only as a foundation for his narrative: 'With the facts on which the tale of "Eugene Aram" is founded, I have exercised the common and fair license of writers of fiction' (EA, p. vii). Such changes included, to provide one example, the creation of the Lester family. Aram falls in love and is eventually engaged to Madeline, the daughter of Mr. Lester. His relationship with Madeline is created in order to show a kind-hearted

and loving side to Aram, who is otherwise introverted. Moreover, Madeline's cousin Walter, the son of Clarke, is a fictional creation of Bulwer-Lytton's, used both drive to the plot forward and to generate a more sensational narrative. It is important to remember that because of the popularity of the *Newgate Calendar* and criminals such as Aram, Newgate novelists were obligated to add fictional aspects to their novels in order to create any sort of suspense. Lastly, Mr. Lester is used to represent those people who believed in Aram's innocence, as he continually argues against the guilt of Aram: "I do not accuse thee, Eugene, my son, my son! I feel, I know thou art innocent of this monstrous crime; some horrid delusion darkens that poor boy's sight" (EA, p. 346). While Bulwer-Lytton did base his novel on the entry on Aram in the *Newgate Calendar*, it is clear from these examples that he twists the truth in order to present a more sympathetic criminal and, consequently, a character whose innocence is less likely to be questioned.

Jack Sheppard

Ainsworth too wrote a sensationalised version of a *Calendar* entry, that of the famous prison-breaker, Sheppard (see Appendix A.i, pp. 167-192, for Sheppard's *Calendar* entry). Ainsworth also drew on *Calendar* narratives about Sheppard's associate Joseph 'Blueskin' Blake (NC, pp. 35-37), and the ever-popular Wild — who yet again features in a Newgate novel. The real Sheppard was an 'immediate sensation in the press' following his final capture, trial, and execution; 'Narratives of Sheppard's exploits in life were extraordinarily popular

at the time of his death, and remained in popular consciousness long after'.⁹ His entry in the *Newgate Calendar* begins, 'The name of Jack Sheppard is one which needs no introduction. His exploits are so notorious, that nothing more is necessary than to recount them' (Appendix A.i, p. 167), which demonstrates the popularity of Sheppard's story at this time. Sheppard's popularity is primarily due to his miraculous escapes from Newgate Gaol — among other prisons — and it is this fact which provides the most notable point of comparison between the *Newgate Calendar* and Ainsworth's novel.

Sheppard's famous last escape — which was depicted in Godwin's earlier Newgate novel, *Caleb Williams* — was not only famous at the time, but has also remained popular throughout the centuries; many of our now stereotypical tropes of a prison escape have stemmed from Sheppard. While the details of his exploits are too extensive to cover here, what is important to note is that Ainsworth's description of his last escape was accurate enough to be reiterated by Pelham in his entry on Jack Sheppard:

Sheppard now immediately proceeded to the completion of the great work of his life, his second escape from Newgate; in describing which we shall extract from Mr. Ainsworth's work of "Jack Sheppard," in which that gentleman has given a lasting fame to our hero, and has founded a most interesting romance on the real circumstances of this daring and extraordinary offender (Appendix A.i, p. 174).

⁹ Matthew Buckley, 'Sensations of Celebrity: *Jack Sheppard* and Mass Audience', *Victorian Studies*, 44.3 (2002), 423-464 (p. 430).

The following six pages of Pelham's *Calendar* are devoted to recounting Ainsworth's description of Sheppard's escapes. The relationship between the Newgate novel and the *Newgate Calendar* can clearly be seen here. It can be assumed that Ainsworth's account of Sheppard's escapes originated in either an earlier edition of the *Newgate Calendar* or from other material of a similar sort, such as newspapers clippings or broadsheets. The use of Ainsworth's material, in forming part of Pelham's *Calendar*, demonstrates how the cycle of information continues, and how narratives about famous criminals were shared and recycled throughout all forms of Newgate literature. Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth used famous criminals from the *Calendar* for two reasons, both of which were the result of the popularity and widespread knowledge of these criminals' narratives. Firstly, the popularity of the criminal acted as a springboard for the novel's own popularity. Secondly, the sympathy already held for such criminals as Sheppard or Aram resulted in a heightened sympathy for the fictional representations of those men, making it easier for Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth to write protest novels.

Author's Purpose: Sensation

Similar to the eighteenth-century Newgate novels, the Newgate novels of the 1830s had two distinct purposes; as sensation fiction and as social problem novels. As outlined in Part Two, Pittard describes the sensation novel thus:

The sensation novel, with its emphasis on female criminality and often with its criminals portrayed sympathetically, caused controversy not only because of a potential glamorizing of crime ...

but also in terms of its treatment of the middle-class family as the site of destructive mystery. ... The genre can be defined not only in terms of content but also in terms of reader response. One of the leading characteristics of the sensation novel is the author's intention of eliciting a reaction, a *sensation*, from the reader.¹⁰

Though the 1830s seems to be dominated by male criminals, Egde worth Bess or Mrs Sheppard in *Jack Sheppard* do exemplify the use of female criminals to produce sensation. The sympathetic portrayal of criminals, as I have argued, is a crucial aspect of any Newgate novel and needs no more explaining here. As for their 'treatment of the middle-class family as the site of destructive mystery', the case of Aram and the Lester family — with the missing father, a few love triangles, a skeleton and an accusation of murder — provides a very clear example of the relationship between family, mystery and consequent sensation. The relationship between Clifford and Lucy too, or Sheppard and his mother, is indicative of the sensational use of familial relationships within these narratives.

Sensation is partly created by Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth through the use of comedy. Clifford, for example, 'liked a joke even better than a purse' (*PC*, p. 168). While Sheppard uses sarcasm to woo other characters: "'Surely you haven't stolen it?' / 'Stolen's an awkward word. But, as you perceive, I brought it away with me'" (*JS*, p. 137). However, sensation is primarily created through thrilling events and, consequently, by producing a reaction in the reader. As earlier stated, these events can be grouped into four categories: scenes of crime, capture, escape, and death.

¹⁰ Pittard, p. 107.

Crime

Scenes of crime are, obviously, a significant part of any Newgate novel, and as they often contain tension, threat, fear and extreme actions, they are sure to elicit a response from the reader. The various instances of highway robbery in *Paul Clifford*, for example, use the tension and suspense of the roadside hedge and the fear created by the highwayman's 'immense pistol' (*PC*, p. 360) to create sensational scenes within the text. *Eugene Aram*, likewise, includes scenes of highway robbery. In a critical scene at the end of Book Two, Lester's carriage is attacked by highwaymen:

Three men started from the hedge with a simultaneous shout. Walter fired, but without effect; ere he could lay hand on the second pistol his bridle was seized, and a violent blow from a long double-handed bludgeon brought him to the ground (*EA*, p. 174).

As someone who had read *Paul Clifford* previously to *Eugene Aram*, the description of a hedge down the right hand side of the road instantly made me suspicious of a highway robbery occurring and, in a sense, the hedge became a symbolic foreshadowing of such a crime. The use of pistols and other violent weapons adds to the sensational nature of such a scene by creating fear for both the characters, and the reader. By placing this passage at the very end of Book Two, Bulwer-Lytton has added to the suspense of his narrative, as Lester is left unconscious and the reader is not re-introduced to his situation for some time.

Eugene Aram elicits a further reaction from his reader by including more violent crimes; the most sensational is the murder of Clarke and the discovery of

his body fourteen years later. Before the discovery of Clarke's body in the cave, however, is the unearthing of the unknown skeleton:

A deep chest, that had been violently forced, stood before them; its contents had been dragged to day, and now lay on the sward — a bleached and mouldering skeleton! Several of the bones were loose, and detached from the body. A general hubbub of voices from the spectators, — inquiry, guess, fear, wonder, — rang confusedly around (*EA*, p. 331).

The discovery of this skeleton is the catalyst for a series of sensational events surrounding the discovery of Clarke's body and the accusation against Aram. It could be considered the most surprising event in the narrative, as the existence of a skeleton is not heavily foreshadowed. However, it must be taken into consideration that most contemporary readers of *Eugene Aram* would have known about the existence of such a skeleton — it was not a fictional creation of Bulwer-Lytton's but instead came directly from the *Newgate Calendar* (Appendix A.iii, p. 228) — and thus the sensational effects of such a scene would have been limited.

Jack Sheppard too, features scenes of robbery and dead bodies, but it takes sensational crime to a whole new level, with graphic scenes of murder. The dubious honour of the most graphic scene goes to the murder of Sir Rowland:

As the signal was given, the Jew ... darted swiftly and silently behind Sir Rowland, and flung a cloth over his head; while Jonathan, rushing upon him in front, struck him several quick and violent blows in the face with the bludgeon ...

The struggles of the wounded man were desperate — so desperate, that in his agony he upset the table, and, in the confusion, tore off the cloth, and disclosed a face so horribly mutilated, and streaming with blood. So appalling was the sight, that even the murderers — familiar as they were with scenes of slaughter — looked aghast at it (JS, pp. 381-382).

Unfortunately, this horrific scene continues for another full page before Sir Rowland finally plummets to his death in Wild's private death pit. While this passage may seem a little excessive, it is a good example of the use of sensation in Newgate novels. A murder scene such as this one creates sensational crime by exaggerating the brutality and animalistic behaviour of the murderers. Sir Rowland's murder, as Ainsworth describes it, is so horrific that the murderers themselves are shocked at the sight of it; clearly Ainsworth intended to present a crime that was out of the ordinary and therefore more sensational than an everyday robbery. In a novel full of crime it can often be difficult to produce an intense reaction from a reader, as they are well-prepared for the scenes and events that are likely to unfold — especially in narratives drawn directly from the *Newgate Calendar* — so the scenes must be excessive in their details if they are to shock the reader.

Capture

Scenes of capture are the next sensational moment in a criminal's life, included to entertain the reader. The capture of a criminal is featured in all three of these texts, but as they work in similar ways, I will concentrate only on examples from

Paul Clifford. The first attempted arrest of Clifford consists of a struggle between himself, his companions, and the authorities: 'Clifford sprang after Tomlinson through the aperture, and found himself — in the presence of four officers, conducted by the shrewd Mac Grawler' (*PC*, p. 390). After a brawl, in which his comrade Augustus is felled by 'a blow from a bludgeon' (*PC*, p. 390), Clifford manages to escape. While this attempted capture is no longer than one page, it contains within it all the elements required to create sensation. There is tension, in the form of the authorities waiting outside the cave; there is violence in the brawl; and most importantly, this scene is intended to create feelings of excitement, fear, sympathy, and joy within the reader.

Furthermore, in the passage recited on earlier, Clifford's arrest is portrayed through a sensational lens with the narrator guiding the reader's feelings. By using key words, such as 'boldness', 'suspense', 'ferment', 'excitation' or the adjective 'daring' to describe Clifford, this passage is characterised as sensational. The narrator is skilfully describing the celebrity status of Clifford to persuade his audience that they too should sympathise with Clifford, consider his deeds heroic, and ultimately *feel* something from his situation.

Escape

There is a wealth of escape scenes to draw on from these novels; so many that such a topic could fill a whole chapter on their own. Therefore, I will have to pass over Clifford and Tomlinson's miraculous escape from Bridewell Prison in Chapter Nine of *Paul Clifford*, and move straight on to the most significant and sensational escape narrative: *Jack Sheppard*.

As I stated earlier, Ainsworth's description of Sheppard's fourth and most famous prison escape — his second one from Newgate Gaol — was so detailed and accurate that it was used by Pelham in his *Newgate Calendar* (and is included in Appendix A.i, pp. 174-186); I suggest reading this excerpt before you continue to read this section.

Sheppard's last escape from Newgate Gaol — which he introduces as “an achievement, compared with which all I have done yet shall be as nothing!” (*JS*, p. 441) — is sensational in many aspects, perhaps most of all because of the immense popularity that resulted from the real Sheppard's daring adventures. Grovier effectively describes the resulting phenomenon:

On 14 October 1724, Jack Sheppard escaped from Newgate Gaol for the second time. It was his fourth prison break in seven months and as he let go of the knotted bed-sheet down which he had shinned from the Upper Leads of the towering structure, and slipped on to the roof of William Bird's adjoining house, he launched Newgate into a new era of cultural meaning. For centuries, The Gaol had slowly migrated from the margins of society on which it had been erected, to something more central, more culturally archetypal. As Sheppard disappeared down Holborn Bridge towards Leicester Fields, skulking in the shadows and clasping to his thighs the twisted fetters that were still attached to his aching legs, the prison was preparing to

emerge as a mythic theatre at the epicentre of English consciousness
 — an existential stage without precedence in London's long history.¹¹

Grovier's idea of a 'mythic theatre' adequately explains the literary phenomenon that resulted from Sheppard's escape, from the pamphlets, to the *Newgate Calendar*, to Ainsworth's novel. Likewise, her idea of Newgate being shifted from the edges of society, to something more culturally central, also emphasises the beginning of Newgate literature as occurring in the early eighteenth century — Sheppard's escape occurring only two years after *Moll Flanders* was published. This literary phenomenon and the public's fascination with Sheppard adds to the sensational nature of Ainsworth's novel, as his novel is fed by this popularity and tells the public the stories that it most loves.

Nevertheless, while Ainsworth's novel may rely on the established celebrity status of Sheppard to create sensation, many additional techniques are used within the description of Sheppard's escape for the same purpose. The reader is encouraged to think that Sheppard's escape is exceptional. He used 'infinite labour' (*JS*, p. 442), 'unremitting exertion' (*JS*, p. 443), and 'firm determination' (*JS*, p. 454) to pass 'impossible' (*JS*, p. 453) and 'insurmountable obstacles' (*JS*, p. 450); the narrator tells the reader that Sheppard's task was so difficult that it 'would have deterred any spirit less daring than Sheppard's' (*JS*, p. 444). Depictions of tension and fear, too, are used to further sensationalise Sheppard's exploits. On several occasions Sheppard fears that 'he heard the lock tried' (*JS*, p. 443), or that the noise he was compelled to make 'must be heard by the prisoners' (*JS*, p. 447), or that 'the turnkeys had discovered his flight and were in

¹¹ Grovier, p. 117.

pursuit of him' (*JS*, p. 450). The tension created by these instances, and the fear that we hold for Sheppard in case he may be caught, increases the tension of the scene by drawing the reader more deeply into the story and making them feel fear as Sheppard does. Furthermore, while the reader feels a similar fear as Sheppard, we also join him in his exultation. When Sheppard is 'animated by this trifling success' (*JS*, p. 442), filled with 'unspeakable joy' (*JS*, p. 447), or 'overjoyed beyond measure' (*JS*, p. 451), the reader too, as we sympathise with him, feels the same feelings. These uses of emotive language clearly elicit a response from the reader and, consequently, they too add to the sensational nature of the narrative.

Death

If sensationalism is defined by the responsive emotions of the reader, then the death of a protagonist must be the pinnacle of sensationalism. Just as Wild is given an honourable death at the gallows, Sheppard too is given a heroic and sensational execution. Ainsworth dedicates thirteen pages to his description of Sheppard's execution, starting with Sheppard's preparations at Newgate Gaol as 'the bell of Newgate began to toll' (*JS*, p. 520). Throughout his preparations, even as the 'vindictive passions of Jonathan' (*JS*, p. 521) are released on Sheppard, the latter remains 'firm', 'unshaken' and 'dignified' (*JS*, p. 521), adjectives which further emphasise Sheppard's heroic and courageous personality.

As Sheppard is led from Newgate Gaol to the carriage which will take him to Tyburn, Ainsworth takes a moment to describe the crowd outside the prison: 'The assemblage which was gathered together was almost countless. Every

house-top, every window, every wall, every projection had its occupants' (*JS*, p. 522). The effect that the immense crowd has on Sheppard is most significant, as it truly expresses the heroic atmosphere present at his execution:

Between the two officers with their arms linked in his, Jack Sheppard was conducted to the cart. He looked around, and as he heard that deafening shout — as he felt the influence of those thousand eyes fixed upon him — as he listened to the cheers, all his misgivings — if he had any — vanished, and he felt more as if he were marching to a triumph than proceeding to a shameful death (*JS*, p. 523).

Likewise when the cart stops at the Crown tavern in Saint Giles so that Sheppard can have a drink — as was tradition — 'the doleful procession at once assumed a festive character' (*JS*, p. 527), further emphasising the celebratory mood of the procession.

However, once the gallows comes into view, 'pitying exclamations' (*JS*, p. 530) are heard from the crowd and the tone becomes one of tension and dismay:

A deep dread calm, like that which preceded a thunderstorm, now prevailed amongst the assemblage. The thousand voices which a few moments before had been so clamorous were now hushed. Not a breath was drawn (*JS*, p. 531).

After setting up the tension of a brewing thunderstorm, Ainsworth describes the atmosphere as being 'an awful moment — so awful, that every other feeling except deep interest in the scene seemed suspended'. In this scene the reader is drawn in as if they too are a member of the audience, and is encouraged to feel

the tension, the fear, and the misery that those men and women felt as they watched Sheppard's execution.

While the crowd's mood seems to fluctuate between celebration and dread, Sheppard's courage never wavers. The firmness and dignity which he exhibited in his last moments in Newgate are still apparent as he stands on the gallows: 'At this terrible juncture, Jack maintained his composure — a smile played on his face before the cap was drawn over it' (*JS*, p. 531). To further add to the reader's emotional response, Sheppard is given heroic and heart-wrenching last words: "My poor mother! I shall soon join her!" The rope was then adjusted, and the cart began to move' (*JS*, p. 531). Ignoring completely the sensational procession from Newgate to Tyburn, or the scramble to cut down Sheppard's body and resuscitate him, Sheppard's hanging can be seen as sensational as it uses fear, tension, sympathy and misery to produce various responses from the reader, comparable to those which the real audience might have felt as they watched Sheppard being hanged.

Aram's death, too, elicits a strong response from the reader, though in a slightly different way:

On the day after that evening in which Aram had given the above confession to Walter Lester, — on the day of execution, — when they entered the condemned cell they found the prisoner lying on the bed; and when they approached to take off the irons, they found that he neither stirred nor answered to their call ... They perceived that he

was covered with blood. He had opened his veins in two places in the arm with a sharp instrument (*EA*, pp. 416-417).

A surgeon is called to restore Aram so as 'not to defraud the law of its victim' (*EA*, p. 417). However, Aram eventually succeeds over the law in his last stand against injustice:

Aram seemed to struggle for words; when, suddenly throwing himself back, a bright, triumphant smile flashed over his whole face. With that smile the haughty spirit passed away, and the law's last indignity was wreaked upon a breathless corpse! (*EA*, p. 417).

Aram's death is sensational first and foremost because it is a suicide. His successful attempt to take his own life — and indeed his need to take his own life — creates feelings of sadness and pity within the reader. Nevertheless, the reader is also invited to join Aram in his exultation as he bravely stands up against the law. Together these aspects demonstrate the way in which these narratives are able to create both negative and positive feelings in the reader. However, while it seems quite clear that sensationalism was a key purpose of the Newgate novel, it is only half of their purpose; behind the sympathy and sensation is a clear, instructive purpose: social protest.

Author's Purpose: Sympathy

The 1830s was a period of great social turmoil and rebellion throughout Great Britain. A rapidly growing population — due to, among other things, urbanisation and the return of disabled soldiers from the Napoleonic Wars — resulted in high levels of unemployment and poverty which was wreaking havoc throughout the

nation.¹² Furthermore, the 1830s saw serious revolutions in both France and Belgium which threatened to spread to the disgruntled population of Britain.¹³ On top of all of this, the British Parliament passed the Great Reform Act and the New Poor Law in 1832. Despite being intended to help the poor, these statutes resulted in an even wider gap between the wealthy and the poor and, consequently, only further increased the miserable state of the poor. In the midst of such an unstable and poverty-stricken society it is no wonder that crime, and most importantly “petty-crime”, was on the rise. Out of these circumstances rose a heightened concern from reformers about the situations and treatments of “criminals” in London.

Reformers — such as the famous Elizabeth Fry — were concerned primarily with ‘the causes of criminal behaviour, the effects of imprisonment and the implications of these matters for the future design and management of prisons’.¹⁴ Some reformers attempted to create positive change by campaigning for the abolition of capital punishment, although their efforts were limited as it was a popular belief that capital punishment was a good deterrent for others. However, they were able to succeed in moving executions out of the public sphere and did have some success in requesting ‘that more humane methods of execution could be found’.¹⁵ Other reformers protested for a reduction in the number of crimes which were punishable by death, rather than the entire abolishment of capital punishment. One eighteenth-century reformer, Dr Samuel

¹² June Rose, *Elizabeth Fry* (London: MacMillan, 1980), p. 79.

¹³ White, p. 29.

¹⁴ Halliday, pp. 214-215.

¹⁵ Halliday, p. 182.

Johnson, offered a unique but valid argument when he stated that, “to equal robbery with murder is to reduce murder to robbery”.¹⁶ Johnson’s point is crucial to this discussion as the Newgate novelists did not believe that all criminals were treated unfairly, but that those who committed small robberies in order to survive did not deserve to be punished with a death sentence, especially when the man next to him in the condemned cell had committed murder or treason. Furthermore, these novelists suggest — such as with Bulwer-Lytton’s use of Tomlinson’s moral speeches, or with Blueskin’s murder of Mrs Wood in Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* — that the wide use of capital punishment could potentially drive a robber to commit a murder if someone stood in their way, as the punishment was no different either way. In their fictional representations of crime, then, Newgate novelists used the arguments of the reformers to protest against the harsh treatments of criminal and the injustices of their laws in the fictional representations of crime that they wrote.

The Criminal Hero and Sympathy

Before discussing the injustices presented by these authors, it is first imperative to discuss how they created sympathy for their criminal protagonists, as the sympathy of the reader is crucial in encouraging the reader to protest against such injustice. Firstly, these authors presented their criminals as heroes in order to elicit sympathy from the reader. Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, in *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, usefully explain the relationship between sympathy and the hero:

¹⁶ Halliday, p. 183.

In fact, the most obvious definition of the ‘hero’ or ‘heroine’ of a novel or play would be the person with whom we ‘identify’, with whom we sympathize or empathize, or whose position or role we imaginatively inhabit.¹⁷

By using a criminal as their key protagonist or hero — whose perspective is, for the most part, exclusive — the author has almost forced the reader to empathise with the criminal as the latter is our only entry point into the story. Nevertheless, these authors do ensure that they ‘treat their criminals sympathetically, if not imbue them outright with the colors of heroism’.¹⁸

Clifford is depicted as heroic both in terms of looks and personality. He is described as possessing ‘uncommon attractions’, with a ‘gait and look which supplied the air of rank’ (*PC*, p. 272), ‘a much larger share of sinews and muscle than is usually the lot even of the strong and hardened’, and the ‘glorious beauty of the sculpted gladiator’ (*PC*, p. 388). As far as his inner characteristics go, Clifford has ‘at heart many good and generous qualities’ (*PC*, p. 270), and a name which has ‘never been coupled with rumours of cruelty or outrage’ but instead with ‘anecdotes of courage, courtesy, good humour, or forbearance’ (*PC*, p. 271). Clifford’s courage and heroism are continually alluded to throughout the novel and, consequently, he is a character worthy of a reader’s sympathy.

Aram is also given heroic qualities, though of a much more intellectual, rather than physical, kind. As the narrator states ‘nature had originally cast his form in an athletic mould; but sedentary habits and the wear of mind seemed

¹⁷ Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 4th Edition (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2009), p. 70.

¹⁸ Gillingham, ‘Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* and the Crimes of History’, p. 884.

somewhat to have impaired her gifts' (*EA*, p. 26). Now, however, Aram is physically described as 'thin and slender' (*EA*, p. 26), with a 'high pale brow, and those deep, unfathomable eyes', but "'Oh, more than handsome!'" (*EA*, p. 23). His personality is described as "'gentle'" (*EA*, p. 23), 'eloquent' (*EA*, p. 26), and charitable — "'he gave as much to the poor last winter as the squire himself'" (*EA*, p. 17) — while he exhibits 'sincerity', 'sympathy' and 'compassion' (*EA*, p. 27) for others. While Aram's positive qualities are obviously very different to those of Clifford, they are no less heroic. Aram is continually painted as a 'genius' (*EA*, p. 26) whose intellectual achievements are widely known and celebrated: 'the greatest folks in the country come in their carriages and four to see him' (*EA*, p. 18). His intellectual qualities, then, are what make him a hero, mask his past, and make others believe in his innocence: "'Heavens above, no! One might as well suspect the lamb of eating the wolf!'" (*EA*, p. 314). Aram is a tragic hero, a man whose life has been dedicated to the pursuits of knowledge, but whose life has also been compromised by one tragic act.

Ainsworth's Sheppard provides yet another contrasting presentation of a hero; his heroism stems from his criminal deeds and, more specifically, his various escapes from prison. Unlike Clifford, Sheppard's physical appearance seems to astonish those who meet him, as he is not built at all like a true hero (or a notorious criminal either):

"'Odd's life!'" cried Gay, in astonishment; "is this slight-made stripling Jack Sheppard? Why, I expected to see a man six foot high at the least, and as broad across the shoulders as our friend Figg. This is a mere boy" (*JS*, pp. 432-433).

To combat Sheppard's small frame he is given a daring spirit and a brave outlook. Sheppard fears that "his name will only be remembered as that of a robber" and so, much like the Artful Dodger in Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, is determined that "it shall be remembered as that of a bold one"; his escapes, he concludes, if "nothing else, shall prevent me from being classed with the common herd of depredators" (*JS*, p. 444). Sheppard's heroism, then, is of a rebellious, Byronic sort, targeted at the law and to those who confine him. Furthermore, when faced with despair and punishment at the hands of men — such as Wild — Sheppard is shown to bear it "like a hero" (*JS*, p. 352), further emphasising his courageous and brave nature. Sheppard's heroic personality and sensational escapes result in immense support from the general populace — the real Sheppard having been 'an immediate sensation in the press'¹⁹ — and consequently, 'Jack is transformed in the course of [the novel] from a mere ruffian to a diamond in the rough'.²⁰ This transformation and heroic representation encourages the reader to feel sympathy for Sheppard and his cause.

Love and Sympathy

Sympathy for the criminal is also created through the thoughts and actions of other characters within the text. Sympathy for Clifford is created, not only by his own pleas — "Believe that I am mad, accursed, criminal, but not utterly a monster!" (*PC*, p. 330) — but also through his relationships with Lucy and her

¹⁹ Buckley, p. 430.

²⁰ Schwarzbach, p. 232.

father, the squire. Clifford's declarations of love for Lucy, and the use of a romantic plot, create sympathy in the reader. On the surface Clifford's relationship with Lucy reveals the sincere qualities of love that he possesses. However, not only is he able to love Lucy in a way he never thought possible, but also, unlike Lord Mauleverer, he loves her selflessly; he wishes that his life could have been different so that he could love Lucy openly without the risk of her 'ruin and disgrace' (*PC*, p. 235). Ultimately, Clifford cares more about the effect his criminal life would have on her, than about his own wants or needs. Furthermore, the power of Clifford's love is expressed through his repentance, which is all the more convincing as it centres round his love for Lucy:

Could all the hours and realities of hope, joy, pleasure, in Clifford's previous life have been melted down and concentrated into a single emotion, that emotion would have been but to tame to the rapture of Lucy's momentary and innocent caress! And at a later, yet no distant period, when in the felon's cell the grim visage of Death scowled upon him, it may be questioned whether his thoughts dwelt not far more often on the remembrance of that delightful moment, than on the bitterness and ignominy of an approaching doom! (*PC*, p. 318)

First of all, this passage demonstrates the courage that Clifford displays in the face of death. Secondly, it shows the sincere and deep affection that Clifford holds for Lucy. This love exemplifies Clifford's 'good and generous qualities' (*PC*, p. 270) discussed previously, and ensures that the reader, like Lucy, ultimately sympathises with Clifford and forgives him for his crimes.

