

REALISM IN PAIN: LITERARY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF VICTORIAN
PAIN IN THE AGE OF ANAESTHESIA, 1846-1870

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by
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May 2013

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ABSTRACT

In 1846 and 1847, ether and chloroform were used and celebrated for the first time in Britain and the United States as effective surgical anaesthetics capable of rendering individuals insensible to physical pain. During the same decade, British novels of realism were enjoying increasing cultural authority, dominating readers' attention, and evoking readers' sympathy for numerous social justice issues. This dissertation investigates a previously unanswered question in studies of literature and medicine: how did writers of social realism incorporate realistic descriptions of physical pain, a notoriously difficult sensation to describe, in an era when the very idea of pain's inevitability was challenged by medical developments and when, concurrently, novelists, journalists, and politicians were concerned with humanitarian reforms to recognize traditionally ignored and disadvantaged individuals and groups in pain? By contextualizing the emergence of specific realist novels including works by Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Reade, William Howard Russell, and Charles Dickens, within larger nonfiction discourses regarding factory reform, prison reform, and war, this dissertation identifies and clarifies how realist authors, who aim to demonstrate general truths about "real life," employed various descriptions of physical pain during this watershed moment in medicine and pain theory, to convince readers of their validity as well as to awaken sympathetic politics among readers.

This study analyzes Gaskell's first industrial novel, *Mary Barton* (1848), Reade's prison-scandal novel, *It is Never Too Late to Mend* (1856), Russell's Crimean War correspondence (1850s) and only novel, *The Adventures of Doctor Brady* (1868), and

Dickens's second *Bildungsroman*, *Great Expectations* (1861), thereby revealing different strategies utilized by each author representing pain – ranging from subtle to graphic, collective to individualized, urgent to remembered, and destructive to productive. This study shows how audience expectations, political timing, authorial authority, and medical theory influence and are influenced by realist authors writing pain, as they contribute to a cultural consensus that the pain of others is unacceptable and requires attention. These realist authors must, in the end, provide fictionalized accounts of pain, asking readers to act as witnesses and to use their imaginations, in order to inspire sympathy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have so many people to thank for their kindness, generosity, and support over many years of graduate study at multiple graduate programs. I am happy to have the opportunity to acknowledge, finally, the early influence and encouragement of my professors of German Literature at the University of Delaware and everyone in the English Department at Rutgers University, Camden, for believing in my abilities, opening my eyes to new ways of reading, and providing teaching assistantships. More recently, I have benefited from a University Fellowship and graduate assistantships from Temple University, which made several years of coursework and research possible. I also want to thank the English Department of Rowan University, especially Dr. Cathy Parrish, for the thoughtful teaching schedules, open doors, and positive energy during the final stages of writing this dissertation.

The vicissitudes of life as a graduate student often make staying in touch difficult, so I would like to thank all of my fellow graduate students who, in one way or another, helped me to understand my work and shared their impressive insights over the years. Thanks also to the members of the occasional Nineteenth-Century British Writing Group, especially Professor Sally Mitchell, who generously offered comments on my first dissertation chapter draft and kindly gave me an old hardcover copy of Charles Reade's novel. I have learned so much from each and every professor I have worked with during my Ph.D. experience, particularly Dr. Steve Newman, and the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Sue Wells, Dr. Oliver Gaycken, Dr. Rachel Buurma, and Dr. Peter Logan. Thanks for the enthusiasm, insight, understanding, time, feedback, advice, and fascinating research. I am very grateful to Dr. Travis Glasson for reading the

dissertation and offering a historian's perspective. I was particularly fortunate to have Peter Logan, my advisor, challenging and guiding me through this process. Thank you.

I would not be able to accomplish anything academically without the love of friends and family, and in this I have been lucky. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of my friends who have supported me in so many ways over so many years, especially Petra Frisk, Meg Herrmann, Cauleen Noël, Evan Roskos, and Laura Roskos: thanks for the brilliance, the conversation, the laughter, and always understanding what I'm trying to say.

Finally, I want to thank everyone in the Harrison, Rusnack, and Manns families for unconditional love. You believed in me from the beginning and I never had reason to doubt that I could accomplish my goals. To my father, Craig Harrison, without whom nothing I am would be possible; to my mother, Karen Harrison, who let me borrow as many books from the library as I could carry and whom I will always miss; and to my brother, Adam Harrison, who is strong in ways I am not, thanks, with love.

In Loving Memory of
Karen Manns Harrison
1952-2012

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: REALISM IN PAIN

In a lengthy article called “Some Account of Chloroform,” published on May 10, 1851 in Charles Dickens’s *Household Words*, the recent discovery and implementation of that substance’s anaesthetic effects are ranked among the greatest discoveries of modern science: “The amount of human comfort has been greatly augmented; the sum of human wretchedness has been diminished by a very large figure. Among the reductions of this kind that have been accomplished in modern times, the most signal, unquestionably, is the abolition of physical pain, in so far as it has been effected by the discovery of the anaesthetical properties of chloroform [...]”¹ The article provides a detailed overview of the discovery of chloroform, the origins of its name, the controversies it raised, and the many ways it brings relief to surgical patients and others before closing with optimistic expectations of future scientific discoveries, as this one “has stilled the shriek of agony and pain, which is so direful a discord in ‘the still sad music of humanity.’”²

In the 1840s, several American doctors and dentists had been employing both nitrous oxide and ether in their practices without capitalizing on their products, until a dentist named William Morton convinced the more influential doctor Henry Jacob Bigelow to write a letter to the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* announcing the so-

¹ [Charles Dickens], “Some Account of Chloroform,” *Household Words* 10 May 1851: 151.

² *Ibid.*, 155.

called discovery of ether in 1846.³ In 1847, Scottish obstetrician James Young Simpson successfully used chloroform to achieve a similar anaesthetic effect.⁴ Rendering patients insensible to surgical pain was one of the most dramatic medical achievements of the era. The meanings and management of pain had shifted for centuries, but 1846 marked the beginning of a new chapter in the medical and social history of pain. The 1840s also marked the beginning of a new era of realist fiction that produced some of the most enduring novels of the Victorian period, and it is the multidirectional intersection of these discourses – the collision of pain and literature – that lies at the center of this project.

Realism was the dominant literary mode in mid-nineteenth-century British fiction. In the seventeenth chapter of her 1859 novel, *Adam Bede*, George Eliot's narrator outlines the virtues and dangers of realism by insisting that accurate representations of the mundane and imperfect details of daily life will lead to more realistic and therefore more meaningful observations, while simultaneously acknowledging that it is a "faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves *in my mind*. The mirror is no doubt defective."⁵ Realist novels privilege fictional particulars in order to express a

³ Despite Morton's dubious reputation, he enjoyed the status of a medical pioneer and insisted it be engraved on his tombstone: "Before Whom, in All Time, / Surgery was agony; / By whom, Pain in Surgery was averted, / Since Whom, Science has Control of Pain." See Thomas Dormandy, *The Worst of Evils: The Fight against Pain* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2006) 208-226.

⁴ For a detailed history of ether and chloroform use in the nineteenth-century, see Linda Stratmann, *Chloroform: The Quest for Oblivion* (Stroud: Sutton, 2003). For a discussion of the use, potential, and dismissal of mesmerism as an anaesthetic in the early 1840s, see Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), especially Chapter 7.

⁵ George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (1859; New York: Penguin, 1985) 221. Emphasis mine.

general truth about the real world, but, as George Levine argues, “no major Victorian novelists were deluded into believing that they were in fact offering an unmediated reality; but all of them struggled to make contact with their world out there.”⁶ This project assumes that there are, in fact, multiple “realisms” produced by various authors depicting varying “‘versions’ of reality” through their deployments of the conventions of literary realism.⁷ However, those very conventions mean that the realisms of different Victorian novelists do converge to create a consensus regarding the “real world” in their historical moment.⁸ And, because one method for producing novels that achieve a “realistic” effect is to include a “discourse that is broadly consistent with historical fact as known and mediated by the contemporary historical consciousness” of the “real world” in question, to render the fictionalization, “whether invented or factually based, convincingly ‘present’ to the reader,” a meaningful historical connection can be traced among the various realisms of, in this case, mid-nineteenth-century Britain.⁹

The social and political conditions of post-Enlightenment, post-Napoleonic Wars, post-Romantic Britain were unprecedented: the chaos of urban life, the grime of

⁶ George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 8.

⁷ Richard Lehan, *Realism and Naturalism: The Novel in an Age of Transition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005) 35. See also Marshall Brown, “The Logic of Realism: A Hegelian Approach,” *PMLA* 96.2 (1981): 224-241.

⁸ See Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983).

⁹ David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature* (Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1977) 25.

industrialization, the wealth of new manufacturers, the ubiquity of periodical publications, and the ever increasing literacy of the reading public swirl around the novelists of this era, who were engaged in ongoing discussions with each other, their readers, and their critics regarding the novelist's responsibility. The Victorian novel is a complex entity: political, scientific, and aesthetic concerns were represented and debated within the genre. Novelists enjoyed more influential positions within the public sphere, as the concept of a critical public discourse gained traction in Britain in the early 1830s, surrounding debates regarding the Reform Bill.¹⁰ "Realisms" allowed authors to imagine the effects living in such a society might have on individual characters, but, as Nancy Armstrong, Mary Poovey, and others have shown, the influence is multidirectional: an individual's modern identity – biological, psychological, and social – is historically constructed, in part, by reading literature and socializing in a culture in which that literary construction is considered – or becomes – a norm.¹¹ A further distinction, articulated by scholars like Thomas Laqueur and Catherine Gallagher, is central to this project as well: the individual's identity as a conscious subject is always an embodied one, inextricably connected to the physical conditions affecting that individual's growth, health, senses, production, reproduction, illness, and death.¹²

¹⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (1962; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991) 66.

¹¹ See Nancy Armstrong, *How Novels Think: The Limits of British Individualism from 1719-1900* (New York: Columbia UP, 2005). And Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

¹² See Thomas Laqueur, "Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative," *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)

The human experience, of course, has always included physical pain, and it must, therefore, figure in realistic fictionalizations of the human experience as well. Pain is intensely personal, both physically and psychologically. Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain* is a work of vital importance to this study because it establishes the implications of the fact that the existence of one's own pain is certain, but the existence of another person's pain is uncertain.¹³ The empirical elusiveness of another's pain creates a dilemma when attempting to write pain within the bounds of literary realism because, as Levine argues, realism relies on an empiricist epistemology.¹⁴ Many theorists have wrestled with the notion that no words can adequately express the experience of pain itself. Virginia Woolf's essay "On Being Ill" is often cited as proof of the inability of language to describe physical pain: "The merest schoolgirl, when she falls in love, has Shakespeare, Donne, Keats to speak her mind for her; but let a sufferer try to describe a pain in his head to a doctor and language at once runs dry."¹⁵ Lucy Bending's *The Representation of Bodily Pain in Late Nineteenth-Century English Culture* disagrees with Scarry and Woolf by arguing that physical pain does not entirely resist linguistic

177. Also Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy of the Victorian Novel* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006); and Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

¹³ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford UP, 1985) 4.

¹⁴ Levine, *Realistic Imagination*, 18.

¹⁵ Qtd. in Lucy Bending, *The Representation of Bodily Pain in Late Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 84.

expression more than any other sensation or emotion.¹⁶ However, Bending and Scarry concur, and this project assumes, that there are linguistic conventions for discussing one's own pain and the pain of others in both fiction and nonfiction works. Identifying how these conventions function in novels of realism and the public discourses surrounding their particular historical moments is one of the main goals of this project.

Pain is a private experience, necessarily limited to the nervous system of the individual in pain, but it is also a public, political concern. This study functions on the premise that there is a politics of pain, an idea supported by several important theorists. Scarry insists that the inexpressibility of an individual's pain renders him more vulnerable to exploitation, oppression, or torture at the hands of those in power, who can deny or ignore his pain.¹⁷ Martin Pernick's *A Calculus of Suffering* chronicles the identification and selection of individuals thought to require or even deserve anaesthetics like ether and chloroform when they entered mainstream medical usage in late-1840s and early-1850s America.¹⁸ Mary Poovey's study of the heated debates regarding the distribution of chloroform to women in childbirth exposes not only the colliding authorities of medical men and clergymen, but also the position of childbearing women, and whether they should continue to feel pain despite the availability of anaesthesia.¹⁹

¹⁶ Bending Chapter 3.

¹⁷ Scarry, *Body in Pain*, 14.

¹⁸ Martin Pernick, *A Calculus of Suffering: Pain, Professionalism, and Anesthesia in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Columbia UP, 1985), especially Chapter 3.

¹⁹ Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, Chapter 2. For the story of Dr. John Snow's administration of chloroform to Queen Victoria during the birth of her eighth child, Prince Leopold, in April 1853, see Stratmann Chapter 5.

Public debates on the issue of physical suffering identify which individuals and groups are in pain, whether or how their pain should be addressed, and who is responsible for it. The pain experience is, therefore, analogous to the relationship between the actual consciousnesses of individuals and the cultural truth derived from their novelistic representations: although each individual experiences pain alone, and can feel only her own, a cultural consensus regarding experiences and meanings of pain nevertheless obtains.

Meanwhile, the physiological and psychological processes behind an individual's physical pain experience remained the domain of philosophers, neurologists, and, eventually, psychologists. Anaesthetic developments ran far ahead of any concrete medical understanding of how anaesthetics like ether and chloroform actually work to render patients insensible to pain. By far the most influential western theory of physical pain was codified by René Descartes, whose seventeenth-century *Treatise of Man* posits that a stimulus, such as fire, disturbs the skin upon contact, "thus pulling the little thread," one of a "great many filaments" in the body, that "terminates [in the brain]."²⁰ The entire body is then activated to distance itself from the pain stimulus and attend to tissue damage. Now known as "specificity theory," this paradigm reigned supreme, dominating physiologists' and early psychologists' experiments until well into the nineteenth century.²¹ Descartes's theory, however, has always failed to account for

²⁰ René Descartes, *Treatise of Man*, trans. Thomas Steele Hall (1664; New York: Prometheus, 2003) 34-35.

²¹ Ronald Melzack and Patrick Wall, *The Challenge of Pain* (1982; New York: Penguin, 1996) 149-150.

several critically important aspects of pain: the various “psychological contributions to pain,” which have been proven to affect actual pain experience; pain without discernible tissue damage; analgesia, or the absence of pain even in cases of obvious tissue or nerve damage; and “phantom body experiences,” which alert sufferers to pain in tissues that have been entirely disconnected from the body.²² In short, pain is too complex and multidimensional to be explained satisfactorily by the major theory of the last three centuries.

Current pain theories argue that the brain is not merely a receiver of messages sent from skin through nerves and up the spinal cord; instead, the brain is an active player in pain experience, generating, modulating, and processing pain, itself a complex notion, in untold ways. Further, psychological and physiological researchers are currently debunking what David Morris calls the myth of two pains, “the artificial division we create in accepting a belief that human pain is split by a chasm into uncommunicating categories called physical and mental.”²³ In fact, even when no physical stimulus or tissue damage can be identified to have caused pain, pain can and does occur. Differences between emotional and physical pain as perceived by sufferers are not separated by the rift suggested by Descartes’s dualist theory of mind and body.²⁴ Nevertheless, because

²² Ronald Melzack, “Pain: Past, Present, and Future,” *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology* 47.4 (1993): n.pag. See also Melzack and Wall, Part I.

²³ David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 9.

²⁴ Although researchers have teased apart two aspects of pain, “pain sensation” and “pain affect,” most sufferers of physical pain will not or cannot distinguish between the two. See Geoff MacDonald and Mark R. Leary, “Why Does Social Exclusion Hurt?”

this project's goal is to analyze representations of pain in realism, or realism in pain, descriptions of physical pain are most significant here. This does not, as this study will show, mean that psychological concerns are entirely divorced from novelistic representations of physical pain. In contrast, the following chapters reveal a surprising number of variations in how physical and psychological states relate to each other in mid-nineteenth-century realism.

Important social histories of pain and pain management include Roselyne Rey's *The History of Pain*, David Morris's *The Culture of Pain*, Thomas Dormandy's *The Worst of Evils*, Joseph Amato's *Victims and Values*, and Javier Moscoso's recent *Pain*.²⁵ These surveys track changing cultural understandings of pain in the west, from the beginning of the Christian era until the twentieth century. Rey, Dormandy, Amato, and Moscoso treat the discovery of surgical anaesthesia in the nineteenth century as a watershed moment during which, finally, physical pain had become, in some circumstances, avoidable, thus challenging religious and other authorities known for ascribing a cosmic, salutary meaning to individuals' suffering. Surgical anaesthesia also profoundly changed the medical profession, as surgeons practicing before ether and chloroform were available had to inflict great pain in order to alleviate other symptoms

The Relationship Between Social and Physical Pain," *Psychological Bulletin* 131.2 (2005): 204. One important social and medical consequence of these discoveries is the fact that pain affect obtains when there is no identifiable tissue damage or stimulus that would be expected to cause a pain sensation. Sufferers in this category are often misdiagnosed, disbelieved, or ignored.

²⁵ Roselyn Rey, *The History of Pain*, trans. L.E. Wallace, J.A. Cadden, and S.W. Cadden (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995). Joseph Amato, *Victims and Values: A History and a Theory of Suffering* (New York: Praeger, 1990). Javier Moscoso, *Pain: A Cultural History*, trans. Sarah Thomas and Paul House (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

and perhaps save patients' lives: "however fast, skilful, and lucky, [. . .] continuous contact with pain could not but blunt sensibilities."²⁶ And yet the memoirs and letters of several medical men express anxiety for the pain they had to cause before anaesthesia, and some suffered nightmares in which they relived those painful scenes.²⁷

Mid- and late-nineteenth-century periodicals published many conversations and debates regarding the meaning and use of pain. Some writers defended "the warning-voice of pain" and argued that "our very existence depends upon our sensibility to suffering."²⁸ Others were careful to qualify the benefits of pain by refuting the idea that pain always "comes at the right time" and reminding readers that many patients suffering from terminal conditions are "tortured slowly" nevertheless by physical pain that is no longer useful as a warning.²⁹ While some writers viewed this very discourse, deliberating on the role of pain in society, as a sign of the times: "Men have always shrunk from suffering, and possibly the inclination to do so is not stronger now than it has been at former periods; but the universal sensibility to it and intolerance of it which shows itself in all quarters in these days is comparatively modern."³⁰ Each of these positions expresses a general truth about the social and cultural meanings of pain in the nineteenth

²⁶ Dormandy 176.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Pain A Blessing," *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts* 13 Nov. 1858: 320.

²⁹ W.J. Collins, "Pain and Its Interpretation," *Lancet* 20 Aug. 1887: 391.

³⁰ "Pain," *The Saturday Review* 5 May 1860: 562.

century: it is, at times, necessary and unavoidable, it is often horrible, and it is always a subject of ethical concern.

Although medical understandings of physical pain are constantly shifting, the fact that pain is culturally mediated remains stable: “Culture tells us what hurt is, who can hurt, and why they hurt, as well as which pains can be cured, by whom and how.”³¹ Attitudes regarding the pain of others had begun to shift during the Enlightenment of the previous century as sympathy for the pain of others became artistically, philosophically, and politically important: “[t]he culture of sensibility steadily broadened the arena within which humanitarian feeling was encouraged to operate, extending compassion to animals and to previously despised types of persons including slaves, criminals, and the insane and generating a reformist critique of forms of cruelty that had once gone unquestioned.”³² Historian Lynn Hunt identifies “imagined empathy,” as opposed to nationalism, as the tie that binds individuals in this social arrangement.³³ Derived from Adam Smith’s theory of sympathy, or “fellow-feeling,” the capacity of one person to imagine the pain of another, and thereby, to relate to it, and to react to it, is essential to this project’s readings of pain in nineteenth-century realist novels.³⁴

³¹ Amato 3.

³² Karen Halttunen, “Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture,” *The American Historical Review* 100.2 (1995): 303. See also Thomas L. Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part I,” *The American Historical Review* 90.2 (1985): 339-361 for an economic reading of the humanitarian phenomenon.

³³ Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007) 32.

³⁴ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759; London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853). See Section I., Chapter 1: “Of Sympathy.” Suzanne Keen differentiates between

Pain also functions as a defining concept in Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian philosophy, which heavily influenced British jurisprudence and reform in the early eighteenth century. Bentham's premise is contained in the first lines of his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. [...] They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire: but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while."³⁵ If pleasure brings happiness and pain is avoided, an ideal system of government and laws will, following Bentham's principle of utility, maximize the number of citizens experiencing pleasure/happiness and minimize those in pain.³⁶ This concept can be understood in terms of the newly recognized groups at the center of humanitarian reforms, but it is a difficult theory to put into practice, as this study will show, especially as it clearly allows for a socially acceptable amount of pain.

empathy ("spontaneous, responsive sharing of an appropriate feeling") and sympathy ("complex, differentiated feeling for another"). See Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (New York: Oxford UP, 2007) 4. Keen also points out that "empathy" is a recent addition to the English language, so pre-twentieth-century texts discussing this concept will use the term "sympathy," as my project does.

³⁵ Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Vol. I (1780; London: Pickering, 1823) 1. Emphasis in original.

³⁶ See Hunt 80-81 for Bentham's debt to Italian philosopher and reformer Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794).

Pain and the Novel

Following Nancy Armstrong's argument that "the history of the novel and the history of the modern subject are, quite literally, one and the same," this study focuses specifically on the experiences and meanings of physical pain, both in the novel and to the modern individual in a changing society.³⁷ Representations of the body in eighteenth-century literature are cited by several scholars as a critical contribution to the growing sense of the personal boundaries of discrete, individual bodies and the accompanying notion of respecting others' bodies.³⁸ Both Lynn Hunt and William Wandless employ Samuel Richardson's novel of sensibility, *Pamela* (1740), as a text that relies on threats to a character's physical well-being, particularly as Pamela's interior thoughts are known through her letters, to evoke sympathetic reactions from readers.³⁹ By the turn of the next century, as Steven Bruhm's *Gothic Bodies* argues, Romantic and gothic literature express a new awareness that representations of visibly vulnerable bodies provoke complex, and not entirely humanitarian, reactions.⁴⁰ Potentially problematic reader-spectators, as this study will explore, complicate the assumption that literary bodies in pain will promote social sympathy.

³⁷ Armstrong 3.

³⁸ Hunt 29. William H. Wandless, "Narrative Pain and the Moral Sense: Toward an Ethics of Suffering in the Long Eighteenth-Century," *Literature and Medicine* 24.1 (2005): 57-58.

³⁹ Hunt Chapter 1. Wandless 57-58.

⁴⁰ Steven Bruhm, *Gothic Bodies: The Politics of Pain in Romantic Fiction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

The notion that literature should function to inspire readers' sympathy was openly discussed and acknowledged by nineteenth-century novelists. In her 1856 essay, "The Natural History of German Life," George Eliot defends the importance of accurate representations, particularly of working-class characters, in "our social novels" in order to inspire readers' sympathy: "a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is a part from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment."⁴¹ She further claims that art is "a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot."⁴² Eliot's argument values difficult, unpleasant facts about real life over aesthetically pleasing distractions, implying that readers have a responsibility, beyond entertaining themselves, to feel for others.

Readers' sympathy has also been the topic of several important contributions to literary studies in the past two decades. Catherine Gallagher's *Nobody's Story* notes the replacement, in the early nineteenth century, of factually based protagonists with "fictional nobodies," thus drawing scholars' attention to this adjustment of novel-readers' expectations.⁴³ Novels still sought to inspire compassion and sentiment, but by characterizing entirely fictional representations of real-life types. Gallagher defends the usefulness of a nobody-protagonist in terms of David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*

⁴¹ George Eliot, "The Natural History of German Life," *The Essays of George Eliot*. ed. Nathan Sheppard (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883) 144-145.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴³ Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 165.

(1739-1740), arguing that nobodies, “belonging to no one, [. . .] could be universally appropriated.”⁴⁴ Thomas Laqueur’s “Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative” locates a similar connection between reader and protagonist in his definition of the humanitarian narrative, a form that emerged around the turn of the nineteenth century. Whereas Gallagher’s nobody-protagonist creates a blank figure to which readers can more easily relate, Laqueur’s humanitarian narrative focuses on “the personal body, not only as the locus of pain but also as the common bond between those who suffer and those who would help.”⁴⁵ These narratives, then, display the wounds and scars of the individual bodies of strangers to allow readers, with their own bodies, to relate and feel sympathy.

Suzanne Keen’s *Empathy and the Novel* distinguishes between the commonly held idea that novels do inspire readers to feel for others and the real-life failure of readers to take any subsequent political action to alleviate the suffering of others. She acknowledges the genuine political influence of certain anomalies like Charles Dickens’s anti-Poor Law novel, *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839), and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), attributing their power to their overwhelming popularity.⁴⁶ In her overview of readers’ empathy in light of Keen’s argument that it does not translate into real-world action, Mary-Catherine Harrison mines current philosophical studies of emotion and fiction to remind scholars of the essential fact that the characters

⁴⁴ Ibid., 168.

⁴⁵ Laqueur 177. Laqueur’s analysis includes many nonfiction examples of this genre, including case histories and autopsy reports.

⁴⁶ Keen 140.

evoking sympathy are “fictional minds,” and that “emotion *sans* action is paradigmatic of how we read fiction.”⁴⁷ Readers, of course, cannot intervene to save their favorite characters from painful fates. This serves as a reminder of Adam Smith’s fellow-feeling: imagination, and in this case, a reader’s imagination, is the key.

Rae Greiner’s recent work claims that the main function of what she calls “sympathetic realism,” the strain of nineteenth-century novels about and inspiring sympathy, is to “turn[] private emotion into public currency.”⁴⁸ So, although feeling sympathy may not lead, as Keen and others observe, to individual readers becoming politically active on others’ behalf, it may succeed, argues Greiner, in cultivating both individual reflection and “profoundly social,” culturally shared feelings.⁴⁹ Such shared feelings would contribute to the consensus produced and perpetuated by realist novels and do, as this study shows, have a tangible effect on the politics of others’ pain. Greiner further contends that “[s]ympathy is productive, not simply mimetic.”⁵⁰ This helps explain why Smith’s imagination is so essential, why it is reasonable to feel sympathy inspired by fictional experiences, and why Gallagher’s nobody-protagonists work so well: the real process occurs in the individual reader’s mind and plural readers’ shared culture.

⁴⁷ Mary-Catherine Harrison, “Ethics, Empathy, and Dickens’s Realism,” *Narrative* 16.3 (2008): 257, 259. Harrison employs the term “empathy,” following Keen’s usage.

⁴⁸ Rae Greiner, *Sympathetic Realism in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2012) 22.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

The interdisciplinary nature of this project owes a debt to those studies of literature and medicine that have brought the medical gaze to bear on literary study, or, brought the novel into the sickroom, to understand how medical and literary discourses reflect, shape, and distort each other. Works including Miriam Bailin's *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction: The Art of Being Ill* (1994), Athena Vrettos's *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture* (1995), Sally Shuttleworth's *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996), Peter Logan's *Nerves and Narratives: A Cultural History of Hysteria in Nineteenth-Century British Prose* (1997), and Jill Matus's *Shock, Memory, and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction* (2009) have been particularly helpful. Their historicization of culturally constructed discourses has influenced the structure of this project and inspired myriad exciting possibilities for reading fiction through the lens of medical culture, and for reading medical culture through the lens of fiction.

This project's goal is to investigate a missing piece of the literature and medicine puzzle: the literary and medical intersections of pain in the 1840s, the decade of surgical anaesthesia, until the 1860s, in order to encompass the first generation of realist novels available in the new world of painless surgery. Because literary realism demands the verisimilitude of a familiar historical discourse, this study focuses exclusively on representations of physical pain in realist novels and the relationships between these fictional versions and representations of pain in contemporaneous nonfiction texts. Though suffering occurs in novels of the gothic and sensational subgenres, their goals and deployments vary from the work of realism, which has a distinctive history of recreating a recognizable reality in order to evoke sympathy. This project analyzes examples of two particular subgenres of the nineteenth-century realist novel – the social-

problem novel and the *Bildungsroman* – in order to identify how authors utilize representations of physical pain, considering both the specific demands and conventions of each subgenre and the popular tropes of the larger social debates on their subject.

Representations of acute, physical pain serve as the primary object of analysis because it is physical pain that Woolf, Scarry, and others, struggle to describe; it is physical pain that challenges authors of realist fiction; it is physical pain that patients and medical men alike could finally escape in the operating theater; it is physical pain that draws readers in, shocks readers, and demands readers' political attention; it is physical pain that has not been analyzed in this way, as illnesses and psychological conditions have. However, physical pain cannot be neatly severed from emotional, and chronic pain may suit an author's purposes more readily than acute. The following chapters investigate how and why. Because nineteenth-century realist fiction depends upon a recognizable notion of historical truth, or a "system of reference between fiction and modern life," this study scrutinizes nonfiction sources surrounding the emergence of the novels in question.⁵¹ Articles, letters, parliamentary reports, and memoirs will help illuminate the consensus, the expectations, and the stakes of contemporary discourse, and therefore, they will help understand the techniques and effects of these novelists' representations of pain.

Chapter 2 begins by identifying how bodies in pain figured in contentious public debates surrounding factory reforms in the 1830s and 1840s. The discussion began, of course, before surgical anaesthesia, and therefore allows a glimpse into a world in which there was no effective pain management for factory workers whose limbs were

⁵¹ Harrison 266. See also Lodge 25.

traumatically amputated in industrial accidents, or surgically amputated thereafter. Fictional and nonfiction texts written by pro-reform writers utilized familiar rhetorical bodies, like the deformed child and the amputee, to emphasize physical pain and disability suffered by workers without government-enforced protection. The industrial novel emerged as a very specific type of social-problem novel, itself a subgenre expressing “the urgency of its subject [and] the presentation of the necessity for remediation,” to fictionalize real grievances and gain readers’ sympathy and attention.⁵²

This chapter locates Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* (1848) in the midst of this combative discourse and argues that her novel deliberately revises the graphic bodies familiar to readers of earlier industrial fiction, like Fanny Trollope’s novel *Michael Armstrong* (1839-1840), and nonfiction autobiographies like William Dodd’s *Narrative of the Experience and Sufferings of William Dodd, A Factory Cripple, Written by Himself* (1841). Gaskell’s stated goal, to bring the working class and the manufacturing class closer together through mutual understanding, is reflected formally in her subtle innovations of those familiar, brutalized victims, as she substitutes less brutalized versions of the crippled, mangled, and sick bodies inhabiting so much divisive writing of the decade. Gaskell does not create shocking spectacles of bodies in pain because, as this project will show, the social injustice of factory workers’ pain had already been exposed to public scrutiny by earlier authors. Her strategy aims to rein in a conversation that has become excessive in its brutal rhetoric.

⁵² Joseph Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985) 10.

Chapter 3 provides a stark contrast to Gaskell's techniques by moving into the 1850s and focusing on another social-problem novel, Charles Reade's *It Is Never Too Late to Mend* (1856), which fictionalizes a real prison-torture scandal that occurred in 1853 and was widely reported and discussed by journalists and government investigators in 1854. Reade's novel employs elements of Laqueur's humanitarian narrative by describing lacerations of characters' bodies in graphic detail, with no accompanying psychological depth, to force readers to feel "[t]enderness for the sufferings of [their] own imaginations," an experience one contemporary writer believed was crucial to "the disapproval which is excited [. . .] by hearing of the infliction of pain on others."⁵³ This chapter demonstrates how Reade's particular type of realism, which presents factual truth in melodramatic garb, creates a spectacle of fictionalized torture, thereby dragging bodily punishment back in front of spectators after years of reform sought to remove punishment from the public gaze.