The old squire, as Lucy's father is most often termed, has a more direct impact on the reader's sympathy for Clifford, as he declares on multiple occasions his belief in Clifford's good character and innocence. As he witnesses the growing affection between his daughter and Clifford, the squire expresses a concrete belief in the latter's innocence:

To Clifford he had a great liking; and having convinced himself that there was nothing to suspect in the young gentleman, he saw no earthly reason why so agreeable companion should not be an agreeable son-in-law (*PC*, p. 280).

The squire's belief in Clifford's good character is resolute — despite continual attempts by Mauleverer and Brandon to prove otherwise — and results in his blessing for Lucy and Clifford's marriage over her marriage to Mauleverer.

The sympathy and love from a father-in-law-to-be is also apparent in Bulwer-Lytton's other Newgate novel, *Eugene Aram*. Walter Lester, Rowland's nephew and Clarke's son, discovers the skeleton of his father and accuses Aram as the chief suspect. While Walter is convinced of Aram's guilt, and desperately seeks revenge for his father's murder, Rowland and Madeline believe wholeheartedly in Aram's innocence. Upon hearing Walter's accusation against Aram, Rowland exclaims, "I do not accuse thee, Eugene, my son, my son! I feel thou art innocent of this monstrous crime" (*EA*, p. 346). Later, Rowland also attacks Walter for his insolence, saying "My brother, my brother, you tell me, has been murdered; I will see justice done to him. But Aram! Fie! Fie! it is a name that would whisper falsehood to the loudest accusation" (*EA*, p. 355). Throughout the story the reader is encouraged to support Rowland and Aram over the

temperamental Walter, so that, when it comes to this climax in the story, the reader will undoubtedly continue to support and sympathise with them and, consequently, will believe in Aram's innocence.

Like Lucy and Clifford, the love and sympathy that Madeline and Aram hold for each other emphasises their good qualities and the sympathy that we as a reader hold for the criminal figure. Madeline, however, in an excessively dramatic plot device, takes this even further, as she dies from her fear of Aram being sent to the gallows. Madeline's decline starts off with nightmares of 'one frightful vision — a crowd, a scaffold, and the pale, majestic face of her lover darkened by unutterable pangs of pride and sorrow' (*EA*, p. 368). She progressively gets worse, making her sister worried that, "if the verdict should be against the prisoner, in her state of health consider how terrible would be the shock!" (*EA*, p. 378). Ellinor's prediction comes true and, shortly after Aram is pronounced guilty by the judge, Madeline passes away:

She uttered a faint cry of pain, and fell at once to the ground; she lived a few hours longer, but never made speech or sign, or evinced token of life but its breath, which died at last gradually, imperceptibly away' (*EA*, p. 398).

Not only does the reader empathise with their situation as a romantic couple, but, undoubtedly, Madeline's death emphasises the tragedy of their situation and increases our sympathy for Aram.

Sheppard's relationship with his family, and in particular his mother, also corresponds to this idea of sympathy being created by the death of a loved one. The villain Wild captures Sheppard's mother and attempts to wed her so that he

would be the rightful heir to her inheritance at her impending death. In a daring act, Sheppard breaks into Wild's house to save her:

A few steps brought him to the door of the vault in which his mother was immured. It was locked ... He was therefore obliged to use the iron bar, which he did with as much caution as circumstances would permit. At the first blow, Mrs Sheppard uttered a piercing scream.

Due to hysteria, Mrs Sheppard mistakes the man outside to be the villain Wild, rather than her son: "It is *not* Jack's voice," rejoined Mrs Sheppard. "I am not to be deceived. The knife is at my breast. Stir a foot, and I strike" (JS, p. 473). Shortly after, as Sheppard strikes down the door, 'there was a deep groan, and the sound of a fall within' (JS, p. 474). The imprisonment and death of Mrs Sheppard increases the reader's sympathy for her son for two reasons. First of all, like that of Madeline, Mrs Sheppard's death has a devastating impact on Sheppard and, consequently, exemplifies the compassionate and loving nature of Sheppard. Secondly, Wild's treatment of Mrs Sheppard increases the reader's hatred and detestation of the villain, increasing our sympathy for those whom he victimises. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, Mrs Sheppard's imprisonment and death — inadvertently at the hands of Wild — foreshadows the future imprisonment and death of her son and, consequently, the reader is able to transfer the sympathy that we feel for the death of an innocent widow like Mrs Sheppard, onto her not-quite-so-innocent son.

Reasons for Crime

These authors further elicited sympathy for their criminal protagonists by highlighting the reasons their characters (and other criminals) entered into a life of crime; the primary reasons were due to bad company or poverty. The idea of bad company as the cause of crime is significant to *Jack Sheppard*. The antagonist of Ainsworth's novel, the infamous Wild — 'a devilish clever fellow' (JS, p. 121), with a 'ruthless countenance, on which duplicity and malignity had set their strongest seals' (JS, p. 228) — is used throughout the novel as a comparison to the more kind-hearted Sheppard. The reader is continually told of Wild's abusive and controlling nature, and his ability to do "what he pleases in the courts" (JS, p. 121):

Jonathan is capable of anything. He has hanged twelve of his associates already. The moment they become dangerous, he lodges an information, and the matter's settled. He has always plenty of evidence in reserve (JS, p. 120).

In Ainsworth's novel — more than in Defoe's or Fielding's earlier depictions — Wild is presented as an overtly evil and sadistic criminal, who enjoys the misfortunes of others. Wild targets Sheppard at a young age, in an attempt by Wild to seek revenge against the latter's parents. In his final induction, Sheppard is instructed by Wild to commit a robbery in the church — Wild 'had also a particular set to steal at churches in time of divine service (Appendix A.ii, p. 210) — where Sheppard's mother is attending a service:

Meanwhile, the service proceeded; and the awful command, "*Thou shalt not steal!*" was solemnly uttered by the preacher, when Mrs

Sheppard, who had again looked round towards her son, beheld a hand glance along the side of the woollen-drapeer. She could not see what occurred, though she guessed it; but she saw Jonathan's devilish triumphant glance, and read in it — "Your son has committed a robbery — here — in these holy walls — he is mine — mine for ever!" She uttered a loud scream, and fainted. (*JS*, pp. 219-220).

Soon after this, in a meeting between Mrs Sheppard and Wild, the latter swears that he will see Sheppard hanged, like his father; "how many years will you give my son before you execute your terrible threat?" she asks, "Nine!" (*JS*, p. 251). The above passage and following statement are crucial to understanding the reason behind Sheppard's criminal career, as it is most clearly a revenge mechanism designed and executed by the wicked Wild. The satanic descriptions of Wild, coupled with the young Sheppard's inability to escape his grasp, result in a clear and deep sympathy for Sheppard's situation. His early crimes, at the very least, are a direct result of Wild's plan.

Poverty has been blamed as the chief cause of petty crime throughout the nineteenth century, and Aram's situation is a prime example of this.²¹ Early on it is established that Aram is not a man of much wealth — "But this scholar, I suppose is not very rich: learning does not clothe men nowadays, eh, corporal?" (*EA*, p. 17) — and this is further emphasised when Aram tells the reader that his 'parents died, and I was an orphan. I had no home and no wealth' (*EA*, p. 399). Houseman, the major antagonist of this novel, uses Aram's poverty against him when he convinces Aram that there are more important things than the law:

²¹ Flanders, p. 379.

“You are poor, with all your wisdom,” said he. “I know nothing; but I am never poor. Why is this? The world is my treasury. I live upon my kind. Society is my foe. Laws order me to starve; but self-preservation is an instinct more sacred than society, and more imperious than laws” (*EA*, p. 401).

While Aram’s crime can be attributed to the influence of Houseman, and therefore bad company, it is his poverty which ultimately pushes him over the edge: ‘For, oh, what a terrible devil creeps into that man’s soul who sees famine at his door!’ (*EA*, p. 412). Furthermore, Aram’s repulsion at finding out, only three days after the murder had taken place, that a distant relative had left him wealth, ‘wealth greater than that for which I had ...’ (*EA*, p. 409), demonstrates his desire not for murder but for money, and the security that such money provides. The anguish that Aram feels at this discovery further heightens the reader’s sympathy for him, and the position into which poverty — and partly bad company — forced him.

Clifford’s introduction to crime, however, is capable of eliciting more sympathy than that of any of the other characters in these novels as he is, at least to begin with, truly innocent. *Paul Clifford* partly demonstrates how poverty can be the cause of crime; as Long Ned argues, ‘hanging is a bad fate, starving is worse’ (*PC*, p. 67). Furthermore, Clifford writes retrospectively in his letter to Lucy that he began life ‘in a wretched abode, surrounded by the inhabitants of poverty and vice, I recall my earliest recollections’ (*PC*, p. 332). This poverty, like the examples laid out above is, to a certain extent, to blame for Clifford’s criminal life.

On the other hand, the influence of bad company is also used in *Paul Clifford* as a cause of crime. Long Ned is the key character who influences Clifford to enter a life of crime through his arguments on the just nature of crime:

“All crime and all excellence depend upon a good choice of words If you take money from the public, and say you have robbed, you have indubitably committed a great crime; but if you do the same, and say you have *been relieving the necessities of the poor*, you have done an excellent action; if, in afterwards dividing this money with your companions, you say you have been sharing booty, you have committed an offence against the laws of your country; but if you observe that *you have been sharing with your friends the gains of your industry*, you have been performing one of the noblest actions of humanity” (PC, p. 116).

Long Ned’s argument persuades Clifford to ‘be an excellent citizen, *relieve the necessities of the poor*, and *share the gains of my industry with my friends*’ (PC, p. 117); or, in other words, become a highwayman. Furthermore, Long Ned convinces Clifford that ‘if he was a highwayman, it was altogether the fault of the highways’ (PC, p. 292). Long Ned’s accountability for Clifford’s altered perception of honesty is further emphasised by his earlier statements of determination to bring Clifford into his criminal world: ‘for that experienced collector of highways ... had long fixed an eye upon our hero’ (PC, p. 65), and later gets ‘a little alarmed at the thought of Paul’s gliding from those clutches which he thought had now so firmly closed upon him’ (PC, p. 68). Like Jonathan Wild, Long Ned’s scheming can be blamed for being a significant contributor in Clifford’s descent into crime.

While *Paul Clifford* does express clear messages of poverty and bad company as causes for crime, the most significant reason behind Clifford's induction into a criminal life is his unjust imprisonment. After Long Ned steals a watch while in Clifford's presence, Clifford is wrongfully accused of being an accomplice in the robbery — when really he had no knowledge of Long Ned's intention to steal — and is duly imprisoned by Judge Brandon. Once in prison, Clifford's introduction to crime is inevitable for two reasons: firstly, the company which he is now forced to keep; and secondly, his inability to earn an honest living now that his name is tarnished.

The effect of imprisonment on an innocent man such as Clifford is clearly exemplified in Bulwer-Lytton's short dialogue at the beginning of Chapter VIII:

Common Sense: — What is the end of punishment as regards to the individual punished?

Custom: — To make him better!

Common Sense: — How do you punish young offenders who are (from their youth) peculiarly alive to example, and whom it is therefore more easy either to ruin or reform than the matured?

Custom: — We send them to the House of Correction, to associate with the d—dest rascals in the country! (*PC*, p. 86).

This dialogue between Common Sense and Custom — which Bulwer-Lytton states is '*very scarce*' (*PC*, p. 86) — expresses the concern that was expressed over the treatment of young offenders. Surely the best solution would be to encourage reform, but, unfortunately, Custom's solution is instead to put them together in one prison where, unsurprisingly, their criminal natures will be

further enhanced and exercised. The reader sympathises then with two aspects of Clifford's situation; first of all — and most significantly — that he is innocent of the crime charged against him and is wrongfully imprisoned; and secondly, that the House of Correction, and prison in general, is not a place that encourages reform, but instead, is the place which causes Clifford's decline into a criminal life.

Author's Purpose: Protest

Rich versus Poor

Like the eighteenth-century Newgate novels, the primary social issue addressed by these novelists is the division between the rich and the poor, and the consequences of that division. I have already explained how poverty was a chief reason behind these criminals' inductions into crime; however, these authors' protest against poverty extends far wider than just to their protagonists. In a very moving declaration, Mrs Sheppard relays the awful situation of the poor in London:

“But *then* — Oh! madam, there are moments — moments of darkness, which overshadow a whole existence — in the lives of the poor houseless wretches who traverse the streets, when reason is well-nigh benighted; when the horrible promptings of despair can alone be listened to; and when vice itself assumes the aspect of virtue” (*JS*, p. 200).

This rather poetic description of the misery and despair that face the homeless poor in London, is but one example of the picture that these authors paint of the

trying circumstances that many people endured and, consequently, why so many people in poverty were forced to commit petty crimes in order to survive. This presentation of lower-class London follows the historical record, as research shows ‘the difficulty of distinguishing between a “criminal” population of London and the poor population as a whole’.²² This alignment with history exemplifies how these authors were presenting fictional representations of real events and situations and, therefore, how they were protesting against contemporary issues affecting their communities.

This relationship between poverty, despair, and crime is used as a foundation upon which these authors build their social protest. The first level they create is identifying the relationship between poverty and crime. Tomlinson, for example, argues that ‘we are all blocks of matter, formed from the atoms of custom’ (*PC*, p. 380), signifying the connection between an upbringing whereby society shuns people for being poor, or low-class, and a life of roguery. Likewise, Aram states that poverty ““makes some humble, but more malignant”” (*EA*, p. 61), again highlighting how poverty often causes crime.

On a further level, these authors use this foundation to mock and ridicule the rich; arguing that while the poor revert to crime to survive, the rich abuse their power for their own benefit. Lord Mauleverer is the prime example of this, and is described by the narrator as the epitome of a ‘spoiled darling’:

Nothing perhaps, could convey a better portrait of the world’s spoiled darling than a sight of Lord Mauleverer’s thin, fastidious

²² Linebaugh, p. xxi.

features, peering forth through the closed window of his luxurious travelling chariot (*PC*, p. 352).

Lord Mauleverer is a central antagonist of *Paul Clifford*, and comes to represent the corrupt temperament of the rich. He abuses his wealth to try to win over Lucy from Clifford by ‘insinuating such inquiries into that gentleman’s relatives, rank, and respectability, as would, he hoped, render such banishment a necessary consequence of the research’ (*PC*, p. 261). Moreover, Mauleverer is the character I mentioned in a previous section, who believes that his dinner with the Judge is more important than whether or not a poor wretch is innocent. To Mauleverer, all poor are worthless, and it is the ‘excellence of his family’ (*PC*, p. 265) which seems to entitle him to fulfil his selfish desires.

Bulwer-Lytton takes this idea even further in his second Newgate novel, *Eugene Aram*, when he has Aram argue, “‘What are the temptations of the rich to those of the poor? Yet see how lenient we are to the crimes of one, — how relentless to those of the other!’” (*EA*, pp. 64-65). Here Aram is almost attacking Mauleverer himself — although only as a symbolic representation of the power-hungry rich as a whole — for committing crimes which society is so lenient towards, when others are forced to commit similar deeds and society calls them crime; this idea is reminiscent of Godwin’s arguments in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* discussed in Part Two. Ultimately, it appears that it is human nature to continually want more, however, for the poor that more is survival, whereas for the rich it is only further feeding their greed: “‘what is civilization but an increase of human disparities? The more the luxury of the few, the more startling the wants and the more galling the sense of poverty’” (*EA*, p. 65).

Injustices of the Law

Injustices of the law are frequently presented within these novels. Examples range from the wrongful capture of an innocent man, through the trial process, to the sentencing. These instances convey a larger picture of the biased nature of the law and, consequently, provide one of the more significant motivations for these authors to write protest novels.

The arrest of Clifford is, undeniably, the most significant instance of this; to begin, it is important to relate precisely what happened at this crucial part of the narrative:

Long Ned walked the nearest to the gentleman, and brushed by him in passing. Presently a voice cried, "Stop thief!" and Long Ned saying to Paul, "Shift for yourself — run" darted from our hero's side into the crowd, and vanished in a twinkling. Before Paul could recover his amaze, he found himself suddenly seized by the collar (*PC*, p. 72).

Despite Clifford's attempt to prove his innocence, he is 'marched off between two tall fellows'. The injustice of Clifford's situation needs little explanation; he is innocent and yet the old man is only concerned with revenge for the loss of his watch and cares very little who is punished for it. This injustice is what causes Clifford to turn to a life of crime, and can perhaps be considered the most significant injustice of all those discussed in this thesis.

However, the idea of a wrongful accusation is not limited to *Paul Clifford*, even if the consequences are less extreme in other cases. In *Jack Sheppard* Thames Darrell is "falsely detained" (*JS*, p. 181) and seeks compassion from his guard, though rather unsuccessfully. After stating his innocence, Darrell's guard

(a 'janizary' (*JS*, p. 177) of Wild's) replies "'Of course,'" rejoined Quilt maliciously, "every thief thinks so'" (*JS*, p. 181). In this scene it is not only Darrell's false arrest that provides an instance of injustice, but also the scepticism and disdain with which any convicted criminal was regarded. Once convicted, prisoners essentially lose their voice and are instead presumed to be trying to lie themselves out of punishment. It is this loss of voice which the Newgate novelists were attempting to rectify through their social protest.

This mistrust of convicted criminals is further emphasised in the way that trials were conducted. In *Paul Clifford*, the narrator, while meditating on the nature of British law, states that it is

... the especial beauty of the English law to make no fine-drawn and nonsensical shades of difference between vice and misfortune, and its particular method of protecting the honest being to make as many rogues in as short a space of time (*PC*, p. 85).

Once again the reader is drawn back to the important relationship between vice and misfortune, between crime and poverty. If a man — or woman — looks like a ruffian, then obviously they must be one. Furthermore, this passage shows how the courts created rogues by trying to protect the innocent. This, of course, relates to the situation of Clifford himself, but he is only one case in a long line of innocent people who are sacrificed for the "greater good": 'And it now *destroys me, as it has destroyed thousands, for being what it made me!*' (*PC*, p. 508). Clifford attacks the prejudice of the courts, arguing that they 'invent all sorts of vices, under pretence of making laws for preserving virtue' (*PC*, p. 252). This attack is evidently part of Bulwer-Lytton's own protest against the "Bloody Code"

and the unjust nature of the law. Moreover, Clifford's situation emphasises the hypocritical and unjust nature of the courts, and characterises Bulwer-Lytton's novel as one which deals heavily with social and legal issues.

The misuse of witnesses, as in the eighteenth-century texts discussed earlier, is also present in these Newgate novels. Sheppard, for example is executed on the conviction and evidence of Wild, who, the *Calendar* tells us, was tried for selling 'human blood', 'by procuring false evidence to swear persons into facts of which they were not guilty; sometimes to prevent them from being evidences against himself' (Appendix A.ii, p. 211). This idea is also exemplified well in Aram's trial as Houseman, in an attempt to protect himself from punishment, accuses Aram of the murder of Clarke. At Aram's trial Houseman is the sole witness used against Aram, a concept which is evidently unjust:

"The witness of one man, — arraigned himself! Is there no chance that, to save his own life, he might conspire against mine; no chance that he might have committed this murder, *if* murder hath indeed been done" (*EA*, pp. 388-389).

Undeniably, Houseman would have conspired against Aram to try to save his own life — as basic human instincts would suggest — and indeed, Aram states, in his final letter to Walter, that 'Houseman lied in the court' (*EA*, p. 408). While it is understandable that Houseman would try to remove the blame from himself, what is unjust about this scene is that the court is willing to take the evidence from one man who is also convicted of committing the same crime. This emphasises how little significance the courts placed on actual evidence, and how little mercy they held for a man, whether innocent or not. It appears that a

convicted criminal had very little say over their own innocence and sentencing: 'My lord, I have now done! To you, whom the law deems the prisoner's counsel, — to you, gentleman of the jury ... I leave the chances of my life' (*PC*, p. 511).

Representations of Newgate Gaol

As exemplified by Mrs Sheppard, the theme of imprisonment as a way to increase a reader's sympathy for a character is also a feature of the Newgate novel. Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth represent life in prison, and the treatment of criminals incarcerated within them, in a way that produces sympathy for their criminals, while also critiquing the unjust and inhumane treatment of inmates. To begin with, the various descriptions of Newgate Gaol within these novels present Newgate as a castle fit for hell. *Jack Sheppard* is a particularly good example, as it has more scenes actually in the prison than either of Bulwer-Lytton's novels. Ainsworth dedicates an entire chapter (eight and a half pages) to describing the layout and various rooms of the prison, including its position in London City and its association with the Old Bailey courthouse, and the various sections of the prison: 'the Master's Side, the Common Side, and the Press Yard' (*JS*, p. 338), the Condemned Hold, the Stone Ward and Stone Hall, the Iron Hold, Jack Ketch's Kitchen, the Stone Hold, the Debtors' Hall, the women's felons rooms, and lastly, the Chapel (*JS*, pp. 336-343). Throughout this chapter, Newgate is described as being 'insufficient [in] space' (*JS*, pp. 337-338), 'dismal and noisome' (*JS*, p. 338), 'built and paved with stone, without beds, or any other sort of protection from the cold', 'terrible', a 'dreadful hole' (*JS*, p. 341), 'filthy and disgusting' (*JS*, p. 342), with a 'system of plunder' (*JS*, p. 339) from staff to

prisoner, and prisoner to prisoner: 'the grand nursery of vice' (*JS*, p. 343). These examples provide an overview of the opinions held about Newgate Gaol during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries; they also reflect the opinions of reformers at the time, such as Fry, who visited Newgate Gaol on several occasions: 'In the dark prison, with its smell of damp and decay ... She was moved, as she had been before, by the sight of the small children, pale and in rags'.²³

The effect of such conditions on criminals is exemplified in all three of these novels. At his trial, after a period of imprisonment, Clifford is described as being 'thin and worn, probably from the effect of his wound and imprisonment', with 'his eyes and hair dark, and his complexion pale, possibly from the effects of his confinement' (*PC*, p. 500). Similarly, the narrator of *Eugene Aram* notes the change in Aram during his imprisonment:

Something, indeed, of what he had suffered was visible in the lines around the mouth, in which mental anxiety generally the most deeply writes its traces, were grown marked and furrowed, ... and as, before his imprisonment, he had seemed considerably younger than he was, so now time had atoned for its past delay ... (*EA*, p. 882).

Sheppard's imprisonment is all the more harsh due to Wild's relentless revenge:

[Wild] had him removed from the Condemned Hold, stripped of his fine apparel, clothed in the most sordid rags, loaded with additional fetters, and thrust into the Stone Hold Here, without a glimpse of daylight ... fed upon the worst diet, literally mouldy bread and ditch-

²³ Rose, p. 80.

water; surrounded by stone walls ... without so much as a blanket to protect him from the death-like cold that pierced his frame — Jack's stout heart was subdued, and he fell into the deepest dejection, ardently longing for the time when even a violent death should terminate his sufferings (*JS*, p. 419).

These conditions, while being awful and unfair on the incarcerated, are only the foundation for the treatment which prisoners received at Newgate; what are even more unjust are the processes of torture which were used by prison staff to gain a confession from their prisoner.

The torture of Blueskin is a prime example of this: 'Marvel, the executioner, who was in attendance, was commanded by Wild to tie his thumbs together, which he did with whipcord, so tightly that the string cut to the bone' (*JS*, p. 425); 'When the prisoner was brought into this room [Press room] he was again questioned; but, continuing contumacious, preparations were made for inflicting the torture' (*JS*, p. 426):

Meanwhile, the executioner had attached strong cords to his ankles and wrists, and fastened them tightly to the iron rings. This done, he unloosed the pulley, and the ponderous machine, which resembled a trough, slowly descended upon the prisoner's breast. Marvel then took two iron weights, each of a hundred pounds, and placed them in the press (*JS*, p. 426).

More weights are slowly added to the press until 'the prisoner breathed with difficulty' and, after an hour's time and further weights, 'an appalling change [is] perceptible':

The veins in his throat and forehead swelled and blackened; his eyes protruded from their sockets and stared widely; a thick damp gathered on his brow; and blood gushed from his mouth, nostrils, and ears (*JS*, p. 427).

This torture scene is undoubtedly sensational, but what is more important is how this scene is used by Ainsworth to protest against the use of such torture. While he is not the central protagonist of the novel we do feel sympathy for Blueskin too, as he is exceptionally loyal to Sheppard and — excepting his one awful act of murdering Mrs Wood — he seems to be influenced by Sheppard's good-hearted nature. The graphic and emotional aspects of this scene open the reader's eyes to the realities of prison life and, as we sympathise with the victim, it makes us question the humanity of such customs and the penal system as a whole.

These depictions of the unfair treatment of criminals, especially of the heroes, further enhance the reader's sympathy for those characters. It is clear in these situations that it is not just the criminals who are committing bad deeds and (potentially) harming their fellow citizens, but that those in power — over the law, and over the running of prisons such as Newgate — are causing just as much harm to society. 'The fact, however, that crying evils were constantly present in the great jail, brings Newgate at once into close connection with the whole subject of prison reform'.²⁴ These depictions of the awful conditions at Newgate Gaol allowed authors to protest alongside reformers, and clearly indicate that these novels belong in the genre of social problem fiction.

²⁴ Arthur Griffiths, *The Chronicles of Newgate* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1884), p. vii.

Paul Clifford, *Eugene Aram* and *Jack Sheppard*, as the most important Newgate novels, clearly exemplify the essential elements of any Newgate novel. Each uses the *Newgate Calendar* as inspiration for their fictional work, despite each of them using it in a slightly different way. These novels also demonstrate the ways in which sympathy is created for a criminal character, by focusing on the reasons people entered into crime, and by providing examples of the social and legal injustices placed upon their protagonists. Most importantly however, these novels demonstrate the conflicting, yet important, relationship between sensational fiction and social-problem fiction. While both of these aspects are crucial to the Newgate novel, contemporary critics were not so pleased with the issues discussed in these works.

Anti-Newgate: Courvoisier and Thackeray's *Catherine*

As I have already established, these Newgate novels were well received by the public — ‘wildly popular and widely read, the texts generated a huge buzz’²⁵ — with the *Calendar* stating that ‘the adventures of this notorious offender [Sheppard] excited more attention than those of many of our most celebrated warriors’ (Appendix A.i, p. 190). However, despite this popularity, these Newgate novels were consistently attacked by critics who disagreed with their romantic presentation of criminals. These critics were concerned that sympathising with criminals might have an adverse effect on the moral judgements of the public; in essence, would reading about and sympathising with criminals make people want to become a criminal themselves?