Reade's strategy, in addition to the fact that prison reform had been occurring for decades before Reade wrote his novel and the very scandal that inspired his anger had already been investigated and resolved, leads to questions about the propriety of literary torture and its potential to inspire voyeuristic or even sadistic reader responses. In fact, Reade's narrator insists that readers learn, like some characters in his fictionalization, how to recognize others' pain and respond with indignant action, but according to Reade's presentation, readers' sympathy and support requires that a certain amount of pain be felt, experienced, written, and shared. Like torture, Reade's argument, and in fact

⁵³ "Pain" 562.

all arguments by novelists writing what Greiner calls sympathetic realism, requires witnesses – spectators who will learn how to react appropriately.

Chapter 4 explores public discourse surrounding the Crimean War (1854-1856), which became a proving ground for military use of chloroform. Analysis of the influential journalistic letters of *The Times*'s William Howard Russell will show how, as Britain's leading war correspondent, Russell contributed to the problematic spectacle of war with highly detailed and ostensibly honest representations of the mismanaged campaign. However, though known for his attention to the plight of the common soldier, his attention to realistic detail does not extend to his presentations of soldiers' pain. Rather, Russell's journalism uses various techniques to render soldiers' pain idealized, collective, anonymous, distant, or panoramic. Debates about chloroform supplies also inform this discussion, as lay readers and medical men openly weighed the dangers and virtues of supplying chloroform for battlefield hospitals.

Russell's only novel, a *Bildungsroman* called *The Adventures of Doctor Brady* (1867-1869), provides an opportunity to compare and contrast his representations of soldiers' pain both during and well after the war, and in both nonfiction and fictional genres. The *Bildungsroman* form, which traces a protagonist's education and socialization from youth to maturity, allows for further analysis of realism's sympathy-inspiring project from a different perspective than the social-problem novel. Because the *Bildungsroman* narrates an individual's socialization, it provides space for authors to demonstrate one individual's encounters with problematic social institutions, even though those encounters lay in the fictional past rather than the urgent, fictional present of social-problem narratives. Russell's novel features an underdeveloped first-person protagonist,

Terry Brady, who becomes a surgeon in the Crimean War. Chapter 4 also demonstrates what this *Bildungsroman* has in common with social-problem novels. The text criticizes the very institution of war by pointing to paradoxes in Terry's experiences of pain from childhood to adulthood.

Chapter 5 represents a useful departure from the previous chapters by investigating how a realist novel of the same era, Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860-1861), though separated from specific, scandalous debates like the factory, prison reform, and war controversies, nevertheless uses pain to inspire readers' sympathy. Dickens's novel is, like Russell's, a *Bildungsroman*, but Dickens's protagonist, Pip, is a more textured protagonist with a highly developed interiority, whose struggles require that he actively assert his agency via an amateur detective plot. This chapter argues that Dickens's novel employs physical pain memories in innovative, but in the end, truthful ways, to indicate how pain is remembered and what significance narratives of remembered pain have. Reading Pip's strategic blend of physical and psychological pains in light of twenty-first-century psychological and physiological studies of pain and memory emphasizes his complete vulnerability at certain key moments of his education. Though not a social-problem novel, Pip's painful memories do bring him in the vicinity of a criminal world, featuring condemned men, crowded prisons, and solemn courtrooms, allowing Dickens's novel to comment on the pain inherent in these institutions through Pip's narration of his own story.

The final chapter proves, from a different perspective, a truth running through this entire project: pain can be horrific, life-shattering, all-consuming, and cruel, but pain is also productive. It inspires social outrage, connects fellow sufferers, and shapes many life

stories. As Scarry notes, literature “is most helpful not insofar as it *takes away* the problem of the other – for only with greatest rarity can it do this – but when it instead *takes as* its own subject the problem of imagining others.”⁵⁴ The novels featured in the following chapters do not erase or solve the problem of others’ pain. Instead, they feature the pain of others in very specific ways, reminding readers how to connect, imaginatively, with fictional others, and why it is critically important, in real life, to do so.

⁵⁴ Elaine Scarry, “The Difficulty of Imagining Other Persons,” *Human Rights in Political Transitions: Gettysburg to Bosnia*, ed. Carla Hesse and Robert Post (New York: Zone, 1999) 287.

CHAPTER 2

REVISING WORKING-CLASS PAIN:

ELIZABETH GASKELL'S *MARY BARTON* AND PAIN "IN THE MINOR KEY"

Elizabeth Gaskell published her industrial social-problem novel, *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*, in the midst of a decades-long public debate regarding Britain's factory system, as writers of every genre and political position attempted to capture the myths and realities of working-class life.¹ Factory debates became particularly heated in the 1830s and 1840s, as the hardships of working populations raised questions about the government's responsibility, if it had one, to protect its citizens from their own occupations and employers. Gaskell's novel worked against reader expectations by aiming to cultivate a common ground in an almost impossibly contentious discourse. The novel's narrator explicitly defines "the most deplorable and enduring evil" of the moment as "this feeling of alienation between the different classes of society."² The novel, famous for its realism, deliberately upsets conventions of the newly established industrial subgenre within the larger factory-debate discourse by eschewing graphic displays of workers' bodies in pain and introducing analogous innovations in their place. Gaskell's characters are greater than the sum of their painful conditions; they are not evidentiary exhibits demonizing manufacturers, and, therefore, Gaskell's novel presents a more

¹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* (1848; Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2000).

² *Ibid.*, 127.

nuanced depiction of the complexity of industrial labor in a public debate rife with brutal accusations.

Britain faced unprecedented change at the turn of the nineteenth century. Two related forces – the discipline of political economy and the proliferation of the recently developed steam engine – combined to create an entirely new system of labor, production, and wealth. The nation’s growing population of workers moved into quickly crowded urban areas, like Manchester and Leeds, where all able-bodied members of the household could participate in the cotton and wool industries, respectively. By 1816, factory workers were testifying that “excessive hours of work were producing a weak and morally inferior population.”³ This early observation provides a mild foreshadowing for the torrent of injustices that would be leveled against factory owners over the next four decades. Few could see then that the promising power of industrial machinery, combined with the solidly laissez-faire positions of most manufacturers, would lead to a terrifying, complex cultural debate about the nation’s working class – its rights, its pain, and its morality. As one journalist wrote, the industrial factory system became known as both “the glory and shame of England.”⁴

³ Roger Lloyd-Jones and M.J. Lewis, *Manchester and the Age of the Factory: The Business Structure of Cottonopolis in the Industrial Revolution* (London: Croom Helm, 1988) 75.

⁴ Angus Reach, “Lancashire,” *Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 1849-1851: The Letters to The Morning Chronicle from the Correspondents in the Manufacturing and Mining Districts, the Towns of Liverpool and Birmingham, and the Rural Districts, Volume I: Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire*, ed. J. Ginswick (London: Frank Cass, 1983) 5.

Writers of all backgrounds, including novelists, poets, journalists, essayists, and autobiographers, scrambled to articulate their opinions on the factory system and its effects on workers. Each genre offers rhetorical strategies valuable to the discussion of industrial pain. Novelists like Fanny Trollope and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna focused on orphaned, angelic factory children caught in the traps of unrealistically sadistic factory-overseer villains.⁵ Poets such as L.E.L. (“The Factory,” 1838) and Elizabeth Barrett Browning (“The Cry of the Children,” 1843) also emphasized the pain of weary working children denied the delights of childhood they deserve. Journalists like Angus Reach, a correspondent for *The Morning Chronicle*, traveled, at the suggestion of Henry Mayhew, to the manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire in order to form “a middle and wiser course of opinion” on the topic of factories, labor, and reform that inspired such polemical public debates.⁶ Thomas Carlyle insisted that factory oversight must be put in place because “such things,” namely unfair and unhealthy working conditions, “cannot longer be idly lapped in darkness, and suffered to go unseen.”⁷ Meanwhile, fellow essayist Harriet Martineau berated supporters of factory legislation for “encroaching on the very principles of our liberties” and inappropriately shifting the burden of individuals’

⁵ Frances Trollope, *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, The Factory Boy* (1839-1840; London: Frank Cass, 1968). Frances Trollope (1780-1863) was the mother of novelist Anthony Trollope (1815-1882). Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-1841; New York: John S. Taylor, 1841).

⁶ Reach 5.

⁷ Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (1843; New York: New York UP, 1965) 261.

well-being to factory owners.⁸ Parliamentary evidence, available as blue books, combined workers' interviews with politicians' observations and provided novelists with inspiring source material for their fictionalizations of this social problem.⁹

Autobiographies of factory workers like William Dodd, telling their own stories of hellish working conditions, their physical "afflictions and deformities," and their "daily and excruciating pains," highlighted the violent effects of factory labor on the individual worker's body rather than focusing on employer-employee relationships or the larger economic condition of England.¹⁰

The Industrial Revolution disrupted familiar social narratives and expectations, requiring extensive debate and legislation for decades before a new cultural narrative could be established and codified.¹¹ Likewise, the industrial novel, which emerged as a literary subgenre that claimed to educate novel readers about the lives of factory workers and the political debates surrounding factory reform with the intention of evoking readers' sympathy, captured moments of political and genre disruption and devised new conventions, new expectations, and new goals for social-problem narratives. Many literary scholars concur that Gaskell's first industrial novel, *Mary Barton*, mixes familiar

⁸ Harriet Martineau, *The Factory Controversy: A Warning Against Meddling Legislation* (Manchester: A. Ireland and Co., 1855) 4.

⁹ Charles Wing, ed., *Evils of the Factory System Demonstrated by Parliamentary Evidence* (1837; London: Frank Cass, 1967).

¹⁰ William Dodd, *A Narrative of the Experience and Sufferings of William Dodd, A Factory Cripple, Written by Himself* (1841; *Factory Lives: Four Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiographies*, ed. James R. Simmons, Jr. (Toronto: Broadview, 2007)) 192, 208.

¹¹ See Gallagher, *Industrial Reformation*.

strategies in unfamiliar ways, combining aspects of political and domestic storylines, moving from privately emotional characterizations to publicly empowered ones, and creating an initial protagonist, John Barton, who is simultaneously praiseworthy and condemnable.¹² The novel highlights the limitations of these narrative forms, adapts them to the unprecedented and chaotic social changes in industrial Britain, and embodies in its own formal structure the very confusion of the cultural moment.

The novel continues to occupy a position in the Victorian canon as a preferred representative of industrial fiction, having enjoyed more positive reviews upon its publication and more far-reaching, long-standing influence than her fellow women writers' works in the subgenre. Contemporary and current critics agree that the novel's strength lies in what Gallagher calls its "documentary realism," which details working-class homes and dialects.¹³ In an 1848 review, *The Athenaeum* hailed *Mary Barton* as the work of a writer who "has described misery, temptation, distress and shame as they really exist," created characters "touched with the fidelity of a Daguerreotype," and seamlessly employed the "vigorous and racy" Lancashire dialect.¹⁴ Knowing the spate of industrial novels as readers and critics did, this reviewer seems excited to have found a

¹² Gaskell's second and final industrial novel, *North and South* (1855), is set in the city of Milton, a recognizable fictionalization of Manchester. See Gallagher, *Industrial Reformation*, Chapter 3. Also Kestner Chapter 3. As well as Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 144-146. And Hilary M. Schor, *Scheherazade in the Marketplace: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Victorian Novel* (New York: Oxford UP, 1992) Chapter 1.

¹³ Gallagher, *Industrial Reformation*, 79.

¹⁴ Rev. of *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*, by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Athenaeum* 21 Oct. 1848: 1050-1051.

fictionalization of “social evils” that is “at once so forcible and so fair” as Gaskell’s novel.¹⁵ W.R. Greg praised the “literary merit of the work” because “its interest is intense: often painfully so,” and because it inspires a “sense of shame and self-condemnation” in readers that should be “salutary.”¹⁶ Over one hundred years later, Kathleen Tillotson continued in this tradition by arguing that *Mary Barton* was meant for “promoting sympathy, not sharpening antagonisms.”¹⁷

Unlike other industrial novels or the parliamentary testimony, journalism, and working-class autobiographies of the late 1830s and early 1840s, Gaskell’s novel is deliberately subtle and restrained in its representations of workers’ pain. In a letter to Mrs. Greg, Gaskell broaches the topic of the review she “conjecture[s] w[as] written by [her] husband” in order to express her appreciation of Greg’s astute reading and to acknowledge her sense that “the whole book seems to be written in the minor key,” pointing to the novel’s melancholic tone.¹⁸ Gaskell’s musical metaphor might also be read as a description of auditory tone as well as emotional: not only is the novel sad, but it is often quietly so.¹⁹

¹⁵ Ibid., 1050.

¹⁶ W.R. Greg, rev. of *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life*, by Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Edinburgh Review* Apr. 1849: 403, 409.

¹⁷ Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (1954; London: Oxford UP, 1962) 213.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Gaskell, “Letter 42,” *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, ed. J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1966) 75.

¹⁹ The physiological versus cultural effects of different types of music is an ongoing debate among musicians and neuroscientists, but studies often find that mood and volume are linked: “Most cultures share the same acoustic characteristics of happy or

By refining and contextualizing various kinds of pain experienced by her novel's characters, Gaskell anticipated and placated critics who were disgusted with what they considered polemical and exaggerated episodes of brutality in the first generation of industrial literature produced by novelists like Trollope and Tonna. However, Gaskell does not efface the pain of workers; by employing understatement in response to earlier hyperbole, Gaskell's novel demonstrates that working-class pain exists, quietly, chronically, and perniciously, as a new kind of normal in cities like Manchester, where one encounters "worn, listless, diseased creatures, who thenceforward crawl through life with moody hearts and pain-stricken bodies," and that polemics and exaggerations merely aggravate the ability of members of one class to understand the other.²⁰ *Mary Barton* reinvents three familiar conventions for depicting workers' pain in the factory debates: the sick body, weakened by illness and hunger; the mangled body, destroyed by factory machinery; and the failing body, slowly lamed and stunted over the course of a factory operative's work life.

The Sick Body: Domestic Scenes of Factory Workers' Pain

A useful contrast, Fanny Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, The Factory Boy*, published less than a decade earlier than Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, was immediately disparaged for its caricatures. *The Literary Gazette* dismissed the novel, stating that "[. . .] in short, her *Factory* is a *very unsatis-Factory Boy*" because

sad speech, the former being relatively fast and loud, and the latter slower and quieter." See Philip Ball, "Does a Minor Key Give Everyone the Blues?" *Nature* 8 Jan. 2010.

²⁰ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 160.

it only imitates “a brilliant model” recently established by Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* and because it does not strike readers as true.²¹ Defending her novel against critics who found her black-and-white characterizations more fantastic than realistic, Trollope insisted that a “true but most painful picture has been drawn faithfully and conscientiously” in her work.²² Trollope’s narrative fulfills its purpose as a social-problem novel by demonstrating that specific injustices cause individuals great suffering, and that readers can and should help them. To expose what she considered horrific facts about the industrial system, Trollope employs the character of Mary Brotherton, sympathetic heiress to a manufacturing fortune, as an industrial tourist: a political and philanthropic novice who gains access to and witnesses scenes of factory workers’ injuries, pain, and unemployment from an outsider’s perspective.²³ Mary Brotherton receives an education, presumably in the same way middle-class readers should, through various interactions with factory reformers, factory children, and others of whom she had been ignorant as a girl. The scene of Mary’s unsolicited visit to a working-class home, in which two young sisters relate their woes, highlights the class difference between Mary

²¹ Rev. of *Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*, by Frances Trollope, *The Literary Gazette* 28 Dec. 1839: 825-826.

²² Trollope, Preface.

²³ For more on the history and popularity of industrial tourism, see Joseph Bizup, *Manufacturing Culture: Vindications of Early Victorian Industry* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003): 24. Fanny Trollope traveled to Manchester in February 1839 “to view conditions for herself.” See Kestner 52.

and this family by representing them as bodies in a “humanitarian narrative”: not as suffering, complex individuals, but as evidence on display for Mary’s edification.²⁴

A girl of about six years old, Becky, tells Mary that she was “smashed” on the arm by a stretcher with a “billy-roller” because she “was sleepy,” and then she “display[s] the limb swollen and discoloured, from some violent contusion” for Mary’s inspection.²⁵ Betsy, about ten years old, insists that she stays home from factory work to care for her dying mother because her father is in the gin-shop, her older siblings must work, and the factory will no longer employ her younger sister. Betsy “can’t piece now” because of what the narrator describes as a “little shriveled right-hand, three fingers of which had a joint deficient” from an injury sustained when she fell “asleep against the machinery.”²⁶ The girls remain calm while their stories and bruises overwhelm Mary, who is confused about the causes and effects that seem so obvious to child factory workers; Becky even speaks to Mary as if she were “more than commonly dull of apprehension” because the wealthy woman does not seem able to absorb the truth about the origins of the girls’ injuries.²⁷ The girls appear desensitized to the agony of their lives; they do not express feelings of physical pain despite their serious injuries. As their

²⁴ Laqueur 177-178.

²⁵“A billy-roller is a heavy rod, from two to three yards long, and of two inches diameter, with an iron pivot at each end. Its primary and proper function is to run on the top of the cording over the feeding cloth. Its secondary and improper function is to rap little children ‘on the head, making their heads crack, so that you may hear the blow at a distance of six or eight yards, in spite of the din and rolling of the machinery.” See “The Factory System, Part I,” *Blackwood’s Magazine* 33.106 April 1833: 442.

²⁶ Trollope 128, 126.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

mother lies dying after a year-long illness “ever since she com’d from the mill,” the narrator theorizes that Becky’s “swollen and discoloured arm still remained uncovered, probably because she feared the pain likely to attend the replacing it in the sleeve,” although the girl articulates no such pain or fear.²⁸ In this house, the pain and deformity of factory injuries are commonplace, and as such they are easily cast aside even by a six-year-old who is too concerned about her mother to voice her own pain; or, the six-year-old is such an underdeveloped character that her emotional experience is not as important as her role as an injured body. Trollope’s critique of the industrial system here invites readers like Mary to share in the surprised realization of this tragic circumstance, although it does not encourage readers to know these workers either individually or intimately.

Mary’s initial visit to a working family’s home neatly exposes her, and Trollope’s readers, to many difficult facts of factory workers’ lives: deformities from machinery, abuse at the hands of overseers, extreme fatigue, hunger, unsanitary living conditions, mysterious infections, high mortality rates, alcoholism, children taking on adult responsibilities, and the loss of employment – and therefore wages, food, and medical care. Mary serves as a model of appropriate compassion, giving the family money for bread, summoning a medical man to attend the dying mother, and praying with her. Her reactions come as a result of her recent education and her growing sympathies for this class of workers.

²⁸ Ibid., 125, 133.

However, while eye-opening, the scene is unrealistic in terms of narrative probability, character development, and dialogue. Mary finds the entire spectrum of factory workers' pain in one visit to one household, arriving as she does, coincidentally, mere minutes before the mother passes away. Mary has no other connection to this family. This strategy places the family's various hardships in one chapter, condensed as a set-piece for Mary to stumble upon in her journey as a wealthy but morally righteous person. She sees this pathetic display because she must in order to understand the factory system and for Trollope's readers to learn about the system through Mary's privileged eyes. Given the domestic setting, the scene's dialogue is less realistic than other narrative strategies, as Becky and Betsy become something like industrial tour guides in their own home, offering evidence and testifying to the problems and terms Trollope wants to expose and Mary needs to learn in order to form an opinion regarding the factory debates.

Critics were not only disappointed by Trollope's narrative strategy and character development, all of which adds up to a "miserable farce"; they were angered by what a review in *The Athenaeum* calls her "wantonly decrying and discrediting a class of person whose operations are intimately bound up with the very existence of our nation."²⁹ Despite the reviewer's support for factory reform, he insists that one's political opinion should not affect a reader's reception of Trollope's novel; Trollope's unfair exaggerations, embodied by "Sir Matthew Dowling, the demon-hero of the work," only undermine her factory reform agenda by striking readers as both unrealistic and unjust.³⁰

²⁹ Rev. of *Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*, by Frances Trollope, *The Athenaeum* 10 Aug. 1839: 588-590.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 590.

Dowling cruelly delights in separating children from their families in order to exploit young workers in his mills because their small hands make them ideal piecers, their narrow frames make them ideal scavengers, and their lack of class standing or political protection make them disposable.³¹ The critic might have added that Dowling's cohort, Doctor Crockley, is an equally dubious medical man whose "love of science" causes him to experiment on children in the factories in order to learn about their "different constitutions."³² The backlash against Trollope's novel also affected the reception of Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's industrial novel *Helen Fleetwood* as well as public reaction to working-class autobiographies like William Dodd's *Narrative of the Experience and Sufferings of William Dodd, A Factory Cripple, Written by Himself*, both of which were published in 1841. By the early 1840s, the credibility of writers working for factory reform was damaged because some readers, critics, and politicians resisted accepting the premise that employers could so callously disregard, or even deliberately inflict, employees' pain. The timing of *Michael Armstrong, The Athenaeum* insists, was "too late" because the wrongs of factory labor were no longer a secret and the legislature was already actively discussing reforms.³³ In other words, the workers' pain had already been

³¹ A "piecer" was also known as a "piecener." The term was coined in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and refers to "a person, esp. a child, employed in a woollen or cotton mill to join together the ends of threads which have broken while being spun or wound." (*Oxford English Dictionary*, Third Ed., 2006, "Piecener.") A "scavenger" was a "child employed in a spinning-mill to collect loose cotton lying about the floor or machinery" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, Third Ed., 2006, "Scavenger.")

³² Trollope 78.

³³ Rev. of *Michael Armstrong, The Athenaeum*, 590.

exposed to the public, rendering Trollope's descriptions, some thought, exploitative and disingenuous.

In fact, attempts at reform began with the 1802 Health and Morals of Apprentices Act, which sought to "limit the working day for apprentices" and regulate their education; reforms continued with the Cotton Mills Act of 1819, which "limited the employment of children in cotton mills [. . .] to those of nine years of age and above and set a maximum twelve-hour workday for children between the ages of nine and sixteen."³⁴ These regulations were not effectively enforced; surgeons and physicians were charged with certifying child workers' ages, but births were not required to be registered in England until 1837 and other forms of evidence, such as family Bibles, were easily forged.³⁵ By the early 1830s, growing awareness of abuses in increasingly urban factories combined with a national push for reforms and abolition led to the Ten-Hours Movement, an attempt by Members of Parliament including Michael Sadler, Lord Ashley, and Lord Althorp to limit the workday of certain workers to ten hours; this piece of legislation was not approved at that time, but their efforts produced the Factory Act of 1833, which further restricted work hours for children, eliminated night hours for child workers, and provided government inspectors to enforce the rules.³⁶ Trollope's critics pointed to these government interventions in the factory system as evidence that her grievances regarding

³⁴ Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-Class Children in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994) 74.

³⁵ B.L. Hutchins and Amy Harrison, *A History of Factory Legislation*, 2nd ed. (London: P.S. King & Son, 1911) 72-73.

³⁶ Hopkins 76.

manufacturing abuses were outdated and patently unfair. Official and public attempts at reform combined with readers' general support for a manufacturing system that was building national wealth and producing more goods rendered readers less amenable to the argument, even when made through humanitarian narratives of pain, that factory work hurt and killed free English laborers, including women and children.

Though set in the early 1840s, *Mary Barton* was not published until 1848, almost twenty years after Michael Sadler began investigating what he called "infant slavery in these accursed mills" and fifteen years after required inspections of factories began.³⁷ Just under one decade elapsed between the publication of Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* and Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, but the Hungry Forties witnessed an almost incredible cluster of events that separate the initial wave of industrial novels from a second wave, represented by Gaskell's work: "the commercial panic" and General Strike of 1842; the Factory Act of 1844, which included women under the same regulations as children, required machinery to be "safeguarded," and outlined obligations of associated surgeons and inspectors; the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846; the discovery and use of anaesthetic properties of ether in 1846 and of chloroform in 1847; the typhus epidemic of 1847; the Factory Act of 1847, also known as the Ten Hours Act, which gradually reduced the workday to ten hours; a trade depression in 1847 that led to cutbacks or closures at almost half of Manchester's mills; and the Irish famine that led to mass starvation, illness, and

³⁷ Robert Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) 39.

emigration – often of Irish workers to English cities like Manchester and Liverpool – in the second half of the decade.³⁸

Gaskell’s novel, then, is part of a second wave of industrial fiction written in the midst of ongoing industrial debates while hundreds of thousands of lives hung in the balance. Sensitive to the torrent of passionate voices on this topic, Gaskell joins the discourse, anonymously at first, in a deliberately toned down mode of subtle realism designed to “give a spur to inactive thought, and languid conscience” without offending critics, manufacturers, politicians, or anyone else with the power to alleviate the suffering of the working class.³⁹ Despite its melodramatic moments, the novel is one of restrained tragedy rather than the famously graphic tales of earlier industrial novels. In this sense, Gaskell rejects the strategies of Laqueur’s humanitarian narrative by instead employing calmer, subtler relationships between her characters and their pain: it scars rather than destroys them, complicates rather than defines them, and accounts for only one aspect, though a dreadfully important one, of their complex lives.

The Bartons experience emotional upheaval within their immediate family – John’s sickly son Tom died young and hungry, Mrs. Barton’s sister disappeared and is later found to be an alcoholic prostitute, and Mrs. Barton and her infant die in childbirth

³⁸ Hutchins and Harrison 66, 85, 87. Charles Creighton, *A History of Epidemics in Britain, Vol II: From the Extinction of the Plague to the Present Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1894) 205-208. Hutchins and Harrison 97. Cormac Ó Gráda, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999) 111-112.

³⁹ Elizabeth Gaskell, “Letter 72a,” *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, ed. J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1966) 119. The recipient of Gaskell’s letter was Mrs. Kay-Shuttleworth, wife of medical doctor and influential social reformer, James Kay-Shuttleworth. Also qtd. in Schor 42.

when Mary is a young teenager – but neither main character is a sufferer of extensive physical pain; instead, John and Mary see, sympathize with, attempt to alleviate, and learn from the pain of others in their working-class world. This pattern is set early in the story, during a nearly perfect moment of domestic harmony on the eve of his wife’s death, when John believes “every now and then [that] his wife’s face flushed and contracted as if in pain.”⁴⁰ This moment precedes two upsetting events: a family friend thoughtlessly mentions Mrs. Barton’s missing sister, causing the woman of the house emotional distress; and, in the beginning of the next chapter, Mrs. Barton goes into labor, her “cries of agony” heard by everyone in the neighborhood but silenced before the doctor, who tells John to “bear it like a man,” can attend to her.⁴¹ The subtle flash of pain on his wife’s face becomes, in retrospect, a foreshadowing of pain, both emotional and physical, to come. It is a momentary crack in the daily domestic façade reminding John, who already knows pain, and readers, who may not yet, that pain will always resurface, threatening their tenuous household harmony.

Like Mrs. Barton’s final agony, the pain of working-class characters remains a working-class concern in this novel. Their suffering is not witnessed first-hand by manufacturers’ daughters or other upper-middle-class tourists; therefore, the narrator focuses more effectively on the *consequences* that workers’ pains and hardships have in their own lives than other industrial novels of the era. Readers do not simply leave the scene of pain to contemplate the politics of factory reform with privileged characters in big houses; readers remain in the pain-filled world of workers because John and Mary

⁴⁰ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 49.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

Barton are the main characters driving the work's entire narrative arc. The novel's most memorable and sustained scene of physical suffering takes place in the cellar dwelling of family friends, the Davenports. At first glance the scene is vaguely reminiscent of Trollope's wealthy heroine traipsing into the hovel of a factory family, and in fact this strategy is similar in that it allows Gaskell to distance, slightly, the tragedy of the Davenports from her main characters. However, they are only separated by family and household, not by class or occupation, as in Trollope. There, the similarities end; as Joseph Kestner points out, "the reader enters the hovel [. . .] with Barton, Wilson, and the narrator, not with a polemicist."⁴² John's friend, George Wilson, knows this family personally; both Wilson and John Barton have lost their own family members to illness and lack of medical care exacerbated by hunger. Witnessing Davenport's downward spiral is part of their normal lives, not a surprising anomaly.

Although depressed trade has made work harder to find – Barton is working "short hours" and Wilson is not working at all – neither man hesitates to visit and help Ben Davenport, a worker who is "down wi' the fever, and ne'er a stick o' fire nor a cowl potato in the house," and whose children are starving but too young to work.⁴³ Supporting the novel's claims of realism, Gaskell's narrator employs language and imagery similar to that of contemporary reports like Edwin Chadwick's *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population* (1842): Barton and Wilson walk by "household slops of every description" flowing in the street, encounter a fetid smell, and

⁴² Kestner 124.

⁴³ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 96-97.

are aware of the dangers of the cold, dark cellar where the Davenport children lie on a wet floor “through which the stagnant, filthy moisture of the street oozed up.”⁴⁴ Mr. Davenport lies dying of typhus, Mrs. Davenport collapses in near-starvation, two children are old enough to be taken to Wilson’s home for the night, and an infant cries for food. Barton knows how to take care of the sick and starving, and he is unafraid of physical contact: he confidently feeds the baby, revives the “dead-like woman” by a freshly lit fire, and attends to the man’s “worn skeleton of a body.”⁴⁵ Wracked by fever but shivering in the freezing cellar, Davenport is a weak, starving, and delirious example of the consequences of unemployment, low wages, and contagion in unsanitary conditions. Although he does not suffer from an acute factory injury, Davenport’s state is a direct result of his working-class status, living in a factory town with little work, with a wife and young children to feed, in a cellar unfit for human habitation. Gaskell’s narrator describes Davenport’s fever as being “(as it usually is in Manchester) of a low, putrid, typhoid kind; brought on by miserable living, filthy neighbourhood, and great depression of mind and body. It is virulent, malignant, and highly infectious.”⁴⁶ An outbreak of typhus, also called the “Irish Fever” that year because some contagion seems to have spread from Irish immigrants in England and Scotland, occurred in 1846-1847 while Gaskell lived and wrote in Manchester, where the epidemic was worsened by a severe

⁴⁴ Ibid., 97-98. Emphasis in original. See also Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 144-145.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 99-100.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 99.

economic depression and subsequent famine.⁴⁷ Similar conditions and an earlier epidemic also obtained in the years 1839-1841, during which the Bartons' story is set.⁴⁸ In his *History of Epidemics in Britain*, Charles Creighton makes a rare literary comment by including a passage of Gaskell's "pathetic scenes of typhus among the poor" as a realistic and useful description for understanding the circumstances of typhus patients in the years around 1840.⁴⁹ Davenport represents the tens of thousands to suffer from typhus, which is marked by fever, delirium, rash, severe headaches, muscle pain, thrombosis, and, often, fatal pulmonary complications.⁵⁰

Gaskell's narration focuses on Davenport's delirium in order to highlight changes in Davenport's character, a devastating and personal effect of his condition. Barton and Wilson see how unlike his usual self Davenport now is: he snatches food "with animal instinct, with selfishness he had never shown in health," and "he cursed and swore," though known for "his piety in health."⁵¹ The "wild mad agony" of typhus forces aside

⁴⁷ "In the whole year of 1847, typhus alone claimed 30,320 deaths in England and Wales, the total in 1848 falling to 21,406." Creighton 206-207.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 197-198. According to Creighton, there were 82,665 *recorded* typhus deaths in England and Wales between 1838 and 1842.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 197, 197n.