²⁵ Gillingham, ‘The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook’, p. 93.

The Newgate Novel and Moral Judgement

It was presumed by many contemporary critics that writing about crime in a glamorised way could have ‘a negative effect upon morals’, especially those ‘of the lower classes’ who were more susceptible to the influences of fiction.²⁶ Because *Paul Clifford* was the first novel published in this wave of Newgate fiction and was not based on a real criminal, it suffered less critique than those published later, although it did receive rather more criticism on its writing style and infamous first line, ‘It was a dark and stormy night’ (*PC*, p. 1). *Eugene Aram*, however, was heavily criticized and became the ‘storm-center of Newgate controversy’.²⁷ Bulwer-Lytton was criticised for ‘depart[ing] from fact’ — with the events of the story and with Aram’s character — and for the way in which he encouraged sympathy towards Aram. As the editor of *Fraser’s Magazine* wrote: “‘Finally, we dislike altogether this awakening sympathy with interesting criminals, and wasting sensibilities on the scaffold and gaol. It is a modern, a depraved, a corrupting taste’”.²⁸

Critics also attacked Newgate literature for its glamorising of crime. Critics argued that because these criminals were presented as heroes it might encourage people — young men in particular — to enter into a life of crime:

As an anonymous reviewer for *Fraser’s Magazine* lamented with respect to Ainsworth’s prison-breaker, the metamorphosis of Jack Sheppard from a “vulgar ruffian into a melodramatic hero” in both the novel and its theatrical adaptations “will tend to fill many a

²⁶ Schwarzbach, pp. 227-228.

²⁷ Hollingsworth, p. 82.

²⁸ Hollingsworth, p. 93.

juvenile aspirant for riot and notoriety with ideas highly conducive to the progress of so ennobling a profession as that of housebreaking".²⁹

What is most disturbing about this contemporary critical debate is that, in one case at least, the critics appear to have been right.

The Story of Courvoisier

When Londoners sat down with their breakfast and morning newspaper on May 7, 1840, they read that a fellow citizen, Lord William Russell, had been violently murdered; the prime suspect was his 21-year-old valet, Bernard François Courvoisier. It was suspected that, after Russell had complained about Courvoisier's work, the latter had slit his master's throat, messed up the room to make it appear as if the house had been burgled, and then gone to bed. While this case in itself is rather scandalous, it is Courvoisier's confession that is crucial to this discussion. Courvoisier stated that he had become enthused at the idea of murdering his master after reading William Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard*:

But what was most shocking of all was that he had alleged in a confession (one of several) that he had been inspired to the deed by reading William Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* (1839-40), probably one of the most notorious of the Newgate novels. Courvoisier was clearly unstable, and in other confessions he said nothing about Ainsworth's novel. But this twist in the crime was too good not to be true, and it provided moralists of every stripe an

²⁹ Gillingham, 'The Newgate Novel and the Police Casebook', p. 94.

occasion to condemn popular fiction about crime as glorifying the characters of criminals and simultaneously encouraging the lower orders to indulge in the same activities.³⁰

Schwarzbach's statement clearly describes the effect that Courvoisier's statement had amongst critics of Newgate fiction; now they could seemingly prove that Newgate novels were having a harmful effect on society.

The British Government quickly acted to ban any material on Sheppard, both in written or theatrical form, and by the end of 1840 the Sheppard craze was beginning to lessen, though the decline could also be attributed to the novelty of Sheppard's story being worn out.³¹ Nevertheless, critical attack did not stop, and was instead taken over by the popular Victorian novelist William Makepeace Thackeray.

William Thackeray's *Catherine*

Thackeray's fictional attack on Newgate literature, *Catherine: A Story*, was published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1839-40. His novel was a direct critique of the novels of Bulwer-Lytton, Ainsworth and to some extent Dickens, and their sympathetic treatment of criminals. Thackeray purposefully chose one of the most disturbing entries in the *Newgate Calendar* — that of Catherine Hayes (NC, pp. 65-71) who brutally murdered her husband — to demonstrate how undeserving of a reader's sympathy he believed criminals to be. Thackeray's purpose is clearly exhibited in the advertisement at the beginning of his novel:

³⁰ Schwarzbach, p. 229.

³¹ Buckley, p. 429.

The story of "Catherine," which appeared in Fraser's Magazine in 1839-40, was written by Mr. Thackeray, under the name of Ikey Solomons, Jun., to counteract the injurious influence of some popular fictions of that day, which made heroes of highwaymen and burglars, and created false sympathy for the vicious and criminal.

With this purpose, the author chose for the subject of his story a woman named Catherine Hayes, who was burned at Tyburn, in 1726, for the deliberate murder of her husband, under very revolting circumstances. Mr. Thackeray's aim obviously was to describe the career of this wretched woman and her associates with such fidelity to truth as to exhibit the danger and folly of investing such persons with heroic and romantic qualities (C, p. 5).

While Thackeray's presentation of his criminals is fascinating, what I find particularly interesting is his satire, but his outright abusive statements towards Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth.

While there are too many aggressive outbursts to cover in such a small section, I will provide a few examples which will demonstrate the nature of Thackeray's attack. Firstly, Thackeray produced an attack on these Newgate novelists through the presentation of his characters. Purposefully making them un-heroic and un-sensational, Thackeray limited any chance of a reader having sympathy for his criminals:

Although we have, in this quiet way, and without any flourishing of trumpets, or beginning of chapters, introduced Mr. Hayes to the public; and although, at first sight, a sneaking carpenter's boy may

seem hardly worthy of the notice of an intelligent reader, who looks for a good cut-throat or highwayman for a hero, or a pickpocket at the very least...' (C, p. 15).

Thackeray's intentional presentation of his characters as 'hardly worthy of notice' demonstrates the unsympathetic tone of his novel; his characters are not heroic or sensational, and are consequently undeserving of any interest. Furthermore, by suggesting that readers want to read about highwaymen, or at least a pickpocket, Thackeray is insulting readers of popular novels and their desire for sensation. He further exaggerates this point when he writes:

This being a good opportunity for closing Chapter I, we ought, perhaps, to make some apologies to the public for introducing them to characters that are so utterly worthless; as we confess all our heroes, with the exception of Mr. Bullock, to be. In this we have consulted nature and history, rather than the prevailing taste and the general manner of authors (C, p. 24).

Once again Thackeray is insulting the public's desire for, and popular authors' use of, heroic criminals, as well as the Newgate novelist's flexible use of history and fact.

Thackeray further attacks the Newgate novelists' sympathetic treatment of criminals when he writes in Chapter Three:

For our part, young ladies, we beg you to bottle up your tears, and not waste a single drop of them on any of the heroes of heroines in this history: they are all rascals, every soul of them, and behave "as sich". Keep your sympathy for those who deserve it: don't carry it, for

preference, to the Old Bailey, and grow maudlin over the company assembled there (*C*, p. 36).

Here Thackeray is clearly targeting those authors — such as Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth — who treat criminals sympathetically, and who consequently encourage the public to do so too. Thackeray argues that convicts — apparently whether they are innocent or not — are not worth a woman's tears and so no author has the right to make her think they do.

However, while Thackeray may believe that these Newgate novelists twist the truth too far in their presentation of heroic characters, he too is heavily biased in his novel. In Chapter Four, for example, Thackeray chooses to skip over parts of Catherine's history in order to present a more one-sided perspective on her life:

Over this part of Mrs. Cat's history we shall be as brief as possible; for, to tell the truth, nothing immoral occurred during her whole stay at the good Doctor's house; and we are not going to insult the reader by offering him silly pictures of piety, cheerfulness, good sense, and simplicity (*C*, p. 45).

Despite being more open with his reader, Thackeray clearly chooses the material and events that will best fulfil his purpose. By refusing to relate the honest parts of Catherine's life, Thackeray insinuates that no criminal is worthy of sympathy despite any honest or good-hearted characteristics they may have. While he may argue that he has an honest and beneficial purpose behind his narrative, his biased nature does not provide an adequate criminal narrative either. Thackeray's anti-Newgate novel and the attempts of contemporary critics to

reduce the popularity of Newgate fiction, were largely unsuccessful. The Newgate novel continued to be widely read, and perhaps has never stopped being written and read.

Part 4: Redefining the Newgate Novel

‘The terrible descriptions were so real and vivid that the sallow pages seemed to turn red with gore...’ — Charles Dickens¹

Although I agree with many aspects of the definition of a Newgate novel — that it has a character who does or could have come from the *Calendar*, that it provides sympathy for that criminal, contains scenes in Newgate Gaol and may be classified as both sensation fiction and as a social problem novel — there is one aspect of the definition with which I wholeheartedly disagree: that it is a ‘novel published in the 1830s’.² In this section of my thesis I will attempt to redefine the Newgate novel, stretching the boundaries of its definitions to include texts outside of this decade. I have already discussed in some detail the aspects of Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*, Fielding’s *Jonathan Wild*, and Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* that can be considered “Newgate” and I hope that, in hindsight, after discussing Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth’s works, it can be seen that these eighteenth-century texts can be termed Newgate novels. Additionally, I will now argue that the term Newgate novel can also be extended to novels published long after the 1830s.

There is a significant list of novels which I could use to support such a claim — such as Michael Crichton’s *The Great Train Robbery* (1975), Nancy Taylor Rosenberg’s *Interest of Justice* (1993), Andrew Pepper’s *The Last Days of*

¹ *OT*, p. 130.

² Gillingham, ‘Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* and the Crimes of History’, p. 883.

Newgate (2006), or Ann Featherstone's *The Newgate Jig* (2011). However, I will be focussing on three case studies: Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1838), Bernard Cornwell's *Gallows Thief* (2001), and Deborah Challinor's *Behind the Sun* (2012). The relationship between Dickens's writing and the Newgate school has previously been discussed — even though Dickens refused to be associated with authors such as Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth — and is, therefore, a crucial entry point into this discussion. *Gallows Thief* and *Behind the Sun*, however, have received very little critical attention and have never been associated with the Newgate novel; this is a connection I would now like to make.

Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*

Although Dickens's *Oliver Twist* was published at roughly the same time as Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* — and therefore does not provide an instance of a Newgate novel being published after the 1830s — it does provide a very good springboard to the rest of this section. *Oliver Twist* contains all the necessary elements of a Newgate novel, but uses these elements in slightly different ways to the traditional Newgate novels of Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth. The most obvious difference is that our protagonist, Oliver, is not a convicted criminal but rather an innocent boy. Nonetheless, Oliver's close connection and interaction with the criminal underworld demonstrates Dickens's use of Newgate material such as the *Newgate Calendar*, and how he created sensation, social protest and sympathy, the vital aspects of a Newgate novel.

The *Newgate Calendar*

The *Newgate Calendar* is referred to several times throughout *Oliver Twist*; early on in the text, for example, Fagin gives Oliver the *Calendar* to read:

It was a history of the lives and trials of great criminals, and the pages were soiled and thumbed with use. Here he read of dreadful crimes that made the blood run cold ... The terrible descriptions were so real and vivid that the sallow pages seemed to turn red with gore, and the words upon them to be sounded in his ears as if they were whispered, in hollow murmurs, by the spirits of the dead (*OT*, pp. 129-130).

This passage is significant for three reasons. First of all, it accentuates the difference between Oliver and the criminals who have kidnapped him: he finds the descriptions repulsive, while Fagin and his crew have read the volume until it has become increasingly worn. Secondly, Oliver's use of the words 'dreadful', 'terrible' and 'vivid', demonstrate the sensational nature of such a work. Thirdly, it shows the importance of the *Calendar* as the most popular source of criminal narratives and histories.

Dickens portrays the *Newgate Calendar* as a significant piece of criminal narrative, so while no criminal in Dickens's narrative comes directly from the *Calendar*, it may be assumed that he used it himself when creating his criminal characters. The creation of Fagin has been discussed most prominently by critics who argue that Fagin 'is a composite of Dickens's personal haunting, of criminals

who skulked his London, and of other figures from literature'.³ Richard Dunn states that, 'although literature presented Dickens with a long tradition of villainous Jews from which to draw', Dickens claimed to have drawn his inspiration for Fagin from life.⁴ However, whether or not Dickens drew his inspiration for Fagin from real life, is rather insignificant in terms of his use of the *Newgate Calendar* in *Oliver Twist*. What is more important is whether or not Fagin could have come from the *Calendar*. It is quite possible that Fagin could have been included in the *Calendar* as he is a very realistic criminal; the Metropolitan Police's constabulary commission having declared in 1839 that 'for the most part, fences were all Jews'.⁵ Of course, Fagin's relation to contemporary criminal trends is important, but furthermore, it is his sensational nature and his impact on the reader's imagination that makes him a realistic and believable character. Grovier suggests that, 'such unforgettable figures as the frisky fence, Fagin, inhabited The Gaol's stage as compellingly as any of the actual inmates ever could'.⁶ By creating such a complete and compelling character, Dickens ensured that Fagin was a character who could have been held in Newgate Gaol and, consequently, could have been in the *Newgate Calendar*.

The Hero

While he is not the key protagonist, the Artful Dodger can be seen as the criminal hero within this text. The Dodger, much like Clifford, is presented as a

³ Richard Dunn, *'Oliver Twist': Whole Heart and Soul* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), p. 75.

⁴ Dunn, p. 79.

⁵ Dunn, p. 79

⁶ Grovier, p. 287.

'Dickensian free spirit, a character sustaining himself through self-invention'.⁷ While the Dodger is no doubt a thief, he only engages in petty crime — rather than the murderous antics of Monks and Sikes — and is skilful and entertaining in his thievery. The Dodger can be considered the clown or fool of the text, not because he is stupid or ridiculous, but because he is, as his name suggests, artful. His heroism is accentuated by his enterprising nature, his cheerfulness and his determination to spite the law. The Dodger protests against the unjust system which rules over him by refusing to take it seriously and, in his last stand, by refusing to let it belittle his success. The Dodger's companion Charley is concerned with 'how will [Dodger] stand in the Newgate Calendar?' (*OT*, p. 287); this concern is mirrored in the Dodger's trial as he mocks the magistrate and encourages the jury to see him as the great criminal he believed he was, rather than a cheap pickpocket. The Dodger is carried away from his trial 'grinning in the officer's face with great glee and self-approval' (*OT*, p. 291), and is noted by Fagin to be 'doing full justice to his bringing-up, and establishing for himself a glorious reputation' (*OT*, p. 292). His cheerful and entertaining personality, coupled with his defiant and sensational exit, craft the Dodger into a criminal hero.

Sensation

As well as being produced by The Dodger's heroic defiance, sensation in *Oliver Twist* is created through descriptions of the mob. The first instance of the mob's 'passion for hunting something' (*OT*, p. 62) is presented early on in the text:

⁷ Dunn, p. 54.

“Stop thief! Stop thief!” The cry is taken up by a hundred voices, and the crowd accumulate at every turning. Away they fly, splashing through the mud, and rattling along the pavements. Up go the windows, out run the people, onward bear the mob, a whole audience desert Punch in the very thickest of the plot, and, joining the rushing throng, swell the shout, and lend fresh vigour to the cry, “Stop thief! Stop thief!” (*OT*, p. 62)

This passage poetically describes the sensation which suspected crime created amongst the populace, and foreshadows the frenzy experienced by the mob that chases Sikes; the animalistic atmosphere of the crowd adequately representing the severity of Sikes’s murder over the pickpockets presented in the above passage. The cries of this later mob are described as the most ‘terrific yells that ever fell on mortal ears’ (*OT*, p. 335). Furthermore, the mob is sensational because of its excessive and violent temperament: ‘The cries and shrieks of those who were pressed almost to suffocation, or trampled down and trodden under foot in the confusion, were dreadful’ (*OT*, p. 336).

Oliver Twist evidently contains elements of sensation — the nature of the mob is just one example of this — and, as all Newgate novels must, it balances this sensation with sympathy for the criminal and social and legal protest. Dunn describes this balance between sensation and social problem fiction when he discusses what readers might find most interesting about the novel:

For some readers, it may be the book’s more sensational elements that seem most important — the melodramatic overstatements of sentimentality of terror — or perhaps the fairy-tale quality of its plot

line, punctuated with nightmarish encounters. Others may insist, as did Dickens in the Preface to the novel's 1841 edition, that the book is important because it presents such a realistic, uncompromising account of early Victorian England.⁸

This 'realistic, uncompromising account' is the foundation for Dickens's protest.

Social Injustice

Dickens focused his protest on the controversial poor-law amendment, which was implemented by Parliament in 1835.⁹ The prime objective of this amendment was to establish a unified system for dealing with the poor, to which all authorities had to adhere. This amendment was designed to help the poor and reduce their mistreatment by local authorities; however, it instead made matters worse for them. As Dickens argues:

So they established the rule, that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they) of being starved by a gradual process, in the house, or by a quick one out of it (OT, p. 11).

The house to which Dickens refers here is the workhouse; the conditions there are central to the opening chapters of the novel.

Dunn identifies the key concerns in Dickens's critique as 'the insufficiency of care, lack of adequate food, and absence of compassion', with Oliver represents just one child of the hundreds who suffered similar or worse

⁸ Dunn, p. 19.

⁹ Dunn, p. 8.

treatment.¹⁰ The lack of adequate food is perhaps the most well-remembered instance of Oliver's mistreatment at the workhouse because of his now-famous line, "Please, sir, I want some more" (*OT*, p. 12). Nevertheless, the insufficiency of care and lack of compassion in the workhouse is also emphasised by Dickens as he notes, to provide one example, how full the cemetery is with the bodies of children: 'It was no very difficult task, for the grave was so full that the uppermost coffin was within a few feet of the surface' (*OT*, p. 35). While Dickens focuses his protest on the new workhouse system in his opening chapters, crime is always there as a backdrop; the workhouse acting as a literal and metaphoric prison for the children, a prison which foreshadows Oliver's later associations with the criminal underworld and Newgate Gaol.

As well as the metaphorical links between the workhouse and the prison, Dickens provides many similarities between the workhouse and the problems of crime and poverty. Bumble, the workhouse beadle, can be compared to Wild and his exhibitions of greed and self-interest; furthermore, he can also be compared later in the text to Fagin, a key antagonist of *Oliver Twist*. Wild, Bumble and Fagin all represent the consequences of greed and power, and the comparison between the latter two within Dickens's novel again emphasises the similarities between a corrupt legal system and criminality. Moreover, Sikes's evil and sadistic nature can also be compared to Wild, as they are both the genuine criminals of their respective novels. In a way, they can also be compared to Catherine and the anti-Newgate theme, as their inherently evil personalities demonstrate that not all criminals are worthy of sympathy. However, by

¹⁰ Dunn, p. 11.

presenting wicked characters such as Wild, Mauleverer, Houseman, Falkland, and Sikes, these Newgate novelists are able to compare their more innocent and good-hearted “criminals” that are worthy of a reader’s sympathy. This comparison, as in all the previous novels discussed in this thesis, again leads the reader to observe the comparisons between the powerful and the powerless, the rich and the poor.

During his time in the workhouse Oliver is compared to his master. Oliver is described as being ‘desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery (*OT*, p. 12), while the master is ‘a fat, healthy man’ (*OT*, p. 12). The purpose of this comparison is clear; Dickens’s attack on economic disparity evidently begins early on in the text. In this novel wealth and power are represented by Bumble, who considers money to be more important than innocence. At the conclusion of an interview with Mr Brownlow, in which Bumble had criticised and insulted Oliver, the former states that he “would gladly have given you treble the money if it had been favourable to the boy”. The narrator then admits to the reader that:

It is not at all improbable that if Mr Bumble had been possessed of this information at an earlier period of the interview, he might have imparted a very different colouring to this little history (*OT*, p. 112).

This statement exemplifies the significance that Bumble places on monetary gain over telling the truth. Dickens uses social protest, then, to critique the unjust treatment of the poor, the division between the rich and the poor, and the abuses of wealth within his society, just as the Newgate novelists before him had done.

Legal Injustice

Although Dickens focuses largely on the social injustices of his society, he also attacks some injustices of the law such as the trial system and capital punishment. During his trial, The Dodger states, ““this ain’t the shop for justice”” (*OT*, p. 291). Oliver, too, witnesses the injustice of the courts after he is wrongfully accused of stealing a handkerchief: despite the prime witness arguing that he is ““not sure that this boy actually took the handkerchief””, Oliver still ““must go before the magistrate”” (*OT*, p. 64). Capital punishment is also targeted by Dickens as when Fagin states, ““What a fine thing capital punishment is! Dead men never repent; dead men never bring awkward stories to light”” (*OT*, pp. 54-55). These brief examples exhibit the types of legal injustices that Dickens protested against in his novel — the misuse of witnesses, the corrupt nature of the judge and jury, and the overall injustices of the legal system — and, consequently, demonstrate how his novel fits alongside the more prominent Newgate novels.

Sympathy

As stated in Part Three, to provide a successful critique of the treatment of criminals, a reader must first have sympathy for those criminals. I have already briefly mentioned the Artful Dodger, but the most sympathetic character is undoubtedly Nancy. In part, poverty is blamed for Nancy’s introduction to crime:

“Thank Heaven upon your knees, dear lady,” cried the girl, “that you had friends to care for and keep you in your childhood, and that you were never in the midst of cold and hunger, and riot and

drunkenness, and — and something worse than all — as I have been from my cradle” (*OT*, p. 263).

However, Nancy, like Sheppard, is also led into crime through bad company. ‘The Jew’, the narrator tells us, ‘led her, step by step, deeper and deeper down into an abyss of crime and misery whence was no escape’ (*OT*, p. 292), while Sikes’s unrelenting rage and violence forces Nancy deeper into a hole from which she cannot climb her way out.

However, while Nancy may be trapped in a criminal life, Sikes and Fagin have less effect on her moral conscience than they do on her physical activities. Throughout the novel Nancy exhibits her compassionate personality, especially through her willingness to help Oliver, at the risk of her own safety. Furthermore, she eventually accepts the help of Rose Maylie — the adopted daughter of Mrs. Maylie, who nurses Oliver back to health after is shot during the burglary of her house, and later visits London — to whom she reveals the plot against Oliver. Unfortunately, Rose is unable to help Nancy escape, as the latter’s violent captor gets to her first:

The housebreaker freed one arm, and grasped the pistol. The certainty of immediate detection if he fired flashed across his mind even in the midst of fury; and he beat it twice, with all the force he could summon, upon the upturned face that almost touched his own (*OT*, p. 313).

The violent murder of Nancy is perhaps the cruellest deed portrayed in any of these Newgate novels. The sincerity, innocence and desperation that the reader feels about Nancy’s situation has, by this point, culminated in an enduring and

heartfelt sympathy for the prostitute, and the reader, like Rose, yearns to help her. Consequently, her vicious murder by Sikes evokes the most sympathy and offers the most significant protest against poverty and power within the novel; a sympathy and protest which was all the more powerful after Dickens's famous public readings of the scene.

Representations of Newgate Gaol

Along with these instances of sensation, social problem and sympathy, *Oliver Twist* displays a negative representation of Newgate Gaol itself. The most famous scene set in Newgate is Fagin's last nights within the condemned cell, to which Dickens dedicates a whole chapter. Within this chapter the reader is given a snapshot of the prison and a psychological analysis of what a criminal might be thinking as he spends his last nights alive. The chapter begins at Fagin's trial in the Old Bailey, where Fagin sits 'burning hot at the idea of a speedy death', thinking 'of all the horrors of the gallows and the scaffold' (*OT*, p. 350) as a 'young man' sat 'sketching his face in a little note-book' (*OT*, p. 350). After the 'news that he would die on Monday' (*OT*, p. 350), Fagin is led 'through a gloomy passage ... into the interior of the prison' (*OT*, p. 351) and the condemned cell. Here Fagin is presented with images of 'all the men he had known who had died upon the scaffold' and of 'how suddenly they changed, from strong and vigorous men to dangling heaps of clothes!' (*OT*, p. 351). 'Scores of men must have passed their last hours' right where Fagin himself was sitting; 'it was like sitting in a vault strewn with dead bodies' (*OT*, p. 351). After musing for some time on these matters, Fagin remarks on the tolling of the church bell: 'the boom of every iron

bell came laden with the one, deep, hollow sound — Death!’ (*OT*, p. 351-352). In this scene Dickens portrays a criminal who has gone mad from fear and desperation; while Moll faints as she nears death, Fagin’s departure begins with his loss of sanity.

Endings

The final comparison to make between *Oliver Twist* and the Newgate novel is in terms of endings. Given the differing structure of *Oliver Twist* and the fact that its narrative does not centre around the journey of a single criminal, it is not the actual ending of the text that needs to be discussed. Instead, a few instances must be pointed out in relation to the three key endings of a Newgate novel: repentance, transportation and execution. Fagin’s hanging follows the traditional formula for an execution, and needs no further discussion here. Sikes’s self-hanging, however, is a more distinctive ending, as it combines both the rope and the noose with suicide:

Staggering as if struck by lightning, he lost his balance and tumbled over the parapet. The noose was at his neck. It ran up with his weight, tight as a bowstring, and swift as the arrow it speeds. He fell for five-and-thirty feet. There was a sudden jerk, a terrific convulsion of the limbs; and there he hung, with the open knife clenched in his stiffening hand (*OT*, p. 337).

Unlike Clifford’s intentional suicide, Sikes’s hanging — as he attempts to escape from the mob and from justice — accentuates his greed and his desire for self-preservation. This selfishness results in his own destruction, and acts as true

justice for his murder of Nancy. An ending by transportation is exhibited by *The Artful Dodger*, while repentance is hinted at with Monks, whom Mr Brownlow hopes will take up 'the opportunity of retrieving his former vices' (*OT*, p. 357); though whether Monks actually repents or not the reader is never told. Evidently, *Oliver Twist* has not just one typical ending, but exhibits instances of all possible endings for a Newgate novel.

While Dickens refused to be associated with the Newgate school, it is clear from the above examples that *Oliver Twist* can be categorised as a Newgate novel. That is not to say that it is only a Newgate novel, as that would belittle the un-Newgate elements within it. However, by using the *Newgate Calendar* as inspiration, romanticizing crime, encouraging sympathy for the criminal, and by providing sensation and social protest, this novel can clearly be aligned with the novels of Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth and the rest of the Newgate school.

Bernard Cornwell's Gallows Thief

Just as I have demonstrated that *Oliver Twist* is, essentially, a Newgate novel, so too do I argue that the phenomenon of the Newgate novel did not die out in the nineteenth century. The key tropes of the genre are still apparent within literature today, as is evident in the two twenty-first-century texts which will provide the remaining discussion of this thesis.

Bernard Cornwell's *Gallows Thief*, for example, can be interpreted as a modern version of the Newgate novel. It may be suspected that a twenty-first-century Newgate novel would focus heavily on the sensational aspects of crime, rather than those aspects which focus on social or legal issues of the Victorian

period (as they may no longer be relevant). However, I believe that *Gallows Thief* contains examples of all aspects of a Newgate novel: its criminal characters can be traced back to the *Newgate Calendar*, it contains both elements of the sensational and social protest and, ultimately, does produce sympathy for convicted criminals.