⁵⁰ Roberts Bartholow, "Typhus Fever," *A Treatise on the Practice of Medicine, for the Use of Students and Practitioners* (2nd ed.; New York: Appleton, 1881) 705-710. For more research on the medical and cultural implications of typhus in nineteenth-century Britain, see Pamela K. Gilbert, *Cholera and the Nation: Doctoring the Social Body in Victorian England* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008).

⁵¹ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 100, 103.

all care for or understanding of social propriety.⁵² Gaskell also introduces another layer of significance to Davenport's suffering body: he is not only a husband and father, but also a "prophet of woe" embodying the real physical consequences of amoral politics and social apathy. Several editors of Gaskell's work have identified the description of Davenport's bearing, when "he started up in his naked madness, looking like the prophet of woe in the fearful plague-picture," as a reference to *Solomon Eagle Exhorting the People to Repentance during the Plague*, an 1843 painting by Paul Falconer Poole.⁵³ The image depicts Solomon Eagle, a character from William Harrison Ainsworth's 1841 historical novel, *Old Saint Paul's: Tale of the Plague and the Fire*, who wildly denounces sinners in the plague-ridden streets of London in 1665. He preaches that the "provocations and wickedness" of London's residents have incurred God's wrath of "plagues," "desolation," and "fire."⁵⁴ Solomon Eagle considers the pain and grief of an epidemic to be religiously ordained and deserved, but the industrial-era suffering of Gaskell's Davenport is fundamentally different: workers do not suffer punishment by God, but cold indifference by the manufacturing class.

The chapter diverts briefly to Wilson's quest to reach the lavish home of the mill owner, Mr. Carson, who controls his employees' access to medical care. Wilson requests an infirmary order "to get [Davenport] in at the Fever Wards," but Carson, though ignorant of the fact, is unhelpful: "I doubt if I've an in-patient's order to spare at present;

⁵² Ibid., 103.

⁵³ Ibid., 100, 100n.

⁵⁴ William Harrison Ainsworth, *Old Saint Paul's: A Tale of the Plague and the Fire* (London: Hugh Cunningham, 1841) 42-43.

but I'll give you an out-patient's and welcome.' So saying, he rose up, unlocked a drawer, pondered a minute, and then gave Wilson an out-patient's order to be presented the following Monday. Monday! How many days were there before Monday!"⁵⁵

Gaskell's use of free indirect discourse blends Wilson's internal disappointment with the narrator's own disapproval of this system. The in-patient order is essentially a ticket to medical care, presumably at the Manchester Royal Infirmary or another local hospital, which depended upon "the philanthropy of the wealthy" and were "managed voluntarily by local elites."⁵⁶ Carson's possession of orders marks him as a patron wealthy and professionally interested enough to subscribe to the infirmary, thereby effectively purchasing a set number of in- and out-patient orders.⁵⁷ These he can dispense as he chooses.

Historian Alan Kidd's call for a more nuanced and anthropologically derived understanding of philanthropy in historical studies is helpful in discerning the significant implications of two kinds of giving in Gaskell's chapter: reciprocal and charitable. When Barton and Wilson unquestioningly leap to the aid of a fellow worker, providing food and care they can ill afford, it is because they recognize that Davenport is in more urgent need than they are, at least at the moment, and because they are functioning in a complex

⁵⁵ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 109.

⁵⁶ Martin Gorsky, John Mohan, and Tim Willis, *Mutualism and Health Care: British Hospital Contributory Schemes in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2006) 18.

⁵⁷ John V. Pickstone, *Medicine and Industrial Society: A History of Hospital Development in Manchester and Its Region, 1752-1946* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985) 11.

working-class paradigm in which assistance is not expected from outside sources and workers help each other. They participate in “reciprocal giving,” an ancient human practice that “creates solidarity and affirms relationships.”⁵⁸ Even though Davenport dies during this chapter, his wife recovers and, two chapters later, she gives John Barton a new outfit for his political quest to London, responding to Mary’s gratitude by explicitly citing the role of reciprocal giving among these working-class families: “Eh, Mary! [. . .] whatten’s all I can do, to what he’s done for me and mine? But, Mary, sure I can help ye, for you’ll be busy wi’ this journey.”⁵⁹ These relationships stand in stark contrast, juxtaposed as they are within the same Davenport episode, with Carson’s position in the town. The disconnect between Wilson’s request for an infirmary order and Carson’s understanding of the situation – particularly, his quickness to give whichever type of infirmary order he has on hand, regardless of Davenport’s actual need, and his apparent unawareness that Wilson is disappointed by the results of their interview – becomes more politically comprehensible when viewed as “charitable” giving that “represents an imbalance of social and moral forces” because the recipient of the gift desperately needs the assistance but will never be able to reciprocate, thus “reinforce[ing] divisions” and “generat[ing] resentments.”⁶⁰ Carson is not cruel like Trollope’s mill owner, but he does not have to be in order for this chasm between the classes to become clear in Gaskell’s text.

⁵⁸ Alan Kidd, “Philanthropy and the ‘Social History Paradigm,’” *Social History* 21.2 (1996): 186.

⁵⁹ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 130.

⁶⁰ A. Kidd 186-187.

Carson is simply doing what he thinks is beneficial for his employees and, by extension, his business; Gaskell's narrator simultaneously demonstrates his generosity and his ignorance, both underlined in different ways by representations of his family in the same chapter: his materialistic daughter who "can't live without flowers and scents" but is loving toward her father; his vain son, Harry, who is "proud of himself" but easily gives Wilson the shillings in his pocket; and his absent wife, Mrs. Carson, whose servants know has "got a bad headache."⁶¹ The Carsons are rendered in a more realistically complex way than Trollope's manufacturing families, further supporting Gaskell's larger argument that it is ignorance of others' plights, not cruelty or callousness, that separate the Carsons of the world from the Bartons and Wilsons. Mrs. Carson's headache returns to the narrative many chapters later just before the Carsons hear of Harry's murder. The narrator describes her "indulging in the luxury of a headache" and attributes the frequency of her headaches to a "state of mental and bodily idleness in which she was placed."⁶² Though pain is distributed "asymmetrical[ly]" across classes, Mrs. Carson reminds Gaskell's readers that it is a bond all humans share.⁶³

The Davenports' cellar scene also provides a realistic depiction of extreme hunger, or "clemming" in the Lancashire dialect, which necessarily accompanied and aggravated all other hardships visited on workers and their families. John Barton is not a stranger to starvation. He remembers feeling hunger "almost to an animal pitch of

⁶¹ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 107-110.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 264.

⁶³ Carolyn Betensky, *Feeling for the Poor: Bourgeois Compassion, Social Action, and the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010) 94.

ravenousness, but with the bodily pain swallowed up in anxiety for his little sinking lad,” his son, Tom, who had scarlet fever, was malnourished, and died before the action of the novel begins.⁶⁴ The narrator subordinates John’s “bodily pain” to his emotional agony in order to underscore the father’s feelings of love, grief, and helplessness. His experience allows Barton to recognize Mrs. Davenport’s condition immediately: “She’s well-nigh clemmed [. . .] Folk do say one mustn’t give clemmed people much to eat, but bless us, she’ll eat nought.”⁶⁵ The pain of hunger is often rendered silently because the sufferer is too weak to produce cries of pain or, as in this case, to remain conscious. *The Northern Star*, a Chartist periodical interested in spreading proof of the exploitation and mistreatment of poor workers, published reports by surgeons and coroners who identified the damage done by starvation in autopsy; one in particular, by a Leeds surgeon named Christopher Brown, speculates on the agony starvation must have caused, observing in a 24-year-old’s abdomen that “there was a complete absence of fat,” the “viscera were contracted *as if in severe pain* [. . .] the stomach was contracted and empty.”⁶⁶ Severe malnutrition aggravates other conditions: it leads to fatigue, which further endangered factory workers near machinery; to vitamin deficiencies and a decreased ability to fight infection, which caused increased rates of contagious diseases; and to death.

⁶⁴ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 56. Scarlet fever, or scarlatina, mortalities tended to be higher in Lancashire (including Manchester) and West Riding (including Leeds) than other regions of England. See Creighton 726-727.

⁶⁵ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 99.

⁶⁶ Qtd. in Peter J. Gurney, “‘Rejoicing in Potatoes’: The Politics of Consumption in England during the ‘Hungry Forties,’” *Past and Present* 203 (May 2009): 117. Emphasis mine.

Mrs. Davenport is only slowly revived when Barton feeds her; starving causes her to react sluggishly, but in due course she is able to cry “thick-coming tears” and eventually to speak “faintly,” explaining to Barton that Davenport “is Buckinghamshire born; and he’s feared the town would send him back to his parish, if he went to th’ board.”⁶⁷ Following the New Poor Law of 1834, a new administrative bureaucracy deliberately discouraged applicants of poor relief by making the application process more difficult and less attractive for those in need.⁶⁸ Although a relief system was theoretically available, it would have been at a price Davenport cannot pay. While poor relief, a system of supporting sick or unemployed citizens with state funds, is different from charity, Kidd’s discussion of the disadvantages of charitable giving apply to Davenport’s case as well because the giver, whether a government bureaucracy or a philanthropic individual, sets the terms of giving, and, therefore, “has the power to wound.”⁶⁹ Davenport chooses to stay in his cellar, where he will die. Gaskell proves that the manufacturing classes do not have to be portrayed as fantastical villains in fiction, and do not have to act cruelly in reality, in order for readers and manufacturers alike to recognize a real problem with current arrangements in factory towns like Manchester. And sick workers like Davenport do not have to be portrayed as in so many humanitarian narratives and other industrial literature, as a body without context, personality, or friends.

⁶⁷ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 100, 103.

⁶⁸ See Peter Dunkley, “Whigs and Paupers: The Reform of the English Poor Laws, 1830-1834,” *Journal of British Studies* 20.2 (1981): 124-149.

⁶⁹ A. Kidd 187.

The Mangled Body: Gaskell's Revision of Factory Injuries

Though affecting fewer workers than hunger, typhus, and other afflictions, by far the most famous and infamous pain associated with factory workers was caused by the violent, bone-crushing “factory accident.” These were reported in local newspapers alongside crimes, fires, railway accidents, and other events. One example from 1840 published by the *Manchester Chronicle* and further circulated by *The Standard* in London illustrates the format of these reports:

[. . .] operatives at the print works of Messrs. Coats and M'Naughton, at Seedly, near Pendleton, were alarmed by the sudden stopping of the steam-engine on the premises, by which the extensive machinery there used is put in motion. The cause was almost instantaneously ascertained to have arisen from the body of an unfortunate youth, named Charles Hopkins, having by some fatal casualty become interposed between the cog wheels of a part of the machinery [...] his mangled body was discovered, on the ground floor. When found the poor youth was quite dead, his head having been torn from the trunk, his lower limbs crushed off, and his body mangled to such an extent that it would be no exaggeration to say he was literally ground and chopped to pieces [. . .]⁷⁰

Typical hallmarks of a factory accident report are present: type, owners, and location of factory or mill in question; name and approximate age of victim; violent collision between human body and running machinery; graphic effects of the collision on the human body, usually described in terms of body parts and pieces. When the victim is not “quite dead,” physical injuries are categorized by damaged or lost limbs, as in the case of a “right arm [that] was literally smashed” and required amputation.⁷¹ Compared to

⁷⁰ “Shocking and Fatal Accident from Machinery,” *The Standard* 5 Nov. 1840.

⁷¹ “Dreadful Accident by Machinery,” *The Morning Post* 28 Nov. 1839.

chronic conditions like hunger, infection, and even physical deformities of the skeleton suffered after years of factory work, injury sustained by contact with machinery is acute and instantaneous, and therefore, easier to report and cite as proof of a monstrous factory system that consumes its workers' bodies.

Workers also provided eyewitness accounts of accident stories. Their words are strikingly similar across genre and time. Testifying for Sadler's Committee in 1832, a 53-year-old factory worker claims to have watched a child working with wool near a machine when "the strap caught him, as he was hardly awake, and it carried him into the machinery; and we found one limb in one place and one in another, and was cut to bits almost; his whole body went in, and was mangled."⁷² In his 1841 autobiography, self-described factory cripple William Dodd shares the story of his sister, who had been tired at work when "her right hand became entangled in the machine [. . .] Four iron teeth of a wheel, three-quarters of an inch broad, and one-quarter of an inch thick, had been forced through her hand [. . .] and the fifth iron tooth fell upon the thumb, and crushed it to atoms."⁷³ The familiar conventions obtain: the machinery indiscriminately mangles or crushes any body or body part in its way. Workers' bodies, often young people and women, were defeated and devoured by the machinery, a factory danger that soon developed into a familiar metaphor for the vexed relationship between the working class

⁷² Wing 6-7.

⁷³ Dodd, *Narrative*, 196. Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's 1841 novel, *Helen Fleetwood*, features a former child worker who has lost an arm: "poor Sarah had only one arm, and that one so contracted as to be nearly useless [. . .] The [other] arm was lost in an accident." Tonna 66.

– populated by workers’ individual, vulnerable, flesh-and-blood bodies – and the larger economic system – represented by unyielding, grinding metal.

Writing in 1835, Andrew Ure, surgeon, chemist, and amateur political economist, enthusiastically praised the use of steam to power machines in Britain’s factories: “In those spacious halls the benignant power of steam summons around him myriads of willing menials” and “show[s] to what extent capital, industry, and science may augment the resources of a state, while they meliorate the condition of its citizens.”⁷⁴ But machinery was undeniably dangerous for citizens working in factories, especially when it was not “fenced” or “boxed off” for workers’ protection. Ure’s perspective, Trollope’s novel, Sadler’s committee, and Dodd’s autobiography were circulating in the public discourse of factory reform before the Factory Act of 1844 finally required safeguarding machinery. However, fencing off machinery remained expensive and often unenforced, so the rhetorical battle raged well into the 1850s, most memorably manifested in a war of words between Charles Dickens’s *Household Words* and Harriet Martineau.⁷⁵ Significantly, injuries to and loss of the hand or arm were a common result of encounters with factory machinery, before and after the Factory Act of 1844. As in the case of Trollope’s fictional Betsy, who cannot work because of her shriveled hand; the case of Dodd’s sister, whose hand was left “stiff and contracted” and useless; and in many more workers’ cases detailed in testimony, autobiographies, newspapers, and factory

⁷⁴ Andrew Ure, *Philosophy of Manufactures* (London: Charles Knight, 1835) 18.

⁷⁵ See [Charles Dickens], “Fencing with Humanity,” *Household Words* 12 May 1855: 337-341; [Charles Dickens], “Death’s CIPHERING-BOOK,” *Household Words* 14 Apr. 1855: 241-244; [Charles Dickens], “More Grist to the Mill,” *Household Words* 28 July 1855: 605-606; and Harriet Martineau, *The Factory Controversy*.

inspectors' reports, damaged or lost hands rendered laborers unable to return to employment to support themselves and their families. Metonymically known as "factory hands," these workers became economically useless, unemployable, and often destitute without the hands they have lost to factory machinery.

Friedrich Engels noted this segment of the population during his stay in Manchester. He shows not only that "flexibility of finger" is highly prized in employees working as piecers and that crushed or amputated fingers and hands were a common injury, but also, significantly, that workers' injuries, scars, deformities, and, therefore, work prospects, were visible for all to see: "besides the deformed person, a great number of maimed ones may be seen going about in Manchester; this one has lost an arm or a part of one, that one a foot, the third half a leg; it is like living in the midst of an army just returned from a campaign."⁷⁶ This observation, though not translated into English until the mid-1880s, is a powerful one because it equates the miserable existence of workers in Manchester to the experience of soldiers after a war, except that this shuffling army includes women and children as well as the elderly and infirm, a segment of the population no Victorian English citizen would voluntarily send into combat. As Chapter 4 of this study will show, reports of injured English soldiers suffering in the mismanaged Crimean War in the mid-1850s elicited overwhelming and outspoken public support from British periodical readers, but reactions to working-class pain in England was more divided, perhaps because Britain's growing economy and increasingly comfortable middle-class lifestyles depended upon a functioning industrial system.

⁷⁶ Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845; trans. 1886; New York: Penguin, 1987, ed. Victor Kiernan) 164, 182.

In his article, “Manufacturing Accident,” Mike Sanders argues that the term “accident” became widely used and accepted in the early years of the nineteenth century to describe occupational injuries associated with factory work. But, as his title suggests, there is more to this than a “manufacturing accident” meaning an industrial mishap. Associations with the term “accident” itself were manufactured, allowing “the bourgeoisie to admit the harmful consequences of industrialization (accidents are caused events) without conceding its own responsibility (accidents are undesired events).”⁷⁷ Sanders’s claim illuminates the apparent paradox inherent in the tendency for horrified writers to lament such “shocking” events, although they occurred often enough to be a critically important thread in fictional and nonfiction public discourse of factory reform.⁷⁸ Controversy centered on whether such “accidents” were in fact avoidable, or whether they were a necessary evil; most seem to believe the latter, meaning those who supported factories with machines necessarily accepted the risk of mangling a certain percentage of workers.

In addition to their occupational responsibilities of certifying the ages of child workers, surgeons like Samuel Smith witnessed the rise in factory accidents, occupational deformity, and illnesses specific to the urban working population in the first half of the nineteenth century. Smith, who practiced in Leeds, deposed in favor of short hours for young workers on medical grounds in front of Sadler’s committee in 1832. He became a more public figure in the 1830s and 1840s, affirming the physical dangers of prolonged

⁷⁷ Mike Sanders, “Manufacturing Accident: Industrialism and the Worker’s Body in Early Industrial Fiction,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28.2 (2000): 321.

⁷⁸ “Accident,” *Leeds Mercury* 2 May 1846.

factory labor on the bodies of children, who, if they survived, grew up to become working men and women. Smith insisted that his publicity of factory hazards was “a great public duty” and that he would “cheerfully give Mr. Sadler any evidence or assistance” required to further factory reform.⁷⁹ In his 1842 collection of letters to benefactor and Factory-Act supporter Lord Ashley, *The Factory System Illustrated*, William Dodd quotes Smith recounting an all-too-familiar accidental amputation: “I have seen the whole of the arm, from the tip of the fingers to above the elbow, chopped into mince-meat, the cog-wheels cutting through the skin, muscles, and, in some places, through the bone, every half-inch: I have seen the arm torn off by the shoulder-joint, and sent in a basket after the patient to the Infirmary.”⁸⁰ In fiction and nonfiction, the image of a lacerated, amputated worker’s body was ubiquitous, but often, as in Smith’s anecdote, horrific bodily injuries were reported with no mention of victims’ pain or fear.

Gaskell’s strategy defies readers’ expectations of lacerated and amputated bodies, in part, as a response to a backlash against perceived exaggerations of factory workers’ injuries and mill owners’ cold indifference. In his *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire*, to take one example, journalist William Cooke Taylor expressed sarcastically in 1842 that he had been “for a time fool enough to believe that mills were places in which young children were, by some inexplicable process, ground – bones, flesh, and blood together – into yarn and printed calicoes” because he had been led to

⁷⁹ Samuel Smith, “To Messrs. Marshall & Co.,” *Leeds Mercury* 21 Jan. 1832. See also Wing 212-231.

⁸⁰ Samuel Smith qtd. in William Dodd, *The Factory System Illustrated* (1842; London: Frank Cass, 1967) 21. For an opposing view calling testimony to Sadler’s Committee “partial, distorted, and fictitious evidence,” see Ure 290-291.

imagine such horrors by the recent public “burst of sentimental sympathy” for factory laborers.⁸¹ He, of course, finds nothing of the kind. Supporters of manufacturers like Cooke Taylor easily rendered graphic claims of factory pain, provided by those in favor of sympathetic reforms, into absurd caricatures; though not a fair argument, as reformers did not claim that children were purposely lined up and fed directly to the machinery as if to fuel the entire operation with blood, some, like Trollope, did give opponents ample reason for claims of hyperbole, and others, like Dodd, were thought to have profited from years of factory work by writing his way into political connections with Lord Ashley.

Setting her work apart from other rhetoric of the decade, Gaskell does not include a body in acute, factory-accident pain or danger. Instead of recycling the familiar figure, Gaskell revises it: she focuses on the long-term effects of conditions – including factory injuries – that plague the working classes of northern manufacturing towns by showing readers the scars of old pain from the past rather than acute pain in the present tense. Gaskell strikes a more moderate but nonetheless sympathetic tone in her portrayal of Mrs. Jane Wilson, a supporting character, wife of George, and mother of Jem, who embodies subtle, lifelong pain. She is described early in the story as “a delicate fragile-looking woman, limping in her gait,” but no further information is provided until several chapters later, when John Barton explains to his daughter that Jane Wilson has not looked strong “sin’ her accident” years earlier, when she had “cotched her side again a wheel [. . .] afore wheels were boxed up,” although beforehand she had been “as fresh and likely a

⁸¹ William Cooke Taylor, *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire in a Series of Letters to His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin* (London: Duncan and Malcolm, 1842) 22. Also qtd. in Bizup 44.

girl as e'er a one in Manchester."⁸² Jane Wilson does not appear to be a typical factory cripple, visible to all, like the population observed by Engels. Her pain does not inspire legislation. Mary does not know about the accident until she is a teenager; it is not discussed openly. The accident does not form Jane's entire identity, but it is part of her larger, complex story of pain and loss over years in Manchester. In the novel, Jane's physical pain serves as one more reason for John to cling to and support his friend George Wilson through life. This is more psychologically realistic than the representations of acute pain populating other industrial literature of the era.

Jane Wilson does not discuss her own accident until a later chapter, when she tells her son, Jem, that it occurred almost twenty five years ago, that the accident also made her ill, and that it affected her personality: "Th' accident gave a jar to my temper it's never got the better of; and now [George is] gone, where he can never know how I grieve for having frabbed him as I did!"⁸³ Jane Wilson is one of the walking wounded: Gaskell's narrator combines physical and emotional pain, dispersed across decades, to portray the realistic and complex consequences of Mrs. Wilson's hardships. At one of the novel's most climactic moments, as Jane must testify at Jem's murder trial, the narrator again makes Jane's layers of scars evident: "partly owing to her accident in early life, which left a stamp of pain upon her face, partly owing to her anxious temper, partly to her

⁸² Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 36, 132.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 425. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "to frab" is "to harass, worry." Although the novel does not provide details of Jane Wilson's post-accident illness, it was not uncommon for infection, particularly lockjaw (tetanus), to set in, often with fatal results. See "Death from Lock-Jaw," *The Blackburn Standard* 9 Sept. 1846.

sorrows, and partly to her limping gait, she always gave me the idea of age.”⁸⁴ Jane Wilson ages rapidly and prematurely, in large part due to emotional suffering, but the novel’s narrator does not let readers forget that this grief is in addition to physical damage done years ago – a specific type of preventable physical damage that would not happen to a member of the middle or upper classes. As working-class mother and son, Jane and Jem are further linked by the fact that he too bears the scars of past pain: he has “a face that might have been handsome, had it not been here and there marked by the smallpox.”⁸⁵ His rich rival for Mary’s love, Harry Carson, is, by contrast, “strikingly handsome, and knew it.”⁸⁶ Jem’s painful infectious disease is not represented in the novel, but the scars remind him and everyone else that he has suffered and survived.

Jane Wilson’s fictional accident occurred before the Factory Act of 1844. Surgical anaesthesia is another technological development to occur in these momentous years: between the setting of the novel in the early 1840s and Gaskell’s writing in the late 1840s, ether and chloroform had become available for use in English infirmaries. Samuel Smith and his colleague T.J. Teale used ether to remove tumors at the Leeds Infirmary as early as January 1847.⁸⁷ Chloroform quickly became the favored inhaled anaesthetic in Britain, and would be available to alleviate the immediate acute suffering and surgical pain of factory operatives, like Squire Sandford, a fifteen-year-old treated at the

⁸⁴ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 400.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁸⁷ “Inhalation of Ether: Painless Surgical Operations at Leeds,” *Leeds Mercury* 30 Jan. 1847.

Manchester Royal Infirmary in 1852 for a “compound fracture of both arms, with extensive laceration, so that the integument and muscles were stripped off from the bones, even to the last phalanx of the fingers” after having been in an “accident” “caused by his being carried round a shaft by a strap several times.”⁸⁸ Unsurprisingly, the worker “*complained of pain* in the injured part” before “both arms [were] removed below the elbow whilst he was under the influence of chloroform.”⁸⁹

Gaskell’s novel does not represent the infamous landscape of machinery and workers’ bodies inside of a factory as her predecessors writing industrial novels as well as workers’ autobiographies so often do. In fact, Carson’s mill is destroyed by fire in a dramatic chapter that reveals Jem’s heroism and John’s cynicism, as the latter insists that the Carsons are “well insured, and the machines are a’ th’ oud-fashioned kind,” implying that Carson’s financial interests are paramount and that they oppose workers’ interests in safety and employment.⁹⁰ Carson, wealthy enough to be insured, would prefer to update his machinery with the insurance settlement. The workers have no such safety net. To begin the following chapter, in which Barton and Wilson will visit Davenport in his final

⁸⁸ “Hospital Reports,” *BMJ* 26 May 1852: 266.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 266. Emphasis in original. The attending surgeon appended a personal note in the report regarding patients in danger of traumatic amputation or injuries requiring surgical amputation: first, that chloroform not only renders surgery painless, but that it minimizes a patient’s risk and severity of shock, which leads to a better prognosis and allows surgeons to undertake more serious, but necessary, procedures without inordinate fear that the surgery itself will kill the patient; second, that a patient’s pain serves a useful purpose for attending surgeons, who noticed that “pain in the injured part” was an indication that surgery was advisable. These are topics of debate regarding the treatment of soldiers in the Crimean War, the subject of Chapter 4 of this study.

⁹⁰ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 85.

hours, Gaskell's narrator confirms that Barton is correct about insurance and the value of updated machinery, saying that trade was so depressed the "mills were merely worked to keep the machinery, human and metal, in some kind of order and readiness for better times."⁹¹ Carson is lucky then, to have sufficient political and financial reason to shut down and refurbish the mill. Equating "human and metal" as types of machinery effaces the individual humanity of these workers and shows them in the cold light of a manufacturer's cost-benefit analysis. However, as reams of factory-accident literature attest, the two types of machinery are not equal: metal machines are stronger, more financially valuable, and will always damage the human "machinery" unfortunate enough to collide with them.

After the mill fire, Davenport's pathetic death, and the deaths of the Wilsons' twin sons, who are only described as "seriously ill" before they succumb, John Barton's gradual emotional estrangement from friends and family becomes clearer.⁹² He lectures Jem about the justice of *The Northern Star* and its burgeoning Chartist movement, even though Jem obviously only wants to court Mary. John, although admittedly too passionate and eventually too violent to represent a rational position on working-class politics, is the novel's main source of specific information about factory reform issues. While educating Jem on Chartist politics, John recounts a past stay in an infirmary while suffering with a fever; there he learned from a kind surgeon that "by far th' greatest part o' th' accidents as comed in, happened in th' last two hours o' work, when folk getten

⁹¹ Ibid., 94.

⁹² Ibid., 116.

tired and careless.”⁹³ The fictional surgeon, like Samuel Smith and other historical counterparts, claims he will “bring that fact to the light.”⁹⁴ Barton enjoys increasing authority as he prepares, alongside other “life-worn, gaunt, anxious, hunger-stamped men,” to present a petition on behalf of the working-class population of Manchester to Parliament in London.⁹⁵ Fellow workers come by to wish him well and, more importantly for the novel’s expression of working-class woes, to voice their various personal and political perspectives. One addresses both hunger and technology: “[t]ell ‘em our minds; how we’re thinking we’n been clemmed long enough” and “ask ‘em to make th’ masters to break th’ machines” because “there’s never been good times sin’ spinning-jennies came up”; other voices agree that “machines is th’ ruin of the poor folk”; and yet another, sickly man, wants them “to pass th’ short-hours’ bill,” arguing that “flesh and blood gets wearied wi’ so much work” and that factory operatives “work so much longer nor other trades.”⁹⁶ Gaskell’s technique of including individual voices in a group conversation allows her to raise the most pressing issues of factory reform politics – restricted work hours, factory safety, access to medical care, and living conditions of workers – without relying on panicked reactions to a worker’s torn and lacerated body, as so much earlier fiction and nonfiction of the decade were accused of doing.

⁹³ Ibid., 126. Emphasis in original.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 128.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 129-130.

The Failing Body in an Economy of Pain

Beside their friends and family members who might be feverishly ill with infectious diseases or nursing lacerations and amputee stumps caused by collisions with factory machinery, some working-class citizens were gradually weakened and eventually crippled by skeletal deformities that formed over the course of many years working in factories. Like machinery accidents, these deformities were unprecedented and occurred on a vast scale. Readers, politicians, reformers, and others learned about these deformities in graphic detail provided by factory operatives interviewed by Sadler's committee, surgeons in manufacturing districts who provided medical testimony, autobiographies like William Dodd's *Narrative*, and contemporary industrial novels. But Gaskell's novel, once again, eschews the predictable representation of painful occupational deformity by describing a different kind of debilitation; in doing so, Gaskell makes a similar point about the physical toll taken on workers' bodies, and the consequential dangers of unemployment, while avoiding the newly established clichés of industrial literature.

Skeletal deformities lacked the instantaneous and sensational qualities that made factory accidents popular news headlines. Sadler's committee depended on workers' testimony and supplemental evidence from surgeons to show that these deformities were not simply a consequence of the malnutrition and poor medical care common in working-class neighborhoods, but were a detrimental effect of industrial labor. One 14-year-old factory worker, William Kenworthy, who began as a piecer at the age of 7, testified: "I grew very crooked" although he had been "as straight as ever I could be two years

since.”⁹⁷ The teenager displayed his legs for the committee members, who found them “*excessively deformed*,” and recorded that the young worker attributed his deformity to “being overworked.”⁹⁸ Sir Charles Bell, the prolific surgeon and anatomist then working at Middlesex Hospital in London, corroborated workers’ claims in front of Sadler’s committee on August 7, 1832. He distinguished between deformities caused by rickets and deformities caused by improper working conditions, which “arise from the mechanical effort being continued in one mode, and without that variety which nature dictates.”⁹⁹ Even though factory machinery appeared to ease a worker’s tasks, because “the operative is the superintendent of the engine’s labours,” the machinery dictated new and damaging positions, held by the twisted, fatigued body, for over ten hours a day.¹⁰⁰ And even though observers may have believed they could determine the cause of a worker’s pain by looking at him, the hazards of the working-class lifestyle were such that there was more than one way in which it crippled its citizens. Although there was evidence that, with appropriate medical care and a change in occupation, skeletal deformities may have been treatable and even reversible, at least for younger workers, this was not usually the outcome.

The causes and effects of certain occupational hazards were no mystery for William Dodd, who cites more than twenty years of experience in the factory system –

⁹⁷ Wing 61.

⁹⁸ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 112.