The *Newgate Calendar*

Like *Oliver Twist*, *Gallows Thief* is not centred solely around the point of view of a notorious criminal but rather, in this case, Rider Sandman. Sandman is a detective figure who is attempting to prove the innocence of Charles Corday, the primary criminal character of the narrative. Corday does not originate directly from the *Newgate Calendar*, but can be considered a criminal who could have been in the *Calendar*; in other words, a composite of *Calendar* criminals. Cornwell references the *Calendar* several times in his narrative — ‘He had never taken much interest in crime, had never bought the Newgate Calendars nor read the broadsheets that celebrated notorious felons’ (*GT*, p. 41) — which demonstrates his knowledge of such material and, consequently, how he might have used that material as inspiration for his criminal characters. There are two aspects of *Calendar* narratives which are apparent in Corday’s case; firstly, he is a notorious criminal who murdered his master or mistress (or, in this case, apparently both) — such as William Duncan (*NC*, pp. 436-437) or Matthew Henderson (*NC*, pp. 116-117) — and secondly, (like Clifford or Aram) his guilt is questionable.

Sensation

Like the Newgate novels of Bulwer-Lytton and Ainsworth, Cornwell's novel uses scenes of torture, the condemned sermon, and hangings to produce sensation. In a scene reminiscent of Blueskin's torture in *Jack Sheppard*, the Press Room is described on the opening page of the novel, by a Newgate guide: "this is where the prisoners were pressed. They were squashed, sir. Weighed down by stones, sir, to persuade them to tell the truth" (*GT*, p. 1). Although an actual pressing does not occur in the text, the mention of such torture on the opening page sets the scene for the sensational violence and injustice that follows.

The condemned sermon is another Newgate practice which produces sensation, with the Ordinary taking extravagant measures to procure confessions from the convicts and entertain the public:

The Keeper would have preferred a quiet and dignified service, mumbled and sedate, but London expected the Ordinary to put on a display and Cotton knew how to live up to those expectations (*GT*, p. 342).

In a rather theatrical performance, Cotton, the Ordinary at Newgate, emphasises the punishment, torment and suffering which will be inflicted upon Corday and his fellow convicts the following morning, as 'we who are left on this earth are having our breakfast' (*GT*, p. 343). His sermon is highly sensationalised, with constant references to the pain of hanging, the judgement of God and the 'dreadful pains of eternity' (*GT*, p. 344). Nonetheless, it is the scenes of execution which provide the best examples of sensation within this text.

Like the thrilling yet dreadful atmosphere at Sheppard's execution, emphasis is placed on the crowds at the various hangings depicted in *Gallows Thief*. In the prologue, the theatrical nature of a hanging is emphasised by the use of payment "to rent a window" or to "rent a telescope from the landlord and watch 'em die" (GT, p. 19). The purchasing of a good view highlights the similarities between a hanging and a concert or theatre production and, consequently, demonstrates the gallows as a stage for the purposes of public entertainment and sensation. Furthermore, the crowd is described as if they were at such a performance, with 'thousands of people with open mouths, shouting' and struggling to see the stage, while 'a pie-seller had set up his wares in a doorway', and, in an upper window, one 'woman had opera glasses' (GT, p. 21). These are just a few examples from one of the many scenes of execution in *Gallows Thief* that exemplifies the theatrical atmosphere of the crowd and the inherent purpose of an execution (both in reality and in fiction) as entertainment rather than as a deterrent for crime.

Social Injustice

Gallows Thief is also concerned with social injustices and, once again, with economic disparity and the power of money: "Money and rank, Captain, are the only two things that matter in this world" (GT, p. 202). The Seraphim Club, the key antagonist group of the novel, is used to represent the relationship between corruption and power and its consequences. Social and legal injustices are tied together here, as Sandman reflects that the members of the Seraphim Club "consider themselves beyond the law. They believe their money and privilege

will keep them safe” (GT, p. 252). Like Jonathan Wild, the men of the Seraphim Club use their money and connections to evade the law and redirect blame onto others. These men, and their political friends, control the law and twist it to meet their own needs, without considering the effects their decisions will have on the lower classes:

The gallows is there, Captain, and we live with it till we die on it, and we won't change it because the bastards don't want it changed. It's their world not ours, and they fight to keep it the way they want (GT, p. 196).

Throughout the novel, men of power are presented as corrupt and selfish, further highlighting the injustices which result from economic disparity.

Legal Injustice

The plot of *Gallows Thief* is driven forward by Sandman as he attempts to spite the law and prove that Corday is innocent. Sandman is a very active protagonist who quickly becomes aware of the injustices of his society and its legal system. Throughout the narrative he attempts to reveal those injustices to both the novel's legal system and the reader. Cornwell presents Sandman's task as a ferocious battle against a legal system which is designed to convict — “No one listens! No one cares! So long as someone hangs, no one cares!” (GT, p. 59) — and, in doing so, highlights the corruption of Victorian systems.

The lively prologue of *Gallows Thief* — which centres round the execution of four people, one of them a young woman, ‘scarce more than a girl’ (GT, p. 8) — immediately introduces the reader to ideas of legal injustice. The young girl

has been accused and sentenced to death for stealing her mistress's necklace, despite the fact that 'the necklace was never found' (*GT*, p. 9) and that the girl pleads, "'I didn't steal anything!'" (*GT*, p. 23). Later in the text — though, sadly, after she is hanged — the girl's innocence is confirmed as the reader is told that "'the owner found the necklace last week'" (*GT*, p. 234). The blatant injustice exhibited in this scene clearly demonstrates that Cornwell, like the earlier Newgate novelists, is concerned with the injustice of the law.

Representations of Newgate Gaol

Conditions at Newgate Gaol and the treatment of criminals are further attacked in *Gallows Thief*: 'The smell was terrible' (*GT*, p. 1); there was 'a noxious miasma of ordure, sweat and rot' (*GT*, p. 2); it is a hell where even the hardest men lose their sanity and their will for life:

"I would rather cut my wrists than stay here! I did nothing, *nothing!*

Yet I am beaten and abused all day, and in a week I hang. Why wait a week? I am already in hell. I am in hell!" (*GT*, p. 63).

Regrettably, the criminals in *Gallows Thief* are not listened to any more than those presented by Bulwer-Lytton or Ainsworth. A Porter at Newgate states that "'there's an easy way to know when a felon's telling lies, sir, an easy way": "'they're speaking, sir, that's how you can tell they're telling lies, they're speaking'" (*GT*, p. 64). This refusal to listen to a criminal exaggerates the injustices of the legal system and the abusive mistreatment received by criminals at the hands of the Newgate staff. Furthermore, this refusal to listen

heightens the sympathy that the reader holds for such characters and encourages us to support Sandman in his attempt to procure justice.

Endings

The various endings in *Gallows Thief* also encourage the reader to sympathise with these criminals. Like *Oliver Twist*, *Gallows Thief* does not have one clear ending for a criminal — as it does not focus primarily on one character — but instead, it presents several criminals reaching their ends, either through transportation, suicide or the gallows. Transportation as a punishment is not used as an ending within this narrative, but it is discussed as a possibility, and is argued to be a more humane method of removing a convicted criminal from society:

“Hang a man,” Lord Alexander said, “and you deny him the chance of repentance. You deny him the chance of being pricked, day and night, by his conscience. It should be sufficient, I would have thought, to simply transport all felons to Australia” (*GT*, pp. 364-365).

Suicide has already been hinted at as a means of escaping the horrid conditions at Newgate, and is also mentioned in regard to Sandman’s father who, in an attempt to evade imprisonment and execution, ‘had taken his own life’ (*GT*, p. 38). Hanging, however, is the most popular ending in this novel, with the narrative framed by the young girl’s execution in the prologue, and a mirrored execution of Corday in the final chapter. The gallows is portrayed as a ‘stage set for a tragedy ending in death’ (*GT*, p. 385), and while Corday is cut down and saved from the crooning hangman who tries hard ‘to make sure he was not

cheated of a death' (*GT*, p. 396), the constant symbols of death and misery — 'the gallows black as any devil's heart' (*GT*, p. 401) — clearly exhibit an execution as the most tragic ending for a convicted criminal.

Is *Gallows Thief* a Newgate Novel?

If Cornwell is presenting the injustices of a previous society and system, how can his novel have a clear purpose as a social problem novel? As noted in Part One of this thesis, Newgate novels relied on the genre of historical fiction to tell their stories. Historical fiction was primarily used to protest about the present, by revealing the similarities between a past century and the present. *Paul Clifford*, *Eugene Aram* and *Jack Sheppard* were all set in the eighteenth century — with Aram and Sheppard both living in the eighteenth century in reality — despite being written in the early nineteenth century. Likewise, Cornwell sets his narrative in a previous century to better present the issues he might have with the present. It could be considered that the social and legal differences between 1830 and 2001 are more extensive than the differences between 1730 and 1830, but nevertheless, there are still many connections between the society presented by Cornwell in his novel and the society in which he lives. In the twenty-first century, capital punishment has still not been completely abolished (it is still legal in many American states, among other countries); innocent men and women are still convicted (though such cases may be rarer now than in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries); prison conditions and processes are still being debated and improved; and economic disparity, most significantly, is still a current and disruptive social issue. By using historical fiction to present notable

instances of these things, Cornwell is able to protest against the aspects of society and crime which have not been solved over the past two centuries and, consequently, his novel can be categorised as a social problem novel as well as sensation fiction. Combine these with Cornwell's use of the *Newgate Calendar* and his representations of Newgate Gaol, and you have a Newgate novel, twenty-first-century style.

Deborah Challinor's Behind the Sun

The Newgate novel is considered to be a sub-genre of crime fiction, but no discussion has yet occurred on whether there are any sub-genres of the Newgate novel itself. I believe that there is, in the form of the transportation novel. The transportation novel has very strong connections to the Australian genre of convict fiction and novels such as Henry Savery's *Quintus Servinton: A Tale Founded Upon Incidents of Real Occurrence* (1830), Eliza Winstanley's *Her Natural Life: A Tale of the 1830s* (1876), or Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1874). Challinor's novel has many similarities with convict fiction, primarily in terms of its narrative structure and, additionally, Challinor was living in New South Wales, Australia while 'researching and writing a series of novels ... set in Sydney in the early 1830s about four convict girls transported from England'.¹¹ The narrative structure of *Behind the Sun* — and of most fiction which centres on a convict, such as the novels listed above, or more modern texts like Bryce Courtenay's 1995 novel, *The Potato Factory* — begins in Newgate Gaol,

¹¹ Deborah Challinor, 'About Deborah', *Deborah Challinor* <<http://www.deborahchallinor.com/Pages/aboutus.aspx>> [accessed on 20/11/13] (para 1 of 5).

includes the transportation of the criminal, and ends with a resolution in the New World; in fact, a very similar structure to *Moll Flanders*. These novels differ from *Moll Flanders*, however, because they place further emphasis on the transportation aspects of the narrative. *Behind the Sun* follows four women — Friday, Rachel, Sarah and Harriet — on their journey through crime, conviction, incarceration, transportation and into their new lives in Australia. The focus of a criminal's journey before, during, and after transportation is, obviously, what classifies their texts as a transportation novel, but to be classified under the umbrella of the Newgate school, they must also include all aspects of the more traditional Newgate novel.

The Newgate Calendar

Challinor states in her 'Author's Notes' that, 'the characters in this story are all fictional, except for the ones already in the history books' (BS, p. 447). There are some evident links to history, real criminals, and the *Newgate Calendar*. In Challinor's work, for example, the reformer Elizabeth Fry is used as a character. Furthermore, the arrest of Rachel Winter, Challinor states, 'is based on the experiences of the real 'Mary Rose' who, although she is not included in the *Newgate Calendar*, is discussed 'in Sian Elias's fascinating book *The Floating Brothel: the extraordinary true story of female convicts bound for Botany Bay* (Hachette Australia, 2010)' (BS, p. 448). *Behind the Sun* was also inspired by Challinor's own ancestors, William Standley, Mary Ann Anstey, James Lowe, and Joseph Bonney, who were all convicts transported to New South Wales. Evidently, Challinor is interested in presenting an historically accurate novel —

demonstrated by her inclusion of a bibliography at the back of her novel — and the relationship between real criminals, reformists and fiction. *Behind the Sun* can also be compared to the *Newgate Calendar* in terms of the types of criminals Challinor includes. While it is not evident that Challinor consulted the *Calendars* in her research — though trial records from the Old Bailey are included in her bibliography — it is possible that famous female criminals could have been used by Challinor as inspiration for her female convicts (as Defoe did with *Moll Flanders*). The reader is told that Mary Rose was used as inspiration for Rachel, but characters such as Mary Young (*NC*, pp. 96-102) or Hannah Dogoe (*NC*, p. 197), who were both convicted for robbery, could easily have been used as inspiration for any of Challinor's female criminals. Likewise, the stories of Nathaniel Lilley, James Martin, Mary Briant, William Allen, and John Butcher (*NC*, pp. 330-331), who were convicted for returning early from transportation, could have been used as inspiration, as their group entry provides many details of life after transportation in the convict colonies. Like *Moll Flanders* then, Friday, Rachel, Sarah and Harriet can all be considered as criminals who could have been included in the *Calendar*, alongside women such as Mary Young, Hannah Dogoe, or Mary Briant.

Sensation

As noted in Part Three, Pittard states that sensation can be created by placing an emphasis on female criminality; if this is the case, then Challinor's novel — with its four female convicts — must be full of sensation.

The opening sections of *Behind the Sun* focus on the various crimes committed by the girls and, consequently, why they are sent to Newgate. We are first introduced to Friday, for example, as she is caught by fellow prostitutes as she is urinating in the street — ‘that’d teach her to squat in alleyways’ (*BS*, p. 3): an introduction which, from the very first page, shows the reader that these women are of the lower orders. Over the course of the first chapter, the reader is led deeper into the life of a prostitute through the protagonist, Friday. This life of a prostitute, filled with ‘unfettered bosoms’ (*BS*, p. 4), a man with ‘a false name’ and ‘a fat purse’ (*BS*, p. 5), a ‘chamber they’d secured for the night’, and ‘two bottles of gin’ (*BS*, p. 6), is clearly humorous, entertaining, and sensational. Scenes of disorderly and ill-mannered women fill this story (as do the typical scenes of capture and conviction), continually providing dramatic and sensational scenes.

Social Injustice

Behind the Sun also balances this sensation with scenes of social and legal injustice. Challinor aligns her novel with criminal reform by using the famous reformer Elizabeth Fry — mentioned in Part Three — as a character within her text. Fry’s successes and goals are outlined:

She was a philanthropist and an evangelist and over the past twenty years had, among other things, introduced schooling to Newgate Gaol, scripture lessons, sewing and knitting, female matrons rather than predatory male gaolers, and these last-minute farewell gestures to transportees (*BS*, p. 125).

By using her as a character, Challinor is able to preach the same messages as Fry and protest for the same results. This protest can be categorised into the three typical forms of protest in a Newgate novel: social issues (primarily surrounding poverty); legal injustices; and the treatment of criminals in Newgate Gaol itself.

The social protest of *Behind the Sun* is chiefly generated through Harriet (or Harrie) as she, much like Aram, decides to steal one thing so that she may escape her life of servitude as an assistant to Mrs Lynch and open her own dress-making business. Harriet is stuck working for the 'tight-fisted, slave-driving' (*BS*, p. 15) Mrs Lynch because, despite the 'pittance she was paid', she must remain the breadwinner of the family while her mother is ill:

But even though what she earned barely covered her family's living expenses, Harrie dared not leave her position with Mrs Lynch. It was tedious and soul-destroying but her mother was ill constantly now (*BS*, p. 15).

Despite never having 'stolen *anything* in her life' (*BS*, p. 16), Harriet is tempted to steal a spool of 'silk embroidery thread' which would 'work into her latest embroidery pattern *perfectly*' (*BS*, p. 16). This idea causes a dream to flash through her mind; Harrie imagines a life when her mother is well again, and well-to-do ladies come into her shop to be measured for her latest design. On a whim, Harriet steals the silk, 'clamped it against her thigh with her hand and walked out of the shop' (*BS*, p. 16). Unfortunately, Harriet's dream is short-lived as she is captured very quickly:

Then someone shouted and she began to run: the bolt of fabric slipped down and tripped her, sending her sprawling face first onto

the cobbles; she knew then she had just made the worst mistake of her life (*BS*, pp. 16-17).

Indeed, Harriet's theft is the worst mistake of her life, as she is consequently sent to Newgate Gaol and then transported to Australia. The fact that Harriet cannot escape from her miserable position, earning very small wages to earn a better living herself, shows the rigidity of the class systems of Victorian London. Without the financial aid that thievery could give her, Harriet is restricted to the position that others have placed her in. Although Harriet is not forced to steal to eat she, like Aram, is forced to steal in order to progress and support her family. Because it is a first-time offence and an offence committed out of desperation, Harriet's arrest can be considered heavily unjust: 'Harriet Clarke shouldn't be in Newgate Gaol, that was obvious' (*BS*, p. 41). Harriet's desperate financial situation and honest demeanour allow a reader to easily empathise with her. Once again, because poverty is the sole reason behind a crime, it is not the crime which the novel is protesting, but instead the social injustice of poverty and economic inequality.

Legal Injustice

Biased and immoral judges, and the unjust use of witnesses, are attacked yet again. Just as Lord Mauleverer and Judge Brandon are critiqued in *Paul Clifford* for placing more value on their dinner than on the innocence or guilt of a criminal, *Behind the Sun*, too, provides examples of a judge's misplaced priorities. As Harriet questions Friday about the sentence she might receive, Friday states, 'sometimes it'll all just turn on whether the judge had a good dinner' (*BS*, p. 22).

At Harriet's trial, Friday's premonition appears to come true, as the judge pronounces his verdict with 'his mind on the roast beef he would shortly be having for his dinner' (*BS*, p. 55). This priority of food over a fair trial demonstrates how the judges abused their power and how corrupt the legal system was.

The corruption of this system is also seen through the unjust convictions of Friday and Harriet. Friday is arrested on the assertion from one man that she robbed him. This is clearly unfair, as the man could either have been lying, or could have mistaken Friday for someone else; the reader is told that he passed out from intoxication and, therefore, his perception may have been blurred. The trial process itself is also criticised, as Hector Slee (the man who had been robbed) is the sole witness at Friday's trial (*BS*, pp. 50-51). Likewise, Mr Wilton, the linen-draper, is the prime witness at Harriet's trial, the only other witness being her nasty ex-mistress, Mrs Lynch. In his speech Mr Wilton exaggerates the story, arguing that he had to "wrestle her to the ground [to] retrieve my stolen property" despite it stating in the "arresting constable's report that the prisoner said she dropped the bolt of silk, then fell over it" (*BS*, p. 53). Although Wilton's lie is not as outright as Houseman's, it nonetheless exemplifies the injustice of a legal system which relies heavily on witness accounts, yet displays no concern over the honesty of such witnesses. Additionally, none of the girls are able to afford 'the prohibitive cost of private counsel' (*BS*, p. 49) and so must defend themselves against the witnesses and jury who seem to be convinced of their guilt before the trial has even begun.

Representations of Newgate Gaol

In 2012 the infamous conditions at Newgate Gaol are still being critiqued. In this novel, the women are housed in 'stinking, damp cell[s]' that are 'built for ten inmates and crammed with almost thirty' (*BS*, p. 39), with only 'one barred, unglazed window too small to admit enough breeze to stir the damp, fetid air inside' (*BS*, p. 17). 'A perpetual chill crept through the ward's oozing stone walls and floor', and 'everything dripped, everything remained continuously damp' (*BS*, p. 17). The bedding on the convict ship — 'the mattress was thin and lumpy and smelt sour' — is described as 'the height of luxury compared to the barracks bed in Newgate' (*BS*, p. 98). In Newgate the women are not given pillows, and are only issued with a rope mat to place over the 'hard planks' (*BS*, p. 39) that is their bed. The female wing, *Behind the Sun* notes, has not been improved in 'fifty years; facilities had not been maintained, and there had been no proper effort to clean the wards or rid them of vermin' (*BS*, p. 17). Furthermore, *Behind the Sun* draws attention to conditions which specifically affected women at Newgate Gaol. Bullying and thieving among the female prisoners is particularly accentuated by Challinor. For example, Rachel refuses to give up her engagement ring, even just for safekeeping, despite the fact that 'it shone like a beacon at almost every inmate on the women's side of Newgate Gaol' (*BS*, p. 60). Worse still, however, are the descriptions of pregnant women and the fears of birthing a child in such terrible conditions: 'To give birth in a hellhole such as Newgate would be a certain death' (*BS*, p. 102); this comment foreshadows the later death of Rachel, who dies in childbirth at the Parramatta Female Factory in Australia. These examples demonstrate how Challinor's novel, like its eighteenth-

and nineteenth-century counterparts, portrays the hellish conditions at Newgate Gaol in order to arouse sympathy for her criminal characters and, consequently, to protest about the treatment of criminals incarcerated within its walls.

The Transportation Novel

The key difference between *Behind the Sun* and other Newgate novels is in the endings that it provides for its criminal characters. As a transportation novel *Behind the Sun* obviously places a much heavier emphasis on the transportation system — rather than execution — as a way of leaving Newgate, with all the girls being transported for either seven or fourteen years (BS, p. 51, p. 55, and p. 71). Consequently, Challinor's novel stresses the opportunities of repentance and reformation that these characters are given as they start new lives in Australia: anything is better than 'swinging at the end of a rope' (BS, p. 21). *Behind the Sun*, therefore, should belong in a sub-genre of the Newgate novel because, while it does display all the key criteria of a Newgate novel, only a quarter of the text is dedicated to these issues. The following three quarters is concerned with, for instance, what might have happened after the Artful Dodger was transported, or what might have happened if Jack Sheppard had managed to escape the country: essentially, what is it like for a convict as they attempt to start afresh in a new country. Challinor's novel, then, may be considered to operate between the Newgate novel and convict fiction. On the one hand, it follows the same structure as the convict novel, with the preceding crime, capture and conviction action as a backdrop for the focus of beginning a new life in a new world. Yet, on the other hand, it still accentuates many of the same themes of the Newgate

novel because of its use of Newgate Gaol in its opening sections. It is, undoubtedly, still concerned with the lives and treatment of convicted criminals, but the focus is shifted to show that criminals, when they are spared from a hasty death on the gallows, can repent, can reform, and ultimately, do deserve our sympathy.

Conclusion

By deconstructing the Newgate novel, this thesis has exposed a more complex and extensive genre than first anticipated. Current definitions of the Newgate novel tie the genre, rather restrictively, to the 1830s and the novels of Edward Bulwer-Lytton and William Ainsworth. In this thesis I have endeavoured to expand this definition to demonstrate that the Newgate novel is a much broader genre than critics have previously argued. In order to expand the definition of a Newgate novel, it was first pertinent to discuss what is already known about it: where it came from, how it was established, and what characteristics it typically includes.

There are four important genres which played a part in the rise of the Newgate novel: detective fiction, gothic fiction, Romantic literature, and historical fiction. Detective fiction, which was established concurrently with the Newgate novel, helped to shape the narrative structure of the texts, and provided detective figures who could be used to move the plot forward. Gothic literature had a significant influence in forming criminal heroes, as they, like the Byronic hero of Gothic fiction, were rebellious and immoral, while still maintaining positive characteristics with which the reader could sympathise. Romantic literature laid a foundation for discussing and protesting against the injustices of an author's society, which is fundamental to the purposes of any Newgate novel. Lastly, a Newgate novel is typically set in a previous century, and so has many connections with the genre of historical fiction.

The historical context of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries had a significant impact on the rise of the Newgate novel. A booming population led to a drastic rise in unemployment and poverty, causing petty crime to increase as the lower classes struggled to survive. The rise of poverty and crime — which are continually interlinked in almost every aspect of the Newgate novel — saw prisons fill to capacity throughout England; the authorities had to find a way to reduce the numbers of prisons, and so they established the Bloody Code. The Bloody Code was the nickname given to around 200 statutes (at the worst peak) which authorised capital punishment: the solution to reducing inmates was to hang them. Reformers protested these harsh statutes, which mostly protected the property of the wealthy against the poor, and from the arguments of these reformers rose some of the key issues that are addressed by Newgate novelists.

To protest these harsh laws the Newgate novelists needed to base their fiction around a criminal protagonist; the largest source of criminal biographies, the *Newgate Calendar*, was a goldmine of fascinating narratives these authors could use as a foundation for their novels. The *Newgate Calendar* is a series of publications which consisted of small biographies (typically one or two pages for regular criminals, and several more for infamous or particularly sensational stories) that detail the criminal's life, crime, conviction and punishment. While these accounts are significantly smaller than a novel, they already contained many of the tropes that would later define the Newgate novel. The sensational *Calendar* entries included the most dramatic crimes, and then focused on the most spectacular details of the criminals' lives. They told stories of injustice — though they were rare — where poverty is ultimately to blame, or where young

boys are punished for crimes they were obviously too young to understand. The key purpose of the *Newgate Calendar*, however, was to provide moral instruction; to deter others from crime by showing the ultimate power of the law. While some of the Newgate novels do contain this element, this is where they differ most from the *Calendar*, for they instead focused on the injustices which are displayed so rarely in the *Calendar*.

While the Newgate novel is often believed to have been established in the 1830s, there are several eighteenth-century novels which contain many of the same elements and which, consequently, I believe should be included under the umbrella of Newgate fiction; a contribution which I think is vital to modern studies on Newgate material. Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* all use the *Newgate Calendar* to varying degrees; Defoe and Godwin use the *Calendar* as inspiration for their criminal characters, while Fielding took his criminal protagonist, Jonathan Wild, straight from the *Calendar* (though Fielding does twist Wild's story to meet his own political agenda). These novels also contain elements of sensation and social protest, targeting the social, legal and political injustices of their societies. They discuss issues of economic disparity, the power of money, and the role of politics in creating and extending the division between the rich and the poor. They also provide examples of the injustices of the law which seem to reflect very little regard for the innocence or guilt of a convicted criminal. These novels also target Newgate Gaol itself by protesting against its awful conditions and its inhumane treatment of criminals. Lastly, they feature several different endings for a criminal, each of which depicts varying degrees of

injustice and, consequently, protest. By presenting instances of injustice and unfair treatment, these authors encourage the reader to sympathise with the criminal protagonists and, in doing so, persuade them to protest against the injustices of their societies. Together these elements form the basis of any Newgate narrative and, therefore, not only do these eighteenth-century texts influence the later Newgate novels, they can also be considered Newgate novels themselves.

Despite my refusal to accept that the Newgate novel is a phenomenon centred only in the 1830s, it is indisputable that the works of Edward Bulwer-Lytton and William Ainsworth are extremely important to the Newgate novel as a genre. Therefore, their novels, *Paul Clifford*, *Eugene Aram* and *Jack Sheppard*, have been used in this thesis to create a comprehensive definition of the characteristics, tropes, and purposes of a Newgate novel. This includes, that an author uses the *Newgate Calendar* when forming their criminal characters; such as Sheppard or Aram, who come straight from the *Calendar*, or Clifford, who, on the other hand, is an example of how entries in the *Calendar* can be used as inspiration. From here the discussion on these novels turns to the author's purpose, and is split into three sections: sensation, sympathy, and social problem fiction.

Sensation, I argue, is created through four clear narrative events: crime, capture, escape and death. Using scenes from these categories — which, undoubtedly, any crime story will include — these authors are able to elicit an emotional response from the reader and, therefore, to create sensation. Sympathy for the criminal is essential to the Newgate novel as, without it, a

successful protest is unlikely. Sympathy is created in these novels through their uses of heroic criminals, the relationship between love and sympathy, and by demonstrating the reasons behind crime. As social problem novels, these texts protest against the social and legal injustices of their societies. Once again the division between the rich and the poor is targeted, both as a reason behind crime, and as a method of corruption at the hands of the wealthy. The injustices of the law are also critiqued by providing instances of innocent men being arrested, and of the biased nature of the Old Bailey, which placed very little importance on the innocence or guilt of a convicted criminal. Newgate Gaol also remains central to the protest of the Newgate novelists, who despise it as a place full of starvation, torture, misery and death.

From an in-depth analysis of *Paul Clifford*, *Eugene Aram* and *Jack Sheppard* it is evident that a Newgate novel must use the *Newgate Calendar* as, at the very least, inspiration for a criminal protagonist, and must balance both elements of sensation and social problem fiction in order to produce a novel which protests against the injustices of its society, while being entertaining enough to be read by its contemporary public.

These Newgate novels were well-received by the public, who clearly enjoyed the sensational aspects of these stories. However, they were not well received by critics, who believed that the glamorisation of crime could be harmful to society. These critics appeared to be correct when, on May 7, 1840, London arose to the news that a young man, Courvoisier, had murdered his master; he claimed that he was inspired by Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard*. Understandably, this resulted in a wave of criticism condemning the Newgate

novelists for writing sympathetic, heroic criminals and, consequently, encouraging crime. As part of this wave of criticism, William Thackeray wrote his anti-Newgate novel, *Catherine*, which also attacked the Newgate novelists for glamorising crime by telling the story of Catherine Hayes, who had murdered her husband, in the disturbing and horrific way that he believed it should be told.

Whether or not *Oliver Twist* can be called a Newgate novel has often been debated. I have argued in this thesis that *Oliver Twist* can indeed be titled a Newgate novel. It has been noted that several of Dickens's characters, such as Fagin or The Artful Dodger, could have been in the *Newgate Calendar* had they been real. Dickens most definitely encourages the reader to feel sympathy for the prostitute, Nancy; and the Artful Dodger is presented as being as heroic and as entertaining as Sheppard. *Oliver Twist* has sensational scenes of crime, capture, escape and death, while still protesting against the social, political and legal injustices of Dickens's society. There are horrifying scenes in Newgate Gaol, and although the key protagonist is the young and innocent Oliver, the text centres quite clearly around the criminal underworld of Victorian London. These combined aspects, clearly shape *Oliver Twist* as a Newgate novel, whether Dickens liked the term or not.

The Newgate phenomenon, I argue, did not end with the nineteenth century. Instead, the themes of Newgate literature have continued to be used by authors for similar purposes. Using Bernard Cornwell's *Gallows Thief* as an example, I have stretched the chronological boundaries of the Newgate novel well out of the 1830s. Like *Oliver Twist*, *Gallows Thief* does not feature a criminal as its central protagonist; instead, Sandman is a detective figure, hired to prove

the guilt of the convicted criminal, Corday. However, Sandman soon discovers that Corday is actually innocent and so begins his fight against “the remorseless fangs of the law”. While it is not clear whether Cornwell consulted the *Newgate Calendar* while writing his novel, it is clear that characters such as Corday could have come from such a publication. In terms of sensation, Cornwell’s novel is a real page-turner, full of suspense and malicious antagonists who have their own motivations for having Corday hanged. Cornwell’s novel, however, should be termed a Newgate novel primarily for its portrayal of the injustices of the law. *Gallows Thief* is rife with exclamations against the harsh and uncaring nature of Victorian law and the authorities who execute it, both within Newgate Gaol and outside it. While Cornwell’s novel was written almost two centuries after it is set, it is still important to note that historical fiction is a significant aspect of Newgate fiction, with many of the Newgate texts being set at least a century earlier. Furthermore, by looking deeper at western society it is clear that some issues still remain; capital punishment has still not been completely abolished, and there are still instances reported of innocent men or women being convicted for crimes they did not commit.

The last novel examined in this thesis is Deborah Challinor’s *Behind the Sun*. This novel features four female criminals — all of whom could have featured in the *Newgate Calendar* — whose crimes, arrests and convictions all provide instances of social and legal injustices similar to those from the previous Newgate novels. After first proving that Challinor’s novel, like Cornwell’s, contains all the aspects required of a Newgate novel, I have argued that *Behind the Sun* can be used to exemplify a sub-genre of the Newgate novel: the

transportation novel. The transportation novel has clear links to the Australian convict novel, particularly in terms of its narrative structure. However, to be categorized as a sub-genre of Newgate fiction, a text must also address the themes and issues apparent within the Newgate school; I have, therefore, shown how *Behind the Sun* uses the *Newgate Calendar*, provide instances of social and legal injustices, uses Newgate Gaol as a setting, and, finally, encourages the reader to sympathise with its criminal protagonists. It differs as a transportation novel, however, as it emphasises the process of transportation and the possibilities of starting a new life in colonial Australia and, ultimately, demonstrates that some criminals, at least, can reform and do deserve our sympathy.

Throughout my discussions of these novels I have extensively detailed the key aspects of any Newgate novel and, consequently, have provided a comprehensive definition of what a Newgate novel is. Using this definition I have argued that novels as early as *Moll Flanders* in 1722, and as late as *Behind the Sun* in 2012, can be termed Newgate novels. I hope that by redefining the Newgate novel, and opening up its definition to include texts outside of the 1830s, authors' continual use of Newgate Gaol may be further understood and its significance recognised as one of the most compelling structures of our cultural memory.

Nevertheless, there are still a many more significant contributions to be made to this fascinating genre; more than a single could ever cover. Further insights into the relationship between the Newgate novel and Australian convict fiction, which I have briefly alluded to, would offer a productive historical

analysis into fictional representations of Australasian history. I think it is important to know where our societies have come from, and historical fiction plays an important part in this tradition. Furthermore, there is much more scope for examination of the Newgate novel in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It was difficult to narrow my examples down to only two modern texts, as there is such a large selection of Newgate material to choose from. An analysis of the varying uses of real or fictional events, an author's choice of an ending, or the aspects where they choose as the focal point of their protest, and how these decisions have changed over time, would make for a captivating study of the way Newgate literature expresses social concerns and cultural developments. Lastly, a study of where Newgate fiction can be found outside of the novel would further stretch its scope and boundaries to provide for a more comprehensive and encompassing definition. John Gay's famous *Beggar's Opera* (1728), for example, is immensely significant to the Newgate school. And what about Stephen Sondheim's 1979 musical *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, or Tim Burton's 2007 film adaptation? With its conviction of an innocent man at the hands of a corrupt judge, and the characters Lucy, Turpin and Lovett, what relationship does *Sweeney Todd* have to Newgate literature? Is there such a thing as a Newgate film? Will Newgate literature ever really become extinct? I think not. Its characters, settings, and powerful themes will continue to compel.

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Appendix A

This appendix includes three excerpts from Camden Pelham's *The New Newgate Calendar*; those of Jack Sheppard, Jonathan Wild and Eugene Aram. I hope that they will prove useful for anyone interested in Newgate narratives and the fascinating relationship between history and fiction.

Appendix A.i —The *Newgate Calendar*: Jack Sheppard¹

The prisoner, whose name heads this article, was a companion and fellow in crime to the notorious Blueskin. The name of Jack Sheppard is one which needs no introduction. His exploits are notorious, that nothing more is necessary than to recount them. Sheppard was born in Spitalfields, in the year 1702; his father was a carpenter and bore the character of an honest man; but dying when his son was yet young, he, as well as a younger brother, Tom Sheppard, soon became remarkable for their disregard for honesty. Our hero was apprenticed to a carpenter in Wych-street, like his father, and during the first four years of his service he behaved with comparative respectability; but frequenting a public-house, called the Black Lion, in Drury Lane, he became acquainted with Blueskin, his subsequent companion in wickedness, and Wild, his betrayer, as well as with some women of abandoned character, who afterwards also became his coadjutors. His attentions were more particularly directed to one of them, named Elizabeth Lion, or Edgeworth Bess, as she was familiarly called from the

¹ Camden Pelham, 'John Sheppard', *The Chronicles of Crime; or, The New Newgate Calendar*, 1 (London: Thomas Tegg, 1841), pp. 38-50.

town in which she was born, and while connected with her he frequently committed robberies at the various houses, in which he was employed as a workman. He was, however, also acquainted with a woman named Maggott, who persuaded him to commit his first robbery in the house of Mr. Bains, a piece-broker, in White Horse Yard, Drury Lane. He was at this time still resident at his master's house; and having stolen a piece of fustian, he took it home to his trunk, and then returning to the house he was robbing, he took the bars out of the cellar-window, entered, and stole goods and money to the amount of 22L.[£] which he carried to Maggott. As Sheppard did not go home that night, nor on the following day, his master suspected that he had made bad connexions, and searching his trunk found the piece of fustian that had been stolen; but Sheppard, hearing of this, broke open his master's house in the night, and carried off the fustian, lest it should be brought in evidence against him.

This matter received no further attention; but Sheppard's master seemed desirous still to favour him, and he remained some time longer in the family; but after associating himself with the worst of company, and frequently staying out the whole night, his master and he quarrelled, and the headstrong youth totally absconded in the last year of his apprenticeship.

Jack now worked as a journeyman carpenter, with a view to the easier commission of robbery; and being employed to assist in repairing the house of a gentleman in May Fair, he took an opportunity of carrying off a sum of money, a quantity of plate, some gold rings, and four suits of clothes. Not long after this Edgeworth Bess was apprehended, and lodged in the round-house of the parish St. Giles's, where Sheppard went to visit her; but the beadle refusing to admit

him, he knocked him down, broke open the door, and carried her off in triumph; an exploit which acquired him a high degree of credit among his companions. Tom Sheppard being now as deep in crime as his brother, he prevailed on Jack to lend him forty shillings, and take him as a partner in his robberies. The first act they committed in consort was the robbing of a public-house in Southwark, whence they carried off some money and wearing apparel; but Jack permitted his brother to reap the whole advantage of the booty. Not long after this, in conjunction with Edgeworth Bess, they broke open the shop of Mrs. Cook, a linen-draper in Clare Market, and carried off goods to the value of 55*L.*; and in less than a fortnight afterwards, they stole some articles from the house of Mr. Phillips in Drury Lane. Tom Sheppard going to sell some of the goods stolen at Mrs. Cook's was apprehended, and committed to Newgate, when, in the hope of being admitted an evidence, he impeached his brother and Bess; but they were sought for in vain.

At length James Sykes, otherwise called Hell-and-Fury, one of Sheppard's companions, meeting with him in St. Giles's, enticed him into a public house, in the hope of receiving a reward for apprehending him; and while they were drinking Sykes sent for a constable, who took Jack into custody, and carried him before a magistrate. After a short examination, he was sent to St. Giles's round-house; but he broke through the roof of that place and made his escape in the night.

Within a short time after this, as Sheppard and an associate, named Benson, were crossing Leicester Fields, the latter endeavoured to pick a gentleman's pocket of his watch; but failing in the attempt, the gentleman called

out "A pickpocket!" on which Sheppard was taken, and lodged at St. Ann's round-house, where he was visited by Edgeworth Bess, who was detained on suspicion of being one of his accomplices. On the following day they were carried before a magistrate, and some persons appearing who charged them with felonies, they were committed to the New Prison; but as they passed for husband and wife, they were permitted to lodge together in a room known by the name of Newgate ward. They were here visited by many of their friends, Blueskin among the number; and being provided by them with the implements necessary to enable them to escape, Jack proceeded to secure the object which he had in view with that alacrity and energy which always characterised his actions. The removal of his fetters by means of a file was a work which occupied him a very few minutes, and he then, with the assistance of his companion, prepared for flight. The first obstacle which presented itself to them was in the shape of the heavy cross-bars which defended the aperture, by which light and air were admitted to their cell; but the application of their file soon removed the difficulty. There was then another point of a more dangerous character to overcome — the descent to the yard. Their window was twenty-five feet in height, and the only means of reaching the earth was by the employment of their blankets as ropes. These, however, would not enable them to touch the ground; but they found that there was a considerable distance for them to drop, even after they should have arrived at the extreme of end of their cord. Gallantry induced our hero to give the first place to Bess, and she, having stripped off a portion of her clothes, so as to render herself lighter, descended in perfect safety. Jack followed, and they found some consolation in their being at least

without the gaol, although there were yet the walls of the yard to climb. These were topped with a strong *chevaux de frise* of iron, and were besides twenty-two feet high; but passing round them until they came to the great gates, the adventurous pair found means by the locks and bolts, by which they were held together, to surmount this, apparently the greatest difficulty of all, and they once again stood on the open ground outside the gaol. Bess having now reassumed the clothes, of which she had denuded herself, in order that she might be more agile in her escape, and which she had taken the precaution to throw over the wall before her, she and her paramour, once more enjoying the free air of liberty, marched into town.

It may readily be supposed that our hero's fame was increased by the report of his exploit, and all the thieves of St. Giles's soon became anxious to become his "palls". He did not hesitate to attempt the companionship of two of them, named Grace, a cooper, and Lamb, an apprentice to a mathematical instrument maker; and at the instigation of the latter they committed a robbery in the house of his master, near St. Clements church, to a considerable amount. The apprentice, however, was suspected, and secured, and being convicted, received the sentence of transportation. Our hero meanwhile escaped, and joining with Blueskin, they did not fail in obtaining considerable booty. The mode of disposing of the plunder which they adopted was that of employing a fellow named Field to procure them a market; and having committed the robbery at Kneebone's, already mentioned in Blake's memoir, they lodged its proceeds in a stable, which they had hired, near the Horse Ferry, Westminster. Field was applied to, to find a customer for the property, and he promised to do so, and

was as good as his word; for breaking open the stable, he carried off the goods himself, and then conveyed information of the robbery to Wild, alleging that he had been concerned in it. Blueskin, it will have been seen, was tried and convicted for the robbery, and suffered execution; and Sheppard having also been secured, he too was sentenced to death.

On Monday, 30th August, 1724, a warrant was sent for his execution, together with that of some other convicts, but neither his ingenuity nor his courage forsook him upon this, any more than upon any previous occasion. In the gaol of Newgate there was a hatch within the lodge in which the gaolers sat, which opened into a dark passage, from which there were a few steps leading to the hold containing the condemned cells. It was customary for the prisoners, on their friends coming to see them, to be conducted to this hatch; but any very close communication was prevented by the *surveillance* of the gaolers, and by large iron spikes which surmounted the gate. The visits of Edgeworth Bess to her paramour were not unattended with advantage to the latter, for while in conversation, she took the opportunity of diverting the attention of the gaoler from her, while she delivered the necessary instruments to Sheppard to assist him in his contemplated escape. Subsequent visits enabled Jack to approach the wicket; and by constant filing he succeeded in placing one of the spikes in such a position as that it could be easily wrenched off. On the evening on which the warrant for his execution arrived, Mrs. Maggott, who was an immensely powerful woman, and Bess, going to visit him, he broke off the spike while the keepers were employed in drinking in the lodge, and thrusting his head and shoulders through the aperture, the women pulled him down, and smuggled him

through the outer room, in which the gaolers were indulging themselves, into the street. This second escape not a little increased his notoriety; but an instant pursuit being made, he was compelled to lie close. Consulting with one Page, a butcher, it was determined that they should go to Warnden, in Northamptonshire, together, where the relations of the latter lived; but on arriving there, being treated with indifference, they immediately retraced their steps to London.

On the night after their return, they were walking through Fleet-street, when they saw a watchmaker's shop attended only by a boy, and having passed it, they turned back, and Sheppard, driving his hand through the window, stole three watches, with which they made their escape. They subsequently retired to Finchley for security; but the gaolers of Newgate gaining information of their retreat, took Sheppard into custody, and once more conveyed him to "The Stone Jug".

Such steps were now taken as it was thought would be effectual to prevent his future escape. He was put into a strong room, called the Castle, handcuffed, loaded with a heavy pair of irons, and chained to a staple fixed in the floor. The curiosity of the public being greatly excited by his former escape, he was visited by great numbers of people of all ranks, and scarce any one left him without making him a present in money. Although he did not disdain these substantial proofs of public generosity, which enabled him to obtain those luxuries, which were not provided by the city authorities for his prison fare, his thoughts were constantly fixed on the means of again eluding his keepers; and the opportunity was not long wanting when he might carry his design into execution.

On the fourteenth of October, the sessions began at the Old Bailey, and the keepers being much engaged in attending the Court, he thought rightly, that they would have little time to visit him, and, therefore, that the present juncture would be the most favourable to carry his plan into execution. About two o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, one of the keepers carried him his dinner; and having carefully examined his irons, and found them fast, he left him. Sheppard now immediately proceeded to the completion of the great work of his life, his second escape from Newgate; in describing which we shall extract from Mr. Ainsworth's work of "Jack Sheppard," in which that gentleman has given a lasting fame to our hero, and has founded a most interesting romance on the real circumstances of the life of this daring and extraordinary offender. He says, "Jack Sheppard's first object was to free himself from his hand-cuffs. This he accomplished by holding the chain that connected them firmly between his teeth, and, squeezing his fingers as closely together as possible, he succeeded in drawing his wrists through the manacles. He next twisted the heavy gyves round and round, and partly by main strength, partly by a dexterous and well-applied jerk, snapped asunder the central link, by which they were attached to the padlock. Taking off his stockings, he then drew up the basils as far as he was able, and tied the fragments of the broken chains to his legs, to prevent them from clanking, and impeding his future exertions." Upon a former attempt to make his way up the chimney, he had been impeded by an iron bar which was fixed across it, at a height of a few feet. To remove this obstacle, it was necessary to make an extensive breach in the wall. With the broken links of the chain, which served him in lieu of more efficient implements, he commenced operations just above

the chimney-piece, and soon contrived to pick a hole in the plaster. He found the wall, as he suspected, solidly constructed of brick and stone; and, with the slight and inadequate tools which he possessed, it was a work of infinite skill and labour to get out a single brick. That done, however, he was well aware the rest would be comparatively easy; and as he threw the brick to the ground, he exclaimed triumphantly, "The first step is taken — the main difficulty is overcome."

"Animated by this trifling success, he proceeded with fresh ardour, and the rapidity of his progress was proclaimed by the heap of bricks, stones, and mortar, which before long covered the floor. At the expiration of an hour, by dint of unremitting exertion, he made so large a breach in the chimney that he could stand upright in it. He was now within a foot of the bar, and introducing himself into the hole, he speedily worked his way to it. Regardless of the risk he ran by some heavy stones dropping on his head or feet, — regardless also of the noise made by the falling rubbish, and of the imminent risk to which he was consequently exposed of being interrupted by some of the gaolers, should the sound reach their ears, he continued to pull down large masses of the wall, which he flung upon the floor of the cell. Having worked thus for another quarter of an hour, without being sensible of fatigue, though he was half stifled by the clouds of dust which his exertions raised, he had made a hole about three feet wide and six high, and uncovered the iron bar. Grasping it firmly with both hands, he quickly wrenched it from the stones in which it was mortised, and leapt to the ground. On examination it proved to be a flat bar of iron, nearly a yard in length, and more than an inch square. 'A capital instrument for my

purpose,' thought Jack, shouldering it, 'and worth all the trouble I have had in procuring it.' While he was thus musing, he thought he heard the lock tried. A chill ran through his frame, and grasping the heavy weapon, with which chance had provided him, he prepared to strike down the first person who should enter his cell. After listening attentively for a short time without drawing breath, he became convinced that his apprehensions were groundless, and, greatly relieved, sat down upon the chair to rest himself and prepare for future efforts.

"Acquainted with every part of the gaol, Jack well knew that his only chance of effecting an escape must be by the roof. To reach it would be a most difficult undertaking. Still it was possible, and the difficulty was only a fresh incitement. The mere enumeration of the obstacles which existed would have deterred any spirit less daring than Sheppard's from even hazarding the attempt. Independently of other risks, and the chance of breaking his neck in the descent, he was aware that to reach the leads he should have to break open six of the strongest doors of the prison. Armed, however, with the implement he had so fortunately obtained, he did not despair of success. 'My name will not only be remembered as that of a robber,' he mused, 'but it shall be remembered as that of a bold one; and this night's achievement, if it does nothing else, shall prevent me from being classed with the common herd of depredators.' Roused by this reflection, he grasped the iron bar, which, when he sat down, he had laid upon his knees, and stepped quickly across the room. In doing so, he had to clamber up the immense heap of bricks and rubbish which now littered the floor, amounting almost to a cart-load, and reaching up nearly to the chimney-piece; and having once more got into the chimney, he climbed to a level with the ward

above, and recommenced operations as vigorously as before. He was now aided with a powerful implement, with which he soon contrived to make a hole in the wall.

“The ward which Jack was endeavouring to break was called the Red-room, from the circumstance of its walls having once been painted in that colour; all traces of which, however, had long since disappeared. Like the Castle, which it resembled in all respects, except that it was destitute even of a barrack bedstead, the Red-room was reserved for state prisoners, and had not been occupied since the year 1716, when the gaol was crowded by the Preston rebels. Having made a hole in the wall sufficiently large to pass through, Jack first tossed the bar into the room and then crept after it. As soon as he had gained his feet, he glanced round the bare black walls of the cell, and, oppressed by the misty close atmosphere, exclaimed, ‘I will let a little fresh air into this dungeon: they say it has not been opened for eight years, but I won’t be eight minutes in getting out.’ In stepping across the room, some sharp point in the floor pierced his foot, and stooping to examine it, he found that the wound had been inflicted by a long and rusty nail, which projected from the boards. Totally disregarding the pain, he picked up the nail, and reserved it for future use. Nor was he long in making it available. On examining the door, he found it secured by a large rusty lock, which he endeavoured to pick with the nail he had just acquired: but all his efforts proved ineffectual, he removed the plate that covered it with the bar, and with his fingers contrived to draw back the bolt.

“Opening the door, he then stepped into a dark narrow passage, leading, as he was well aware, to the Chapel. On the left there were doors

communicating with the King's Bench Ward, and the Stone Ward, two large holds on the master debtor's side. But Jack was too well versed in the geography of the place to attempt either of them. Indeed, if he had been ignorant of it, the sound of voices, which he could faintly distinguish, would have served as a caution to him. Hurrying on, his progress was soon checked by a strong door, several inches in thickness and nearly as wide as the passage. Running his hand carefully over it in search of the lock, he perceived, to his dismay, that it was fastened on the other side. After several vain attempts to burst it open, he resolved, as a last alternative, to break through the wall in the part nearest the lock. This was a much more serious task than he anticipated. The wall was of considerable thickness, and built altogether of stone; and the noise he was compelled to make in using the heavy bar, which brought sparks with every splinter he struck off, was so great, that he feared it must be heard by the prisoners on the debtor's side. Heedless, however, of the consequences, he pursued his task. Half an hour's labour, during which he was obliged more than once to pause to regain breath, sufficed to make a hole wide enough to allow a passage for his arm up to the elbow. In this way he was able to force back a ponderous bolt from its socket; and to his unspeakable delight, found that the door instantly yielded. Once more cheered by daylight, he hastened forward and entered the Chapel.

“Situating at the upper part of the south-east angle of the gaol, the Chapel of Old Newgate was divided on the north side into three grated compartments, or pens, as they were termed, allotted to the common debtors and felons. In the north-west angle there was a small pen for female offenders; and on the south, a

more commodious inclosure appropriated to the master debtors and strangers. Immediately beneath the pulpit stood a large circular pen, where malefactors under sentence of death sat to hear the condemned sermon delivered to them, and where they formed a public spectacle to the crowds which curiosity generally attracted on those occasions. To return. Jack had got into one of the pens at the north side of the chapel. The inclosure by which it was surrounded was about twelve feet high; the under part being composed of oaken planks, the upper part of a strong iron grating, surmounted by sharp iron spikes. In the middle there was a gate: it was locked. But Jack speedily burst it open with the iron bar. Clearing the few impediments in his way, he soon reached the condemned pew, where it had once been his fate to sit; and extending himself on the seat endeavoured to snatch a moment's repose. It was denied him, for as he closed his eyes — though but for an instant — the whole scene of his former visit to the place rose before him. There he sat as before, with the heavy fetters on his limbs, and beside him sat his three companions who had since expiated their offences on the gibbet. The chapel was again crowded with visitors, and every eye fixed upon him. So perfect was the illusion, that he could almost fancy he heard the solemn voice of the Ordinary warning him that his race was nearly run, and imploring him to prepare for eternity. From this perturbed state he was roused by the thoughts of his present position, and fancying he heard approaching voices, he started up. On one side of the chapel there was a large grated window, but, as it looked upon the interior of the gaol, Jack preferred following the course he had originally decided upon, to making any attempt in this quarter. Accordingly he proceeded to a gate which stood upon the south,

and guarded the passage communicating with the leads. It was grated and crested with spikes, like that he had just burst open; and thinking it a needless waste of time to force it, he broke off one of the spikes, which he carried with him for further purposes, and then climbed over it. A short flight of steps brought him to a dark passage, into which he plunged. Here he found another strong door, making the fifth he had encountered. Well aware that the doors in this passage were much stronger than those in the entry he had just quitted, he was neither surprised nor dismayed to find it fastened by a lock of unusual size. After repeatedly trying to remove the plate, which was so firmly screwed down that it resisted all his efforts, and vainly attempting to pick it with his spike and nail, he at length, after half an hour's ineffectual labour, wrenched off the box by means of the iron bar, and the door, as he laughingly expressed it, 'was his humble servant.'

"But this difficulty was only overcome to be succeeded by one still greater. Hastening along the passage, he came to the sixth door. For this he was prepared: but he was not prepared for the almost insurmountable difficulties which it presented. Running his hand hastily over it, he was startled to find it one complicated mass of bolts and bars. It seemed as if all the precautions previously taken were here accumulated. Any one less courageous than himself would have abandoned the attempt from the conviction of its utter hopelessness; but though it might for a moment damp his ardour, it could not deter him. Once again he passed his hand over the surface, and carefully noted all the obstacles. There was a lock, apparently more than a foot wide, strongly plated, and girded to the door with thick iron hoops. Below it a prodigiously large bolt was shot into

the socket, and, in order to keep it there, was fastened by a hasp, and further protected by an immense padlock. Besides this, the door was crossed and recrossed by iron bars, clenched by broad-headed nails. An iron fillet secured the socket of the bolt and the box of the lock to the main post of the door-way. Nothing disheartened by this survey, Jack set to work upon the lock, which he attacked with all his implements; — now attempting to pick it with the nail; — now to wrench it off with the bar, but all without effect. He not only failed in making any impression, but seemed to increase the difficulties, for after an hour's toil he had broken the nail, and slightly bent the iron bar. Completely overcome by fatigue, with strained muscles and bruised hands, streaming with perspiration, and with lips so parched that he would gladly have parted with a treasure if he had possessed it for a draught of water, he sunk against the wall, and while in this state was seized with a sudden and strange alarm. He fancied that the turnkeys had discovered his flight, and were in pursuit of him — that they had climbed up the chimney — entered the bed-rooms — tracked him from door to door, and were now only detained by the gate, which he had left unbroken in the chapel. So strongly was he impressed with this idea, that grasping the iron bar with both hands he dashed it furiously against the door, making the passage echo with the blows. By degrees his fears vanished, and, hearing nothing, he grew calmer. His spirits revived, and encouraging himself with the idea that the present impediment, though the greatest, was the last, he set himself seriously to consider how it might best be overcome. On reflection, it occurred to him that he might, perhaps, be able to loosen the iron fillet — a notion no sooner conceived than executed. With incredible labour, and by the

aid of both spike and nail, he succeeded in getting the point of the bar beneath the fillet. Exerting all his energies, and using the bar as a lever, he forced off the iron band, which was full seven feet high, seven inches wide, and two inches thick, and which brought with it, in its fall, the box of the lock, and the socket of the bolt, leaving no further hindrance. Overjoyed beyond measure at having vanquished this apparently insurmountable obstacle, Jack darted through the door.