¹⁰⁰ Reach 9.

beginning, like so many others, during childhood – as his claim to authority, and confidently matches certain kinds of work with certain kinds of deformity: a piecer must move in a “sidling direction” and therefore “his right knee [. . .] is almost always the first joint to give way,” while he is also at risk for “splay-foot,” in which the “continual pressure of the body on [the] arch [. . .] causes it to give way,” leading the crippled worker to drag the lame foot, causing more damage to joints in the leg.¹⁰¹ Dodd, like many workers, attempted to self-medicate by rubbing his painful joints with oil and “wrapping them in warm flannel,” although they continued to hurt “like so many rusty hinges.”¹⁰² Dodd’s simile resonated with readers familiar with factory-reform discourse because he imagined his own body and pain in terms of the metal machinery thought by many to be the root cause of so much grief in the factory system. The “bending and curving” of the limbs of factory workers did more internal damage than observers realized, “for if the bones go wrong, the blood-vessels must go wrong also,” thus disrupting circulation by constricting blood flow to extremities and allowing blood to pool “in crannies and corners” where it did not belong.¹⁰³ This is presumably the condition of fictional factory workers like the younger brother of Trollope’s eponymous Michael Armstrong, who is a “poor rickety, shriveldy” boy, and Tonna’s minor character Charles, who works in a cotton mill and suffers with a “curvature of his legs, a

¹⁰¹ Dodd, *Narrative*, 190.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 192-193.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 208-209. Editors of Dodd’s text note that this condition was later called Raynaud’s disease and involves “constriction of blood vessels, often caused by repetitive motion and vibrating machines [which] can lead to tissue death, deformity, ulceration, and gangrene.” See Dodd, *Narrative*, 209n.

“deformity [that] was striking,” and an “irregular shuffle” that was “painful to witness,” although both are still children.¹⁰⁴

Dodd’s skeletal and joint pain plagued him for years before the pain in his arm became so severe that self-medication was entirely ineffective. Eventually Dodd underwent amputation at St. Thomas’s Hospital in London. His procedure occurred just a few years before surgical anaesthesia was discovered, but the loss of his arm to the elbow worried him for reasons other than pain: he feared becoming unemployable and unable to “keep himself from the workhouse.”¹⁰⁵ Medical historian Peter Stanley cites Dodd’s story as an important reminder “that for many surgery was merely a stage in a long process of bodily abuse and degeneration, of chronic and continued pain, placing the relatively brief agony of amputation in perspective.”¹⁰⁶ Surgeons dissected Dodd’s arm, finding that the bones looked like “an empty honeycomb, the marrow [. . .] having totally disappeared,” which explained his “weakness and pain,” though Dodd had no doubt the origin of his suffering was “the factory system” itself.¹⁰⁷ Dodd’s “amputation of his arm, without which, presumably, he cannot continue to write,” at least without assistance, is the last painful event in a long journey of acute and chronic, physical and emotional pain.¹⁰⁸ He

¹⁰⁴ Trollope 34. Tonna 48.

¹⁰⁵ Dodd, *Narrative*, 220.

¹⁰⁶ Peter Stanley, *For Fear of Pain: British Surgery, 1790-1850* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 274.

¹⁰⁷ Dodd, *Narrative*, 220.

¹⁰⁸ Regenia Gagnier, *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832-1920* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991) 143.

sensed the injustice of his “bondage” and wrote from a perspective of indignant anger.¹⁰⁹ Even if the charges he leveled at the factory system were true, that anger alienated many readers, especially manufacturers and politicians, immediately.

Gaskell’s narrator does not display indignant anger in the novel’s updated version of the debilitated worker’s body. Gaskell omits the typical bow-legged or knock-kneed male character, exploring instead the weakening eyesight of Mary’s friend, Margaret, in order to show that occupational debilitation happens to different types of workers and is often invisible to others, though it produces its own fears and pains. Mary and Margaret work as dressmakers, primarily to avoid the questionable status of “factory girls,” an infamously problematic group of workers because their age and gender made them vulnerable – as much to the perception of immorality as to real moral hazards. In keeping with the subdued course of the novel, Gaskell’s narrator does not judge factory girls harshly, though she describes them as having “an acuteness and intelligence of countenance” from their work experiences.¹¹⁰ Female characters with factory experience take wildly different paths in the novel: Mrs. Barton’s sister, Esther, runs away and eventually becomes a prostitute, Mrs. Wilson outlives everyone in her family with the exception of Jem, and even the wealthy Mrs. Carson, her son admits, was once a factory girl. But John Barton swears when Mary is still a young child: “My Mary shall never work in a factory, that I’m determined on.”¹¹¹ His statement is linked to his anger

¹⁰⁹ Dodd, *Narrative*, 199.

¹¹⁰ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 35.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

regarding Esther's vanity and downfall. Dressmaking allows both Mary and Margaret to avoid the physical pains and moral dangers of the factories, but pain of an unexpected kind finds Margaret anyway.

While working on mourning dresses ordered by a local grocer's widow and commenting on the expense of the funeral preparations, Margaret confides in Mary about her anxiety that she "is growing a little blind," because it would interfere with supporting herself and her grandfather.¹¹² Like Dodd, Margaret's first concern is financial stability, not her own physical pain, grief, or impending handicap. The usually even-keeled Margaret falls "into an agony of tears" and admits a doctor told her she was losing her sight, while a second medical man diagnosed her eye condition as a "weakness" and gave her a lotion, which leaves her "eye so much worse" and with little vision.¹¹³ Prioritizing her ability to earn wages above her sight and her pain, Margaret chooses to sew the more lucrative black mourning rather than "plain work," even though laboring over the dark materials "does so hurt the eyes."¹¹⁴ Margaret is presumably predisposed to vision problems, but her rapid and painful loss of sight is exacerbated by the close, tedious work of dressmaking, which she and Mary often engage in by dim candlelight, late into the evening, in order to earn as much income as possible while the men in their families are working less. To make matters financially worse, Margaret does not expect the widow's

¹¹² Ibid., 83.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 83-84.

family to be able to pay for the work, but she resolves to do it anyway, in a generous act of reciprocal giving, “as [her] bit towards comforting them.”¹¹⁵

Several chapters later Margaret’s eyes appear “swollen and red” and her vision has deteriorated, but she is saved from unemployment by being paid to sing at the Mechanics’ Institute; having secured employment that does not require vision, she finally confides to her grandfather that she is going blind.¹¹⁶ Margaret describes to Mary the song she sang at the Institute, explaining that it begins happily, but then “it falls into th’ minor key, and must be very sad like. I feel as if I could do that better than t’ other.”¹¹⁷ Margaret’s sentiment echoes Gaskell’s own comment about the novel’s melancholic tone; it is a calm suffering, as opposed to wails of indignation. Because Gaskell does not have first-hand knowledge of factory work and Margaret is a fictional character, the tone can be gentler than, for example, Dodd’s rhetoric. And because Trollope set a standard of industrial fiction that aggressively displayed the hellish factory and its crippled denizens, Gaskell does not have to do that here either.

While novelists and autobiographers tended to focus on the pain and suffering of individuals, the debilitation of individual workers led some journalists, philosophers, and reformers to be concerned about “a dangerous degeneration of the working classes, evident in their malformed bodies and blunted moral sensibilities,” as they continued to work, reproduce, live, and die in the squalid houses and hazardous factories of

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 83.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 138-139.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 141.

manufacturing cities.¹¹⁸ The situation was a “muddle,” as Dickens’s Stephen Blackpool would attest in a few years.¹¹⁹ A host of medical, social, and economic factors were at play during the factory reform debates, and the rhetoric launched by both sides was just as complex: Engels accuses English manufacturers of “social murder” and creating a “cold, calculating political economy [. . .] by which they try to prove that they, and with them all England, must go to ruin, if they should be forbidden to cripple so and so many children a year” and Samuel Smith asks whether “a certain number of lives and limbs of our children [are] to be annually sacrificed to this modern English Juggernaut” for the financial gains of “very few,” while mill owners organized against factory legislation, claiming that “interference is not only offensive to sound principle, but is fraught with present injustice and with enormous future evils” that may, in fact, “entail national misery.”¹²⁰

The rhetoric was overwhelmingly divisive, and Gaskell’s novel enters the fray in an understated way to assert an understanding of both sides. The novel’s most radical character, John Barton, does make angry claims about the victimization of the working poor at the hands of the manufacturers, but it is significant that Barton’s political quest is unsuccessful and that he does not survive the novel. Gaskell’s narrative techniques suggest that John is not entirely incorrect about the concerns of working-class pain, all of

¹¹⁸ Bizup 84.

¹¹⁹ Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854; New York: Longman, ed. Jeff Nunokawa and Gage C. McWeeny). See especially Book the First, Chapter 11, “No Way Out” and Book the Second, Chapter 5, “Men and Masters.”

¹²⁰ Engels 174, 188. Samuel Smith qtd. in Dodd, *Factory System*, 22. “The Factory Bill – Deputation to Sir George Grey,” *Leeds Mercury* 9 June 1849.

which are demonstrated, though calmly, by Davenport's typhus, Jane Wilson's limp, and Margaret's failing eyesight, but that participants in factory debates can find more common ground than other industrial writers had yet imagined by adopting a more mournful and restrained mode of describing physical pain.

CHAPTER 3
NARRATING PRISONERS' PAIN:
SCENES OF PHYSICAL TORTURE IN CHARLES READE'S
IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND

In 1856 Charles Reade published his realistic prison novel, *It Is Never Too Late to Mend*, in order to condemn physical and psychological abuses of prisoners confined within the newly reformed separate system of incarceration.¹ The most critical goal of the first portion of the novel – before its setting shifts to the goldmines of Australia – is Reade's fictionalization of scenes of physical torture suffered by inmates under the supervision of the cruel prison governor, Hawes. Closely based on a widely reported scandal at Birmingham Gaol in 1853, Reade's novel borrowed the facts of the case from coverage in *The Times* and an 1854 Royal Commission investigation. Reade converted the already graphic news reports surrounding the torture and suicide of teenaged inmate Edward Andrews into an even more explicit and provocative novel featuring the torture and suicide of a teenaged character named Josephs. Reade purposely outraged readers by combining his penchant for melodrama, admiration of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), and an obvious surrogate for his own personality and views in the character of the prison chaplain, Eden, to make a spectacle of fictionalized prisoners' torture. The goal of this spectacle presented by Reade, and Eden, is, as in other social-problem narratives, to teach readers, associated in the novel with prison turnkeys, to

¹ Charles Reade, *It Is Never Too Late to Mend: A Matter-of-Fact Romance* (1856; London: Chatto and Windus, 1894).

recognize and respond appropriately to the pain of others. *Never Too Late* raises difficult questions about the use and propriety of public audiences viewing prisoners' pain – both in the reality of early-nineteenth-century prison reform and the literature of novelists like Reade, who claimed a humanitarian agenda.

Never Too Late was immensely popular, allowing Reade, finally, to claim his place as “one of the writers of the day.”² But the novel's explicit descriptions of prisoners' pain also inspired controversy. In 1857 Reade defended his authorial role in a letter addressed to a reader who felt “harrowed” by the novel's brutality:

Those black facts have been before the public before ever I handled them; they have been told, and tolerably well told, by many chroniclers. But it is my business, and my art, and my duty, to make you Ladies and Gentlemen *realize* things, which the chronicler presents to you in his dim, and cold, and shadowy way; and so they pass over your mind like idle wind. This you sometimes call ‘being harrowed,’ but ask yourselves two questions: (1) Do you think you are harrowed one tenth part as much as I have been; as I could harrow you? (2) I, one tenth part as much as Josephs, who died under the harrow?³

In addition to revealing Reade's focus on his own character, Josephs, rather than the real Edward Andrews, as well as his well-known insecurity regarding critical reviews of his work, his response more significantly reflects Reade's belief, quite different from Elizabeth Gaskell's style, that the realist novelist has the ability and authority to disturb readers deeply in the interest of justice, particularly if the author artistically depicts facts that had already been disseminated by the serviceable but “dim” press. Reade considers

² Wayne Burns, *Charles Reade: A Study in Victorian Authorship* (New York: Bookman, 1961) 174-175.

³ Charles Reade and Compton Reade, *Charles Reade, Dramatist, Novelist, Journalist: A Memoir*, vol. 2 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1887) 37-38. Emphasis in original.

realism a demonstration of the author's power and discretion; he even implies that, as a filter for the pain of this subject, he has himself been harrowed in the name of his art. He presents himself as a martyr, willing to suffer so that the truth of actual injustice may be "realized" by readers. This stance introduces Reade's politics of pain, which inform his novel's rhetorical use of fictional representations of bodily torture.

Inspired by the success of novels like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Reade aspired to be named alongside other revolutionary humanitarian authors, but his formal use of physical pain in *Never Too Late* does distinguish his work from Stowe's anti-slavery novel. Like Gaskell's attitude toward the factory system, Reade was not entirely opposed to the institution under attack in his work. Reade's cause, and the justification for such graphic brutality in his writing, was a scandal in Birmingham Gaol that had already been resolved by a Royal Commission two years before Reade's novel was published. The prison system itself had been overhauled before Reade ever wrote a word. Also, unlike both Gaskell and Stowe, Reade's inclusion of devastating physical pain in the novel remains almost entirely unaccompanied by emotional suffering and psychological character development. For these reasons, among others, the graphic nature of the novel's scenes of physical torture remains vulnerable to charges of sensationalism and exploitation.

In his articulation of the humanitarian narrative genre, Laqueur identifies the suffering body, depicted realistically, as the literal embodiment of the connection between sufferers and spectators. But he explicitly excludes *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Reade's most important fictional source of inspiration, from this genre because "the breakup of the slave family, far more than the slave's lacerated back, is the imaginative vehicle for

abolitionist sentiment.”⁴ On this point, Reade’s novel is closer to Laqueur’s notion of a humanitarian narrative because it does not delve into emotional character backgrounds; the physically tortured body is the readers’ main object of pity and indignation.

Reade’s prison novel exploits the sensational, attention-grabbing power of scenes of physical torture, which also comes to stand for an implied but unexplored psychological suffering among tortured prisoners. In her study of physical torture as a rhetorical device in ancient Greece, Jennifer Ballengee argues that, because “torture and its representation create uniquely fertile, rhetorical situations precisely because they combine three factors – the body, pain, and the image – that all *resist* linguistic signification,” bodily torture requires a witness in order to have a larger cultural significance.⁵ The indisputable physicality of a tortured body renders it powerful proof of violence, suffering, and injustice, but it must be seen to become symbolic. Elaine Scarry discusses the potential “lack of acknowledgment and recognition” for a tortured individual whose pain was not “accompanied by visible body damage” and therefore remains “unreal to others.”⁶ Literary torture, though undeniably constructed, likewise requires witnesses, who, for Reade, are his readers. *Never Too Late* produces a spectacle of pain: Reade depicts the graphic torture of socially inferior individuals by insensitive

⁴ Laqueur 179. See also Marianne Noble, “The Ecstasies of Sentimental Wounding in Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 10.2 (1997): 295-320. Noble agrees with Laqueur and argues that Stowe’s novel must present both physical and emotional suffering to engage readers.

⁵ Jennifer R. Ballengee, *The Wound and the Witness: The Rhetoric of Torture* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009) 6.

⁶ Scarry, *Body in Pain*, 56.

authorities in order to demand that readers bear witness to the brutal injustice suffered by inmates incarcerated in Birmingham Gaol, just as his fictional chaplain, Eden, convinces ignorant turnkeys to recognize and rebel against the pain they both observe and inflict.

As his response to the harrowed reader suggests, Reade believed he could only represent a small fraction of the pain actually experienced by Birmingham's real victims. In one sense, this may be read as an admission that literary descriptions of pain must always pale in comparison to the physiological experience itself. In another sense, Reade may also be referring to his decision to focus solely on physical torture, which itself constitutes only a fraction of the suffering experienced by the real-life prisoners, who must have felt significant emotional pain as well, as cultural, psychological, and situation-specific factors always affect one's overall pain experience.⁷ By making a spectacle of their physical torture, Reade indicates that the prisoners' pain was, in reality, *more* than he can accurately convey or readers can hope to understand.

Reade's Realism: Baconian Melodrama

Reade's unique style of realist novel, bearing the subtitle "A Matter-of-Fact Romance," inspired his contemporaries, often by infuriating them, to comment on the work of mid-Victorian realism.⁸ Although most novelists contributing to nineteenth-

⁷ See Melzack and Wall Chapter 2. See also Morris Chapter 1.

⁸ *Never Too Late* was Reade's first novel to bear the subtitle "A Matter-of-Fact Romance," although it was his third published novel. Four of Reade's later novels, including *Hard Cash* in 1863, also feature this subtitle. He published seventeen novels and over two dozen plays in his lifetime. See Mary Poovey, "Forgotten Writers, Neglected Histories," *ELH* 71 (2004): 434.

century realism, including Gaskell, Dickens, George Eliot, and, by way of his journalistic experiences, William Howard Russell, relied on specific nonfiction details about their culture in order to capture a sense of reality, Reade was not only obsessed with the accuracy of specific details, but explicit in his allusions and defensive of their use. As an outspoken believer in the Baconian scientific method, Reade collected facts about cases of social injustice as well as scientific anecdotes and brief sketches for future novels and plays in his Notebooks, which he “envisaged [. . .] as ‘a steam engine for truth.’”⁹ While his documentarian research style led some mid-twentieth-century critics to view Reade as a “forerunner of Zola” and naturalism’s attention to verifiable, if unpleasant, facts, Reade’s claims of historical accuracy invited sharp criticism from his contemporaries, who either delighted in identifying minute mistakes in Reade’s researched detail or thought such detail might miss the larger social point.¹⁰ Because he labored under the “tyrannical restraints of what we must call aesthetic verisimilitude,” Reade developed an antagonistic relationship with readers and reviewers interested in parsing the facts in his fiction. Reade explains his methods in the preface to his novel *Hard Cash*, which is “a matter-of-fact Romance [. . .] a fiction built on truths; and these truths have been gathered by long, severe, systematic, labour, from a multitude of volumes, pamphlets, journals, reports, blue-books, manuscript narratives, letters and living people, whom I have sought

⁹ Burns 187.

¹⁰ Qtd. in Lewis S. Haines, “Reade, Mill, and Zola: A Study of the Character and Intention of Charles Reade’s Realistic Method,” *Studies in Philology* 40.3 (1943): 463.

out, examined, and cross-examined, to get at the truth.”¹¹ Reade’s extensive use of interviews and documents depicting prison conditions and prisoner abuse provide the “matter-of-fact” foundation of *Never Too Late*.

After Stowe’s publication of *A Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in 1853, which included documents authenticating Stowe’s claims about American slavery, Reade realized he might be able to duplicate her success by combining documented facts from cases of social injustice with his talent for dramatic action scenes.¹² The Birmingham Gaol scandal exploded in English newspapers in September of the same year, providing Reade, who had already researched prisons and prisoners for other purposes, with the tragic storyline he needed for *Never Too Late*. All clues indicate that Reade believed entirely in the humanitarian goals of Stowe’s novel, and that he could easily link prisoner abuse to slavery in justifying his theme.

However, Reade’s method simultaneously resists several typical hallmarks of Victorian realism by engaging in overblown, self-righteous, and at times “sadistically humanitarian” rhetoric in defiance of several key realist conventions, including the mode’s usual “deflation of ambition and passion” and “antiheroism.”¹³ Paradoxically, this stance allowed him to collect the facts of the Birmingham case and appeal to the logic of reform-minded readers while simultaneously characterizing Eden, the concerned

¹¹ Roland Barthes, “The Reality Effect,” *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (1984; New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986) 144. Charles Reade, *Hard Cash* (1863; London: Chatto and Windus, 1888) i.

¹² Burns 131-132.

¹³ Burns 312. Levine, *Realistic Imagination*, 15.

prison chaplain, as a hero whose fiery speeches threaten cruel prison turnkeys with God's own wrath. It becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between the author Reade and the fictional chaplain Eden in their angry invective, as they proselytize, converting ignorant, unsympathetic turnkeys – and by extension, ignorant, unsympathetic readers – into appropriately concerned witnesses of prisoners' pain.

Finally, Reade's experience as a dramatist also influences his novel's reliance on scenes of spectacle rather than subtlety. Despite the grave nature of *Never Too Late's* subject matter, Reade converted it into a play of the same name in 1865. As in the novel version, the play privileges graphic brutality rather than exploring the complex issues leading to injustice within the prison system. Sheila M. Smith's evaluation of the drama can also be applied to the novel: "psychological truth is often sacrificed so that the audience shall be certain to receive the full thrill of physical action."¹⁴ John Cawelti's definition of social melodrama is also helpful in understanding Reade's techniques: it "synthesizes the archetype of melodrama with a carefully and elaborately developed social setting in such a way as to combine the emotional satisfactions of melodrama with the interest inherent in a detailed, intimate, and realistic analysis of major social or historical phenomena."¹⁵ Reade's novel combines melodrama's "impulse toward

¹⁴ Sheila M. Smith, "Realism in the Drama of Charles Reade," *English: The Journal of the English Association* 12.69 (1958): 98. George Eliot wrote of Reade's style: "In Mr. Reade's dialogue we are constantly imagining that we see a theatrical gentleman, well 'made-up,' delivering a repartee in an emphatic voice, with this eye fixed on the pit." Eliot qtd. in James D. Rust, "The Art of Fiction in George Eliot's Reviews," *The Review of English Studies* 7.26 (1956): 168.

¹⁵ John Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) 261.

dramatization, heightening, expression, [and] acting out,” with the serious political matter of prisoner abuse.¹⁶ This may seem to contradict Reade’s devotion to historical detail, but he believed that straightforward conflicts between good and evil, superficial characters, righteous heroes and recognizable villains, and eventual moral victory, combined with “grandiose” narration, resulted in the useful fictionalization of critically important truths.¹⁷ Reade uses melodrama to make readers “*realize* things” they cannot comprehend – as he could – by reading facts alone.¹⁸

Unlike more psychologically oriented novelists who excelled at character development and subtly eliciting emotional responses from readers, Reade preferred writing action scenes and claimed that other novelists, who “clog the story with a hundred little essays on the character of each character...openly analyzing their pale creations, and dissecting them...and microscoping their poodles into lions,” fail to create the epics appropriate for the nineteenth century.¹⁹ As Wayne Burns has shown, Reade’s comments often criticized other established novelists whose work he could not emulate. A *Spectator* reviewer articulated what many critics noticed about Reade’s work: “He is a master of simple pathos, of powerful eloquence, of striking description [...] but of the innermost life, of the struggles and the conflicts that are not revealed to observation and are not common to the majority of human kind, but have to be sought by the writer in the

¹⁶ Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (1976; New Haven: Yale UP, 1995) xv.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸ Charles Reade and Compton Reade 38.

¹⁹ Qtd. in Burns 75.

depths of his own nature stirred to action by imaginative sympathy, he appears to know but little.”²⁰ A lack of both character development and nuanced philosophy became a signature characteristic of Reade’s writing and a point of contention between him and his fellow authors.²¹

Reade’s real-life inspiration for the novel, the 1853 scandal at Birmingham Gaol, erupted when a fifteen-year-old prisoner named Edward Andrews hanged himself after enduring months of physical and emotional abuse at the hands of Governor Austin and his turnkeys. A subsequent investigation revealed a cruel pattern of discipline under Austin’s leadership, forced Austin to resign, and provided the basis of Reade’s detailed prison plot. Reade’s dramatized narrator simply observes throughout the work, never appearing to affect the novel’s events, but occasionally employing his own first-person perspective to clarify his storytelling duties for the reader. The novel’s central protagonist is a friendly drifter and thief named Tom Robinson, a convict who finds himself in the newly reformed prison system. While in prison, Robinson befriends the doomed young Josephs, a fictionalization of the real Edward Andrews. Robinson also witnesses and eventually experiences firsthand the extreme violence perpetrated against prisoners by the

²⁰ Rev. of *Never Too Late to Mend*, by Charles Reade, *Spectator* 16 Aug. 1856: 878.

²¹ By the 1860s, for example, Reade became increasingly irritated by George Eliot’s success. He refers to Eliot as “Georgy Porgy” in letters to friends in which he attacks anachronisms he detected in Eliot’s historical novel, *Romola* (1862-1863). His nephew and biographer, Compton Reade, assures readers that Reade could never “be capable of the pettiness of jealousy, least of all, of a woman,” but he continues to assert, in his uncle’s defense, that, through “the process of natural selection,” twentieth-century readers would likely be rid of “such interminable nebulæ, as, for example, ‘Daniel Deronda.’” See Charles Reade and Compton Reade 130, 134.

fictional Governor Hawes and his sycophantic subordinates. Eden, a chaplain Robinson had met briefly before his incarceration, is assigned to the prison, where he sympathizes with the tortured prisoners, attempts to comprehend the pain they experience, and, following Josephs's suicide, convinces visiting justices to dismiss Hawes for his cruelty. Nearly forty-five chapters into the novel – of which approximately thirty take place in prison – Robinson is released and travels to Australia, where he proves that it is, in fact, never too late to mend. He and his friend George Fielding, whose Berkshire farm provides the opening setting of the novel, eventually marry their sweethearts and live happily ever after.

Pain is central to *Never Too Late*, whose narrator offers early commentary on a character's pain that is important for two reasons: it involves the emotional pain of the only important female character, George Fielding's fiancée, Susan Merton, and it provides the first clue to Reade's complex ethics regarding the representation of pain in literature by directly contradicting the explicit nature of the pain scenes contained in later chapters. When George leaves for Australia early in the novel, the narrator refuses to examine or describe Susan's grief, which eventually gives way to physically manifested depression, stating: "What she suffered [. . .] I could detail perhaps as well as any man living; but I will not; there is a degree of anguish one shrinks from intruding upon too familiarly in person: and even on paper the microscope should spare sometimes these beatings of a bared heart [. . .] For the present, let us draw gently back and leave her."²² This language corroborates the pattern in Reade's notes, letters to editors, reviews, and

²² Reade, *Never Too Late*, 34.

works of fiction demonstrating his disdain for novels that represent psychological detail rather than moments of action. His statement regarding Susan's emotional pain may be interpreted, then, as an early strike against "domestic and psychological novelists in general," who would, presumably, place any character under the microscope, regardless of gender, class, or pain.²³ Reade explicitly refuses to allow a woman's emotional pain to become a spectacle in his novel. However, Reade's declaration may also be read as a defensive maneuver, asserting that his abilities equal those of "any man living," by a novelist known for his lack of skill in character development and his desire for literary fame.²⁴

The narrator's apparent discretion regarding the minute inspection and realistic representation of pain, as readers will learn, does not apply to the physical agony of prisoners. Although Reade believes that the microscope is not often an appropriate tool for authors of realist fiction, he does describe various experiences of prisoner pain in great detail, with no concern for inmates' privacy or pride. Susan is spared this indignity due to her status as a devout middle-class woman, whose pain, which is both emotional and physical, has been caused by the socially sanctioned grief any young woman of good character would be expected to feel upon the departure of her hard-working, honest, and faithful young fiancé. Susan's pain is familiar and culturally acceptable, and need not be described. In fact, Reade employs a common strategy in representing pain by suggesting that it is, in this case, better left unarticulated. As Lucy Bending argues, refusing to seek

²³ Burns 76.

²⁴ See E.G. Sutcliffe, "Psychological Presentation in Reade's Novels," *Studies in Philology* 38 (1941): 521-542.

the right words to describe a certain feeling, whether it is pleasure or pain, is in itself a well-established convention, which claims that “a lack of language is more expressive than words.”²⁵ In this case, Reade insists he could find the right words for Susan’s pain, but her delicate nature and his gentlemanly sensibility and aversion to describing the psychological states of his characters preclude the effort.

However, Reade must employ the microscope in his narration of prisoners’ pain in order to achieve his dual goals of exposing prisoner abuse to public scrutiny and impressing readers enough to elevate his own authorial status. To this end, Reade employs two characters, Robinson and Eden, as “disguised narrators,” through whom readers receive various descriptions of, explanations for, and judgments upon the deliberate infliction of physical pain in the prison.²⁶ Eden, in particular, is a thinly veiled mouthpiece for Reade’s own perspective. The rhetoric of each pain scene does support Reade’s larger philanthropic concerns by creating spectacles of literary pain to expose the injustices of actual prison torture.

Under the Microscope: The Nineteenth-Century Prisoner’s Pain

The Enlightenment, which initiated a wave of social reforms, ushered in an era in which physical pain was no longer routinely associated with sin, evil, and God’s punishment.²⁷ Like other works of the period, John Howard’s 1777 *The State of the*

²⁵ Bending 97.

²⁶ Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (1961; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 152.

²⁷ Rey 90.

Prisons in England and Wales anticipated a new kind of philanthropy featuring middle-class observations of lower-class institutions, which would characterize much nineteenth-century social and medical reform. Howard, an “obscure Bedfordshire squire...who became the father of the penitentiary,” investigated and exposed the brutal details of incarceration in eighteenth-century prisons.²⁸ His study confirmed fears regarding the unsanitary moral chaos of institutions like Newgate and Bridewell, which had long been established in the popular imagination by works such as Daniel Defoe’s novel *Moll Flanders* (1722), John Gay’s drama *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728), and William Hogarth’s engravings of *A Harlot’s Progress* (1732).²⁹ The system’s disorganization allowed inmates to interact in common areas regardless of gender, age, crime, or illness, while awaiting corporal punishment, transportation, or release. Hanging, whipping, use of the pillory, and other state-sanctioned physical punishments were conducted in public, overseen by a crowd that understood its role as witness: excessive or unjust suffering would not be tolerated by a sympathetic audience, but generally the authorities in charge of distributing punishments were supported by the crowd’s approval.³⁰ However, in an age of both violent revolutions and calls for the implementation of reason, the public ritual of punishment was no longer consistent with political and social ideals.

²⁸ Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) 47.

²⁹ John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 88-89.

³⁰ Ignatieff 20-21.

Howard's study inspired reformers who were interested in moving away from "the theatrical representation of pain" in public and toward an "age of sobriety in punishment."³¹ Rather than holding criminals in morally and medically diseased jails until their bodies could be broken for public observation, the new system of punishment would build more complex penitentiaries and attempt to reform the incarcerated by controlling their time, work, and diet behind closed doors. To accomplish this, the Penitentiary Act of 1779, co-drafted by Howard, established prisoner solitude, hard labor, and moral instruction as methods for reforming current criminals as well as deterring future offenses.³² Over the next several decades, the penitentiary system continued to develop new methods for disciplining prisoners away from the public gaze. Pentonville Prison, which opened in 1842, became the model prison representative of the most ambitious and optimistic voices in the era's prison reform movement. Created by the newly formed Prison Inspectorate, Pentonville's mission was to use "solitude to inspire prisoners to self-reflection, moral regeneration, and self-narration from the cell."³³

During the same year Charles Dickens had expressed his concern with this separate system, which he witnessed in Philadelphia and wrote about in his *American Notes*.³⁴ Dickens believed in the humane intentions of the reformers responsible for

³¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995) 14.

³² Bender 23.

³³ Sean Grass, *The Self in the Cell: Narrating the Victorian Prisoner* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 5.

³⁴ Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842; New York: Penguin, 2000) Volume 1, Chapter 7.

devising and governing the new system, but he recognized that the infliction of intense pain had not been eradicated by these reforms. His notes contain many important elements in the debate regarding prison reform and discipline that would re-surface in Reade's novel fourteen years later, including the idea that witnesses must be able to see external signs of prisoners' pain in order to know that they suffer, and the fear that prison injustice had moved from public spectacle into a more secretive penitentiary system, no longer monitored by concerned citizens. *American Notes* acknowledges, as early as 1842, the awful realization that Victorian attempts at prison reform, based on the reasonable premise that the brutal, body-destroying public punishments of the past should be replaced with rational and disciplined care for the prisoner's body and soul, in solitude, had only shifted the horrors of punishment from outside of the prison to behind its closed doors. The pains suffered by criminals had similarly shifted from external wounds to internal, psychological misery. And yet, it was the external signs – the expression on an inmate's face, for example – that Dickens himself read in order to determine the dangers of the system and to describe these dangers to his readers.³⁵ As a visitor observing the faces of prisoners, Dickens must rely on bodily signs of suffering in order to speculate

³⁵ For more on Dickens's prison politics, which wavered throughout his career, see Philip Collins, *Dickens and Crime* (1962; Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994). In Chapter 61 of *David Copperfield*, published in 1850, David visits a newly constructed prison where he notices the expense of such an institution, the prisoners' plentiful meals, and the fact that prisoners do communicate with each other, in violation of the rules. He also meets a "Model Prisoner," who turns out to be Uriah Heep. See Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (1850; Toronto: Broadview, 2001) 421-427. In Chapter 32 of *Great Expectations*, the novel central to Chapter 5 of this project, Pip visits Newgate and his older, narrating self reminds readers that this version of Newgate was pre-reform, so "much neglected," and not yet a place where criminals eat better than soldiers. See Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1860-1861); New York: Penguin, 1996) 260.

that psychological damage had occurred as well: “because [the] ghastly signs and tokens [of mental pain] are not so palpable to the eye and sense of touch as scars upon the flesh; because its wounds are not upon the surface, and it extorts few cries that human ears can hear.”³⁶ Dickens wants to draw his readers’ attention to hidden pains by describing the more obvious, upsetting signs of physical pain. Reade’s narrator extends this notion by neglecting psychological pain entirely, and using the signs of physical pain as an emblem to represent all of the prisoners’ torments. In fact, in order to educate readers about prison abuse and the need for further reform, both Dickens and Reade must re-establish the spectacle of prisoners’ pain as an essential component of their arguments.

In *Never Too Late*, Robinson’s fictional incarceration occurs after the recent transition from unorganized jails disinterested in reform to the new model prison, “intended to be a penal hospital for diseased and contagious souls,” where he becomes the novel’s first observer of a prisoner’s pain.³⁷ Because of his criminal history and former incarceration, Robinson is presumably jaded enough to expect and accept many unpleasant aspects of prison life; it is he who first sees the teenaged prisoner Josephs writhing in an illegal punishment jacket. It is a “sight [that] chilled the felon to the bone” and Reade’s first attempt to articulate a detailed scene of physical pain in the novel:

A lad about fifteen years of age was pinned against the wall in agony by a leathern belt passed round his shoulders and drawn violently round two staples in the wall. His arms were jammed against his sides by a straight waistcoat fastened with straps behind, and those straps drawn with the utmost severity. But this was not all. A high leathern collar a quarter of an inch thick squeezed his throat in its iron grasp. His hair and his clothes

³⁶ Dickens, *American Notes*, 111.

³⁷ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 69.

were drenched with water which had been thrown in bucketfuls over him, and now dripped from him to the floor. His face was white, his lips livid, his eyes were nearly glazed, and his teeth chattered with cold and pain.³⁸

Robinson serves as a spectator here, and the torture scene upsets him, an experienced prisoner. Despite Robinson's crimes, he remains a sympathetic individual: the narrator insists that "burglary and larceny do not extinguish humanity in a thinking rascal."³⁹ Inspired to investigate and help Josephs by the sound of the boy's groans, Robinson covertly attempts to discover the reason for Josephs's punishment as well as a means of effecting his release. Josephs, despite the pains in his neck, shoulders, and arms, and the fatigue and chill of his entire body, would rather remain jacketed than risk further punishment. Like Dickens, Robinson recognizes that Josephs's white face, livid lips, glazed eyes, and chattering teeth indicate the nearly fatal brutality of his physical punishment and the necessarily detrimental emotional and psychological effects it implies. Unlike the prison governor and his turnkeys, Robinson is able to read the external signs of Josephs's body in pain, to recognize the injustice of such torture, and to offer his friendship. However, Robinson can only exchange names with Josephs, an act which is in itself a violation of rules in a prison where they are known as Numbers 19 and 15, respectively, and socializing is prohibited. This scene contains no details of the crimes committed by the tortured "lad," or indications that he is a cruel or dangerous prisoner. He is represented as a frightened boy, whose ability to withstand the jacket even when Robinson offers to help him, is unmatched by his fellow prisoners and whose desire for friendship is unshaken by his agonizing experiences.

³⁸ Ibid., 79.

³⁹ Ibid.

The historical Royal Commission report, which was organized and published in response to the suicide of the young prisoner Edward Andrews and consulted by Reade throughout his research for the novel, indicates that the “punishment jacket” in question was a strait jacket, sometimes used in mental asylums or cases of prisoners “threatening violence to themselves” or to “prison officers,” that had been modified with a leather collar to prevent inmates from loosening the jacket with their teeth.⁴⁰ In an attempt to understand Andrews’s experience in the jacket, officials asked someone of his stature to wear it, “the collar and straps being put on by the same warder who had put them on Andrews, and as nearly as possible with the same degree of tightness.”⁴¹ The report describes how a prisoner’s arms are “constrained” and “compress[ed],” while the jacket is “fastened” to the wall.⁴² Reade borrows this image but increases the violence of its depiction by adding terms like “pinned,” “agony,” “violently,” and “squeezed,” to convert the dry, professional evaluation of the punishment jacket into a more disturbing description that makes readers cringe for Josephs.⁴³

Reade employs descriptions of what Ronald Melzack identifies as “sensory” aspects of pain, specifically opting to evoke “stabbing,” “lacerating,” and “crushing” kinds of physical pains, rather than the “dull,” “heavy,” or “taut” descriptions associated

⁴⁰ *Report of the Commissioners appointed to Inquire into the Condition and Treatment of the Prisoners confined in Birmingham Borough Prison, and the Conduct, Management, and Discipline of the said Prison, Together with the Minutes of Evidence 1854* (1809) XXXI, vii-viii.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, viii.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 79.

with tumors or inflammation, for example, but Reade does not include any accompanying “affective” modifiers.⁴⁴ These word choices also highlight Scarry’s notion that the tortured body is acted upon by both the weapon cutting the flesh and the person wielding it.⁴⁵ Reade’s vocabulary of cutting invokes this sense of victimization and bodily destruction. However, his readers encounter the tortured prisoner’s bodily condition alone, not his mental state, so a reader imagines his own flesh being racked and pierced, he is reminded of his own dread of pain, and he is convinced that he should object when others are hurt as well. In Reade’s novel, psychological pain is not described, even though the real Birmingham prisoners certainly endured psychological pain as well as physical agony.

Those who agree with the infliction of physical pain under certain conditions, including disciplining prisoners, provide an additional understanding of the resonance of Reade’s pain scenes: pain educates. As a *Saturday Review* writer admits, physical pain teaches sufferers lessons “which have more chance of being remembered than almost any others”; he goes on to suggest that physical pain’s “brevity, emphasis, and great convenience and cheapness” make it a practical tool for teaching deviants about the moral and social consequences of their actions.⁴⁶ Contemporary debates about pain’s uses imply that there was a “just measure of pain,” to borrow Michael Ignatieff’s phrase,

⁴⁴ These categories appear on the McGill Pain Questionnaire, developed by Ronald Melzack and Warren Torgerson in the early 1970s; the categories collect and organize commonly used descriptors for the various pains associated with various conditions in order to facilitate diagnoses. See Melzack and Wall 39-44.

⁴⁵ Scarry, *Body in Pain*, 16.

⁴⁶ “Pain” 563.

which could be utilized appropriately in the interests of social order. Reade's novel does not depict instances of justified torture: his suffering prisoners are portrayed as victims and his pain-inflicting governor and turnkeys are characterized as evil or ignorant. However, although many readers presumably interpreted Reade's depictions of physical torture as a call to protect prisoners from unjust punishment, others undoubtedly believed it "a good thing that people should see the results of the bad influences which society engenders, and should undergo the pain of witnessing or hearing of the infliction of the necessary penalties."⁴⁷ Readers might experience the dread of imagining physical pain and be inspired to act philanthropically, or they might imagine the discomfort of physical pain and simply remember to be grateful they were not condemned as criminals themselves. In both cases, physical pain is not only used to teach criminals but its literary constructions are used to teach readers.

Prison Labor and the Gospel of Work

Work was a key component of the new penitentiary system's methods for reforming prisoners. After the Gaols Act of 1823, which required prison authorities to write annual reports for the Home Secretary, techniques for maintaining prisoner discipline were shared across the nation.⁴⁸ These methods typically included reducing prisoners' diets and increasing hard labor, but controversy erupted over whether prisoners' work should be productive or unproductive labor. In addition, physical

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ignatieff 168.

exertion was not the only type of work in which prisoners were expected to engage. They were also sometimes required to produce a self-narrative in support of the separate penitentiary system by sharing their stories of crime and reform with their prison chaplains. These two different types of labor figure largely in the prison system's – and *Never Too Late's* – complex ethics of pain by highlighting the ways in which Reade ultimately chooses the body over the mind, showcasing physical pain rather than exploring ambiguous mental pain, and in so doing, returning to “punishment as a spectacle” even as he rails against it.

In his 1843 *Past and Present* Thomas Carlyle declares: “Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it!”⁴⁹ Carlyle glorifies even the lowest forms of labor, which produce tangible products and render the laborer useful to society. Although Reade did seem to agree with Carlyle on the central importance of work to both the British citizen's identity and the British state's stability, he does not agree with Carlyle's calls demanding prisoners be denied the right to labor productively. Despite his belief that honest work provided both social and personal benefits, Carlyle argues that prisoners should not be counted among the nation's productive laborers. In fact, in an essay describing his visit to a “Model Prison” in 1850, he laments the fact that the institution's treacherous but unproductive treadmill would soon be dismantled.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Carlyle, *Past and Present*, 197.

⁵⁰ Thomas Carlyle, “Model Prisons,” *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850; London: Chapman and Hall, 1898) 54-55.

The treadwheel, a “huge revolving cylinder with steps on it like the slats of a paddle wheel,” which prisoners stepped on and turned with their feet while holding a bar to maintain their balance, was sometimes designed as a mill or grind, but usually only served to “grind the air.”⁵¹ The unproductive nature, or “sheer uselessness,” of treadwheel work exacerbated the physical pain experienced by prisoners exhausted and mangled by the device.⁵² Although the pain stimulus – repetitively stepping on the wheel’s slats – was identical to the stimulus experienced by free workers producing useful goods, the prisoners’ knowledge that their treadwheels were unproductive – that their physical exhaustion and pain were for punishment only – likely aggravated their pain experiences. But supporters of unproductive treadwheels considered the “salutary terror” inspired by such labor to be a fitting punishment for prisoners.⁵³ Like Carlyle, they believed prisoners had lost the right to engage in useful labor, but that they should be put to work for punitive purposes only.

Reade’s novel disagrees with Carlyle and other advocates for unproductive, disciplinary labor by depicting Robinson’s exemplary work ethic, his frustrating experience at the hand crank, and his eventual torture. Before witnessing Josephs in the punishment jacket, Robinson proves to be a hard-working, skilled tradesman. His initial foray into prison labor entails digging in the garden, where Robinson gratefully embraces the opportunity to work: he “drove the spade into the soil with all the energy of one of

⁵¹ Ignatieff 177.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

God's creatures escaping from the system back to nature."⁵⁴ Exhaustion does not upset Robinson: "his breath was short, and he perspired profusely; but he did not care for that."⁵⁵ He takes pleasure in the novelty, the challenge, and the exertion of the task. He desires to improve upon his first attempt at working in a garden, but prison officials ignore his ambition and enthusiasm. Because the well-meaning surgeon alerts Governor Hawes to Robinson's work ethic and trade skills, suggesting that he be kept employed in these tasks that maintain his health, the governor deliberately deprives Robinson of the tasks he enjoys and marks him for future punishment. Hawes's disdain for Robinson's work ethic provides further proof of the governor's excessive cruelty.

After finding Josephs in the punishment jacket for the first time, Robinson does not rebel. He maintains his work ethic and therefore avoids alienating readers who believe thieves like him deserve stern punishment. Robinson learns from Josephs's experience that he should be diligent in his hard labor, although his assignments no longer include satisfying skilled labor; instead, he must turn the hand crank. He "went to the crank in good spirits," not opposed to doing his work despite the cruelty of the device, which was a common tool for disciplinary labor.⁵⁶ According to the Royal Commission report, Birmingham Gaol had rejected new, more efficient cranks because of their cost. Investigators found that "old crank machines" actually required 10,000 revolutions a day for one day's work; this was "nearly 30 revolutions a minute," a goal only a draught

⁵⁴ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 75.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

horse could achieve, and a weakened prisoner would risk “wasting much and suffering greatly” in the attempt.⁵⁷ The insurmountable nature of hand-crank labor became a favorite tool of the real Governor Austin of Birmingham Gaol, and is therefore exploited by Reade’s fictional Governor Hawes as well. However strong and cooperative prisoners were, they could not complete the hand-crank task. They continued to push the crank with all their remaining strength, inspired by fear of worse punishments, until their bodies were weakened, broken, and unable to push further. Prison surgeons often recorded the condition of men worked too hard on the crank as “crank oedema”; symptoms included paleness, weakness, disorientation, and severe swelling in the legs.⁵⁸

But the hand crank was not utilized in this manner by the real Governor Austin’s predecessor, Captain Alexander Maconochie, who served as governor of Birmingham Gaol from 1849 until 1851. In the 1840s, Maconochie emerged as a benevolent but tough leader of the growing community of prison administrators. His theory of prison discipline earned the respect of cultural authorities including Charles Dickens, Henry Mayhew, and Herbert Spencer, and he served as the model for the minor character of Captain O’Connor in Reade’s novel.⁵⁹ He privileged purposeful work as a noble endeavor necessary for the rehabilitation of criminals. However, Maconochie’s experience convinced him of the need for employing unpleasant conditions, or “‘purposeful’ pain,”

⁵⁷ *Report of the Commissioners* vi-vii.

⁵⁸ Philip Priestley, *Victorian Prison Lives: English Prison Biography, 1830-1914* (London: Methuen, 1985) 135.

⁵⁹ Martin J. Wiener, *Reconstructing the Criminal: Culture, Law, and Policy in England, 1830-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 115-119.

to inspire the more hardened criminals to embrace the penitentiary system by shaping their behavior through the strategic use of pain stimuli.⁶⁰ Maconochie argued that, ideally, the infliction of pain would occur for socially just purposes and that it would be distributed by the penal system itself – the architecture, treadmill, hand crank, or diet – rather than by the human hands of a prison authority. In reality, all aspects of the penitentiary were controlled by human hands and affected by human emotions.

Maconochie was no longer employed at Birmingham Gaol when his cruel replacement, Governor Austin, gained control of the institution, but he was interrogated by the Royal Commission in their investigation of the prison's disciplinary practices. Like Dickens's criticism of the separate system, the Commission begins by praising Maconochie's intentions but disagrees with the necessary results. Despite his status as "a gentleman of humanity and benevolence," the Commission found that Maconochie "sanction[ed] the infliction of [illegal] punishments [. . .], the employment of which was the more to be regretted, inasmuch as such a course is apt to lead to the use, in the hands of persons not restrained by the same benevolent feelings, of practices equally illegal, and more objectionable from their greater frequency and their greater severity."⁶¹ Legal reforms set strict limits on the amount of pain a prison administrator could inflict upon a prisoner, but the system was only as fair and just as the governor in charge. That even a respectable leader might cross the line and inflict an unacceptable measure of pain, Scarry argues, stems from "the ease of remaining ignorant of another's person's pain,"

⁶⁰ Ibid., 115.

⁶¹ *Report of the Commissioners* xxxiv.

which enables “one to inflict it and amplify it in the body of another person while remaining immune oneself.”⁶² Pain-inducing devices like the treadwheel, the hand crank, and the strictly punitive punishment jacket, would eventually be used inappropriately, whether accidentally or intentionally, if the prisoners’ pain is ignored.

In *Never Too Late*, Reade’s narrator comments on this problem by stating that the new prison system, despite well-meaning laws, “unwisely allows a discretionary power” to local authorities.⁶³ This suggests that Reade’s social outrage was inspired by and directed toward the abuses of sadistic individuals working within what he believed to be an otherwise acceptable institution. The narrator’s position also supports a fundamental premise of the social melodrama: an inherently moral world order obtains even if evil temporarily threatens it.⁶⁴ The penitentiary system was considered acceptable largely because it accomplished the early reformers’ goal of moving prisoners’ punishments from public squares to private cells, thereby eliminating the cruelty and barbarism of “punishment as a spectacle.”⁶⁵ The most obvious consequence of this shift was the relocation of prisoners’ physical punishment away from the potentially protective eyes of citizens interested in prisoner rights and penal reforms. The new penitentiaries lacked oversight, trusting governors entirely with their prisoners’ welfare. Although prisoners were no longer explicitly sentenced to bodily punishment, the penitentiary necessarily

⁶² Scarry, “Difficulty of Imagining Other Persons,” 279.

⁶³ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 69-70.

⁶⁴ Cawelti 45.

⁶⁵ Foucault 8.

inflicted physical pain. Despite its mission to reform criminals' souls, the penitentiary continued to focus on the body: as Foucault argues, "imprisonment has always involved a certain degree of physical pain," varying from the "rationing of food, sexual deprivation, corporal punishment, [and] solitary confinement" to "forced labour" and the "loss of liberty" itself.⁶⁶ Bodily punishment is inherent in the penitentiary system, but excessive bodily punishment, hidden from the public, remained an insidious problem.

A less obvious consequence of the shift from public to private punishment was the introduction of the prisoner self-narrative. According to Sean Grass, chaplains played an editorial role, shaping prisoner narratives to ensure their alignment with prison politics.⁶⁷ Prisoner narratives presumably allowed prisoners to reflect upon their lives, confess responsibility for their crimes, and assess their attempts to reform. Not only did chaplains edit and select for the narratives they wanted to read and publish, but prisoners also crafted their stories to please prison officials, either to avoid punishment or to curry favor. Nevertheless, prisoner self-narratives were published as proof that the penitentiary system effected real reform and, as one chaplain hoped, as an educational warning with the potential "to lessen human misery and suffering, to augment the worshippers in our churches, to decrease the frequenters of our gin-palaces, and to diminish the number of inmates in our gaols."⁶⁸ In short, prisoners' own words could serve to instruct readers and prevent future crime. The prisoner self-narrative privileges the prisoner's psychological

⁶⁶ Ibid., 15-16.

⁶⁷ Grass 35.

⁶⁸ Henry Samuel Joseph, *Memoirs of Convicted Prisoners* (London: Wertheim, 1853) viii.

development and self-reflection. Its concern with individual prisoners' interiority rather than the conditions of their bodies directly parallels and reflects the larger shift from external/outside/public punishments to internal/inside/private suffering and rehabilitation.

Remarkably, Reade had researched the prisoner self-narrative genre and written a sketch from the perspective of his character Tom Robinson before the real Birmingham Gaol scandal became public. Believing the scandal should be the basis of his next novel, Reade originally combined his depictions of prisoner torture with his first-person narrative of Robinson's life of crime and reform. When forced to cut down the resulting five-volume novel, Reade chose to retain the many lengthy torture scenes and omit Robinson's narrative entirely. Although Robinson's writing remains one minor aspect of his experience in the novel, the narrative itself is not included for the novel's readers. Eden requires Robinson to write "the only kind of story that is worth a button – a true story – the story of Thomas Robinson," in order to distract him from vengeful thoughts and his own solitude.⁶⁹ Eden elaborates on the self-narrative genre and provides advice reminiscent of Reade's own writing philosophy: "Now write the truth – do not dress or cook your facts: I shall devour them raw with twice the relish, and they will do you ten times the good. And intersperse no humbug, no sham penitence. [. . .] self-review is a healthy process. Write down these honest reflections, but don't overdo it [. . .] it may do good to other prisoners."⁷⁰ Twenty-one chapters later, following plot shifts occurring outside of the prison setting, the narrator remembers that "we left Thomas Robinson

⁶⁹ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 190.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

writing his life” and declares “[h]e has written it,” but explains to readers that it is too “late in our story” to include Robinson’s narrative, which “must therefore be thrust into my Appendix or printed elsewhere.”⁷¹

Reade’s *Autobiography of a Thief* was published separately, in a collection of shorter works entitled *Cream*, in 1858. In a brief preface Reade claims that Robinson’s own narrative was “the central gem” of his original work for *Never Too Late*, but that he felt obligated to cut it because “a story within a story is a frightful flaw in art.”⁷² Given the brevity of the piece when compared to the epic breadth of the final novel, it seems more likely that Reade deliberately chose to depict physical violence against prisoners as the essential theme of his prison chapters. Robinson’s self-narrative tells the story of a kind man with poor luck, who became a thief due more to his poverty and laziness than a malicious, violent temper. Reade’s comment to readers that “[y]ou have seen Thomas Robinson, alias Hic, alias Ille, alias Iste, tinted in water-colours by me: now see him painted in oils by himself and retouched by Mr. Eden,” corroborates the charge that Reade’s novel is lacking a complete characterization of Robinson without this short piece.⁷³ But it is not only Robinson’s history that is missing when the self-narrative is ignored. Reade’s decision to cut the work disregards attempts by prison reformers to understand prisoners’ psychological developments in favor of more graphically compelling scenes of physical torture. Reade paradoxically prefers to create and discuss a

⁷¹ Ibid., 271.

⁷² Charles Reade, *The Autobiography of a Thief and Other Histories* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1888) 3-4.

⁷³ Ibid., 5.

spectacle of pain rather than attempting to articulate the more subtle dangers of the mid-Victorian prison system.

Literary Torture: A Double-Edged Sword

Reade's tortured bodies reveal "the causal links between an evil, a victim, and a benefactor," and compel "ameliorative action" on the part of the reader by representing the wounds of specific individuals – Josephs and Robinson, for example – rather than discussing the abstract misfortunes of a large group, such as prisoners.⁷⁴ *Never Too Late*'s characters learn from escalating pain scenes that the torture cannot continue much longer, as everyone reaches a breaking point: Robinson shifts from spectator to tortured prisoner, Josephs moves toward martyrdom, some of the more sensible turnkeys come around, and Eden finally claims his position as the prison's, and novel's, true humanitarian authority.

Robinson's torture begins when Hawes finally orders his turnkeys to "strap him up":

He was in no condition to resist, and moreover knew resistance was useless. They jammed him in the jacket, pinned him tight to the wall, and throttled him in the collar. This collar, by a refinement of cruelty, was made with unbound edges, so that when the victim exhausted with the cruel cramp that racked his aching bones in the fierce gripe of Hawes's infernal machine, sank his heavy head and drooped his chin, the jagged collar sawed him directly and lacerating the flesh drove him away even in this miserable approach to ease. Robinson had formed no idea of the torture. The victims of the Inquisition would have gained but little by becoming the victims of the separate and silent system in --- gaol.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Laqueur 177, 178.

⁷⁵ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 82-83.

The terms “cruelty” and “victims” imply that, despite his criminal status, Robinson deserves protection from his torturers, who are calculatingly sadistic. Because Robinson is more familiar to the reader than Josephs, the narrator provides a tentative inside view of Robinson’s experience, including what he “knew” about the futility of resistance and what he could not have known about such pain until he felt it. While he had witnessed Josephs’s experience and felt appropriately upset by it, Robinson still cannot know the true pain of torture until he feels it himself, and nor, this implies, can Reade or his readers, although the attempt has humanitarian value.

Like all of Reade’s torture scenes, this text features the language of acute pain while excluding descriptions of the deep-seated fear and long-term psychological damage caused by torture. The narrator favors verbs like “pinned,” “jammed,” “squeezed,” and “throttled,” “racked,” and “lacerating.”⁷⁶ Robinson’s first scene in the punishment jacket also introduces the term “torture” with all of the barbaric historical associations it carries. In her analysis of torture, Scarry argues that it “systematically prevents the prisoner from being the agent of anything and simultaneously pretends that he is the agent of some things.”⁷⁷ Dominated by the governor and his men, Robinson cannot escape the torture he dreads, and, to compound the nightmare scenario in which all tortured bodies live, Robinson is blamed for his own pain. His failure to work hard enough, though an obvious pretext, leads to his torture; his failure to endure the pain in an upright position leads to further agony. But unlike some instances of torture, the cruelty of Hawes and his lackeys

⁷⁶ Ibid., 79, 82-83.

⁷⁷ Scarry, *Body in Pain*, 47.

is not applied to interrogate prisoners. There is no state-sanctioned reason – no question in need of an urgent answer – behind Hawes’s decision to torture prisoners. He is solely responsible for the sadistic culture of the prison. Ordering his subordinates to torture prisoners establishes and sustains his authority, while depicting him as an exaggerated melodramatic villain.

Yet, when a desperate inmate bites Hawes’s hand, the governor moans “dismally like a great girl.”⁷⁸ Hawes’s inability to endure the pain of his own minor injury draws further attention to a serious problem for proponents of painful prison discipline: those inflicting pain may not be able to judge its degree and would certainly not be able to withstand torture themselves. Reade deliberately amplifies his character Hawes’s cruelty in many ways, but the Royal Commission’s findings regarding Hawes’s real-life counterpart, Governor Austin, agree with Reade’s depiction of Hawes in that neither the fictional nor the real-life governor could determine the intensity of the pain he inflicted. When asked about his reliance on the punishment jacket as a disciplinary tool, Austin “expressed his belief that the straps and collar might give him pain ‘in a degree,’ (as he judged from his moaning and restlessness) but ‘not severe pain.’”⁷⁹ The report does not characterize Austin as sadistic; rather, he is portrayed as a professional administrator whose thoughts about prison theory did not run deep, and whose sympathies did not lie with criminals seeking to reform. This was not a unique perspective, then or now. But the

⁷⁸ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 125.

⁷⁹ *Report of the Commissioners* x.

tragedy of Edward Andrews's suicide spurred the public to censure Austin, and Reade deliberately incites much stronger condemnation for Hawes by exaggerating his villainy.

In direct contrast to Hawes, the chaplain Eden is presented as correct in his sympathies. He is called to the scene by a prisoner's screams and outraged by his tortured position: "[t]his sight drove a knife through Mr. Eden's heart. He stood amongst them white as a sheet. He could not speak, but his pale face was a silent protest against this enormity. His look of horror and righteous indignation chilled and made uneasy the inquisitors, all but Hawes."⁸⁰ Eden's ability to recognize the pain of others and the injustice of the system inflicting it marks him as the ideal humanitarian spectator in the novel, and as a fictionalized version of Reade, who performs a similar function as the investigating author. Eden's outrage regarding prisoner abuse, as well as the overzealous hypocrisy some critics have identified in his rhetoric, are both closely related, thematically and linguistically, to Reade's own writings.

Eden selflessly attempts to wear the punishment jacket in order to understand the pain of the prisoners whose souls he wants to save. This experience convinces him that the jacket delivers inexcusable torture, demonstrates to prisoners that Eden is sincere, and allows him to teach the turnkey Evans. Because he is brave enough to wear the jacket and wise enough to understand the importance of this step, Eden can testify convincingly that the jacket "crushes your very heart [and] makes you ache from your hair to your heel, till you would thank and bless any man to knock you on the head."⁸¹ While it is enough to ensure Hawes's censure, Eden's account of torture is tellingly innocuous compared to the

⁸⁰ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 124-125.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

narrator's depictions of Josephs's and Robinson's experiences. This illustrates the effect that one's personal status and understanding of pain stimuli has on actual pain experience; knowing he is an authority figure who will not long suffer the jacket, Eden's perception of the pain is less intense, which is reflected in his less graphic descriptions of it, as it does not carry the same implications that Robinson's and Josephs's torture do. There is always a distance between the tortured and the reformers who would help them.

There was no Eden in the real Birmingham Gaol scandal. Although a surgeon, a chaplain, and a teacher commented in various notes and records that prisoners were slowly dying under Austin's command, none of these individuals filed formal complaints to encourage investigation. The fictional Eden embodies Reade's notion of a true humanitarian, which none of Birmingham's learned prison staff were strong enough to become. In effect, Eden is Reade, if Reade were able to enter a prison full of tortured prisoners and save them himself. As Wayne Burns argues, Eden's obsession with saving prisoners and cursing Hawes means that "Eden's humanitarianism is but Hawes's sadism, plus moral sanctions."⁸² Rather than employing a calm appeal to reason, Eden considers himself a servant of Christ, whose role is to defeat the evil Hawes and convince prison officials to govern prisoners with compassion rather than cruelty. However, he makes his points against Hawes by referring to the will of a vindictive and violent God, whose own cruelty will be felt by Hawes. In his final use of such sweeping rhetoric before the visiting justices and current prison staff, Eden declares: "Tremble, ye cruel, God hates

⁸² Burns 168.

ye!”⁸³ This scene is decidedly melodramatic rather than indicative of the post-Enlightenment reason that inspired prison reforms earlier in the century.

The day before he commits suicide, Josephs enjoys an elevated status expressed in religious terms: the narrator refers to him as a “martyr,” indicating that this character’s suffering serves a cause greater than one individual’s pain, and that this representation of agony and death will inspire an investigation of prison discipline, as the real agony and death of his historical counterpart Edward Andrews did.⁸⁴ In his final torture scene, Josephs speaks more than before by directly addressing Hawes and his assistant, Fry, accusing them of fully understanding the impossible misery of hand-crank labor and the potentially fatal constriction of the punishment jacket. He boldly challenges them, while also hinting that his death is near: “Why not kill me at once and put me out of my misery? [. . .] It can’t last much longer you know.”⁸⁵ In another melodramatic exaggeration of the real-life governor’s attitudes, the fictional Hawes responds with threats of unrelenting torture, only to be followed by death. Josephs’s words are the first act in a series of rebellions that will culminate in his suicide, as he finally claims agency though it costs his life. Although Josephs’s story comes to an end, his final torture scene lays the foundation for others, turnkeys and readers in particular, to begin on their own paths of recognition and sympathy.

⁸³ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 132.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 172-173.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

Throughout the novel, Reade's torture scenes insist that the act of torture desensitizes the turnkeys in charge of inflicting it. The Royal Commission's report on the Birmingham scandal lends further credence to this popular idea that inflicting physical pain numbs the person inflicting it, regardless of their original intentions. Even if Austin was not as diabolical and calculating as his fictional counterpart Hawes, his decision to delegate the responsibilities of physically punishing prisoners did adversely affect his turnkeys: "[. . .] the warders, whose business it was, upon the order of the governor, to administer it, - hardened by the continual infliction of such a punishment, and exasperated by the violence and resistance of those prisoners upon whom they had to inflict it, [. . .] have proved fitting instruments of such a system; severe, unmerciful, at times even brutal."⁸⁶ Rather than helping prisoners improve themselves, a penitentiary system based on the infliction of physical pain degrades both prisoners and the authority figures charged with their care.