“Ascending a short flight of steps, Jack found at the summit a door, which, being bolted on the inside, he speedily opened. The fresh air, which blew in his face, greatly revived him. He had now reached what were called the Lower Leads — a flat, covering a part of the prison contiguous to the gateway, and surrounded on all sides by walls about fourteen feet high. On the north stood the battlements of one of the towers of the gate. On this side a flight of wooden steps, protected by a hand-rail, led to a door opening upon the summit of the prison. This door was crested with spikes, and guarded on the right by a bristling semi-circle of similar weapons. Hastily ascending the steps, Jack found the door, as he anticipated, locked. He could have easily forced it, but he preferred a more expeditious mode of reaching the roof which suggested itself to him. Mounting the door he had last opened, he placed his hands on the wall above, and quickly drew himself up. Just as he got on the roof of the prison, St. Sepulchre’s clock struck eight. It was instantly answered by the deep note of St. Paul’s; and the concert was prolonged by other neighbouring churches. Jack had been thus six hours in accomplishing his arduous task.

“Though nearly dark, there was still light enough left to enable him to discern surrounding objects. Through the gloom he distinctly perceived the dome of St. Paul’s, hanging like a black cloud in the air; and, nearer to him, he remarked the golden ball on the summit of the College of Physicians, compared by Garth to a ‘gilded pill’. Other towers and spires; — St. Martin’s, on Ludgate-Hill, and Christ Church, in Newgate-street, were also distinguishable. As he gazed down into the courts of the prison, he could not help shuddering, lest a false step might precipitate him below. To prevent the recurrence of any such escape as that just described, it was deemed expedient, in more recent times, to keep a watchman at the top of Newgate. Not many years ago, two men employed in this duty quarrelled during the night, and in the morning their bodies were found stretched upon the pavement of the yard below. Proceeding along the wall, Jack reached the southern tower, over the battlements of which he clambered, and crossing it, dropped upon the roof of the gate. He then scaled the northern tower, and made his way to the summit of that part of the prison which fronted Giltspur-street. Arrived at the extremity of the building, he found that it overlooked the flat roof of a house, which, as far as he could judge in the darkness, lay at a depth of about twenty feet below.

“Not choosing to hazard so great a fall, Jack turned to examine the building, to see whether any more favourable point of descent presented itself, but could discover nothing but steep walls, without a single available projection. Finding it impossible to descend on any side, without incurring serious risk, Jack resolved to return for his blanket, by the help of which he felt certain of accomplishing a safe landing on the roof of the house in Giltspur-street.

Accordingly he began to retrace his steps, and pursuing the course he had already taken, scaling the two towers, and passing along the walls of the prison, he descended by means of the door upon the Lower Leads. Before he re-entered the prison he hesitated, from a doubt whether he was not fearfully increasing his risk of capture; but, convinced that he had no other alternative, he went on. During all this time he had never quitted the iron bar, and he now grasped it with the firm determination of selling his life dearly if he met with any opposition. A few seconds sufficed to clear the passages through which it had previously cost him more than two hours to force his way. The floor was strewn with screws, nails, fragments of wood and stone, and across the passage lay the heavy iron fillet. He did not disturb any of the litter, but left it as a mark of his prowess. He was now at the entrance of the chapel, and striking the door over which he had previously climbed a violent blow with the bar, it flew open. To vault over the pews was the work of a moment; and having gained the entry leading to the Red Room, he passed through the first door, his progress being only impeded by the pile of broken stones, which he himself had raised. Listening at one of the doors leading to the master-debtors' side, he heard a loud voice chanting a Bacchanalian melody; and the boisterous laughter that accompanied the song, convinced him that no suspicion was entertained in that quarter. Entering the Red Room, he crept through the hole in the wall, descended the chimney, and arrived once more in his old place of captivity. How different were his present feelings, compared with those he had experienced on quitting it! Then, full of confidence, he half doubted his power of accomplishing his designs. Now he had achieved them, and felt assured of success. The vast heap of rubbish on the floor

had been so materially increased by the bricks and plaster thrown down in his attack upon the wall of the Red Room, that it was with some difficulty that he could find the blanket, which was almost buried beneath the pile. He next searched for his stockings and shoes, and when found, put them on. He now prepared to return to the roof, and throwing the blanket over his left arm, and shouldering the iron bar, he again clambered up the chimney, regained the Red Room, hurried along the first passage, crossed the chapel, threaded the entry to the Lower Leads, and in less than three minutes after quitting the Castle, had reached the northern extremity of the prison. Previously to his descent, he had left the nail and spike on the wall, and with these he fastened the blanket to the coping-stone. This done, he let himself carefully down by it, and having only a few feet to drop, alighted in safety.

“Having now got fairly out of Newgate, for the second time, with a heart throbbing with exultation, he hastened to make good his escape. To his great joy he found a small garret door in the roof of the opposite house open; he entered it, crossed the room, in which there was only a small truckle-bed, over which he stumbled, opened another door and gained the stair-head. As he was about to descend, his chains slightly rattled. ‘O lud! what’s that?’ cried a female voice from an adjoining room. ‘Only the dog,’ replied the rough tones of a man, and all was again silent. Securing the chain in the best way he could, Jack then hurried down two pair of stairs, and had nearly reached the lobby, when a door suddenly opened, and two persons appeared, one of whom held a light. Retreating as quickly as he could, Jack opened the first door he came to, entered a room, and

searching in the dark for some place of concealment, fortunately discovered a screen, behind which he crept."

Having lain down here for about two hours, he once more proceeded down stairs, and saw a gentleman take leave of the family and quit the house, lighted by a servant; and as soon as the maid returned, he resolved to venture at all hazards. In stealing down the stairs he stumbled against a chamber door, but instantly recovering himself, he got into the street.

By this time it was after twelve o'clock, and passing by the watch-house of St. Sepulchre, he bid the watchman good night; and going up Holborn, he turned down Gray's Inn Lane, and at about two in the morning, he got into the fields near Tottenham Court Road, where he took shelter in a cow-house, and slept soundly for about three hours. His fetters were still on his legs, and he dreaded the approach of daylight lest he should be discovered. His mind, however, was somewhat relieved for the present, for at seven o'clock the rain began to fall in torrents, so that no one ventured near his hiding-place. Night coming on, the calls of hunger drove him to seek some refreshment; and going to Tottenham Court Road, he ventured to purchase some bread and cheese and small-beer at a chandler's shop. He had during the day been planning various means to procure the release of his legs from the bondage of his chains, and now having forty-five shillings in his possession, he attempted to procure a hammer. His efforts, however, proved ineffectual, and he was compelled to return to his shelter for the night. The next day brought him no relief; and having again gone to the chandler's shop, he once more went back to his place of concealment. The next day was Sunday, and he now beat the basils of his irons with a stone, so that he

might slip them over his heels, but the master of the cow-house coming, interrupted him, and demanded to know how he came there so confined by irons. The answer given was, that he had escaped from Bridewell, where he had been confined because he was unable to give security for the payment of a sum of money for the maintenance of a child he had had sworn to him, and the master of the house desiring him to be gone, then quitted him. A shoemaker soon after coming near, Jack called him, and telling him the same story, induced him, by a bribe of twenty shillings, to procure him a hammer and a punch. They set to work together to remove the irons, and his legs were at length freed from this encumbrance at about five o'clock.

When night came on, our adventurer tied a handkerchief about his head, tore his woollen cap in several places, and also his coat and stockings, so as to have the appearances of a beggar; and in this condition he went to a cellar near Charing-Cross, where he supped on roast veal, and listened to the conversation of the company, all of whom were talking of the escape of Sheppard. On the Monday he sheltered himself at a public-house of little trade in Rupert-street, and conversing with the landlady about Sheppard, he told her it was impossible for him to get out of the kingdom, and the keepers would certainly have him again in a few days; on which the woman wished that a curse might fall on those who should betray him.

On the next day he hired a garret in Newport Market, and soon afterwards, dressing himself like a porter, he went to Blackfriars, to the house of Mr. Applebee, printer of the dying speeches, and delivered a letter, in which he

ridiculed the printer and the Ordinary of Newgate, and inclosed a communication for one of the keepers of the gaol.

Some nights after this he broke open the shop of Mr. Rawlins, a pawnbroker, in Drury Lane, where he stole a sword, a suit of wearing apparel, some snuff-boxes, rings, watches, and other effects to a considerable amount; and determining to make the appearance of a gentleman among his old acquaintance in Drury Lane and Clare Market, he dressed himself in a suit of black and a tie-wig, wore a ruffled shirt, a silver-hilted sword, a diamond ring, and a gold watch, and joined them at supper, though he knew that diligent search was making after him at that very time. On the 31st of October he dined with two women at a public-house in Newgate-street, and about four in the afternoon they all passed under Newgate in a hackney-coach, having first drawn up the blinds. Going in the evening to a public-house in Maypole Alley, Clare Market, Sheppard sent for his mother, and treated her with brandy, when the poor woman dropped on her knees, and begged that he would immediately retire from the kingdom. He promised to do so; but now being grown mad from the effects of the liquor he had drunk, he wandered about from public-house to public-house in the neighbourhood till near twelve o'clock at night, when he was apprehended in consequence of the information of an ale-house boy, who knew him. When taken into custody he was quite senseless, and was conveyed to Newgate in a coach, without being capable of making any resistance, although he had two loaded pistols in his possession at the time. He was now lodged securely enough; and his fame being increased by his recent exploits, he was visited by many persons of distinction, whom he diverted by a recital of the particulars of

many robberies in which he had been concerned, but he invariably concluded his narration by expressing a hope that his visitors would endeavour to procure the exercise of the royal mercy in his behalf, to which he considered that his remarkable dexterity gave him some claim.

Having been already convicted, it was unnecessary that the forms of a trial should be again gone through, and on the 10th of November he was carried to the bar of the Court of King's Bench; when a record of his conviction having been read, and an affidavit made that he was the same person alluded to in it, sentence of death was passed upon him by Mr. Justice Powis, and a rule of court was made for his execution on the following Monday. He subsequently regularly attended chapel in the gaol, and behaved there with apparent decency, but on his quitting its walls, he did not hesitate to endeavour to prevent any seriousness among his fellow prisoners. All his hopes were still fixed upon his being pardoned, and even when the day of execution arrived, he did not appear to have given over all expectations of eluding justice; for having been furnished with a penknife, he put it in his pocket, with a view, when the melancholy procession came opposite Little Turnstile, to have cut the cord that bound his arms, and, throwing himself out of the cart among the crowd, to have run through the narrow passage where the sheriff's officers could not follow on horseback, and he had no doubt but he should make his escape by the assistance of the mob. It was not impossible that this scheme might have succeeded; but before Sheppard left the press-yard, one Watson, an officer, searching his pockets, found the knife, and was cut with it so as to occasion a great effusion of blood. He, however, had yet a farther view to his preservation even after

execution; for he desired his acquaintance to put him into a warm bed as soon as he should be cut down, and to try to open a vein, which he had been told would restore him to life.

He behaved with great decency at the place of execution, and confessed that he had committed two robberies, for which he had been tried, but had been acquitted. His execution took place at Tyburn, on the 16th of November, 1724, in the twenty-third year of his age. He died with difficulty; and there were not wanting those among the crowd assembled, who pitied him for the fate which befel him at so early a period of his life. When he was cut down, his body was delivered over to his friends, who carried it to a public-house in Long Acre; from which it was removed in the evening, and buried in the church-yard of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

The adventures of this notorious offender excited more attention than those of many of our most celebrated warriors. He was, for a considerable time, the principal subject of conversation in all ranks of society. Histories of his life issued from the press in a variety of forms. A pantomimic entertainment was brought forward at Drury-lane theatre, called "Harlequin Sheppard," wherein his adventures, prison-breakings, and other extraordinary escapes, were represented; and another dramatic work was published, as a farce of three acts, called "The Prison-Breaker;" or, "The Adventures of John Sheppard;" and a part of it, with songs, catches, and glees added, was performed at Bartholomew Fair, under the title of "The Quaker's Opera."

The arts too, were busied in handing to posterity memoranda for us never to follow the example of Jack Sheppard.

Sir James Thornhill, the first painter of the day, painted his portrait, from which engravings in mezzotinto were made; and the few still in preservation are objects of curiosity. On this subject the following lines were written at the time:

—

“Thornhill, ‘tis thine to gild with fame
The obscure, and raise the humble name;
To make the form elude the grave,
And Sheppard from oblivion save.

Though life in vain the wretch implores,
An exile on the farthest shores,
Thy pencil brings a kind reprieve,
And bids the dying robber live.

This piece to latest time shall stand,
And show the wonders of thy hand:
Thus former masters graced their name,
And gave egregious robbers fame.

Appelles Alexander drew,
Caesar is to Aurelius due;
Cromwell in Lily’s works doth shine,
And Sheppard, Thornhill, lines in thine.”

In modern times, the adventures of Sheppard and his contemporaries have become even better known and more remarked, in consequence of the work to which we have already alluded, and from which we have made an extract which details his exploits with great exactness; but at the same time gives to them a degree of romantic interest to which they are hardly entitled. The *rage* for house-breakers has become immense, and the fortunes of the most notorious and the most successful of thieves have been made the subject of entertainments at no fewer than six of the London theatres.

Blewitt, whose name is mentioned in the foregoing sketch, as one of the earliest companions of Sheppard, was eventually hanged, with others, for the murder of a fellow name Ball, a publican and ex-thief, who lived in the Mint, and who had provoked the anger of his murderers, by threatening to denounce them. Their execution took place on the 12th of April, 1726.

Appendix A.ii —The *Newgate Calendar*: Jonathan Wild²

The name of this most notorious offender must be familiar to all; his arts and practices are scarcely less universally known. The power exercised by him over thieves of all classes, and of both sexes, was so great as that he may have been considered their chief and director, at the same time that he did not disdain to become their coadjutor, or the participator in the proceeds of their villany. The system which he pursued will be sufficiently disclosed in the notices which follow of the various transactions in which he was engaged; but it appears to have been founded upon the principle of employing a thief so long as his efforts proved profitable, or until their suspension should be attended with advantage, and then of terminating his career in the most speedy and efficacious manner, by the gallows.

The subject of this narrative was born at Wolverhampton in Staffordshire, about the year 1682; and his parents being persons of decent character and station, he was put to school, where he gained a competent knowledge of the ordinary minor branches of education. At the age of fifteen he was apprenticed to a buckle-maker, at Birmingham; and at the age of twenty-two, his time having expired, he was united to a young woman of respectability, whom he was well able to support by the exercise of his trade. His wife soon afterwards presented him with a son; but getting tired of a life of quietude, he started for London, leaving his wife and child destitute, and soon gained fresh employment. His disposition, however, led him into extravagances, and having contracted some

² Camden Pelham, 'Jonathan Wild', *The Chronicles of Crime; or, The New Newgate Calendar*, 1 (London: Thomas Tegg, 1841), pp. 51-65.

debts, he was arrested, and thrown into Wood-street Compter, where, according to his own statement, "it was impossible but he must, in some measure, be led into the secrets of the criminals there under confinement, and particularly under Mr. Hitchin's management." He remained in prison upwards of four years, and the opportunity which was afforded him, of becoming acquainted with the persons, as well as the practices of thieves, was not lost upon him. A woman named Mary Milliner, one of the most abandoned prostitutes and pickpockets on the town, who was also in custody for debt, soon attracted his attention, and an intimacy having commenced in the prison, on their discharge they lived together as man and wife. The possession of a small sum of money having been obtained, they opened a public-house in Cock Alley, Cripplegate; and from the notoriety of Mrs. Milliner, and her intimate acquaintance with the thieves of the metropolis, it soon became the resort of the lowest of the class. While Wild was thus pursuing his course to his pecuniary advantage, however, he lost no time in acquiring a proficiency in all the arts of knavery; and having, with great assiduity, penetrated into the secrets of his customers, he started as a "fence," or receiver of stolen goods; and by this means he obtained that power, which subsequently proved so useful to him, and so dangerous to those who entrusted him with their secrets. He was at first at little trouble to dispose of the articles brought to him by thieves at something less than their real value, no law existing for the punishment of the receivers of stolen goods; but the evil having increased at length to an enormous degree, it was deemed expedient by the legislature to frame a law for its suppression; and an act was therefore passed, consigning such

as should be convicted of receiving goods, knowing them to have been stolen, to transportation for the space of fourteen years.

This was a check of no very trifling character to his proceedings, but his imagination suggested to him a plan by which he would save himself from all his profits being lost. He therefore called a meeting of thieves, and observed that, if they carried their booties to such of the pawnbrokers as were known to be not much affected by scruples of conscience, they would scarcely receive on the property one-fourth of the real value; and that if they were offered to strangers, either for sale or by way of deposit, it was a chance of ten to one but the parties offering were rendered amenable to the laws. The most industrious thieves, he said, were now scarcely able to obtain a livelihood, and must either submit to be half-starved, or live in a great and continual danger of Tyburn. He had, however, devised a plan for removing the inconveniences which existed, which he would act upon most honourably, provided they would follow his advice, and behave towards him with equal honesty. He proposed, therefore, that when they made prize of anything, they should deliver it to him, instead of carrying it to the pawnbroker, saying, that he would restore the goods to the owners, by which means greater sums might be raised, while the thieves would remain perfectly secure from detection. This proposition was one which met with universal approbation, and the plan was immediately carried into effect, convenient places being established as the depositaries of the stolen goods. The plan thus concerted, it became the business of Wild to apply to persons who had been robbed, and pretending to be greatly concerned at their misfortunes, to say, that some suspected goods had been stopped by a friend of his, a broker, who would

be willing to give them up; and he failed not then to throw out a hint that the broker merited some reward for his disinterested conduct and for his trouble, and to exact a promise that no disagreeable consequences should follow, because the broker had omitted to secure the thieves as well as the property. The person whose goods had been carried off was not generally unwilling by this means to save himself the trouble and expense of a prosecution, and the money paid was generally sufficient to remunerate the "broker," as well as his agent. This trade was successfully carried out for several years, and considerable sums of money were amassed; but at length another and safer plan was adopted. The name of our hero having become pretty extensively known, instead of applying to the parties who had been plundered, he opened an office, to which great numbers resorted, in the hope of obtaining the restitution of their property. In this situation he lost no opportunity of procuring for himself the greatest credit, as well as the greatest profit possible. He made a great parade in his business, and assumed a consequence which enabled him more effectually to impose upon the public. When persons came to his office, they were informed that they must each pay a crown in consideration of receiving his advice. This ceremony being despatched, he entered into his book the name and address of the applicants, with all the particulars they could communicate respecting the robberies, and the rewards that would be given provided the goods were recovered: they were then required to call again in a few days, when, he said, he hoped he should be able to give them some agreeable intelligence. Upon returning to know the success of his inquiries, he told them that he had received some information concerning their goods, but that the agent he had employed

to trace them had apprised him that the robbers pretended they could raise more money by pawning the property than by restoring it for the promised reward; saying, however, that if he could by any means procure an interview with the villains, he doubted not of being able to settle matters agreeably to the terms already stipulated; but, at the same time, artfully insinuating that the safest and most expeditious method would be to make some addition to the reward; and thus having secured the promise of the largest sum that could be obtained, he would direct a third call, and then the goods would be ready to be delivered. It will be seen that considerable advantages were derived from examining the person who had been robbed; for by that means he became acquainted with particulars which the thieves might omit to communicate, and was enabled to detect them if they concealed any part of their booties. Being in possession of the secrets of every notorious thief, they were under the necessity of complying with whatever terms he thought proper to exact, because they were aware that, by opposing his inclination, they would involve themselves in the most imminent danger of being sacrificed to the injured laws of their country; and thus he was enabled to impose both on the robber and the robbed. The accumulation of money by these artifices enabled Wild to maintain the character of a man of consequence; and to support his imaginary dignity, he dressed in laced clothes and wore a sword, which martial instrument he first exercised on the person of his accomplice and reputed wife, Mary Milliner, who having on some occasion provoked him, he instantly struck at her with it, and cut off one of her ears. This event was the cause of the separation; but in acknowledgement of the great services she had rendered him, by introducing

him to so advantageous a *profession*, he allowed her a weekly stipend till her decease.

In the year 1715 Wild removed from his house in Cock Alley to a Mrs. Seagoe's, in the Old Bailey, where he pursued his business with the usual success; but while resident there, a controversy of a most singular character arose between him and a fellow named Charles Hitchin, who had been city marshal, but had been suspended for mal practices, to whom before his adoption of the lucrative profession which he now carried on, he had acted as assistant. These celebrated co-partners in villany, under the pretext of controlling the enormities of the dissolute, paraded the streets from Temple-bar to the Minories, searching houses of ill-fame, and apprehending disorderly and suspected persons; but those who complimented the reformers with *douceurs*, were allowed to practise every species of wickedness with impunity. Hitchin and Wild, however, grew jealous of each other, and an open rupture taking place, they parted, each pursuing the business of thief-taking on his own account.

Our readers will doubtless be somewhat surprised to hear that these rivals in villany appealed to the public, and attacked each other with all possible scurrility in pamphlets and advertisements. Never was the press so debased as in publishing the productions of their pens. Hitchin published what he called "The Regulator; or a Discovery of Thieves and Thief-takers." It is an ignorant and impudent insult to the reader, and replete with abuse of Wild, whom he brands, in his capacity of thief-taker, with being worse than the thief. Wild retorts with great bitterness; but Hitchin having greatly debased the respectable post of city marshal, the lord mayor suspended him from that office. In order to repair his

loss, he determined, as the most prudent step, to strive to bury his aversion, and confederate with Wild. To effect this, he wrote as follows:

“I am sensible that you are let into the knowledge of the secrets of the Compter, particularly with relation to the securing of pocket-books; but your experience is inferior to mine: I can put you in a far better method than you are acquainted with, and which may be done with safety; for though I am suspended, I still retain the power of acting as constable, and notwithstanding I cannot be heard before my lord mayor as formerly, I have interest among the aldermen upon any complaint.

“But I must first tell you that you spoil the trade of thief-taking, in advancing greater rewards than are necessary. I give but half-a-crown a book, and when thieves and pickpockets see you and me confederate, they will submit to our terms, and likewise continue their thefts, for fear of coming to the gallows by our means. You shall take a turn with me, as my servant or assistant, and we’ll commence our rambles this night.”

Wild it appears readily accepted the ex-marshal’s proposals, and they accordingly proceeded to take their walks together, imposing upon the unwary and confederating with thieves, whom at the same time they did not hesitate to make their slaves. One or two instances of their mode of doing business may not be uninteresting. They are taken from a pamphlet written by Wild, and may therefore be supposed to be correct.

“A biscuit-baker near Wapping having lost a pocket-book containing, among other papers, an exchequer bill for 100*l.*, applied to Wild for its recovery: the latter advised him to advertise it, and stop the payment of the bill, which he

did accordingly; but having no account of his property, he came to Wild several times about it, and at length told him that he had received a visit from a tall man, with a long peruke and sword, calling himself the city-marshal, who asked him if he had lost his pocket-book? He said that he had, and desired to know the inquirer's reasons for putting such a question, or whether he could give him any intelligence; but he replied, No, he could not give him any intelligence of it as yet, and wished to be informed whether he had employed any person to search after it? He said that he had employed one Wild; whereupon the marshal told him he was under a mistake; that he should have applied to him, as he was the only person in England that could serve him, being well assured it was entirely out of the power of Wild, or any of those fellows, to know where the pocket-book was (this was very certain, he having it at that time in his custody); and begged to know the reward that would be given? The biscuit-baker replied that he would give ten pounds, but the marshal said that a greater reward should be offered, for that exchequer bills and those things were ready money, and could immediately be sold; and that if he had employed him in the beginning, and offered forty or fifty pounds, he would have served him. Wild gave it as his opinion, that the pocket-book was in the marshal's possession, and that it would be to no purpose to continue advertising it; and he advised the owner rather to advance his bidding, considering what hands the note was in, especially as the marshal had often told him how easily he could dispose of bank-notes and exchequer-notes at gaming-houses, which he very much frequented. Pursuant to this advice, the losing party went to the marshal, and bid forty pounds for this pocket-book and bill, but 'Zounds, sir,' said the marshal, 'you are too late!' and

that was all the satisfaction he gave him. Thus was the poor biscuit-baker tricked out of his exchequer-bill, which was paid to another person, though it could never be traced back; but it happened a short time after, that some of the young fry of pickpockets, under the tuition of the marshal, fell out in sharing the money given them for this very pocket-book; whereupon one of them came to Wild, and discovered the whole matter, viz. that he had sold the pocket-book, with the 100/. exchequer-note in it, and other bills, to the city-marshal, at a tavern in Aldersgate-street, for four or five guineas.”

“The marshal going one night up Ludgate Hill, observed a well-dressed woman walking before, whom he told Wild was a lewd woman, for that he saw her talking with a man. This was no sooner spoke but he seized her, and asked who she was. She made answer that she was a bailiff’s wife. ‘You are more likely to be a prostitute,’ said the marshal, ‘and as such you shall go to the Compter.’

“Taking the woman through St. Paul’s churchyard, she desired liberty to send for some friends, but he would not comply with her request. He forced her into the Nag’s Head tavern in Cheapside, where he presently ordered a hot supper and plenty of wine to be brought in; commanding the female to keep at a distance from him, and telling her that he did not permit such vermin to sit in his company, though he intended to make her pay the reckoning. When the supper was brought to the table, he fell to it lustily, and would not allow the woman to eat any part of it with him, or to come near the fire, though it was extreme cold weather. When he had supped he stared round, and applying himself to her, told her that if he had been an informer, or such a fellow, she would have called for eatables and wine herself, and not have given him the trouble of direction, or

else would have slipped a piece into his hand; adding, 'You may do what you please; but I can assure you it is in my power, if I see a woman in the hands of informers, to discharge her, and commit them. You are not so ignorant but you must guess my meaning.' She replied, 'that she had money enough to pay for the supper, and about three-crowns more;' and this desirable answer being given, he ordered his attendant to withdraw, while he compounded the matter with her.