Reade's fictional turnkeys are consistently cruel, which the narrator expresses by depicting their lack of response to prisoners' screams of pain as well as their laughter and conversations with each other as though nothing were out of the ordinary. In a torture scene during which Hawes forces a pound of salt down a prisoner's throat, the watching warders prove their own brute natures: "whenever [the prisoner] opened his mouth with the instinct that makes animals proclaim their hurts and appeal for pity on the chance of a heart being within hearing," the turnkeys remain silent and assist Hawes with the

⁸⁶ *Report of the Commissioners* x.

torture.⁸⁷ However, a turnkey named Evans provides hope for the possibility that even hardened torturers and dim-witted spectators, like distant readers, may be taught to read the signs of another's pain and respond with compassion. Eden's attempt to educate Evans proves successful as the turnkey watches Josephs suffer in his final torture scene. And the narrator connects Evans's progress to Josephs's martyrdom and Reade's own goals:

A month or two ago the lips of a prisoner turning blue, and his skin twitching, told Evans nothing [. . .] Like the English public he *realized* nothing where prisoners were concerned. But Mr. Eden had awakened his intelligence, and his heart waked with it naturally. Now when he saw lips turning blue and eyes rolling in sad despair, and skin twitching convulsively, it occurred to him – 'this creature must be suffering very badly,' and the next step was, 'let me see what is hurting him so.'⁸⁸

This is Reade's argument for the representation of literary torture in a humanitarian narrative: Evans and readers are more responsible and compassionate in their reactions to the pain of others because they are capable of learning sympathy.

Amplifying his homage to *Uncle Tom* and broadening its powerful educational potential, Reade's narrator claims that "[n]ot to have read it was like not to have read 'The Times' for a week," and Eden presents another turnkey, Fry, with the book, hoping it will help him realize the cruelty he participates in everyday.⁸⁹ Like Evans's interactions with Eden, Fry's reading of the novel opens up a simple conversation between Eden and Fry about pain, sympathy, and cruelty, and it slowly causes Fry to be a less effective assistant to Hawes.

⁸⁷ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 168.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 173. Emphasis in original.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 153.

Reade's narrator makes this turnkey-reader connection explicit in the pivotal chapter of Josephs's last torture by addressing readers directly and demanding that they use their imaginations to compare the kind of pain Josephs and his fellow prisoners endure to their own. He asks:

Were you ever seized at night with a violent cramp? then you have instantly with a sort of wild and alarmed rapidity changed the posture which had cramped you; ay though the night was ever so cold you have sprung out of bed sooner than lie cramped. If the cramp would not go in less than half a minute, that half-minute was long and bitter [. . .] Imagine now the severest cramp you ever felt, artificially prolonged for hours and hours. Imagine yourself cramped in a vice, no part of you moveable a hair's breadth, except your hair and your eyelids. Imagine the fierce cramp growing and growing, and rising like a tide of agony higher and higher above nature's endurance, and you will cease to wonder that a man always sunk under Hawes's man-press. Now then add to the cramp a high, circular saw raking the throat, jacket straps cutting and burning the flesh of the back – add to this the freezing of the blood in the body deprived so long of all motion whatever (for motion of some degree is a condition of vitality), and a new and far more rational wonder arises, that any man could be half an hour cut, sawed, crushed, cramped, Mazeppa'd thus, without shamming – still less be four, six, eight hours in it, and come out a living man.⁹⁰

The narrator appeals to readers' memories of experiencing the considerably less severe pain of a common muscle cramp to provide a foundation for his discussion of prisoners' pain in the punishment jacket. He then aggravates and intensifies the imagined pain until it is deliberately unfathomable to anyone outside of the prison. The combination of readers' real knowledge and dread of physical pain and their persuasion that the prisoners' pain is infinitely worse effectively convinces many readers to be sympathetic. Like Robinson, readers cannot know torture unless they experience it themselves, but

⁹⁰ Ibid., 172-173.

they must attempt to understand, to remember that prisoners' bodies are sensitive, breakable, and limited just like their own.

Directly addressing readers also serves as a defensive maneuver: by insisting readers imagine their bodies in the prisoners' place, Reade may avoid charges of inviting voyeurism rather than humanitarian concern. According to Karen Halttunen, spectators' sympathy could potentially result in two negative effects. The first is a reader's self-congratulatory awareness of his or her own remarkable virtue for taking an interest in criminals' pain, an awareness that Reade himself demonstrates in his letters to readers, in which he claims absolute authority on the prison scandal and insists he has been tormented – though, significantly, not hardened – by the fictionalized exploration of prisoners' pain more than any reader could be. The second potential result is a reader's heightened sense of personal well-being and distance from such desperate scenes of pain, which reinforces the social chasm between groups rather than bridging it.⁹¹ Reade conforms in this manner to certain social conventions, particularly in his claim that an innocent female character's pain is one he “shrinks upon intruding upon too familiarly in person.”⁹² His delicate handling of Susan Merton's pain and Eden's brave, voluntary suffering indicates that Reade and his readers do in fact stand apart, categorically separate from the prisoners they pity.

But Reade demonstrated throughout his career that he believed in the power of the press to expose and disseminate information critical to understanding and addressing

⁹¹ Charles Reade and Compton Reade 38. Halttunen 308-309.

⁹² Reade, *Never Too Late*, 34.

important social issues of the day, not entirely to display his own power, but to help others. In a letter on this topic, Reade claims that “‘Justice’ is the daughter of ‘Publicity.’”⁹³ His character Eden shares this belief and lauds the press as a great nineteenth-century vehicle for truth. With “heightened colour and flashing eyes,” Eden promises Hawes’s warders that, if prisoners suffer any further harm, he will “proceed against [the offending turnkey] by the dog-whip of the criminal law [and] the gibbet of the public press.”⁹⁴ Eden considers the press a powerful tool in the exposure of those committing acts of evil hidden from the public, but the “gibbet,” a brutal device evocative of public execution and the display of criminals’ corpses, and the “dog-whip” are telling metaphors. Eden cloaks these reforming, reason-based, nineteenth-century institutions – the law and the press – in images of violent persecution. Like his invocation of a vindictive God, Eden’s “gibbet” and “dog-whip” reveal the “sadistically humanitarian” style he shares with Reade: presenting violent imagery and threatening retribution in the pursuit of peace and compassion.⁹⁵

Amid charges of sadistic voyeurism, deliberate sensationalism, and self-righteous, hypocritical rhetoric, one fact about *Never Too Late* cannot be denied: the novel creates a spectacle of literary torture by recreating scenes of hidden torture in the light of the reading public. By doing this through popular fiction, Reade expands the audience from those already familiar with the Royal Commission and brief newspaper reports to reach

⁹³ Charles Reade, *Readiana: Comments on Current Events, Bible Characters* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1896) 101.

⁹⁴ Reade, *Never Too Late*, 137.

⁹⁵ Burns 312.

readers who may be more interested in melodramatic plot twists than contemporary social scandals. Paradoxically, Reade generates representations of violent torture in order to take a stand against them; however, the fictionalization of such acts is infinitely preferable to the real-life perpetuation of torture behind closed doors. While the shift from the older punishment-as-spectacle model to an enlightened, pro-reform penitentiary system occurred in part to eradicate both the physical torture of prisoners as well as the public's enjoyment of the spectacle, the achievement of this goal had the unanticipated effect of moving torture, though now illegal, indoors. It is precisely this kind of phenomenon that Reade wants to make public, because he believed that "deeds of villainy are done every day in kid gloves; but they can only be done on the sly: here lies [England's] true moral eminence as a nation."⁹⁶ Reade's unwavering confidence that merely exposing readers to the truth of a shocking and outrageous case will lead to social reform attests to his faith in the journalistic and political machinery as well as the hard-working, compassionate readers of the nineteenth century.

In effect, Reade restores the witnessing crowd of eighteenth-century public punishment on a smaller, literary scale. Ballengee's argument that bodily torture requires a witness in order to have a larger cultural significance may be applied to Reade's literary torture: he successfully calls on Victorian readers to act as a new generation of spectators, to bear witness to his representations of physical torture, in order to render them more famous, more provocative, and therefore, more socially potent. But, to avoid the problematic and potentially backward-looking charge of voyeurism, the morality of Reade's ideal spectator is clearly indicated throughout the novel: like Eden, the spectator

⁹⁶ Reade, *Readiana*, 101.

should be able to read the signs of a body in pain, be sympathetic to that pain regardless of the individual's social position, and be willing to protect the less fortunate from cruel authorities. He should be willing to feel pain himself, to bond with the tortured, and to lend credibility to his testimony defending their rights, as Reade claimed to do.

CHAPTER 4
WRITING THE PAIN OF WAR:
SOLDIERS' COLLECTIVE PAIN IN WILLIAM HOWARD RUSSELL'S
CRIMEAN WAR CORRESPONDENCE AND NOVEL

The Crimean War (1854-1856), ambivalently remembered in British history, ushered in a new era in warfare, media and communication, and nursing practices, while it simultaneously upset Britain's military tradition and confidence. Irish-born war correspondent William Howard Russell became the premier authority on Britain's action and inaction during the war. Russell's letters from the front, published in *The Times*, told readers what he considered to be the truth of the war effort. Criticism, political upheaval, and investigations into the war's administration were due in large part to Russell's eyewitness accounts. In 1868, Russell wrote his only novel, a *Bildungsroman* called *The Adventures of Doctor Brady*, which contains one of the few Victorian fictionalizations of the Crimean War.¹ Because Russell's success depended upon his reputation as a writer who sought the truth and did not hesitate to share even grim and disappointing facts with readers, Russell is often associated with the conventions of realism.² However, close readings of his journalistic and novelistic descriptions of physical pain in the Crimea, an

¹ William Howard Russell, *The Adventures of Doctor Brady* (London: Tinsley, 1869). The novel was serialized in *Tinsley's Magazine*, 1867-1868.

² See Stefanie Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) 26-30. See also Alan Hankinson, *Man of Wars: William Howard Russell of The Times* (London: Heinemann, 1982) 54. For a critical reading of Russell's reliability, see Clive Ponting, *The Crimean War* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1982) x-xi.

upsetting if expected fact of the war, uncover a subject about which he refuses to write realistically: soldiers' pain.

Careful reading requires a distinction between Russell's journalism and his novel. Dallas Liddle's criticism of scholars' common conflation of sensation novels with sensational journalism is a helpful reminder that the generic conventions and goals of journalism and novels, as well as the circumstances under which the two are written, are not interchangeable and must be understood on their own terms.³ Russell's understatement of soldiers' individuality, apparent idealization of soldiers' pain, and intentionally vague descriptions of the work of army surgeons, are identifiable in both his letters and his novel. However, they do not function in the same way, or reveal the same politics. In his journalism, Russell contributes to the spectacle of war, which becomes entertainment for readers back home, by downplaying the pain of individuals and highlighting panoramic scenes of entire armies in pain. His reports of soldiers' collective pain gripped readers by providing an anonymous group of soldiers, whose pain became a symbol – shared, if not understood – by the British public. Public discourse surrounding the war gravitated toward subjects Russell chose as his focus, including shortages of basic necessities. The fact that chloroform was among these necessities created a scandal about soldiers' pain and military leaders' responsibility for alleviating it, if possible, through surgical anaesthesia.

Pain plays a critical though different role in Russell's later novel, which traces the childhood adventures, occupational decisions, war experiences, and eventual domestic

³ Dallas Liddle, *The Dynamics of Genre: Journalism and the Practice of Literature in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009) 10.

happiness of his narrator and protagonist, Terence Brady. Terry becomes an army surgeon, a profession Russell had once contemplated entering, until “a single visit to a dissecting room” convinced him he could not be a medical man.⁴ As Terry grows out of his “youthful restlessness” and into domestic conformity, he learns contradictory lessons about pain: he must be compassionate about the pain of accident victims or the sick, but, at the same, willing to participate in masculine traditions, like war, that require inflicting pain.⁵

Unrealistic pain descriptions might lead readers unfamiliar with Russell’s work to suspect that his journalism and his novel glorify war. This is not the case. Russell’s early descriptions idealize British soldiers’ tolerance of physical pain, and his later descriptions extend this tolerance to all soldiers. He is, in fact, against the pain caused by war and aware of the hypocrisy of the Empire, which fights brutally, causes pain, and then congratulates itself for alleviating pain with medical advancements like anaesthesia and modern hospital facilities. While other Victorian novelists rely on realistic detail to express the pain of others and to elicit readers’ sympathy, Russell chooses other techniques. His portrayal of collective pain, reliance upon an authority figure to stand between readers and the reality of the operating room, and depiction of his protagonist’s lessons about pain and war actually express Russell’s own developing disgust with the

⁴ Hankinson 13.

⁵ Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (1987; New York: Verso, 2000) 184.

British Empire's war machine, "a sentient Juggernaut under whose wheels the soldier bleeds."⁶

Britain's Crimean War

The Crimean War, commonly referred to as the Russian War by British contemporaries, was a conflict "[m]ost British people remember [. . .] for the heroic disaster of the Charge of the Light Brigade and the selfless devotion of Florence Nightingale."⁷ British history remembers the Crimean War for its deployment of "modern" innovations such as communications via telegraph, transport via new railroads, the first war photography, and advances in nursing. Placed in context, these facts only prove that the end of the war was well managed; the beginning of the war, before these changes were implemented, was so embarrassingly botched that all of these advancements and more were necessary to correct Britain's perceived course, militarily, politically, and socially.

The war was instigated by thousands of Russian troops moving south, closer to the Ottoman Empire, in 1853.⁸ Britain, in an alliance with France, promised to protect the Turks, though British leaders were more concerned with checking Russia's imperial expansion. British soldiers and sailors were dispatched in the summer of 1853 to

⁶ Russell, *Adventures* 348. This quotation is spoken by a supporting character named Standish, a war correspondent and Terry's friend in the Crimea.

⁷ Ponting vii. For his debunking of the Florence Nightingale myth, see Ponting 194-202.

⁸ The Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia in October 1853. See John Peck, *War, the Army and Victorian Literature* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998) 27.

discourage Russian aggression. Britain and France, forming a strange alliance after so many generations of fighting each other, declared war on Russia in March 1854.

Although there were skirmishes in the Baltic region and other minor theatres, most of the battles took place on the Crimean peninsula in the Black Sea, between Turkey and Russia.⁹ The main British hospital was located across the Black Sea, in Scutari.¹⁰

The Crimean War was the first military conflict in British history during which the middle class made its disapproval of military leadership known. Aristocratic military traditions, which had not changed since the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, failed the modern British soldier. British leaders foolishly entered a war to be fought on unfamiliar terrain; they privileged old-fashioned cavalry units during a war in which infantrymen carrying rifles and muskets became the norm; high-ranking officials did not prepare for the number of sick and wounded soldiers who would need treatment, or for the shelter and sustenance of soldiers left to fight on the freezing battlefield. Further mismanagement, combined with poor communication among officers, led to the nationally remembered loss memorialized in Tennyson's poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," which he wrote after reading Russell's account of the costly blunder.¹¹ Over the course of the war, approximately 22,000 British soldiers died; however, only about 4,000 of these casualties resulted from wounds received in battle. Most British soldiers died of cholera, dysentery,

⁹ Crimea is now a parliamentary republic within Ukraine.

¹⁰ Scutari, properly called Üsküdar, is located on the Bosphorus and is now part of Istanbul, Turkey.

¹¹ John R. Reed, "The Victorians and War," *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing*, ed. Kate McLoughlin (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) 135.

typhus, typhoid, malaria, frostbite, and scurvy.¹² Though Russia was technically defeated by the fall of Sebastopol, the European political landscape was little changed.¹³ Britain and France did not have the resources or desire to press further. Austria, hoping to avoid an escalation of the conflict, mediated the armistice in February 1856.

Charles Dickens's letters on the war illustrate the national mood in microcosm. In October 1854, writing from Boulogne, Dickens patriotically gushed: "Everything that happens here we suppose to be an announcement of the taking of Sebastopol [. . .] and fly out of the house in a burst of nationality [. . .] Whatever anyone says I believe; everybody says, every day, that Sebastopol is in flames."¹⁴ Like so many wars, the Crimean conflict was only supposed to last a couple of months, allowing soldiers to be home before the first Christmas. But Sebastopol, the Russian port city under siege by British soldiers and their allies, did not fall until September 1855. As the war progressed – or stagnated – Russell's letters from the front chipped away at British readers' formerly unshakeable confidence in their military might. By October 1855, Dickens was disgusted: "I have no present political faith or hope – not a grain."¹⁵

¹² There were approximately 95,000 French fatalities (most from disease), 50,000 Ottoman fatalities, and 475,000 Russian fatalities, by comparison. See Ponting 334.

¹³ Sebastopol, also spelled "Sevastopol," is a port city on the Crimean peninsula, across the Black Sea from Turkey. In the nineteenth century, Sebastopol and the entire Crimea were Russian territory.

¹⁴ Charles Dickens, *The Selected Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. F.W. Dupee (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1960) 204-205.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 220.

The Crimean War became a topic of national debate at a time when military issues were otherwise “side-lined” in British culture.¹⁶ In fact, scholars have long wondered at the dearth of military figures in mid-Victorian novels, before, during, and after the Crimean War.¹⁷ On the comparatively rare occasions when novelists feature military history, jargon, or geography, it is almost exclusively culled from the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), which had already become legendary. When Thackeray writes of soldiers, duels, and battlefields, it is within such a historical setting.¹⁸ The Napoleonic Wars produced naval heroes, Peninsular heroes, and Waterloo heroes, whose turn-of-the-nineteenth-century, pre-anaesthetic exploits greatly influenced the Crimean generation.¹⁹

One explanation for the lack of novels describing the Crimean War is that writers felt they could not compete for readers’ attention. The poet Arthur Hugh Clough declared early in 1855 that “[o]ur literature, at present, is the war column in the newspaper”; Elizabeth Barrett Browning noted that Thackeray’s most recent novel, *The Newcomes*, was “not strong enough to resist the Czar”; and Thackeray himself asked, “What can any novelist write [. . .] so interesting as our own correspondent?” in a reference to his friend,

¹⁶ Peck x.

¹⁷ Although some lesser known novels, such as Dinah Craik’s *A Life for a Life* (1859), Henry Kingsley’s *Ravenshoe* (1861), and Anne Thackeray Ritchie’s *Old Kensington* (1871), do discuss the Crimean War. See Reed, “Victorians and War.”

¹⁸ Peck ix.

¹⁹ Peninsular heroes emerged during the Peninsular War of 1808-1814, in which British, Spanish, and Portuguese soldiers forced Napoleon’s army to leave the Iberian Peninsula. The British soldiers were led by Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, who defeated Napoleon for the final time at Waterloo in 1815, eventually became Prime Minister, and was the most revered British military hero of the first half of the nineteenth century.

Russell.²⁰ John Everett Millais's painting, *Peace Concluded, 1856*, famously depicts a British father, surrounded by his wife and children, reading the most recent edition of *The Times* as an open and presumably partially read copy of Thackeray's novel lies neglected in the corner. But this does not explain why otherwise socially concerned novelists like Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Charlotte Brontë did not tackle the pain and injustice of war in the novel form that had proven so powerful a weapon in the debates over workers' rights, sanitary conditions for the poor, and other humanitarian causes.

In the same letter in which Dickens admits he has lost faith in British politics, he explains his only fictional contribution to the debate: "In No. 3 of my new book I have been blowing off a little of indignant steam which would otherwise blow me up."²¹ The book is *Little Dorrit* and the "steam" Dickens vents is the Circumlocution Office of incompetent bureaucracy in which "How not to do it was the great study and object."²² His 1857 Preface contains a sarcastic apology "for so exaggerated a fiction" and requests that readers remember it was written in "the days of a Russian war."²³ The object of Dickens's criticism is mismanagement itself, not sending soldiers to war.

Most influential novelists avoided writing about the controversially mismanaged war altogether. Thackeray was on a lecture tour in America during most of the Crimean War. His letters claim he was "awfully busy all day with the affairs of imaginary people"

²⁰ Qtd. in Markovits 63.

²¹ Dickens, *Selected Letters*, 220.

²² Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit* (1855-1857; London: Penguin, 1967) Book the First, Chapter 10: "Containing the whole Science of Government," 145.

²³ *Ibid.*, 35.

and show no particular novelistic interest in the Crimean experience.²⁴ Elizabeth Gaskell is thought to have contributed to the Crimean War discourse by stationing a minor character from her 1855 novel *North and South* in Corfu, a location that John Peck argues readers would associate with Britain's attempts to protect the Mediterranean from the Russians.²⁵ It is a timely but extraordinarily slight reference, given Gaskell's proven concern with contemporary scandals.

Charlotte Brontë's correspondence in early 1854 shows solid support for Britain's war: "Of course my Father's sympathy (and mine too) 'are' all with Justice and Europe and against Tyranny and Russia."²⁶ Several months later, her tone changes: "I say nothing about the War – but when I read of its horrors – I cannot help thinking that it is one of the greatest curses that can fall upon mankind [. . .] no glory to be gained can compensate for the sufferings which must be endured."²⁷ Unlike Dickens's and Thackeray's commentary, Brontë's letter acknowledges and laments the large-scale infliction of physical and emotional pain. She also recognized the trouble with war, that the pain is greater than the glory, before the terrible winter of 1854-1855 truly upset the British public. She did not live to see peace declared.

²⁴ William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray, Vol. III: 1852-1856*, ed. Gordon N. Ray (London: Oxford UP, 1946) 426.

²⁵ Peck 1.

²⁶ Charlotte Brontë, *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, Vol. III: 1852-1855*, ed. Margaret Smith (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) 223.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 305.

Victorian novelists seemed to feel themselves estranged from the war. Scholars may at first find this strange given novelists' otherwise active engagement with controversial topics of social injustice. At first glance, the physical pain and class divisions of soldiers at war seem to have much in common with the plights of crippled factory workers, abused prisoners, and the starving poor that were embraced by socially conscious novelists as objects of their detailed realism, and by extension, readers' sympathy. Before the war, soldiers typically "came from the lowest levels of society," were sometimes "convicted criminals" forced to choose between prison and the army, and were "poorly paid, atrociously housed and greatly given to drunkenness" as well as being twice as likely to die from disease as their civilian counterparts.²⁸ But popular novelists' deafening silence on the pain and problems of the war and its soldiers reveals an underappreciated aspect of the realist fiction of the mid-Victorian decades: though shocking in its exposure of the pains suffered by many formerly ignored groups, novelists were not interested in showing the realistic pain suffered by soldiers, whose experiences had not been ignored but rather glorified in the epic mode by previous generations. As George Eliot would lament and Russell would admit, war is already a spectacle; it is not a hidden evil to be discovered and mediated by a social novelist. War also differs from other institutions inflicting pain because, unlike the causes taken up by social novelists, war may occasionally be justifiable, as in the cases of self-defense or the defense of others from tyranny or genocide. Soldiers' pain is sometimes suffered for the greater good. However, in the case of an expanding empire like Victorian Britain, waging war

²⁸ Hankinson 46.

was an integral part of the imperialist project and there is no indication that the Crimean War was fought for a higher purpose than advancing the interests of the Empire.

Another factor preventing novelists from writing about the war is its historically uncertain status. They could not yet know the outcome, themes, or aftermath of the war, which created a narrative dilemma for anyone contemplating its fictionalization. As Dickens notes, he and everyone else in England were impatiently awaiting news and eager to believe every rumor. With the novelists who typically served as the voices of this generation silenced in anticipation and ambiguity regarding the war, the ability of Russell's letters to *The Times* to temporarily occupy that same socially conscious space for British readers makes sense. Russell emulated his novel-writing colleagues by identifying and cataloguing the details of the "social problem" of the war, even as it unfolded.²⁹ But close study reveals ways in which Russell's Crimean letters are not novelistic: he could wait for actual events to unfold and provide him with the next "chapter," he could not be held responsible for the conclusion of the narrative, and his material was time-sensitive, ensuring a massive and enthusiastic audience. His responsibility was to shape the story, not to imagine it. It is a mistake to assume Russell's Crimean reports and later novel are works of strict realism simply because he earned a reputation for telling the truth about the war's mismanagement, or because he was generally applauded by novelists of the day.

²⁹ Peck 30-31.

The Spectacle of the Chloroform Debates

Although her personal correspondence does not discuss the Crimea, perhaps because she and G.H. Lewes had recently embarked on their scandalous trip to Germany, George Eliot's 1860 novel *The Mill on the Floss*, set decades earlier, contains a scathing comment on war. It includes a chapter in which Tom and Philip bond through war stories, Tom enjoys the literally incredible "reminiscences" of Mr. Poulter, "an old Peninsular soldier," and Tom takes Poulter's sword and dreams of being a war hero.³⁰ The narrator concludes the episode by suggesting that many non-military men and boys indulge in this fantasy, and that this may be at least in part to blame for the very existence of modern war: "[i]t is doubtful whether our soldiers would be maintained if there were not pacific people at home who like to fancy themselves soldiers. War, like other dramatic spectacles, might possibly cease for want of a 'public.'"³¹ Safely ensconced in their domestic routines, readers of the war eagerly await the next battle or controversy. Although ostensibly supportive of their nation's soldiers, the public's fondness for this ritual may effectively extend the army's actual engagement in war, thereby leading to more physical pain to be inflicted and felt by its soldiers.

David McNeil describes the "spectator factor" of warfare as the long-standing tradition of non-combatants watching battles from afar, as though they were a game.³² The state of journalism in Britain in 1855 assured that the Crimean War would be no

³⁰ George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980) 170-171.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 176.

³² David McNeil, *The Grotesque Depiction of War and the Military in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990) 24.

exception; in fact, the war became a mass media phenomenon. When the repeal of the stamp tax allowed newspapers to be sold for one penny in 1855, competition among periodicals exploded.³³ Benedict Anderson describes the “mass ceremony” of readers across the country consuming the most recent information in the day’s newspaper as a ritual that builds an “imagined community.”³⁴ Trudi Tate calls these readers’ interest a “*fantasy* investment in war.”³⁵ Regardless of the level of realism included in war correspondence, the domestic audience can only follow dramatic plot developments; they cannot truly understand the real experiences of soldiers in a distant war. After all, the serialized consumption of Russell’s war correspondence looks much like readers’ enjoyment of fictional installments by writers like Dickens and Gaskell. For the home audience, the line between fact and fiction is blurred, precisely because of the tendency to feel entertained by the yet unwritten storyline of the war. Some critics’ current argument that readers’ sympathetic feelings do not lead to real-life action serves as a reminder that sympathy evoked by fictional characters is thought to be enough in itself because it inspires self-reflection and builds a social consensus; however, when evoked by actual living, breathing others, sympathy alone is not enough.³⁶ Spectators feel no physical pain, fear, or confusion, and are therefore actually quite estranged from the real-life experience they believe they are so closely following.

³³ Jean K. Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998) 35.

³⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983; London: Verso, 1991) 35.

³⁵ Qtd. in Markovits 59.

³⁶ See Keen, Greiner, and Harrison.

Editors of *The Times* called readers to account in a plea soliciting contributions to aid the sick and wounded: “Every man of common modesty must feel [. . .] rather smaller than usual, when he reads the strange and terrible news of the war. Here we are sitting by our firesides, devouring the morning paper [. . .] lazily tracing the path of conquest [. . .] To us war is a spectacle, and, if we happen to have no friends in it, a very amusing spectacle. [. . .] on the whole, the suffering is sadly vicarious.”³⁷ Less radical than Eliot’s statement that war itself exists because of such a comfortable domestic audience, *The Times* nevertheless accuses British readers, including themselves, of eliciting more pleasure than pain from the very real war raging in the Crimea. Their vicarious enjoyment seems both counterproductive and inappropriate, given the thousands of British men facing painful privations, wounds, amputations, and deaths.

While *The Times* still dominated as the most trusted news source, articles from general interest to war reports were also available in daily and weekly periodicals ranging from *Chambers’s Journal* to *The Daily Telegraph*. Russell was not the first correspondent to report from the scene of a foreign war; however, he is considered the first “modern” war correspondent because, although he lived and wrote among the soldiers and officers, his determination to tell readers what he considered the truth of the war trumped any allegiances to editors, politicians, or military leaders. In keeping with *The Times*’s stated goal of acting as a “‘historian’: to seek out truth,” Russell did not censor his criticism of the campaign to suit the administration or the wishes of readers at

³⁷ Qtd. in Markovits 23.

home.³⁸ Though this earned him his reputation and alerted many, including Dickens, to the growing disappointments of the Crimean War, *The Illustrated London News* castigated Russell and his editor, John Delane, for their emotional and supposedly unpatriotic contributions.³⁹ Finding its niche in opposition to *The Times*, *The Illustrated London News* refused to criticize the aristocratic leaders of the war. It also published Roger Fenton's photographs, which were taken in the Crimea in 1855 at the request of Prince Albert, to repair public opinion of the war.⁴⁰ But in the end, Russell's vision of the Crimea is the one that dominated the British public's collective knowledge of the war.

Russell's letters did not serve as propaganda for the British administration, but they did lead to his own fame and success. He understood war as a spectacle, a performance for the reading public back home in Britain, but he added a more pragmatic mode to the epic and romantic descriptions of war published by his predecessors and colleagues. Russell became the self-appointed defender of the common soldiers, who suffered from lack of supplies, medical care, and managerial foresight. During the first brutal winter, Russell deliberately exposed the suffering of the British soldiers and defended his own reports, arguing that readers "should know that the wretched beggar who wandered about the streets of London in the rain led the life of a prince compared with the British soldiers who were fighting for their country, and who, we were complacently assured by the home authorities, were the best appointed army in Europe,"

³⁸ Chalaby 132.

³⁹ Grace Moore, *Dickens and Empire: Discourses on Class, Race and Colonialism in the Works of Charles Dickens* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004) 84.

⁴⁰ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2003) 48.

and that, in the Crimea, “we were dying, as it were, by our own hands.”⁴¹ Russell’s use of the first person plural pronoun “we” serves two purposes: it counts him among the soldiers fighting for the British cause, and it unites his readers’ goals with those of the soldiers on the battlefield. At the same time readers enjoyed following the war, they were furious that their own leaders could hurt British soldiers with administrative and logistical mistakes. They were offended by the spectacle of incompetence.

Like blankets, tents, and beef-tea, chloroform was among the supplies required in the Crimea. Unlike the other items, it was a relatively new invention and still controversial. Retrospectively viewed as part of the modernity of the Crimean War, surgeons were still unsure how to use the relatively new anaesthetic, particularly in cases of acute battle wounds. Some physicians had gained experience with chloroform in treating factory workers’ and other occupational accidents, which sometimes resulted in traumatic or surgical amputations.⁴² The Crimean War provided thousands of additional test cases, leading to a greater professional consensus about chloroform’s usage and effects in the late 1850s.⁴³ Amidst various reports of insufficient medical care for soldiers, and in the spirit of “participatory journalism,” letters from soldiers’ families,

⁴¹ William Howard Russell, *Russell’s Despatches from the Crimea, 1854-1856*, ed. Nicolas Bentley (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966) 151. “The War: The Siege of Sebastopol,” *The Times* 8 March 1855: 7.

⁴² See Chapter 2 of this study.

⁴³ At most, there were 1353 British amputations and 4698 French amputations. See Henry Connor, “The Use of Chloroform by British Army Surgeons during the Crimean War,” *Medical History* 42 (1998): 188. Chloroform would also be used on a massive, unprecedented scale less than a decade later, in the American Civil War (1861-1865). See Alfred Bollet, *Civil War Medicine: Challenges and Triumphs* (Tucson, AZ: Galen Press, 2002).

officers, surgeons, and others who could claim some authority on the war discussed the use of chloroform.⁴⁴ One M.D. wrote to comfort readers whose loved ones were fighting: “It might be presumed [. . .] that the wounded in the Crimea had been deprived of the benefit of chloroform, but it will be satisfactory to their friends to know that in no instance of operation has it been omitted.”⁴⁵ This assurance came in response to a memorandum written on behalf of Dr. John Hall, Principal Medical Officer, who cautioned “against the use of chloroform in the severe shock of serious gunshot wounds,” despite his recognition that “public opinion, founded perhaps on mistaken philanthropy” would be against him; the memo argues that “however barbarous it may appear, the smart of the knife is a powerful stimulant; and it is much better to hear a man bawl lustily than to see him sink silently into the grave.”⁴⁶ Hall’s message was published in *The Illustrated London News*, and indeed, public opinion was soon against him. Although there is ample evidence from surgeons and soldiers that chloroform was used after the major battles of the Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman, and throughout the long siege of Sebastopol, there are also indications that, because of a combination of Hall’s warning, the same mismanagement of goods that confused other aspects of the campaign, older surgeons’ misgivings about surgical anaesthesia, and the inability of surgeons to administer the chloroform amidst the chaos of the battlefield, fewer limbs were amputated with chloroform than concerned readers at home might have expected. Though their concern reflects readers’ sympathy, it also highlights the incongruous reality that healthy soldiers

⁴⁴ Markovits 47.

⁴⁵ “Chloroform in the Crimea,” *The Times* 6 Feb. 1855: 5.

⁴⁶ Qtd. in Connor 163.

have gone to the Crimea in order to suffer debilitating physical injuries that require anaesthesia in hospital tents.

Russell's correspondence does not mention chloroform, though the term "supplies" is used dozens of times to convey a multitude of goods. But his novel, written years later, after he could review his experiences and expand his commentary on the war, considers chloroform from two distinct perspectives. The first scene illustrates how inexperienced soldiers encountered by the protagonist, Terry, on his way to the Crimea bond with each other, singing together to build camaraderie and stave off fear. The soldiers have learned a song that teaches them to value the tough tolerance of intense pain and to remember the British bravery of the Napoleonic Wars, which were fought by a different generation, for different reasons, in different countries, and with different weapon and medical technologies. They sing: "Let your medical comforts be kept in their chest! / Comforts no true Peninsular hero possessed; / When shot through the leg, o'er a mule I was thrown, / E'er your d-----d ambulances, thank Heavens, were known!"⁴⁷ The Crimean War was the first major British conflict in the age of anaesthesia, when battlefield surgeons like Russell's protagonist could reasonably hope to alleviate soldiers' pain and to perform painless surgeries in makeshift battlefield hospitals. And yet, the soldiers' song explicitly rejects the idea that soldiers should be concerned with anaesthesia or any other medical development designed to ease their suffering, as if physical pain must be suffered if one wishes to be considered a brave war hero.

⁴⁷ Russell, *Adventures*, 321.

The song's lyrics might appeal to supporters of Muscular Christianity, who valued certain men's abilities to bear physical pain stoically. However, Terry's comment on the ignorance of young soldiers asserts that he is not of this school: "not one of the wisest knew a whit more than any of the foolish of the tremendous ordeal of battle on which they were setting forth that day."⁴⁸ When the battles truly begin, Terry encounters no soldiers rejecting anaesthesia and other medical advancements to be like the heroes in the song. Interestingly, Henry Connor points out that the rate of chloroform usage in amputations among British soldiers was likely lower than that of the French or the Russians, and he suggests this may be a result of a distinctly English attitude toward the pain of a masculine soldier, as if British soldiers did not require anaesthetics as much as others might.⁴⁹ In such cases, it was the surgeon making this decision about pain, not the soldier, though occasionally some of the wounded were "cunning enough to ask for chloroform."⁵⁰ It is important to note that only inexperienced soldiers in Russell's novel are heard singing anti-anaesthesia lyrics; after battle, soldiers presumably feel differently.

Dr. Hall's reservations about administering chloroform to soldiers suffering from gunshot wounds stemmed from an ongoing medical debate about chloroform's effects on the body and the role of pain during surgery. The second mention of chloroform in

⁴⁸ Ibid., 296.

⁴⁹ Connor 189. Connor also connects this with Martin Pernick's argument that "a cult of manly endurance" arose around midcentury among Anglo-American men. See Pernick 117-119. See also John Kucich, *Imperial Masochism: British Fiction, Fantasy, and Social Class* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007) 9. Kucich focuses on the "masochistic ethos of British masculinity" in late-nineteenth-century fiction.

⁵⁰ Qtd. in Connor 191.

Russell's novel allows him to articulate the opposing sides of this dispute. One surgeon, Marmaduke Blossom, M.D., is "a very Napoleon of medicine": high-ranking, gentlemanly, and imposing.⁵¹ Blossom is known as a lover of scientific research, who enjoys specimens that "fluttered as they were pinned," and who "invented a very acute agony for malingerers, in which nitric acid and a powerful galvanic battery had some share [. . .]," in order to expose and punish dishonest soldiers faking pain.⁵² Blossom, who is associated with the antiquated and aristocratic by his Napoleonic moniker, has slightly sadistic tendencies that have helped him reach the rank of Deputy Instructor-General of Hospitals. Discussing the meaning of pain with Blossom is MacPhillip, a practical surgeon and Terry's superior; he believes that "pain is the great enemy to life [and] [i]f chloroform render the patient insensible to pain, you will admit it ought to be administered [. . .]."⁵³ MacPhillip's argument represents the medical opinion gaining momentum in the years following surgical anaesthesia's introduction. MacPhillip has no reservations regarding the use of chloroform on the grounds that British soldiers should be able to withstand physical pain or that painlessness will adversely affect their recovery.

Shortly after the war, Charles Kidd, M.D. wrote a letter to the *Association Medical Journal* agreeing with this side of the historical debate for two reasons. As a surgeon, he could not fathom returning to pre-anaesthetic surgery: "the hurry, the agony,

⁵¹ Russell, *Adventures*, 216.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 324, 217.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 325.

the bleeding, the confusion.”⁵⁴ Surgical anaesthesia eases the suffering of the patient and allows surgeons to operate calmly and carefully. Secondly, Kidd sensed a flaw in the opposing side’s arguments against anaesthesia: they were misusing it. In documented cases ostensibly proving that chloroform killed soldiers in the Crimea, Kidd disputed the claims by pointing out that surgeons used far “too much” of the anaesthetic, that it should be diluted as in French practice, and that amputations should be delayed if possible, until the soldier is no longer in shock.⁵⁵ Kidd’s view, echoed by Russell’s fictional MacPhillip, is that pain does not help patients survive.

But the fictional Blossom disagrees: “I’m not prepared to admit your proposition. Pain may be a very good thing! It’s a signal given by nature when in danger and aware of it. I think it’s a good sign when patients cry out under the knife.”⁵⁶ According to Blossom, low levels of pain in a patient mean “low animal energy,” which does not indicate a positive prognosis.⁵⁷ Though an increasingly minority position, Blossom’s argument reflects the beliefs some skeptics, like Dr. Hall, maintained about anaesthesia. If the body possesses a finite amount of “animal energy,” or what one of Hall’s defenders calls “vital action,” and chloroform depresses the levels of this energy, it may simply be killing patients by sapping their already waning strength.⁵⁸ In a reversal of the concept

⁵⁴ Charles Kidd, “Deaths from Chloroform in the Crimea,” *Association Medical Journal*, 9 August 1856: 689.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Russell, *Adventures*, 325.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Qtd. in Connor 163.

that pain could be exhausting or even killing a patient headed for surgery, Blossom's and Hall's position holds that pain is a sign of life that does not, like chloroform, aggravate the patient's condition. In fact, they believed that pain and reactions to pain stimulated the body, and, therefore, the healing process.

Reports and anecdotes indicated that some soldiers who were administered chloroform in the hospital at Scutari were "brought into the condition of a dead body, and then it was no operation, but a dissection."⁵⁹ Blossom and his real-life counterparts would attribute a patient's corpse-like condition to the repression of animating physical pain and to the dangers of chloroform. Hall's original note confirmed this opinion by calling "the smart of the knife [. . .] a powerful stimulant," although he knows that this pro-pain position would be unpopular with lay readers.⁶⁰ MacPhillip and Kidd, whose side was more agreeable to lay readers, would suggest that the anti-chloroform surgeons are mistaking pain as a favorable sign and anaesthetics as the enemy. Studies conducted after the war proved the latter group to be correct: dosages of chloroform at Scutari were simply too large and were administered with "lint" rather than a standard inhaler.⁶¹ Properly administered, chloroform should not have caused any wounded soldiers to fall asleep and never wake up. This conflict was entirely new, as, only ten years before, chloroform was not an option and battlefield amputations without anaesthetic were the unchallenged and unquestionable norm.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 185-186.

Eventually Russell's narrator Terry moves away from Blossom and MacPhillip's discussion, not because the roles of pain and chloroform have been resolved, but because duty calls. Later both men find themselves "with a crowd of assistants sawing, and cutting, and probing – without much care for their theories."⁶² In the chaos of war, Blossom and MacPhillip can only concern themselves with urgently removing damaged limbs and staunching bleeding wounds, although Russell's novel does not provide realistic detail of the men's work. Russell's personal politics of pain management in the war can be aligned with that of MacPhillip, who is portrayed as a sympathetic, pragmatic, and modern mentor for Terry, and as a foil for Blossom and his colder and crueler theories.

Idealizing Soldiers' Collective Pain

It might be expected that Russell and other writers questioning the unjust and overwhelming human cost of war would exploit techniques of the humanitarian narrative genre, as articulated by Thomas Laqueur, given its effectiveness in exposing bodies in pain, to advance their cause. However, the opposite is true. Whereas the humanitarian narrative privileges specific realistic details, including the screams, blood, and scars of an individual in pain, in order to evoke readers' aversion to pain and its infliction, Russell's correspondence and novel highlight the collective nature of the army, as if to emphasize the massive number of British men sustaining painful combat injuries, losing limbs, and dying for Britain.

⁶² Russell, *Adventures*, 325.

While arguing that Russell's journalism is akin to realist novels of the era, John Peck points out that his "attention to detail overwhelms any sense of dramatic confrontation."⁶³ Indeed, Russell's letters spell out the time of day, movements of the various regiments, positions of redoubts, and every slope, ridge, and sea view of the landscape. He uses lists to emphasize the abundance of men, goods, and action, as in his description of the battlefield after the living have left: "the quantity of firelocks, of greatcoats, of bearskin caps, of shakos, or Russian helmets and flat forage caps, of knapsacks, of cross and sling belts, bayonets, cartouche-boxes, cartridges, swords [. . .] round shot, fragments of shell [. . .] grape-shot, Minié balls and bullets."⁶⁴ Such descriptions undoubtedly made readers feel they could accurately envision the cluttered reality of war, as Russell appears to exclude nothing. But Russell's attention to detail is misleading: it convinces his audience that the whole truth is being told, but, critically, the physical pain of soldiers is not depicted with the same detail. Russell blends truly realistic scenes with an idealistic portrayal of soldiers' pain.

In a strikingly unrealistic style, Russell's descriptions of anonymous wounded soldiers present their bearing as calm and gentlemanly despite grave injury: "One of the wounded men rode coolly to the rear with his foot dangling by a piece of skin to the bone" and "another wounded trooper behaved with equal fortitude [although] his leg was broken in splinters."⁶⁵ Though graphically describing bodily injury, these depictions

⁶³ Peck 32.

⁶⁴ Russell, *Despatches*, 89.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

insist that British soldiers are not expressing pain in obviously painful circumstances. During the September 1854 Battle of the Alma, Russell similarly notes: “One man limped along with his foot dangling from his ankle [saying] ‘Glory be to God, I killed and wounded some of the Russians before they crippled me anyway.’”⁶⁶ The soldiers’ names are not known. Whether they live or die is not known. Their wounds are always gruesome, involving near-amputation or deep lacerations, but the soldiers never describe their pains or complain about their conditions.

Battlefields littered with the dead and wounded contribute to the sense of collective suffering, as many soldiers are “destined to pass another night in indescribable agony.”⁶⁷ Russell does not communicate personal details about the individuals in the mass graves, or the cries of the wounded left to suffer on the battlefield. He describes panoramic fields of soldiers in pain, but each individual British soldier he faces shows signs of injury without suffering. As Stefanie Markovits notes, Russell writes “types” rather than psychologically developed individuals; this is another deviation from strict realism.⁶⁸ But in the case of war writing, both journalistic and fictional, anonymity and collective suffering serve a purpose. Russell’s descriptions elevate common soldiers by insisting on their proud, stoic comportment while simultaneously omitting their biographical details – an omission that seems to amplify their numbers. Unlike the slaves, prisoners, and factory workers, for example, written in the nineteenth-century to inspire

⁶⁶ Ibid., 86.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 89.

⁶⁸ Markovits 32.

sympathy, who move from being considered non-entities to distinct individuals deserving compassion, soldiers move from distinct individuals living and working in Britain to the collective of the British army, where they forfeit their individuality as they also sacrifice their bodies and lives for the national cause. Benedict Anderson points out that cenotaphs and tombs of unknown soldiers receive “public ceremonial reverence [. . .] precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them.”⁶⁹ Like Catherine Gallagher’s nobody-protagonists, their experiences become more generally, widely relatable. In the case of fallen soldiers, the nation requires an anonymous symbol of the soldier to honor rather than any individual soldier himself. Buried under monuments or lying wounded in makeshift hospitals abroad, soldiers and the pain they experience become part of the “ghostly *national* imaginings” of the audience at home.⁷⁰ The idea of their sacrifice and suffering is more powerful for civilians than accurate and detailed knowledge of their true stories.

But at the same time, famous officers make names for themselves as individuals. The story of Lord Raglan proves that the aristocratic glory of the Napoleonic Wars weighed heavily on the Crimean generation. Raglan, the commanding officer of the Crimean War, lost an arm at Waterloo, in what is consistently described in history books, personal memoirs, and other sources as a moment of proud, British courage in the face of pain and loss: “when his right elbow was smashed by a musket ball, he walked quietly back to the field hospital and made no moan as the arm was cut off below the shoulder

⁶⁹ Anderson 9.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

without benefit of anaesthetic. As the surgeon went to throw it away, Raglan called out, ‘Hey, bring back my arm. There’s a ring my wife gave me on the finger.’”⁷¹ Raglan’s fame and career depended largely on this anecdote, which was so pervasive in the culture that it was mentioned almost fifty years later in the performing surgeon’s obituary.⁷² And, in 1868, Russell’s novel employs this aspect of Raglan’s celebrity to introduce him in a Crimean scene: “The empty coat-sleeve looped to his breast, far more than his staff announced to his army that Lord Raglan was present.”⁷³ Raglan’s Napoleonic reputation overshadowed his inability to command in the modern Crimean War while further convincing younger soldiers that pain should be tolerated without crying, grieving, or assistance.

Russell’s letters from the war subtly link lower-ranking British soldiers to aristocratic heroes, all of whom represent the masculine, pain-tolerating ideal, by conspicuously mentioning the names and fates of officers in similar terms: “Sir George Brown was hit by a shot, which went through his arm and struck his side. I saw with regret his pale and sternly composed face.”⁷⁴ Later, “a shell [. . .] blew away General Strangway’s leg, so it hung by a shred of flesh and bit of cloth from the skin. The poor

⁷¹ Hankinson 55. Raglan’s arm was amputated in 1814.

⁷² “The Late Mr. John Gunning, C.B.” *Medical Times and Gazette: A Journal of Medical Science, Literature, Criticism, and News Vol. I* (London: Churchill and Sons, 1863) 68-69.

⁷³ Russell, *Adventures*, 328.

⁷⁴ Russell, *Despatches*, 134.

old General never moved a muscle of his face.”⁷⁵ These officers’ wounds are described exactly like those of the anonymous soldiers: torn limbs, a common catastrophic injury resulting from the chaos of battle. The officers also maintain a polite dignity and what must be considered impossible self-control over typically involuntary facial expressions of pain, as the common soldiers do. While cases of episodic analgesia, a temporary absence of pain despite obvious tissue damage, have been reported among soldiers and attributed to psychological and emotional factors, this cannot account for the entirely calm, collected behavior of Russell’s soldiers.⁷⁶ Russell reveals that suffering in noble silence is highly valued among the men in the Crimea and, likely, by the readers back home. In his desire to represent their pain and sacrifice, Russell preserves and supports these values rather than deviating from them.

In sharp contrast to the impassive bearing of the British, Russell’s letters describe the Russian wounded as animals, “groaning and palpitating as they lay around [...] glar[ing] upon you from the bushes with the ferocity of wild beasts, as they hugged their wounds [. . .] holding out their mutilated and shattered limbs.”⁷⁷ Although they sustained similar injuries, the Russians are the enemy and so, to maintain the image of British soldiers withstanding pain better than others and to ensure that readers would not sympathize with Britain’s adversary, they are described as morally, mentally, and

⁷⁵ Ibid., 135.

⁷⁶ Melzack and Wall note that episodic analgesia is unpredictable in its effect on some wounded individuals but not others, and it is always temporary: a delayed pain reaction rather than a true absence of physical pain. See Melzack and Wall 7-8.

⁷⁷ Russell, *Despatches*, 137.

physically, inferior to the British. Russell's journalism provides an emotional, patriotic, and unrealistic view of British and Russian soldiers' reactions to pain, even as it exposes other disturbing facts about the war's management. Years later, Russell's novel employs the same panoramic, collective pain scenes without differentiating between British and Russian behavior in the face of pain. Because his lack of realism in pain scenes is no longer motivated by anti-Russian patriotism, it becomes clear that Russell's novel masks the graphic details of soldiers' pain for different reasons.

The Quasi-Realistic Pain Education of Terry Brady

In his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham attempts to define the "Value of a Lot of Pleasure or Pain, How to Be Measured." If, as his theory of legislation argues, the legislators' goal should be the "avoidance of pains," then public leaders should make decisions based upon how much pleasure or pain will be caused, and for how many people.⁷⁸ Although pleasure and pain are complex sensations, ideally, national decisions would bring pleasure and minimize pain for the greatest number of people: "Such pains avoid, whichever be thy view: / If pains *must* come, let them *extend* to few."⁷⁹ Bentham provides a felicific calculus, with which he believed one could calculate the pleasure or pain caused by any particular action. In Bentham's philosophy, a conflict like the Crimean War, in which others' lives were not being saved, cannot render an acceptable result: the physical pain

⁷⁸ Bentham 49.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

of soldiers alone, without considering their psychological pain and the emotional pain of their loved ones waiting back home, is overwhelming in its “intensity,” “duration,” and “purity.”⁸⁰ Leaders sending British men to war know that the soldiers will suffer. The “sadly vicarious” pleasure taken by readers sitting by their firesides in Britain takes on a naïve and insensitive quality, but it cannot, in a felicific calculus, excuse the pain caused by war.⁸¹ Nor did the British public’s insistence that soldiers receive chloroform compensate for the pain caused by war. Though dismissed by many as an unreasonable method for making governmental – or any – decisions, Bentham’s calculus of pleasure and pain calls attention to the disparity between the pain and sacrifice of the war and the supposed good it was accomplishing for Britain.

Russell’s novel, written after he had also served as a correspondent during the Indian Mutiny and the American Civil War, supports the political goals of Bentham’s felicific calculus while also proving that Victorian Britain was rife with social and political traditions that condoned the deliberate infliction of pain, despite post-Enlightenment philosophies and medical advancements. The novel demonstrates this stance formally, in the structure of the narrating protagonist’s educational episodes. Terry’s pain education, represented throughout the *Bildungsroman*, relies on three escalating moments of intentional pain in the life of a nineteenth-century British man: a schoolboy’s fight, a young man’s duel, and a grown man’s war. Regardless of the intervening incidents of unavoidable pain and suffering Terry encounters among the

⁸⁰ Ibid., 50.

⁸¹ Qtd. in Markovits 23.

victims of a violent railway accident and the seriously ill patients of a medical practice, Terry is relentlessly drawn into a masculine tradition of pain until he recognizes its cruelty.

Early in his academic career, Terry is inducted into the tradition of fighting among schoolboys. With “swollen hands and lips and cheeks, and torn clothes,” Terry enjoys the scuffle until he hears a classmate cry out in pain and sees the boy’s severely cut foot.⁸² Terry immediately springs into action, mimicking the medical work his grandfather used to do. When schoolmaster Dr. Ball finally arrives to help, he scolds them: “Such are the fruits of disobedience – the results of strife and contention [. . .] if you were the beasts of the field, you could not tear and wound each other more cruelly; but the beasts have none to guide them – you have.”⁸³ Ball attributes the physical pain of the injury to the boys’ disobedience and uncivilized violence. He suggests that, through education, boys will be guided and can become civilized men who do not resort to violence. But the novel itself, and the professional experience of its author, belie this statement. Terry’s first schoolboy fight foreshadows the absurdity of warfare in an age of modern medicine. Avoidable pain is inflicted; medical expertise is brought in to alleviate it. This is the cycle Terry will find himself in as a surgeon in the Crimea, even though Dr. Ball claims such violence is beastly, cruel, and unnecessary, or that it is the deserved result of disobedience. On the contrary, the great nation’s wars depend on violence and pain, even though the soldiers involved have been obedient as they were taught.

⁸² Russell, *Adventures*, 48.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 49.

As a young man, Terry participates in a second masculine tradition of pain by serving as a classmate's second in a duel. Terry witnesses and silently condones the infliction of unnecessary pain, as two of those present suffer flesh wounds during the confrontation. When the injured bleed and cry out in pain, Terry switches from duel participant to medical man, "busily engaged in binding up the injuries."⁸⁴ Terry plays a role in a ritual that will cause pain, but instantaneously attempts to alleviate it as soon as he observes that an injury has occurred. But Terry is no longer a young schoolboy; he has sympathetically witnessed unpreventable pain in various forms. And yet, significantly, the ubiquity and absurdity of inflicting pain in order to protect one's honor is once again depicted. Despite the intervening episodes and Terry's growing compassion for others' pain, he is still part of a culture that will continue to inflict pain even as the developing medical profession works to relieve it.

Terry's third episode of traditional masculine pain is the Crimean War, which he enters as a surgeon, as his guardian Bates clarifies: "You will not be a doctor, but a surgeon, you know – next thing to being a soldier: cutting off legs and arms, and that sort of thing."⁸⁵ This description convinces Terry to pursue his professional course because he is still naïve enough to be attracted to the supposed glory of war, and he has not yet realized the significance of the fact that he will be cutting soldiers' bodies, not to harm them but to save their lives. Terry reconciles himself to this change: if he "were not to

⁸⁴ Ibid., 206.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 159.

lead armies, [he] could cure them, and try to undo the ruin the warriors had made.”⁸⁶ At this point in his development, Terry’s realization of this paradox is only theoretical. He has yet to experience the frustrating cycle of constantly providing medical care for men whose bodies were perfectly healthy until they went to battle and were deliberately butchered by soldiers on the other side of the lines. The fact that Terry is still lamenting his inability to be an officer, and that he is concerned whether “the chivalry of the lancet” will be enough to impress his future sweetheart, emphasizes how desirable the intentional infliction of pain within the masculine tradition of warfare is to someone of Terry’s upbringing, and it proves that the test of Bentham’s felicific calculus is too unrealistic to work in the face of such deeply embedded cultural attitudes toward pain.⁸⁷ Russell, and the older, narrating version of his protagonist Terry, realize these truths if young Terry cannot.

Russell also agrees with the sense, implied by Bentham’s felicific calculus, that, somehow, pain is compounded: the suffering of multiple individuals is worse than the suffering of one alone. His novel demonstrates this theory by introducing the common sense opinion of a character named Tony Potts, a layman and aide-de-camp who interjects during the aforementioned pain debate between Blossom and MacPhillip. Despite their professional differences, both Blossom and MacPhillip agree that the notion of cumulative pain is a “fallacy” because “you can’t multiply the pain of one man by that

⁸⁶ Ibid., 161.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 162.

of another, and add up the sum total.”⁸⁸ Potts, representing the observations of soldiers who lack the surgeons’ medical training but have participated in brutal battles, insists: “But there must be a deuced lot of fellows in pain, you’ll admit [. . .] and you can add ’em up, you know: eh?”⁸⁹ Potts is advancing the Benthamite concept that pain can be compounded, and that widespread, long-lasting pain among many people constitutes the unfortunate and unjust result of an immoral decision. Blossom finds Potts’s idea ridiculous: “I presume you will not contend [. . .] that if one of your men has got a toothache and you have another toothache, that he or you suffer more or less on that account?” To which Potts responds: “I maintain that there will be two of us with the toothache, and that there’s twice as much toothache going as if only one had it [. . .].”⁹⁰ Whereas the trained surgeons deny that the physical pain experienced by one individual can be made more excruciating by the existence of fellow individuals in physical pain, Potts ignores the medical fact that any given individual soldier can only feel the physical pain of his own discrete and contained body and believes in a far more utilitarian idea: that the physical pain of many individuals is worse than the physical pain of one individual alone, and that the dire nature of such a situation of mass, collective pain can only hurt everyone more. The British leaders who decided to go to war in the Crimea understood and accepted the kinds of pain their soldiers would endure, even though, in

⁸⁸ Ibid., 325.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Bentham's terms a calculation of such intense pain for so many individuals would reveal the "evil tendency" of an act of war.⁹¹

In a memoir of the war written forty years later, Russell claims to have discussed the "pain and misery lying broadcast and moaning on the field" after a Crimean battle with a Scottish surgeon, who immediately insisted: "D'ye think that one body's pain can be multiplied by another body's pain? Na! Na! There's jist a number of wounded men, and each as his own pain – but it's not cumuleective at all."⁹² This idea seems to haunt Russell, but he does not reply to the surgeon. However, the perspective of his fictional Potts may at least partially explain Russell's continued preference for describing soldiers' pain in collective rather than individual terms, even after he gained experience as a witness to war. The Scottish surgeon Russell encountered, and the fictional surgeons Blossom and MacPhillip, cling to a technicality about pain, perhaps taking comfort in the fact that each individual's pain is limited by the bounds of his body. But Potts, and by extension, Russell himself, are insisting that medical professionals and military leaders honestly confront the vastness of entire fields of soldiers in pain caused by the war.

The novel's descriptions emphasize the panoramic chaos of battle, placing unnamed soldiers in its unpredictable disorder. Terry calls the sound of war itself "indescribable and infinite," and yet goes on to characterize the "scream" of ammunition and the "storm of human voices [expressing] command, angry urgency, pain, imprecation, hate, furious outcry, and passionate appeals for help and mercy; all mingled

⁹¹ Bentham 52.

⁹² William Howard Russell, *The Great War with Russia: The Invasion of the Crimea: A Personal Retrospect* (London: Routledge, 1895) 76-77.

together, with a crackling and hissing of flames [. . .].”⁹³ Terry’s fictional experience recalls Russell’s firsthand historical knowledge by depicting an aural fog of war that obscures the individual details of combat but may be pierced by only two recognizable sounds: “a word of command, or a cry of pain.”⁹⁴ Terry’s war visions are as anonymous as Russell’s correspondence. He lists the various ways soldiers suffer and die in battle: “To see a man fall gently forward on his face [. . .] to see a man pirouette and reel and drop [. . .] to see a man stagger [. . .] to see a man topple abruptly and then crawl away, dragging a broken leg behind him, - to see a body stand for a second ere it fell, without a head, or the trunk and head lying legless [. . .].”⁹⁵ Given no names, these soldiers’ bodies are watched by Terry in the very moment they are torn apart. All bodies react in similar ways to the devastating injuries, and Terry comes to find these repetitive scenes “quite familiar,” something he refers to as war’s “monotony of death.”⁹⁶

Terry describes the confusion of battle sounds and dead soldiers, but he refuses to share realistic details of his medical work with readers: “When the soldier’s work is done the surgeon’s begins. Let me spare the readers that night of horrors.”⁹⁷ This implies that the surgeon’s work is even worse than the damage soldiers inflict upon each other. A review in the *Spectator* noted that, despite its otherwise complete descriptions, the novel

⁹³ Russell, *Adventures*, 336.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 337, 338.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 338.

includes “very little about [Terry’s] experiences in the hospital, which, indeed, it would require professional skill to describe at all, and something much more rare than professional skill to describe the horrors that art forbids.”⁹⁸ Some critics attribute the lack of detailed medical work to Russell’s creative deficiency. It might seem that Russell is relying on the common convention of “sparing readers” out of a sense of delicacy, or that he is using a rhetorical move to inspire readers’ imaginations to invent something more graphic than he could describe.

But it is more likely that Russell deliberately masks the truth of the operating room in order to maintain the fog of war and collective pain he has preserved throughout his letters and his novel. In this case, Russell’s refusal to detail surgeon’s work realistically does not idealize or glorify war. Rather, Russell reveals his belief in the power of an authoritative eyewitness, like his own role in the Crimea, to mediate the experience for readers and vouch for its brutality. Russell presents Terry as an authority figure “behind the scenes” who knows the horrors of “the machinery of glory”: “amputations and extractions, and plugging of wounds, bandages, gangrenes, and death.”⁹⁹ While readers of his journalism were eager to believe Russell’s emotional and idealized statements on the serious nature of the pain he witnessed during the war, novel readers came to expect and demand more realistically graphic depictions of difficult topics. By contrast, Leo Tolstoy’s short story “Sebastopol in December, 1854,” inspired by his service in the Russian Army, boldly addresses the reader to see for himself: “Now,

⁹⁸ Rev. of *The Adventures of Doctor Brady*. *Spectator* June 1868: 744.

⁹⁹ Russell, *Adventures*, 350.

if your nerves are strong, enter there at the left. It is the operating-room.”¹⁰⁰ Before leaving the “house of pain,” Tolstoy’s narrator depicts surgeons elbow-deep in blood, cutting a man who is waking up from having received too little chloroform, while another wounded soldier in need of amputation looks on in terror.¹⁰¹ Tolstoy’s talent for facing even the most difficult and painful stages of life and death would develop over the next several decades and contribute to his status as a great novelist. His achievement is helpful in understanding why Russell’s more distanced technique for depicting pain through the eyes of a wise authority figure is not as successful, though both Russell and Tolstoy were decidedly anti-war later in their lives.

Russell’s novel allows him to express his anti-war politics and to explain, at least partially, how he arrived at his conclusions. Young Terry’s naïve love for military pageantry reflects Russell’s own original faith in the glory of war. Indeed, his Crimean letters focus on the fact that soldiers are ill-equipped to represent Britain, not that British soldiers have been sent to fight in the first place. The novel traces Terry’s lifelong participation in traditions demanding the infliction of pain, which finally makes it impossible for him to deny the “homicide” of war, or to support Britain’s seemingly eternal instigation and consumption of the spectacle of war.¹⁰² While still supporting the soldiers’ well-being, the older, narrating Terry, along with his author, Russell, condemn the war machine: “The British Army! Wandering, Ulysses-like – forever wandering [. . .]