"When Wild returned, the gentlewoman was civilly asked to sit by the fire, and eat the remainder of the supper, and in all respects treated very kindly, only with a pretended reprimand to give him better language whenever he should speak to her for the future; and, after another bottle drunk at her expense, she was discharged."

The object of these allegations on the part of Wild may be easily seen, and the effect which he desired was at length produced; for the marshal, having been suspended, and subsequently fined twenty pounds, and pilloried, for a crime too loathsome to be named, he was at length compelled to retire; and thus he left Wild alone to execute his plans of depredation upon the public. The latter, not unmindful of the tenure upon which his reputation hung, was too wary to allow discontent to appear among his followers, and therefore he found it to his interest to take care that where he promised them protection, his undertaking should not be neglected or pass unfulfilled. His powers in supporting his word were greater than can be well imagined, in the present state of things, where so much corruption has been got rid of; and where his influence among persons in office failed him, his exertions in procuring the testimony of false witnesses to rebut that evidence which was truly detailed, and the nature of which he could

always learn beforehand, generally enabled him to secure the object, which he had in view. His threats, however, were not less amply fulfilled than his promises; and his vengeance once declared was never withdrawn, and seldom failed in being carried out.

By his subjecting such as incurred his displeasure to the punishment of the law, he obtained the rewards offered for pursuing them to conviction; and greatly extended his ascendancy over the other thieves, who considered him with a kind of awe; while, at the same time, he established his character as being a man of great public utility.

A few anecdotes of the life and proceedings of this worthy will sufficiently exhibit the system which he pursued.

A lady of fortune being on a visit in Piccadilly, her servants, leaving her sedan at the door, went to refresh themselves at a neighbouring public-house. Upon their return the vehicle was not to be found; in consequence of which the men immediately went to Wild, and having informed him of their loss, and complimented him with the usual fee, they were desired to call upon him again in a few days. Upon their second application Wild extorted from them a considerable reward, and then directed them to attend the chapel in Lincoln's-inn-Fields on the following morning, during the time of prayers. The men went according to the appointment, and under the piazzas of the chapel perceived the chair, which upon examination they found to contain the velvet seat, curtains, and other furniture, and that it had received no kind of damage.

A thief of most infamous character, named Arnold Powel, being confined in Newgate, on a charge of having robbed a house in the neighbourhood of Golden

Square of property to a great amount, was visited by Jonathan, who informed him that, in consideration of a sum of money, he would save his life; adding that if the proposal was rejected, he should inevitably die at Tyburn for the offence on account of which he was then imprisoned. The prisoner, however, not believing that it was in Wild's power to do him any injury, bade him defiance. He was brought to trial; but through a defect of evidence he was acquitted. Having gained intelligence that Powel had committed a burglary in the house of Mr. Eastlick, near Fleet Ditch, Wild caused that gentleman to prosecute the robber. Upon receiving information that a bill was found for the burglary, Powel sent for Wild, and a compromise was effected according to the terms which Wild himself had proposed, in consequence of which Powel was assured that his life should be preserved. Upon the approach of the sessions Wild informed the prosecutor that the first and second days would be employed in other trials; and as he was willing Mr. Eastlick should avoid attending with his witnesses longer than was necessary, he would give timely notice when Powel would be arraigned. But he contrived to have the prisoner put to the bar; and no persons appearing to prosecute, he was necessarily dismissed; and the court ordered Mr. Eastlick's recognisances to be estreated. Powel was ordered to remain in custody till the next sessions, there being another indictment against him; and Mr. Eastlick represented the behaviour of Wild to the court, who reprimanded him with great severity. Powel now put himself into a salivation, in order to avoid being brought to trial the next sessions; but, notwithstanding this stratagem, he was arraigned and convicted, and was executed on the 20th of March, 1717.

At this time Wild quitted his apartments at Mrs. Seagoe's, and hired a house adjoining to the Coopers' Arms, on the opposite side of the Old Bailey. His unexampled villanies were now become an object of so much consequence, as to excite the particular attention of the legislature; and in the year 1718 an act was passed, deeming every person guilty of a capital offence who should accept a reward in consequence of restoring stolen effects without prosecuting the thief. It was the general opinion that this law would effectually suppress the iniquitous practices he had carried on; but, after some interruption to his proceedings, he devised means for evading it, which were for several years attended with success.

He now declined the custom of receiving money from the persons who applied to him; but, upon the second or third time of calling, informed them that all he had been able to learn respecting their business was, that if a sum of money was left at an appointed place, their property would be restored the same day. Sometimes, as the person robbed was returning from Wild's house he was accosted in the street by a man who delivered the stolen effects, at the same time producing a note, expressing the sum that was to be paid for them; but in cases where he supposed danger was to be apprehended, he advised people to advertise that whoever would bring the stolen goods to Jonathan Wild should be rewarded, and no questions asked.

In the first two instances it could not be proved that he either saw the thief, received the goods, or accepted of a reward; and in the latter case he acted agreeably to the directions of the injured party, and there appeared no reason to criminate him as being in confederacy with the felons.

Our adventurer's business had by this time so much increased, that he opened an office in Newtoner's-lane, to the management of which he appointed his man Abraham Mendez, a Jew. This fellow proved a remarkably industrious and faithful servant to Jonathan, who entrusted him with matters of the greatest importance, and derived great advantage from his labours. The species of despotic government which he exercised may be well collected from the following case: — He had inserted in his book a gold watch, a quantity of fine lace, and other property of considerable value, which one John Butler had stolen from a house at Newington Green; but Butler, instead of coming to account as usual, gave up his felonious practices, and lived on the produce of his booty. Wild, highly enraged at being excluded his share, determined to pursue every possible means to secure his conviction.

Being informed that he lodged at a public house in Bishopsgate-street, he went to it early one morning, when Butler, hearing him ascending the stairs, jumped out of the window of his room, and climbing over the wall of the yard got into the street. Wild broke open the door of the room, but was disappointed at finding that the man of whom he was in pursuit had escaped. In the meantime Butler ran into a house the door of which stood open, and descending to the kitchen, where some women were washing, told them he was pursued by a bailiff, and they advised him to conceal himself in the coal-hole. Jonathan coming out of the ale-house, and seeing a shop on the opposite side of the way open, inquired of the master, who was a dyer, whether a man had not taken refuge in his house? The dyer answered in the negative, saying he had not left his shop more than a minute since it had been opened. Wild then requested to search the

house, and the dyer having readily complied, he proceeded to the kitchen, and asked the women if they knew whether a man had taken shelter in the house. They also denied that they had, but on his informing them that the man he sought was a thief, they said he would find him in the coal-hole.

Having procured a candle, Wild and his attendants searched the place without effect, and they examined every part of the house with no better success. He observed that the villain must have escaped into the street; but the dyer saying that he had not quitted the shop, and it was impossible that a man could pass to the street without his knowledge, they all again went into the cellar, and after some time spent in searching, the dyer turned up a large vessel used in his business, and Butler appeared.

Butler, however, knowing the means by which an accommodation might be effected, directed our hero to go to his lodging, and look behind the head of the bed, where he would find what would recompense him for his time and trouble. Wild went to the place, and found what perfectly satisfied him; but as Butler had been apprehended in a public manner, the other was under the necessity of taking him before a magistrate, who committed him for trial. He was tried at the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey; but, by the artful management of Wild, instead of being condemned to die, he was only sentenced to transportation.

The increased quantity of unclaimed property now in his hands, compelled Wild to seek some new mode of disposing of it, in a manner which should benefit him; and with this view he purchased a sloop, in order to transport the goods to Holland and Flanders, where he conceived he should find an easy market for them. The command of his vessel was entrusted to a fellow named Johnson, a

notorious thief; and Ostend was selected by him as the port to which the vessel should principally trade. The goods, however, not being all disposed of there, he would carry them to Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, and other places. In return he brought home lace, wine, brandy, and the other commodities of the countries which he visited, which he always contrived to land without affording any trouble to the officers of his Majesty's customs. When this traffic had continued for about two years, a circumstance occurred which entirely and effectually prevented its being any longer carried on. Five pieces of lace were missing on the arrival of the ship in England, and Johnson, deeming the mate to be answerable for its production, deducted their value from the amount due to him for his pay. The latter was naturally violently irritated at this harsh proceeding, and he forthwith lodged an information against his captain, for running goods subject to exciseable duties. The vessel was in consequence seized, and Johnson was cast into prison for penalties to the amount of 700*l*. This was of course the ruin of the commercial proceedings; and the only remaining subject to be touched upon in this sketch is that which proved the ruin, and the termination of the career of Jonathan Wild.

Johnson having obtained his liberty from the government prosecution, soon returned to his old practices of robbery; but it was not long before a disagreement took place between him and Thomas Edwards, the keeper of a house which was the resort of thieves, in Long-lane, with respect to the division of some spoil, and meeting one day in the Strand, a scene of mutual recrimination took place between them, and they were at length both taken into custody. Johnson was bailed by Wild, and Edwards gained his liberty by there

being no prosecution against him; but his enmity being now diverted in some degree from Johnson to Wild, he was no sooner at large than he gave information against him, in consequence of which, his warehouses being searched, a great quantity of stolen goods was discovered. It was pretended that the property belonged to Johnson, and Edwards was arrested at his suit for a supposed debt, and lodged in the Marshalsea; but he soon procured bail. His anger against Johnson for this act was much increased, and he determined to have his revenge upon him; and meeting him in the Whitechapel-road, he gave him into the custody of an officer, who conveyed him to a neighbouring ale-house. Wild being sent for, made his appearance, accompanied by Quilt Arnold, one of his assistants, and they soon raised a riot, in the midst of which the prisoner ran off. Information was immediately given of the escape, and of Wild's interference in it; and the attention of the authorities being now called to this notorious offender, he judged it prudent to abscond, and he remained concealed for three weeks. He was unaware of the extent of the danger which threatened him, however, and at the end of that time he returned to his house. Being apprised of this, Mr. Jones, high-constable of Holborn division, went to his house in the Old Bailey; and on the 15th of February, 1725, apprehended him and Quilt Arnold, and took them before Sir John Fryer, who committed them to Newgate, on a charge of having assisted in the escape of Johnson.

On Wednesday, the 24th of the same month, Wild moved to be either admitted to bail or discharged, or brought to trial that session; and on the following Friday a warrant of detainer was produced against him in Court, to which were affixed the following articles of information: —

I. That for many years past he had been a confederate with great numbers of highwaymen, pick-pockets, housebreakers, shop-lifters, and other thieves.

II. That he had formed a kind of corporation of thieves, of which he was the head or director; and that notwithstanding his pretended services in detecting and prosecuting offenders, he procured such only to be hanged as concealed their booty, or refused to share it with him.

III. That he had divided the town and country into so many districts, and appointed distinct gangs for each, who regularly accounted with him of their robberies. That he had also a particular set to steal at churches in time of divine service; and likewise other moving detachments to attend at court on birth-days, balls, &c. and at both houses of parliament, circuits, and country fairs.

IV. That the persons employed by him were for the most part felon convicts, who had returned from transportation before the time for which they were transported was expired; and that he made choice of them to be his agents, because they could not be legal evidences against him, and because he had it in his power to take from them what part of the stolen goods he thought fit, and otherwise use them ill, or hang them, as he pleased.

V. That he had from time to time supplied such convicted felons with money and clothes, and lodged them in his own house, the better to conceal them: particularly some against whom there are now informations for counterfeiting and diminishing broad-pieces and guineas.

VI. That he had not only been a receiver of stolen goods, as well as of writings of all kinds, for near fifteen years past, but had frequently been a confederate, and robbed along with the above-mentioned convicted felons.

VII. That in order to carry on these vile practices, and to gain some credit with the ignorant multitude, he usually carried a short silver staff, as a badge of authority from the government, which he used to produce when he himself was concerned in robbing.

VIII. That he had, under his care and direction, several warehouses for receiving and concealing stolen goods; and also a ship for carrying off jewels, watches, and other valuable goods, to Holland, where he had a superannuated thief for his factor.

IX. That he kept in pay several artists to make alterations, and transform watches, seals, snuff-boxes, rings, and other valuable things, that they might not be known, several of which he used to present to such persons as he thought might be of service to him.

X. That he seldom or never helped the owners to the notes and papers they had lost unless he found them able exactly to specify and describe them, and then often insisted on having more than half their value.

XI. And, lastly, it appeared that he had often sold human blood, by procuring false evidence to swear persons into facts of which they were not guilty; sometimes to prevent them from being evidences against himself, and at other times for the sake of the great rewards given by the government.

The information of Mr. Jones was also read in court, setting forth that two persons would be produced to accuse the prisoner of capital offences. The men alluded to in the affidavit were John Follard and Thomas Butler, who had been convicted, but pardoned on condition of their appearing to support the prosecution against their former master. On the 12th of April a motion for the

postponement of the trial until the ensuing sessions was made on behalf of Wild, and after some discussion it was granted; the ground of the postponement being alleged to be the absence of two material witnesses for the defence, named — Hays, of the Packhorse, Turnham Green, and — Wilson, a clothier at Frome, in Somersetshire.

On Saturday, May 15, 1725, the trial came on, and the prisoner was then arraigned on an indictment for privately stealing in the house of Catherine Stretham, in the parish of St. Andrew, Holborn, fifty yards of lace, the property of the said Catherine, on the 22d of January in the same year.

He was also indicted for feloniously receiving from the said Catherine, on the 10th of March, the sum of ten guineas, on account and under pretence of restoring the said lace, and procuring the apprehension and prosecution of the person by whom the same was stolen.

Before the trial came on, the prisoner was not a little industrious in endeavouring to establish a feeling in his favour, and he distributed a great number of printed papers among the jurymen and others walking about the court, entitled, "A List of person discovered, apprehended, and convicted of several robberies on the highway; and also for burglaries and housebreaking; and also for returning from transportation; by Jonathan Wild." The list contained the names of thirty-five persons for robbing on the highway, twenty-two for housebreaking, and ten for returning from transportation, and the following note was appended to it.

“Several others have been also convicted for the like crimes; but, remembering not the persons’ names who had been robbed, I omit the criminals’ names.

“Please to observe that several others have been also convicted for shoplifting, picking of pockets, &c. by the female sex, which are capital crimes, and which are too tedious to be inserted here, and the prosecutors not willing of being exposed.

“In regard, therefore, of the numbers above convicted, some that have yet escaped justice, and endeavouring to take away the life of the said

“JONATHAN WILD.”

The prisoner being put to the bar, requested that the witnesses might be examined apart, which was complied with.

The trial then commenced, and the first witness called was Henry Kelly, who deposed that by the prisoner’s direction he went, in company with Margaret Murphy, to the prosecutor’s shop, under pretence of buying some lace; that he stole a tin box, and gave it to Murphy in order the deliver to Wild, who waited in the street for the purpose of receiving their booty, and rescuing them if they should be taken into custody; that they returned together to Wild’s house, where the box being opened, was found to contain eleven pieces of lace; that Wild said he could afford to give no more than five guineas, as he should not be able to get more than ten guineas for returning the goods to the owner; that the witness received as his share three guineas and a crown, and that Murphy had what remained of the five guineas.

Margaret Murphy was next sworn, and her evidence corresponded in every particular with that of the former witness.

Catherine Stretham, the elder, deposed that between three and four in the afternoon of the 22nd of January, a man and woman came to her house, pretending that they wanted to purchase some lace; that she showed them two or three parcels, to the quality and price of which they objected; and that in about three minutes after they had left the shop she missed a tin box, containing a quantity of lace, the value of which she estimated at fifty pounds.

The prisoner's counsel on this contended, that he could not be legally convicted, because the indictment positively expressed that *he stole* the lace *in* the house, whereas it had been proved in evidence that he was at a considerable distance outside when the fact was committed. They allowed that he might be liable to conviction as an accessory before the fact, or for receiving the property, knowing it to be stolen; but conceived that he could not be deemed guilty of a capital felony, unless the indictment declared (as the act directs) that he did *assist, command, or hire*.

Lord Raymond, who presided, in summing up the evidence, observed that the guilt of the prisoner was a point beyond all dispute; but that, as a similar case was not to be found in the law-books, it became his duty to act with great caution: he was not perfectly satisfied that the construction urged by the counsel for the crown could be put upon the indictment; and, as the life of a fellow-creature was at stake, he recommended that prisoner to the mercy of the jury, who brought in their verdict Not Guilty.

Wild was then arraigned on the second indictment, which alleged an offence committed during his confinement in Newgate. The indictment being opened by the counsel for the crown, the following clause in an act passed in the fourth year of the reign of George the First was ordered to be read: —

“And whereas there are divers persons who have secret acquaintance with felons, and who make it their business to help persons to their stolen goods, and by that means gain money from them, which is divided between them and the felons, whereby they greatly encourage such offenders; be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, that whenever any person taketh money or reward, directly or indirectly, under pretence or upon account of helping any person or persons to any stolen goods or chattels, every such person so taking money or reward as aforesaid (unless such person do apprehend or cause to be apprehended such felon who stole the same, and give evidence against him) shall be guilty of felony, according to the nature of the felony committed in stealing such goods, and in such and the same manner as if such offender had stolen such goods and chattels in the manner, and with such circumstances, as the same were stolen.”

Mrs. Stretham then, having repeated the evidence which she had before given, went on to state that on the evening of the robbery she went to the house of the prisoner in order to employ him in recovering the goods, but that not finding him at home, she advertised them, offering a reward of fifteen guineas for their return, and promising that no questions should be asked. The advertisement proved ineffectual, and she therefore again went to the house of the prisoner, and seeing him, by his desire she gave an account of the transaction

and of the appearance of the thieves. He promised to inquire after her property, and desired her to call again in a few days. She did so, and at this second visit he informed her that he had gained some information respecting her goods, and expected more; and a man who was present said that he thought that Kelly, who had been tried for passing plated shillings, was the offender. The witness again went to the prisoner on the day on which he was apprehended, and said that she would give twenty-five guineas rather than not have her lace back; on which he told her not to be in too great a hurry, for that the people who had stolen the lace were out of town, and that he should soon cause a disagreement between them, by which he should secure the property on more easy terms. On the 10th of March, she received a message, that if she would go to the prisoner in Newgate, and take ten guineas with her, her lace would be returned to her. She went to him accordingly, and a porter being called, he gave her a letter, saying it was addressed to the person to whom he was directed to apply for the lace, and the porter would accompany her to carry the box home. She declined going herself, and then the prisoner desired her to give the money to the porter, who would go for her and fetch the goods, but said that he could not go without it, for that the people who had the lace would not give it up without being paid. She gave the money and the man went away, but in a short time he returned with a box sealed up, but not the box which she had lost. On opening it, she found it contained all her lace except one piece. She asked the prisoner what satisfaction he expected, when he answered "Not a farthing; I have no interested views in matters of this kind, but act from a principle of serving people under misfortune. I hope I shall soon be able to recover the other piece of lace, and to return you

the ten guineas, and perhaps cause the thief to be apprehended. For the service I can render you I shall only expect your prayers. I have many enemies, and know not what will be the consequence of this imprisonment.”

The prisoner’s counsel argued, that as Murphy had deposed that Wild, Kelly, and she, were concerned in the felony, the former could by no means be considered as coming within the description of the act on which the indictment was founded; for the act in question was not meant to operate against the actual perpetrators of felony, but to subject such persons to punishment as held a correspondence with felons.

The counsel for the crown observed, that from the evidence adduced, no doubt could remain of the prisoner’s coming under the meaning of the act, since it had been proved that he had engaged in combinations with felons, and had not discovered them.

The judge was of the opinion that the case of the prisoner was clearly within the meaning of the act; for it was plain that he had maintained a secret correspondence with felons, and received money for restoring stolen goods to the owners, which money was divided between him and the felons, whom he did not prosecute. The jury pronounced him guilty, and he was sentenced to be executed at Tyburn on Monday the 24th of May, 1725.

When he was under sentence of death, he frequently declared that he thought the services he had rendered the public in returning the stolen goods to the owners, and apprehending felons, was so great, as justly to entitle him to the royal mercy. He said that had he considered his case as being desperate, he should have taken timely measures for inducing some powerful friends at

Wolverhampton to intercede in his favour; and that he thought it not unreasonable to entertain hopes of obtaining a pardon through the interest of some of the dukes, earls, and other persons of high distinction who had recovered their property through his means.

He was observed to be in an unsettled state of mind; and being asked whether he knew the cause thereof, he said he attributed his disorder to the many wounds he had received in apprehending felons; and particularly mentioned two fractures of his skull, and his throat being cut by Blueskin.

He declined attending divine service in the chapel, excusing himself on account of his infirmities, and saying that there were many people highly exasperated against him, and therefore he could not expect but that his devotions would be interrupted by their insulting behaviour. He said he had fasted four days, which had greatly increased his weakness. He asked the Ordinary the meaning of the words "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;" and what was the state of the soul immediately after its departure from the body? He was advised to direct his attention to matters of more importance, and sincerely to repent of the crimes he had committed.

By his desire the Ordinary administered the sacrament to him; and during the ceremony he appeared to be somewhat attentive and devout. The evening preceding the day on which he suffered he inquired of the Ordinary whether suicide could be deemed a crime; and after some conversation, he pretended to be convinced that self-murder was a most impious offence against the Almighty; but about two in the morning, he endeavoured to put an end to his life by drinking laudanum. On account of the largeness of the dose, and his having

fasted for a considerable time, no other effect was produced than drowsiness, or a kind of stupefaction. The situation of Wild being observed by two of his fellow-prisoners, they advised him to rouse his spirits, that he might be able to attend to the devotional exercises; and taking him by the arms, they obliged him to walk, which he could not have alone, being much afflicted with the gout. The exercise revived him a little; but he presently became exceedingly pale; then grew very faint; and profuse sweating ensued; and soon afterwards his stomach discharged the greatest part of the laudanum. Though he was somewhat recovered, he was nearly in a state of insensibility; and in this situation he was put into the cart and conveyed to Tyburn. In his way to the place of execution the populace treated him with remarkable severity, incessantly pelting him with stones and dirt.

Upon his arrival at Tyburn he appeared to be much recovered from the effects of the poison; and the executioner informed him that a reasonable time would be allowed him for preparing himself for the important change that he must soon experience. He continued sitting some time in the cart; but the populace were at length so enraged at the indulgence shown him, that they outrageously called to the executioner to perform the duties of his office, violently threatening him with instant death if he presumed any longer to delay. He judged it prudent to comply with their demands; and when he began to prepare for the execution, the popular clamour ceased.

About two o'clock on the following morning the remains of Wild were interred in St. Pancras churchyard; but a few nights afterwards the body was taken up (for the use of the surgeons, as it was supposed). At midnight a hearse

and six was waiting at the end of Fig Lane, where the coffin was found the next day.

Wild had by the woman he married at Wolverhampton a son about nineteen years old, who came to London a short time before the execution of his father. He was a youth of so violent and ungovernable a disposition, that it was judged right to confine him during the time of the execution, lest he should excite the people to some tumult. He subsequently went to one of the West India colonies.

The adventures of Wild are of a nature to attract great attention, from the multiplicity and variety of the offences of which he was guilty. It has been hinted, that his career of crime having been suffered to continue so long was in some degree attributable to the services which he performed for the government, in arresting and gaining information against the disaffected, during the troubles which characterised the early part of the reign of George I.; but whatever may have been the cause of his being so long unmolested, whatever supineness on the part of the authorities, whether wilful or not, may have procured for him so continued a reign of uninterrupted wickedness, it cannot be doubted that the fact of his long safety tended so much to the demoralisation of society, as that many years passed before it could assume that tone, which the exertions of a felon like Wild were so calculated to destroy. The existing generation cannot but congratulate itself upon the excellence of the improvements which have been made in our laws, and the admirable effect which they have produced; as well as upon the exceedingly active vigilance of the existing police, by whom crime, instead of its being supported and fostered, is checked and prevented.

Appendix A.iii —The *Newgate Calendar*: Eugene Aram³

We are now arrived at that period which brings to our view perhaps the most remarkable trial on our whole Calendar. The offender was a man of extraordinary endowments and of high education, and therefore little to be suspected of committing so foul a crime as that proved against him.

Much has been written upon the subject of this murder, and attempts have been made, even of late years, to show the innocence of Aram. The contents of the publications upon the subject would be sufficient of themselves to fill our volumes; and it would be useless to republish arguments, which, having had due circulation and due consideration, have failed in their object, which was to convince the world that this offender was the victim of prejudice, and fell an innocent sacrifice to the laws of his country. We shall, therefore, abstain from giving this case greater space in our Calendar than that to which it is entitled, as well on account of the peculiarity of its nature, as of the great interest which its mention has always excited. The peculiarities of the case are twofold; first, the great talents of the offender, and secondly, the extraordinary discovery of the perpetration of the murder, and of the evidence which led to the conviction of the murderer. On the former point, indeed, some seem to have entertained a doubt; for about thirty years after his execution, his name being inserted among the literary characters of the country, in the “*Biographia Britannica*,” and his high erudition being mentioned, a pamphlet was put forth, complaining of this step on the part of the editors of that work, and accusing them of a want of

³ Camden Pelham, ‘Eugene Aram’, *The Chronicles of Crime; or, The New Newgate Calendar*, 1 (London: Thomas Tegg, 1841), pp. 168-179.

impartiality in affording their meed of praise to Aram, and withholding it from Bishop Atherton, who also met with an ignominious death. The charge was, however, answered more ably than it was made; and as it may prove interesting to our readers, we shall subjoin the refutation to the complaint, which appears distinctly to support Aram's right to the character which was originally given to him. It is said: —

“Objections are made to the admission of Eugene Aram into the *Biographia Britannica*, and the exclusion of Bishop Atherton; but it appears to me that the remarks on this subject are far from being just. The insertion of Aram is objected to because he was a man of bad principles, and terminated his life on the gallows; but it should be remembered that it was never understood that in the *Biographia Britannica* the lives of virtuous men only were to be recorded. In the old edition are the lives of several persons who ended their days by the hands of the executioner. Bonner was not a virtuous man, and yet was very properly inserted, as well as Henry Cuff, who was executed at Tyburn in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. As to Eugene Aram, it is truly said of him in the *Biographia Britannica*, in the article objected to, that the progress he made in literature, allowing for the little instruction he had received, may justly be considered as astonishing; and that his powers of mind were uncommonly great cannot reasonably be questioned. Eugene Aram possessed talents and acquisitions that might have classed him among the most respectable of human characters, if his moral qualities had been equal to his intellectual. It was certainly the extraordinary talents and acquirements of Eugene Aram which occasioned his introduction into the *Biographia*; and I know that by persons of undoubted taste

and judgement, the account of him in that work has been thought a curious and interesting article. His singular defence alone was well worthy of being preserved in such a work.

“With respect to Bishop Atherton, he never had the least claim to insertion in such a work as the *Biographia Britannica*, and was therefore very properly omitted in the new edition. He was not in the least distinguished for genius or learning; his merely being a bishop could give him no just pretensions, and still less the unnatural crime for which he suffered. The friends of Bishop Atherton say that his reputation was suspected to have been destroyed, and his catastrophe effected, more by the contrivance of a party than by the aggravated guilt with which he was charged. If this were perfectly just, which however may be reasonably questioned, it would not give Bishop Atherton the least claim to insertion in the *Biographia Britannica*. Aram was inserted on account of his uncommon talents and learning; but Atherton, who was not distinguished for either, never had the least pretension to be recorded in such a work.”

The talents and abilities of this criminal, therefore, seem to be undoubted; but that a man possessing powers of intellect so great should have been guilty of such a crime as that which he committed, seems most extraordinary.

Within the second peculiarity of the case will very properly come the narrative of the life of its hero, as well as the circumstances attending the commission of the crime and the discovery of its perpetrator. A succinct description of the case will probably be more intelligible than a detail of all the exceedingly minute circumstances by which it was surrounded.

Eugene Aram was born at the village of Netherdale, in Yorkshire, in the year 1704, of an ancient and highly respectable family; but although it is shown by the chronicles that one of his ancestors served the office of high sheriff in the reign of Edward the Third, it appears that at the time of the birth of Eugene, the vicissitudes of fortune had so far reduced its rank, that his father was compelled to support himself and his children by working as a gardener in the house of Sir Edward Blackett; although in that situation he was well employed and highly respected. In his infancy, Aram's parents removed to the village of Shelton, near Newby, in the same county; and when about six years old, his father, having saved a small sum of money out of his weekly earnings, purchased a small cottage at Bondgate, near Rippon. The first indications of that singular genius which afterwards displayed itself in so remarkable a manner in our hero, were given while his father was in the service of Sir Edward. Eugene was employed as an attendant upon that gentleman, and he early displayed a taste for literature, which was fostered and supported by his indulgent master. His disposition was solitary, and every leisure hour which presented itself to him was devoted to retirement and study; and in the employment which good fortune had bestowed upon him, ample opportunities were afforded him of following the bent of his inclinations. He applied himself chiefly to mathematics, and at the age of sixteen he had acquired a considerable proficiency in them; but his kind and indulgent master dying about this time, he was employed by his brother, Mr. Christopher Blackett, a merchant in London, who took him into his service as book-keeper. This was an occupation ill suited to his desires, and an attack of the small pox having rendered his return to Yorkshire necessary, he did not afterwards resume

his employment in London, but at the invitation of his father he remained at Newby, to pursue his studies. He now found that study of mathematics possessed but few charms; and the politer subject of poetry, history, and antiquities, next engaged his attention. Every day served to increase the store of knowledge which he possessed, and his fame as a scholar having now extended to his native place, he was invited to take charge of a school there. The means of study and of profit appeared to him to be thus united, and he immediately accepted the offer which was made; and after a short time he married a young woman of the village, to whom he appeared tenderly attached. To this marriage, however, which proved unhappy, he attributed all his subsequent misfortunes; but whether with truth or not, the course of the narrative does not distinctly disclose. His deficiency in the learned languages now struck him, and he immediately set about conquering the difficulties which presented themselves in this new field of research; and so rapid was his progress, that ere a year had passed, he was able to read with ease the less difficult of the Latin and Greek historians and poets. In the year 1734 an opportunity was afforded him of adding a knowledge of the Hebrew language to his list of acquirements; for in that year Mr. William Norton, of Knaresborough, a gentleman of great talents, who had conceived a strong attachment towards him, invited him to his house, and afforded him the means necessary for pursuing its study. He continued in his situation in Yorkshire until the year 1745, when he again visited London, and accepted an engagement in the school of the Rev. Mr. Plainblane, in Piccadilly, as usher in Latin and writing; and, with this gentleman's assistance, he acquired the knowledge of the French language. He was afterwards employed as an usher and

tutor in several different parts of England; in the course of which, through his own exertions, he became acquainted with heraldry and botany; and so great was his perseverance, that he also learned the Chaldaic and Arabic languages. His next step was to investigate the Celtic in all its dialects; and, having begun to form collections, and make comparisons between the Celtic, the English, the Latin, the Greek, and the Hebrew, and found a great affinity between them, he resolved to proceed through all those languages, and to form a comparative lexicon. But, amid these learned labours and inquiries, it appears that he committed a crime which could not naturally have been expected from a man of so studious a turn, as the inducement which led him to it was merely the gain of wealth, of which the scholar is seldom covetous.

On the 8th of February 1745, in conjunction with a man named Richard Houseman, he committed the murder for which his life was afterwards forfeited to the laws of his country. The object of this diabolical crime was Daniel Clarke, a shoemaker, living at Knaresborough; and it appears that this unfortunate man, having lately married a woman of a good family, industriously circulated a report that his wife was entitled to a considerable fortune, which he should soon receive. Aram and Houseman, in consequence, conceiving hopes of procuring some advantage from this circumstance, persuaded Clarke to make an ostentatious show of his own riches, in order to induce his wife's relations to give him that fortune of which he had boasted. It is not impossible that in giving their subsequent victim this advice, they may at the time have acted from a spirit of friendship, and without any intention of committing that crime for which they

afterwards received their reward; but the belief that the design was already formed receives equal confirmation from subsequent events.

Clarke, it seems, was easily induced to comply with a hint so agreeable to his own desires; and he borrowed, and bought on credit, a large quantity of silver plate, with jewels, watches, rings, &c. He told the persons of whom he purchased, that a merchant in London had sent him an order to buy such plate for exportation; and no doubt was entertained of his credit till his sudden disappearance in February 1745, when it was imagined that he had gone abroad, or at least to London, to dispose of his ill-acquired property.

Whatever doubt may exist as to the original intention of the parties, their object at this time is perfectly clear, and there can be no hesitation in supposing that Aram and Houseman had at this time determined to murder their dupe, in order to share the booty. On the night of the 8th February 1745, they persuaded Clarke to take a walk with them, in order to consult upon the proper method to dispose of the effects; and, engaged in the discussion of this subject, they turned into a field, at a small distance from the town, well known by the name of St. Robert's Cave. On this arrival there, Aram and Clarke went over a hedge towards the cave; and when they had got within six or seven yards of it, Houseman (by the light of the moon) saw Aram strike Clarke several times, and at length beheld him fall, but never saw him afterwards. These were the facts immediately connected with the murder, which were proved at the trial by Houseman, who was admitted King's evidence; and, whatever were the subsequent proceedings of the parties in respect of the body, they must remain a mystery.

The murderers, going home, shared Clarke's ill-gotten treasure, the half of which Houseman concealed in his garden for a twelvemonth, and then took it to Scotland, where he sold it. In the mean time Aram carried his share to London, where he sold it to a Jew, and then returned to his engagement with Mr. Plainblane, in Piccadilly.

Fourteen years afterwards elapsed, and no tidings being received of Aram, it was concluded that he was dead; and these fourteen years had also elapsed without any clue being obtained to unravel the mystery of the sudden disappearance of Clarke. The time at length came, however, at which all the doubts which existed upon both subjects were to be solved. In the year 1758, a labourer named Jones was employed to dig for stone in St. Robert's Cave, in order to supply a limekiln at a place called Thistle Hill, near Knaresborough; and having dug about two feet deep, he found the bones of a human body, still knit together by the ligaments of the joints. It had evidently been buried double; and there were indications about it which could not but lead to the supposition that some unfair means had been resorted to in order to deprive the living being of life. The incident afforded good grounds for general curiosity being raised, and general inquiry taking place; and hints were soon thrown out that it might be the body of Clarke, whose unexpected disappearance was still fresh in the memory of many, and whose continued absence had been the subject of so much surprise. Suggestions of his murder which had been thrown out by Aram's wife were called to mind, and a coroner's inquest being held, she was summoned. By this time a general impression prevailed that the remains found were those of Clarke, and the testimony of Mrs. Aram greatly confirmed the idea which had

gone abroad. She deposed that she believed that Clarke had been murdered by Houseman and her husband, and that they had acquired considerable booty for the crime; but she was unable to give any account of her husband, or to state whether he still was in existence or not. Inquiries being made, however, Houseman was soon found; and on his being brought forward to be examined, he exhibited the utmost confusion. The coroner desired that he would take up one of the bones, probably with a view of seeing what effect such a proceeding would produce; and upon his doing so, he showed still further terror, and exclaimed, "This is no more Daniel Clarke's bone than it is mine!" The suspicions which were already entertained of his guilt were, in a great measure, confirmed by this observation; and it was generally believed that he knew the precise spot where the real remains of the murdered man were deposited, even if he had not been a party to their interment. He was therefore strictly questioned; and after many attempts at evasion, he said that Clarke was murdered by Eugene Aram, and that his body was buried in St. Robert's Cave, but that the head lay further to the right in the turn near the entrance of the cavern than the spot where the skeleton produced was found. Search was immediately made, and a skeleton was found in a situation corresponding exactly with that which had been pointed out. In consequence of this confession an inquiry was immediately set on foot for Aram, and after a considerable time he was discovered, occupying the situation of usher in a school at Lynn in Norfolk.

He was immediately apprehended and conveyed in custody to York Castle; and on the 13th of August 1759, he was brought to trial at the assizes before Mr. Justice Noel. The testimony of Houseman to the facts which we have described,

and of the other witnesses whose evidence was of a corroborative character, was then adduced; and from the proof which was given, it appeared that the share of plunder derived by the prisoner did not exceed one hundred and fifty pounds.

Aram's defence was both ingenious and able, and would not have disgraced any of the best lawyers of the day. It is a curious and interesting address, and we subjoin it as affording the best criterion of the talents of the prisoner which can well be adduced. He thus addressed the court: —

“My Lord, — I know not whether it is of right or through some indulgence of your lordship that I am allowed the liberty at this bar, and at this time, to attempt a defence, incapable and uninstructed as I am to speak; since, while I see so many eyes upon me, so numerous and awful a concourse fixed with attention and filled with I know not what expectancy, I labour not with guilt, my lord, but with perplexity; for having never seen a court but this, being wholly unacquainted with law, the customs of the bar, and all judiciary proceedings, I fear I shall be so little capable of speaking with propriety in this place, that it exceeds my hope if I shall be able to speak at all.

“I have heard, my lord, the indictment read, wherein I find myself charged with the highest crime, with an enormity I am altogether incapable of; a fact, to the commission of which there goes far more insensibility of heart, more profligacy of morals, than ever fell to my lot; and nothing possibly could have admitted a presumption of this nature but a depravity not inferior to that imputed to me. However, as I stand indicted at your lordship's bar, and have heard what is called evidence adduced in support of such a charge, I very humbly

solicit your lordship's patience, and beg the hearing of this respectable audience, while I, single and unskilful, destitute of friends and unassisted by counsel, say something, perhaps an argument, in my defence. I shall consume but little of your lordship's time: what I have to say will be short; and this brevity, probably, will be the best part of it: however, it is offered with all possible regard and the greatest submission to your lordship's consideration, and that of this honourable court.

"First, my lord, the whole tenor of my conduct in life contradicts every particular of the indictment: yet had I never said this, did not my present circumstances extort it from me, and seem to make it necessary. Permit me here, my lord, to call upon malignity itself, so long and cruelly busied in this prosecution, to charge upon me any immorality of which prejudice was not the author. No, my lord, I concerted no schemes of fraud, projected no violence, injured no man's person or property. My days were honestly laborious, my nights intensely studious; and I humbly conceive my notice of this, especially at this time, will not be thought impertinent or unreasonable, but, at least, deserving some attention; because, my lord, that any person, after a temperate use of life, a series of thinking and acting regularly, and without one single deviation from sobriety, should plunge into the very depth of profligacy precipitately and at once, is altogether improbable and unprecedented, and absolutely inconsistent with the course of things. Mankind is never corrupted at once. Villany is always progressive, and declines from right, step by step, till every regard of probity is lost, and every sense of all moral obligation totally perishes.

“Again, my lord, a suspicion of this kind, which nothing but malevolence could entertain and ignorance propagate, is violently opposed by my very situation at that time with respect to health; for, but a little space before, I had been confined to my bed, and suffered under a very long and severe disorder, and was not able, for half a year together, so much as to walk. The distemper left me indeed, yet slowly, and in part — but so macerated, so enfeebled, that I was reduced to crutches; and so far from being well about the time I am charged with this fact, I have never, to this day, perfectly recovered. Could then a person in this condition take anything into his head so unlikely, so extravagant? — I, past the vigour of my age, feeble and valetudinary, with no inducement to engage, no ability to accomplish, no weapon wherewith to perpetrate such a deed, without interest, without power, without motive, without means. Besides, it must needs occur to every one, that an action of this atrocious nature is never heard of, but when its springs are laid open. It appears that it was to support some indolence, or supply some luxury; to satisfy some avarice, or oblige some malice; to prevent some real or some imaginary want: yet I lay not under the influence of these. Surely, my lord, I may, consistently with both truth and modesty, affirm thus much; and none who have any veracity and knew me, will ever question this.

“In the second place, the disappearance of Clarke is suggested as an argument of his being dead; but the uncertainty of such an inference from that, and the fallibility of all conclusions of such a sort from such a circumstance, are too obvious and too notorious to require instances; yet superseding many, permit me to produce a very recent one, and that afforded by this Castle.

“In June 1757, William Thompson, for all the vigilance of this place, in open daylight and double-ironed, made his escape, and, notwithstanding an immediate inquiry set on foot, the strictest search, and all advertisement, was never heard of since. If, then, Thompson got off unseen, through all these difficulties, how very easy it was for Clarke, when none of them opposed him! But what would be thought of a prosecution commenced against any one seen last with Thompson?

“Permit me next, my lord, to observe a little upon the bones which have been discovered. It is said (which perhaps is saying very far) that these are the skeleton of a man. Is it possible, indeed, it may; but is there any certain known criterion which incontestably distinguishes the sex in human bones? Let it be considered, my lord, whether the ascertaining of this point ought not to precede any attempt to identify them?

“The place of their depositum, too, claims much more attention than is commonly bestowed upon it; for of all places in the world, none could have mentioned any one wherein there was greater certainty of finding human bones than a hermitage, except he should point out a churchyard; hermitages, in time past, being not only places of religious retirement, but of burial too: and it has scarce or never been heard of, but that every cell now known contains or contained these relics of humanity, some mutilated and some entire. I do not inform, but give me leave to remind your lordship, that here sat solitary Sanctity, and here the hermit or the anchoress hoped that repose for their bones when dead they here enjoyed when living.

“All the while, my lord, I am sensible this is known to your lordship, and many in this Court, better than to me; but it seems necessary to my case that others, who have not at all, perhaps, adverted to things of this nature, and may have concern in my trial, should be made acquainted with it. Suffer me then, my lord, to produce a few of many evidences that these cells were used as repositories of the dead, and to enumerate a few in which human bones have been found, as it happened in this question; lest, to some, that accident might seem extraordinary, and, consequently, occasion prejudice.

“1. The bones, as was supposed, of the Saxon saint, Dubritius, were discovered buried in his cell at Guy’s Cliff, near Warwick; as appears from the authority of Sir William Dugdale.

“2. The bones thought to be those of the anchoress Rosia were but lately discovered in a cell at Royston, entire, fair, and undecayed, though they must have lain interred for several centuries; as is proved by Dr. Stukely.

“3. But my own country — nay, almost this neighbourhood — supplies another instance; for in January 1747, were found, by Mr. Stovin, accompanied by a reverend gentleman, the bones, in part, of some recluse, in the cell at Lindholm, near Hatfield. They were believed to be those of William of Lindholm, a hermit, who had long made this cave his habitation.

“4. In February 1744, part of Woburn Abbey being pulled down, a large portion of a corpse appeared, even with the flesh on, and which bore cutting with a knife; though it is certain this had lain above two hundred years, and how much longer is doubtful; for this abbey was founded in 1145 and dissolved in 1538 or 1539.

“What would have been said, what believed, if this had been an accident to the bones in question?

“Farther, my lord: — it is not yet out of loving memory that at a little distance from Knaresborough, in a field, part of the manor of the worthy and patriot baronet who does that borough the honour to represent it in parliament, were found, in digging for gravel, not one human skeleton only, but five or six, deposited side by side, with each an urn placed at its head, as your lordship knows was usual in ancient interments.

“About the same time, and in another field, almost close to this borough, was discovered also, in searching for gravel, another human skeleton; but the piety of the same worthy gentleman ordered both pits to be filled up again, commendably unwilling to disturb the dead.

“Is the invention of these bones forgotten, then, or industriously concealed, that the discovery of those in question may appear the more singular and extraordinary? whereas, in fact, there is nothing extraordinary in it. My lord, almost every place conceals such remains. In fields, in hills, in highway sides, in commons, lie frequent and unsuspected bones; and our present allotments for rest for the departed are but of some centuries.

“Another particular seems not to claim a little of your lordship’s notice, and that of the gentlemen of the jury; which is, that perhaps no example occurs of more than one skeleton being found in one cell: and in the cell in question was found but one; agreeable, in this, to the peculiarity of every other known cell in Britain. Not the invention of one skeleton, but of two, would have appeared suspicious and uncommon. But it seems another skeleton has been discovered

by some labourer, which was full as confidently averred to be Clarke's as this. My lord, must some of the living, if it promotes some interest, be made answerable for all the bones that earth has concealed and chance exposed? and might not a place where bones lay be mentioned by a person by chance as well as found by a labourer by chance? or is it more criminal accidentally to name where bones lie than accidentally to find where they lie?

"Here too is a human skull produced, which is fractured: but was this the cause, or was it the consequence, of death? was it owing to violence, or was it the effect of natural decay? If it was violence, was that violence before or after death? My lord, in May 1732, the remains of William, Lord Archbishop of this province, were taken up, by permission, in this cathedral, and the bones of the skull were found broken; yet certainly he died by no violence offered to him alive that could occasion that fracture there.

"Let it be considered, my lord, that, upon the dissolution of religious houses and the commencement of the Reformation, the ravages of those times affected both the living and the dead. In search after imaginary treasures, coffins were broken up, graves and vaults dug open, monuments ransacked, and shrines demolished; and it ceased about the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. I entreat your lordship, suffer not the violence, the depredations, and the iniquities of those times, to be imputed to this.

"Moreover, what gentleman here is ignorant that Knaresborough had a castle, which, though now a ruin, was once considerable both for its strength and garrison? All know it was vigorously besieged by the arms of the parliament; at which siege, in sallies, conflicts, flights, pursuits, many fell in all the places round

it, and, where they fell, were buried; for every place, my lord, is burial-earth in war; and many, questionless, of these rest yet unknown, whose bones futurity shall discover.

“I hope, with all imaginable submission, that what has been said will not be thought impertinent to this indictment; and that it will be far from the wisdom, the learning, and the integrity of this place, to impute to the living what zeal in its fury may have done — what nature may have taken off, and piety interred — or what war alone may have destroyed, alone deposited.

“As to the circumstances that have been raked together, I have nothing to observe but that all circumstances whatever are precarious, and have been but too frequently found lamentably fallible; even the strongest have failed. They may rise to the utmost degree of probability, yet they are but probability still. Why need I name to your lordship the two Harrisons recorded by Dr. Howel, who both suffered upon circumstances because of the sudden disappearance of their lodger, who was in credit, had contracted debts, borrowed money, and went off unseen, and returned a great many years after their execution? Why name the intricate affair of Jacques de Moulin, under King Charles II. related by a gentleman who was counsel for the crown? And why the unhappy Coleman, who suffered innocently, though convicted upon positive evidence; and whose children perished for want, because the world uncharitably believed the father guilty? Why mention the perjury of Smith, incautiously admitted king’s evidence: who, to screen himself, equally accused Faircloth and Loveday of the murder of Dun; the first of whom, in 1749, was executed at Winchester; and Loveday was

about to suffer at Reading, had not Smith been proved perjured, to the satisfaction of the Court, by the governor of Gosport hospital?

“Now, my lord, having endeavoured to show that the whole of this process is altogether repugnant to every part of my life; that it is inconsistent with my condition of health about that time; that no rational inference can be drawn that a person is dead who suddenly disappears; that hermitages are the constant depositaries of the bones of a recluse; that the proofs of this are well authenticated; that the revolutions in religion, or the fortunes of war, have mangled or buried the dead; — the conclusion remains, perhaps, no less reasonable than impatiently wished for. I, at last, after a year’s confinement, equal to either fortune, put myself upon the justice, the candour, and the humility of your lordship; and upon yours, my countrymen, gentlemen of the jury.”

The delivery of this address created a very considerable impression in court; but the learned judge having calmly and with great perspicuity summed up the evidence which had been produced, and having observed upon the prisoner’s defence, which he declared to be one of the most ingenious pieces of reasoning that had ever fallen under his notice, the jury, with little hesitation, returned a verdict of Guilty. Sentence of death was then passed upon the prisoner, who received the intimation of his fate with becoming resignation. After his conviction, he confessed the justice of his sentence to two clergymen who were directed to attend him — a sufficient proof of the fruitlessness of the efforts to prove him innocent, which the morbid sentimentality of late writers has induced them to attempt. Upon an inquiry being made of him as to his

reason for committing the crime, he declared that he had reason to suspect Clarke of having had unlawful intercourse with his wife; and that at the time of his committing the murder he had thought that he was acting rightly, but that he had since thought that his crime could not be justified or excused. In the hopes of avoiding the ignominious death which he was doomed to suffer, on the night before his execution he attempted to commit suicide by cutting his arm in two places with a razor, which he had concealed for that purpose. This attempt was not discovered until the morning, when the jailor came to lead him forth to the place of execution, and he was then found almost expiring from loss of blood. A surgeon was immediately sent for, who found that he had wounded himself severely on the left arm, above the elbow and near the wrist, but he had missed the artery, and his life was prolonged only in order that it might be taken away on the scaffold. When he was placed on the drop, he was perfectly sensible, but was too weak to be able to join in devotion with the clergyman who attended him.

He was executed at York on the 16th of August 1759; and his body was afterwards hung in chains in Knaresborough Forest.

The following papers were afterwards found in his handwriting on the table in his cell. The first contained reasons for his attempt upon his life, and was as follows: — “What am I better than my fathers? To die is natural and necessary. Perfectly sensible of this, I fear no more to die than I did to be born. But the manner of it is something which should, in my opinion, be decent and manly. I think I have regarded both these points. Certainly no man has a better right to dispose of a man’s life than himself; and he, not others, should determine how.

As for any indignities offered to my body, or silly reflections on my faith and morals, they are, as they always were, things indifferent to me. I think, though contrary to the common way of thinking, I wrong no man by this, and hope it is not offensive to that eternal Being that formed me and the world: and as by this I injure no man, no man can be reasonably offended. I solicitously recommend myself to that eternal and almighty Being, the God of Nature, if I have done amiss. But perhaps I have not; and I hope this thing will never be imputed to me. Though I am now stained by malevolence and suffer by prejudice, I hope to rise fair and unblemished. My life was not polluted, my morals irreproachable, and my opinions orthodox. I slept sound till three o'clock, awaked, and then writ these lines—

Come, pleasing rest! eternal slumbers, fall!

Seal mine, that once must seal the eyes of all.

Calm and composed my soul her journey takes;

No guilt that troubles, and no heart that aches.

Adieu, thou sun! all bright, like her, arise!

Adieu, fair friends, and all that's good and wise!

The second was in the form of a letter, addressed to a former companion, and was in the following terms:

“MY DEAR FRIEND, — Before this reaches you, I shall be no more a living man in this world, though at present in perfect bodily health: but who can describe the horrors of mind which I suffer at this instant? Guilt — the guilt of blood shed without any provocation, without any cause but that of filthy lucre — pierces my conscience with wounds that give the most poignant pains! 'Tis true the

consciousness of my horrid guilt has given me frequent interruptions in the midst of my business or pleasures; but yet I have found means to stifle its clamours, and contrived a momentary remedy for the disturbance it gave me by applying to the bottle or the bowl, or diversions, or company, or business; sometimes one, and sometimes the other, as opportunity offered: but now all these, and all other amusements, are at an end, and I am left forlorn, helpless, and destitute of every comfort; for I have nothing now in view but the certain destruction both of my soul and body. My conscience will now no longer suffer itself to be hoodwinked or browbeat: it has now got the mastery; it is my accuser, judge, and executioner: and the sentence it pronounceth against me is more dreadful than that I heard from the bench, which only condemned my body to the pains of death, which are soon over; but conscience tells me plainly that she will summon me before another tribunal, where I shall have neither power nor means to stifle the evidence she will there bring against me; and that the sentence which will then be denounced will not only be irreversible, but will condemn my soul to torments that will know no end.

“Oh! had I but hearkened to the advice which dear-bought experience has enabled me to give, I should not now have been plunged into that dreadful gulf of despair which I find it impossible to extricate myself from; and therefore my soul is filled with horror inconceivable. I see both God and man my enemies, and in a few hours shall be exposed a public spectacle for the world to gaze at. Can you conceive any condition more horrible than mine? O, no! it cannot be! I am determined, therefore, to put a short end to trouble I am no longer able to bear, and prevent the executioner by doing his business with my own hand, and shall

by this means at least prevent the shame and disgrace of a public exposure, and leave the care of my soul in the hands of eternal mercy. Wishing you all health, happiness, and prosperity, I am, to the last moment of my life, yours, with the sincerest regard,

“EUGENE ARAM.”

It is impossible to view the circumstances of this remarkable case, without being struck with the extraordinary conduct of Aram. It is most singular that a man of his talents and mind should have leagued himself with a person like Houseman, who appears to have been utterly uneducated, in the commission of a murder, and with the hope only of gain; for whatever his declarations after his conviction may have been, as to his object being revenge only for the supposed injury which had been done him by his victim in the seduction of his wife, his ready acquiescence in the plot with another, and his willing acceptance of the plunder which was obtained, distinctly show that that was not the only end which he sought to attain. If, indeed, his feelings were outraged, as he suggested, he would have selected some other mode of obtaining that satisfaction to which the injury alleged would have entitled him; and it is hardly to be supposed that he would have obtained the assistance of another to secure the object which he had in view, more particularly when it appears that it was he who absolutely committed the foul act, without the immediate aid of Houseman, — a circumstance which clearly exemplifies the power which he possessed to dispose of his victim, and which would seem to show a desire on his part only to obtain the participation of another in a preconceived act, anticipating doubtless that some aid would be necessary in appropriating and disposing of the property

which might be procured from the deceased, and also that some advice would be requisite in the event of suspicion attaching to him. But while these circumstances cannot but surprise us, how much more astonishing is the Divine power of Providence, which disclosed to human eyes, after so long a lapse of time, such evidence as in the result proved the commission of the crime, and which secured the seizure of the criminal, who had up to that time remained unsuspected, and who even then was living in fancied security, free from all fear of discovery and apprehension! It is said that

“— Murder! though it have no tongue, will speak

With more miraculous organ:”

and how truly is this observation of the most wonderful of poets exemplified by nearly every page of these records of crime!

'And now, reader, farewell! If sometimes, as thou hast gone with me to this our parting spot, thou hast suffered thy companion to win the mastery over thine interest, to flash now on thy convictions, to touch now thy heart, to guide thy hope, to excite thy terror, to gain, it may be, to the sources of thy tears, — then there is a tie between thee and me which cannot readily be broken! And when thou hearest the malice that wrongs, affect the candor which should judge, shall he not find in thy sympathies the defence, or in thy charity the indulgence, of a friend?' — Edward Bulwer-Lytton