¹⁰⁰ Leo Tolstoy, “Sebastopol in December, 1854,” *Sebastopol* (1855; trans. Frank D. Millet, 1887; Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004) 26.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰² Russell, *Adventures*, 329.

while the pale Penelope, Britannia, sits at home [and] reads the newspapers [. . .] Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena doloris?”¹⁰³ In an 1895 retrospective on the war, Russell declares: “The invasion of the Crimea, regarded merely as a military operation, was not bold simply. It was very rash. Boldness may be justified.”¹⁰⁴ And, Russell implies, the Crimean War was not.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 394. Latin quotation adapted from Virgil’s *Aeneid*: “What region of earth is not full of our sorrows?”

¹⁰⁴ Russell, *Great War*, 17.

CHAPTER 5
REMEMBERING PAIN:
CHARLES DICKENS'S *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*
AS DETECTIVE *BILDUNGSROMAN*

With *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens created a first-person protagonist, Pip, who recounts and employs pain in an entirely different way than other characters featured in this project.¹ The novel, a *Bildungsroman*, does not rely on representations of the physical suffering of others in order to expose social injustice as Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and Reade's *It Is Never Too Late to Mend* do, nor is the protagonist's pain education solely meant to reflect ethical problems on a larger political scale as in Russell's *Adventures of Doctor Brady*. Pip affords readers an opportunity to consider how pain, and the memory of pain, may work when turned inward, developing the protagonist's interiority over time, as opposed to being displayed externally, to expose social problems. Along the way, young Pip experiences just as much pain as he witnesses, and the memories narrated by his older self employ a distinctive pattern in which physical and emotional pains are bound together, associated with one another, to set the truly threatening and terrifying episodes of Pip's development apart.² Pip's coming of age requires that he witness, process, and suffer in scenes of remembered pain – on the

¹ Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1860-1861; New York: Penguin, 1996).

² The terms “mental pain,” “emotional pain,” “psychological pain,” and “social pain” are used interchangeably throughout this chapter, as they are in current research, except in cases of specific preference by psychological and physiological researchers.

marshes near his childhood home, in the rotten decadence of Satis House, and in the shadow of Newgate in London – until he can finally achieve agency, wresting control of his life away from those who would hurt or use him by choosing the role of amateur detective and actively seeking out the truth of the novel’s central mystery. Rather than creating a spectacle of others’ pain, *Great Expectations* creates a protagonist who sees, remembers, and detects, thus inspiring readers to sympathize with his particular vision of justice and pain.

In his articulation of the genre, Jerome Buckley notes that Dickens’s use of first-person narration throughout his two *Bildungsromane*, *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*, succeeds in “dramatizing the consciousness of the narrator,” and Buckley further distinguishes Pip, created by Dickens ten years later than David, as a particularly “rounded character, interesting as hero and persuasive as narrator.”³ While some contemporary critics cited the novel as one without purpose, *Great Expectations* features a protagonist who develops a deeper, more psychologically realistic interiority than Gaskell’s, Reade’s, and Russell’s protagonists, and who is “a much more thorough study of character than David Copperfield was.”⁴ Russell’s Terry Brady, as well as Dickens’s David and Pip, present first-person narration of their developments, an act that relies on

³ Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1974) 61.

⁴ Rev. of *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens, *The Literary Gazette* 13 Jul. 1861: 33 – “the work is all the more artistic for not being devoted to any one special serious purpose [...]” Rev. of *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens, *The Critic* 10 Aug. 1861: 149 – ““Great Expectations” is full of grave defects. It is a story without a purpose.” Rev. of *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens, *The Saturday Review* 20 July 1861: 69.

what Buckley calls “a powerful memory working over his experience.”⁵ Russell’s novel opens with a reference to the “mist of years” through which his older self must look back and recollect.⁶ *David Copperfield* famously begins with a chapter entitled “I am Born,” recounting the earliest event in his development, though it is one he knows only through the testimony of others.⁷ That Pip’s opening comments focus on his own name, one he gave himself, anticipates the narrative’s eventual inevitability: Pip will define himself and tell his own story. But pain memory functions quite differently in *Great Expectations*, as older Pip narrates a carefully distorted pattern that reflects the general truth of other characters’ effects on Pip’s developing consciousness rather than the factual truth of his biography.

If a “novelistic episode” in the *Bildungsroman* form achieves significance, it is because the protagonist “gives it meaning.”⁸ Pip creates a meaningful narrative of his development by specifically linking psychological and physical pain in telling ways: episodes evoking long-term, negative emotional affect hurt young Pip both mentally and bodily. Pip’s pain narrative helps illuminate what Jill Matus identifies as Dickens’s “interest in the latent effects of past crisis and the dysfunctions of memory and consciousness it can produce.”⁹ Among Pip’s surrogate, would-be family members,

⁵ Buckley 35.

⁶ Russell, *Adventures*, 1.

⁷ Dickens, *David Copperfield*, 1.

⁸ Moretti 45. Emphasis in original.

⁹ Jill Matus, *Shock, Memory and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) 2.

Estella and Miss Havisham represent greater threats to young Pip's personal confidence and growth, and they are therefore associated in Pip's memories with both the emotional pains they inflict as well as bodily pains that Pip sustains on their behalf. On the other hand, his second father figure, Magwitch, unexpectedly serves as a catalyst for Pip's healthy development into a narrating amateur detective, and so young Pip does not connect memories of physical agony with his intense emotions about the convict. Pip's narration of painful memories changes as he moves from a timid, weak child-protagonist to a bold, confident detective figure. Pip's pain memories highlight his criminal potential and his initial lack of personal agency, and are indivisible from his sense of identity and personal narrative. Finally, Detective Pip, tempered by suffering and in pursuit of knowledge, takes control over his own painful case and achieves "authorial mastery" over the story, himself, and the other players who once overpowered him.¹⁰

Pip gains readers' sympathy, "relatively straightforwardly," in several ways.¹¹ In his first volume, narrating Pip directly addresses readers and invites them to consider their own memories and developments: "That was a memorable day to me, for it made great changes in me. But, it is the same with any life [. . .] Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would

¹⁰ Peter Thoms, *Detection and Its Designs: Narrative and Power in 19th-Century Detective Fiction* (Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1998) 2.

¹¹ Rachel Ablow, "Addressing the Reader: The Autobiographical Voice," *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 3: The Nineteenth-Century Novel, 1820-1880*, ed. John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012) 283. Ablow suggests that Pip shares this characteristic with David Copperfield and Jane Eyre.

never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day.”¹²

Like all first-person *Bildungsromane*, Pip’s narrative is self-reflexive, often sharing justifications and lessons from the story of his young self and reminding readers to relate to his process. His development appears more organic than that of Russell’s Terry because it mimics the emergence of human consciousness, an individual’s awareness, “changing, yet continuous,” of itself and others over time.¹³ Readers come to know Pip and his reactions and developments intimately. Physical and mental pain serve as the primary data in Pip’s selective memory of this process: they shape his brushes with criminality and his individual sympathy for others, eventually allowing for his burgeoning social and narrative authority, and the significance of these experiences determine how his older self will remember and choose to relay his story.

Pip’s Progress, Part One: On the Edge of Criminality

Pip’s transformation from timid protagonist to authoritative detective narrator makes him a site of personal development rather than an obvious mouthpiece of the novelist’s social commentary, but his interior processes do slowly and subtly reveal his politics of pain. Pip’s impressions of the criminal world only hint at the crimes and punishments explicitly explored in Reade’s *Never Too Late* as well as some of Dickens’s other works, like *Oliver Twist*, *Little Dorrit*, and the nonfiction *American Notes*. Pip is

¹² Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 72.

¹³ Gerald Edelman, *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of Mind* (New York: BasicBooks, 1992) 111. Edelman’s “qualia assumption” – that other individuals possess them as well – is essential to his theory of higher-order consciousness and is also similar to Theory of Mind studies.

not explicitly tagged as a reader's guide to larger, social concerns. Instead, familiar cultural issues loom and recede around Pip, who remains at the center of the narrative. As a child and young man Pip is buffeted about by social institutions and expectations, like, as Alex Woloch notes, "a first-person narrator stuck in a third person narrative world – a world in large part shaped by the structures and logic of Dickens's own earlier omniscient novels."¹⁴ The threat and terror of the criminal realm remain a constant, just at the edge of young Pip's small world. His potentially criminal behavior, and his fascination with glimpses of criminal life and punishment, form what Peter Brooks calls the "convict-communion material" of Pip's story.¹⁵ Eventually, Pip will have to contain this "criminal side of the self" in order to achieve detective authority.¹⁶ But in the meantime, young Pip's occasional encounters with the criminal underworld heighten his anxiety about his future identity, hone his skills of observation, and create a sustained pattern of Pip's sympathetic treatment of others. Pip's compassion implies, though with more subtlety than contemporary social-problem novels, that the convicted criminal figure is, in fact, often deserving of Pip's, and readers', sympathy.

By far the most significant criminal representative in Pip's life is Magwitch. Young Pip meets him in the novel's first volume and takes to calling him "my convict" to distinguish Magwitch from another mysterious man roaming the marshes, a no man's

¹⁴ Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003) 178.

¹⁵ Peter Brooks, "Repetition, Repression, and Return: *Great Expectations* and the Study of Plot," *New Literary History* 11.3 (1980): 510.

¹⁶ Thoms 4.

land between Pip's home and the hulks.¹⁷ In their initial encounter, Pip is terrified but still able to recognize that the convict is "lamed by stones, cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars" and that he "limped, and shivered, and glared and growled."¹⁸ Pip feels concern for the man's obvious suffering and steals both food and a metal file from his home for the convict, despite Pip's sister's dire response to his questions about prisoners in nearby stationary ships, that "[p]eople are put in the Hulks because they murder, and because they rob, and forge, and do all sorts of bad; and they always begin by asking questions."¹⁹ Pip's sister, Mrs. Joe, convinces Pip to fear his potential criminal self, but he, though afraid, is not paralyzed by this; he helps the convict anyway – itself a criminal act – because sympathy and fairness demand it. Joe, Mrs. Joe's husband and Pip's friend, confirms that young Pip's feelings and actions are correct by telling the convict, once again in the custody of the authorities: "We don't know what you have done, but we wouldn't have you starved to death for it [. . .]."²⁰ Pip's first role model of kindness and sympathy, Joe, does not condone painful or cruel punishments, and although Pip takes some time to realize it, and only older, narrating Pip can articulate it in retrospect, neither does he. Pip further demonstrates his youthful capacity for sympathetic fellow-feeling by imagining both the physical discomfort and the loneliness of an escaped convict on the marshes: "[. . .] I looked at the stars, and considered how awful it would be

¹⁷ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 36.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

for a man to turn his face up to them as he froze to death, and see no help or pity in all the glittering multitude.”²¹ Pip’s use of his imagination, though fictional, inspires readers, who are not, to join him.

Pip’s beliefs regarding crime and punishment strengthen but do not truly change from his initial instincts as a young boy. His arrival in London only adds more convincing evidence for him to process. Pip’s first glimpses of criminal artifacts and architecture always briefly fascinate him before he learns enough to become disgusted by the cruelty and pain they represent. The first time Pip looks around the office of his new guardian, Jaggers, he notices “two dreadful casts on the shelf, of faces peculiarly swollen, and twitchy about the nose,” but wonders whether they might not be some of Jaggers’s less attractive family members.²² But, significantly, he does wonder. Not until his worldly friend Wemmick educates Pip by explaining that the casts were taken after Jaggers’s clients were hanged at nearby Newgate, does Pip realize the expressions on the faces of the casts are frozen in the fear and pain of their final criminal executions.²³ Likewise, Pip’s initial glance at Newgate, when he first arrives in the city, reveals merely a sliver of the yard used for hangings and whippings and inspires Pip with “a sickening idea of London,” while Pip’s true tour of Newgate, again featuring Wemmick as his guide and taking him deeper into the prison, strikes Pip as “a frouzy, ugly, disorderly,

²¹ Ibid., 50.

²² Ibid., 164-165.

²³ Ibid., 200-201.

depressing scene.”²⁴ Older Pip’s memory of Newgate incorporates his knowledge of prison reform by placing young Pip’s experience before “the period of exaggerated reaction consequent on all public wrong-doing” made prisons the ostensibly comfortable places older Pip imagines them to have become.²⁵

Pip’s sympathy, unlike the more distanced, comfortably authoritative position of Reade’s narrator in *Never Too Late*, is complicated by Pip’s ever-present fear of being condemned and punished as a criminal himself. He is haunted from childhood by signs of a criminal connection: to prepare Pip for his first visit to Satis House, Mrs. Joe “kneaded, and toweled, and thumped, and harrowed, and rasped” Pip “like a penitent”; a mysterious man at the local pub stirs his drink “*with a file*” to signal to Pip that he knows who he is and that he helped a convict; and two convicts discuss Magwitch’s case while traveling in the same coach as Pip.²⁶ These and other moments heighten Pip’s awareness that criminality hovers nearby, but they also strengthen Pip’s quiet and unwavering sympathy for criminals. However, older, narrating Pip knows that he, in the end, does not have a criminal identity; he deliberately includes young Pip’s unspoken sympathetic tendencies to illustrate one of the narrative’s central truths: not all convicted criminals are cruel or dangerous, and some convicted criminals deserve readers’ sympathy.

²⁴ Ibid., 166, 260.

²⁵ Ibid., 260. Older Pip’s apparent disapproval of the supposed comforts of the newly reformed prison system (the system central to Reade’s *Never Too Late* and Chapter 3 of this study) may provide further evidence for Dickens’s varying positions regarding prisoner punishment and prison reform. See P. Collins, particularly Chapter 1.

²⁶ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 52-53, 77 (emphasis in original), 226-231.

Magwitch represents the kind, misunderstood criminal figure throughout the novel. Though he terrifies very young Pip and upsets slightly older Pip's ideas about Estella and his future, Magwitch is never the cause or source of violence against Pip. Pip does not suffer physically, or, more importantly, his older narrating self does not report that he suffered physically, in the same way he must with and for Estella and Miss Havisham. In fact, Magwitch, the convict, is full of empty threats and true generosity; Estella and Miss Havisham, bolstered by appearances of class and power, constitute the actual danger against which Pip should be guarding.

Pip's Progress, Part Two: Shattering the Myth of Two Pains

In 1861, Dickens wrote to his good friend, actor W.C. Macready, complaining of “neuralgic pains in the face” during his recent composition of *Great Expectations*: “[the pains] have troubled me a good deal, and the work has been pretty close. But I hope that the book is a good book, and I have no doubt of very soon throwing off the little damage it has done to me.”²⁷ These lines link the physical agony of facial neuralgia, which “provokes a massive, stabbing pain” along specific nerves, with Dickens's physical and creative work of writing.²⁸ He reported that his pains ended with his work on the novel,

²⁷ Qtd. in Claire Tomalin, *Charles Dickens: A Life* (New York: Penguin, 2011) 316. See also Michael Slater, *Charles Dickens: A Life Defined by Writing* (New Haven, Yale UP, 2009) 492.

²⁸ Melzack and Wall 74. Nineteenth-century analyses of neuralgia often associated the condition with “nervous exhaustion and fatigue” or “fatigue and malaise” sometimes brought on by “serious pressure from external influences.” See Alexander Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855; New York: Appleton, 1902) 137. Francis Edmund Anstie, *Neuralgia and the Diseases that Resemble It* (New York: Bermingham, 1882) 15, 24. Biographers have identified several professional and personal concerns that

further compounding the complex relationship between mental and physical pain. Dickens's own personal experience and recording of physical pain during a mentally stressful time in his life parallel an even more complex constellation of mental and physical pain in his *Great Expectations*.

Pip's memories illustrate a hierarchy of pain, in which both emotional and physical kinds of suffering attach to particular characters and episodes. This connection supports current research showing that the relationship between emotional distress and the experience of physical pain, or what Matus calls "the tangle of physiological and psychological effects that attend on great emotional upheaval, strain or terror," is not merely metaphorical.²⁹ As early as 1845, German neurologist Wilhelm Griesinger posited an anatomical connection between mental pains, like "anxiety, fright, sorrow, [and] grief," and physical pains based on his observations that both "have the same effects upon the rest of the organism," and, a generation later, German neuroanatomist and later teacher of Sigmund Freud, Theodor Meynert, argued "that identical cortical states underlay bodily and mental pains."³⁰ However, mainstream pain theory did not converge with these ideas until relatively recently. Researchers now recognize emotional pain as a

were affecting Dickens at this stage in his life. See Slater 491-495. See also Harry Stone, "Fire, Hand, and Gate: Dickens's *Great Expectations*," *The Kenyon Review* 24.1 (1962): 663.

²⁹ Matus 3.

³⁰ Wilhelm Griesinger, *Mental Pathology and Therapeutics*, trans. C. Lockhart Robertson and James Rutherford (1845; New York: William Wood, 1882) 27. Andrew Hodgkiss, *From Lesion to Metaphor: Chronic Pain in British, French and German Medical Writings, 1800-1914* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000) 162.

“viable form of nonphysical pain.”³¹ Psychologists Geoff MacDonald and Mark Leary specifically define “social pain” as the “emotional reaction to the perception that one is being excluded from desired relationships or devalued by desired relationship partners or groups” – something Pip certainly feels – and, further, that social pain also includes “affective states such as embarrassment, shame, guilt, or jealousy [because they] can also serve as signs that one is not living up to the standards of valued others.”³² Pip demonstrates many of these emotional states in the hours, days, weeks, and years after meeting Estella and Miss Havisham, two of the most pain-inducing figures in his world. Recent studies in affective neuroscience demonstrate that these various facets of pain share “neural substrates,” thus proving that human responses to grief, rejection, and social disappointments are not *like* pain; they *are* pain.³³

This system of emotional-physical pain is captured in Pip’s memory narrative. In fact, Pip’s narrative choices reflect what current researchers found in recent studies of pain memory: individuals “can accurately recall both their physical-pain experiences and their social-pain experiences,” but only “social pain, [...] not physical pain, can be

³¹ MacDonald and Leary 203.

³² *Ibid.*, 202.

³³ Psychologist Naomi Eisenberger reports that physical and emotional pain “share[] opioid-related activity” and structures like the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex, or dACC, which plays a central role in the “unpleasant” feelings associated with pain. See Naomi Eisenberger, “Broken Hearts and Broken Bones: A Neural Perspective on the Similarities between Social and Physical Pain,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 21.1 (2012): 43.

relieved.”³⁴ This may mean that the implications of the various subcategories of emotional pain are more threatening to individuals over time, and that individuals fear loss, rejection, and betrayal more than temporary physical pain, as long as that physical pain stimulus has been removed. Reading Pip’s story from this perspective emphasizes the pain-inflicting relationships with Estella and Miss Havisham, who pose the greatest danger to Pip’s developing self, and de-emphasizes the effects of characters that readers might expect to be central to a young man’s pain education, such as young Herbert, whom Pip fights as a boy, and Orlick, who physically tortures Pip in the third volume.

Young Pip begins the novel as a “central, but passive, protagonist who encounters the powerful, but distorted minor character.”³⁵ Meeting Miss Havisham and Estella changes the course of Pip’s life. Narrating Pip remembers, just before his victimization at Satis House begins, having heard Miss Havisham tell Estella, “You can break his heart,” but young, naïve Pip cannot believe or understand the statement.³⁶ Pip’s heart symbolically encompasses his physiological well-being as well as his emotional state. Although Kirstie Blair has argued that the “heart was on the verge of becoming a dead cliché” in the Victorian era, as medical research focused on the nervous system rather than the heart “as the central agent within the body,” Pip’s story defends the heart as a meaningful and evolving reference: as they grow older, Pip will suffer heartache, Estella

³⁴ Zhansheng Chen, Kipling D. Williams, Julie Fitness, and Nicole C. Newton, “When Hurt Will Not Heal: Exploring the Capacity to Relive Social and Physical Pain,” *Psychological Science* 19.8 (2008): 790.

³⁵ Woloch 35.

³⁶ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 60.

will think that she is heartless, and Miss Havisham will confess that she sacrificed her heart for love.³⁷ The heart also functions synecdochally, focusing as so many of Dickens's characterizations do, on the fragment to represent the whole.³⁸ Thus, a threat to the fragment, the heart, represents a threat to the whole, Pip's self, and readers' sympathy for the heart should extend to Pip. To reflect his endangered self in retrospect, Pip recounts his relationships with these women by fusing physical and emotional pains together, capitalizing on the connection of these two facets of suffering contained within the symbolic heart.

Too young just yet to know with certainty that Estella and Miss Havisham target his heart, the very core of his developing self, in this first meeting, Pip does nevertheless feel a confusing blend of pain and powerlessness: "I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry – I cannot hit upon the right name for the smart – God knows what its name was – that tears started in my eyes."³⁹ Pip immediately appears destined to become the type of "self-lacerating individual" that John Kucich locates in "middle-class fiction" as "the moral center of middle-class culture."⁴⁰ He reacts by inflicting physical pain upon himself: "As I cried, I kicked the wall, and took a hard twist at my hair; so

³⁷ Kirstie Blair, *Victorian Poetry and the Culture of the Heart* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006) 11.

³⁸ For interpretations of synecdoche in Dickens's works, see Elana Gomel, "The Body of Parts: Dickens and the Poetics of Synecdoche," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 26.1 (1996): 48-74. And John R. Reed, "The Gentleman in the White Waistcoat: Dickens and Metonymy," *Style* 39.4 (2005): 412-426.

³⁹ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 62.

⁴⁰ Kucich 11.

bitter were my feelings, and so sharp was the smart without a name, that needed counteraction.”⁴¹ As he has not yet achieved narrative authority, young Pip can only turn his frustration at this undefined “injustice,” violently, inward; rather than asserting control over others, he hurts himself and forever ties this memory of Estella with his own mentally and bodily pain.⁴²

By contrast, Pip’s narration of his first physical fight as a boy, with the “pale young gentleman” at Satis House, leaves little emotional or physical impression, and Pip, though the victor, feels “but a gloomy satisfaction.”⁴³ Readers might expect this to be a pivotal scene of pain education, as Terry Brady’s first fight is in Russell’s *Bildungsroman*, but Pip is humorously detached from both the energetic young fighter and his own actions in the altercation, although their encounter is bruising and bloody. The chapter ends not with older Pip’s commentary on his first fight or his injuries, but rather on Estella’s invitation for Pip to kiss her cheek.

His “injured feelings” over Estella anger Pip, inspire episodes of physical self-injury, and highlight the very idea that feelings can be hurt at all. MacDonald and Leary cite the term “hurt feelings,” which they define as the “emotion that accompanies perceived relational devaluation by other people,” as linguistic proof that emotional and physical pains are experienced and expressed in psychologically similar ways.⁴⁴ Even

⁴¹ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 63.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 91-92.

⁴⁴ MacDonald and Leary 206. MacDonald and Leary found this to be the case in over a dozen diverse languages.

after years of apprenticeship in Joe's forge and distance from Estella, Pip becomes upset with himself when he admits to Biddy that he is anxious to become a gentleman for Estella's sake. He punishes himself, again, physically, for his emotional attachment and confusion: "[I] got a good grasp on the hair on each side of my head, and wrenched it well. All the while knowing the madness of my heart to be so very mad and misplaced, that I was quite conscious it would have served my face right, if I had lifted it up by my hair, and knocked against the pebbles as punishment for belonging to such an idiot."⁴⁵ This does, as Kucich argues, suggest that "individuals are redeemed by suffering," implying that Pip must suffer to win his love and he must suffer to escape the working class, though neither occurs as Pip expects.⁴⁶

Young Pip's reaction to Estella, if he were emotionally healthy, should be to remove the source of pain from his life. But his emotional pain regarding Estella is tempered by what he believes to be his acceptance by Miss Havisham and his future place at Satis House. However false, Pip's sense of security and inclusion prevents him from feeling social pain on the scale he should. He feels rejected at the moment by Estella's coldness, but he simultaneously, and incorrectly, believes he enjoys the long-term approval of "valued others" like Miss Havisham.⁴⁷ At this point in his education, Pip is in danger of forming an entirely incorrect sense of self because he trusts that he and Estella will build a relationship and future. The "torture" Estella inflicts upon him and

⁴⁵ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 129.

⁴⁶ Kucich 11.

⁴⁷ MacDonald and Leary 202.

Pip's sense that she is "inseparable from all my restlessness and disquiet of mind" reveal the physical and emotional force with which Estella dominates Pip's search for his own identity and authority.⁴⁸ However, despite his foolishness, young Pip continues to enjoy the sympathy of readers, in part because he occasionally reminds them of their own imperfections. As he explains even after he knows Estella is marrying Drummle but he deliberately avoids news of the event: "Why I hoarded up this last wretched little rag of the robe of hope that was rent and given to the winds, how do I know! Why did you who read this, commit that not dissimilar inconsistency of your own last year, last month, last week?"⁴⁹ Again, Pip appeals to readers, with their own internal emotional processes, to relate to his, and, by extension, to sympathize with his whole narrative vision.

Despite their differences in setting and Estella's marital status, both the novel's original and published endings have something in common: Estella has developed a feeling heart because she too has suffered.⁵⁰ Her suffering occurs offstage, later than Pip's, and comes at the hands of an abusive husband. Readers need only consider various clues to Drummle's personality – that Jaggers both likes and warns Pip about him, that Jaggers and Wemmick recognize him as the type that "either beats or cringes," that he was killed after mistreating a horse – to appreciate the sadistic bullying Estella must have

⁴⁸ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 300, 272.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 381-382.

⁵⁰ For an analysis of Dickens's revision of an unhappy ending to an unclear ending, see Jerome Meckier, "Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*: A Defense of the Second Ending," *Studies in the Novel* (1993): 28-58.

endured and the very different narrative of pain memory she would tell.⁵¹ In both cases, the two figures, whose identities and origins are linked throughout the novel, must suffer their own painful, isolated storylines to become their most sympathetic, strongest selves. Without pain, Pip would remain timid, hurting himself in frustration, and Estella would remain cold.

But pain and suffering do not convert every character into a sympathetic, kind figure. Compeyson, the villainous criminal responsible for Miss Havisham's and Magwitch's pain, remains cruel and heartless until the end. Miss Havisham, likewise, does not become sympathetic after suffering heartbreak as a young woman. She is bitter and selfish, living in a house "that made the forward movement of plot impossible" for decades before she claims to regret Pip's misery.⁵² Unbeknownst to young Pip, Miss Havisham serves as a model of what he may become if he allows himself to be emotionally and physically defined and destroyed by Estella. As *The Athenaeum* review insists, some readers may think that "Miss Havisham's strange mad life is overdrawn [...] but such have not been conversant with the freaks and eccentricities which a haughty spirit in agony can assume [...]."⁵³ Pip has already demonstrated his emotional sensitivity, and, therefore, his potential future as a "haughty spirit in agony." By the moment of their final conversation, Pip's knowledge of his patron's true identity lends him a calm strength and resigned sympathy because Miss Havisham no longer has power

⁵¹ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 390, 482.

⁵² Brooks, "Repetition," 508.

⁵³ Rev. of *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens, *The Athenaeum* 13 Jul. 1861: 45.

over him. In fact, Pip chooses to follow Magwitch's example of kindness and perseverance rather than Miss Havisham's path of bitterness and manipulation. Even as their relationship comes to an end, Miss Havisham's formerly threatening position in his young life remains locked in Pip's memory, connecting what older Pip knows is an emotional farewell to an experience of serious bodily injury.

When Pip sees Miss Havisham engulfed in flames, his narrating self captures the sense of action amidst chaos by using a litany of *that*'s. This is Pip's reconstruction of an urgent moment that was not clear to him as it occurred: "That I got [the coats] off [and] threw her down [. . .]; that I dragged the great cloth [...] that we were on the ground struggling like desperate enemies, and that the closer I covered her the more wildly she shrieked and tried to free herself, that this occurred I knew through the result, but not through anything I felt, or thought, or knew I did."⁵⁴ Some critics read this aggressive physical response and detached narration as "symbolic revenge" upon Miss Havisham, and possibly women in general.⁵⁵ But there is more evidence throughout the novel that Pip is not cruel, and that given an opportunity, he will assist those in need regardless of class or status. Pip's act can be construed as immediate and selfless, demonstrating more sympathy than Miss Havisham has shown. By disregarding his own risk of physical pain, Pip again proves himself capable of placing the welfare of others before his own despite the emotional abuse perpetrated by Miss Havisham and Estella for so many years. And, although Pip's injuries are once again self-inflicted because he voluntarily throws his

⁵⁴ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 402.

⁵⁵ Curt Hartog, "The Rape of Miss Havisham," *Studies in the Novel* 14.3 (1982): 259.

own arms into the fire, he is not hurting himself out of frustration, as he did in earlier scenes with Estella. Rather, he asserts his agency in this confusing scene, acting in a room where he used to be paralyzed with deference and fear.

Pip's apparent episodic analgesia suggests that the complex matrix of psychological factors affecting Pip, particularly those pertaining to Miss Havisham's former power over his sense of self, may be temporarily affecting his sensitivity to physical pain: "When I got up, on the surgeon's coming to her with other aid, I was astonished to see that both my hands were burnt; for, I had no knowledge of it through the sense of feeling."⁵⁶ The absence of pain is only temporary: at this moment Pip is physically strong enough to intervene on Miss Havisham's behalf, but the pain of the burns he sustains, like the emotional effects of Miss Havisham's position in his young life, will follow Pip into the next stage of his development and memory. At first, the following chapter finds Pip "a good deal burned" and in a "very painful" condition, but he reels from remembered impressions of "the glare of the flames, their hurry and noise, and the fierce burning smell," of the incident at Satis House, and he becomes convinced that the "pain of the mind was much harder to strive against than any bodily pain I suffered [...]."⁵⁷ Miss Havisham's emotional effect on Pip is so profound that it preoccupies him and takes precedence in his pain memory even when compared to the simultaneous, excruciating physical pain of his burns.

⁵⁶ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 402. For more on episodic analgesia, see Melzack and Wall 7-8 and Chapter 3 of this study.

⁵⁷ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 404.

Again, Pip's selective pain memory upsets readers' expectations in the comparatively quick treatment of a torture scene perpetrated by Orlick against Pip. It is, surprisingly, not a central episode in his pain narrative. Although Pip's already damaged arms, still hurting from his recent scene with Miss Havisham, cause him "exquisite pain," and Orlick's believable threat against Pip's life scares him, older Pip's brief and easily resolved narration of the dangerous experience is further proof that Pip's physical pain memories are subordinate to his emotional suffering. Orlick's attack remains secondary to Pip's anxiety over Magwitch's safety, anticipating recent psychological studies showing that individuals dread the threat of future social pain more than that of physical pain once the physical pain stimulus has been removed.⁵⁸ Orlick is a viable threat throughout the novel, but older, narrating Pip does not attach a long-term physical and emotional effect to this encounter, and the scene presents a memory of torture rather than a time-sensitive exposé of torture that may be rectified in an analogous, real-life political scenario. Orlick does not torment Pip for information, but rather to boast about his own knowledge regarding Pip's experiences, hopes, injuries, and fears: "Old Orlick knowed you was burnt, Old Orlick knowed you was a smuggling your uncle Provis away, Old Orlick's a match for you [. . .]."⁵⁹ Adding to many scholars' sense that Orlick represents

⁵⁸ Ibid., 423. See Zhansheng Chen and Kipling D. Williams, "Imagined Future Social Pain Hurts More Now than Imagined Future Physical Pain," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 42 (2012): 314-317.

⁵⁹ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 428.

Pip's own dark side, Orlick brags about the very commodity that must become Pip's goal if he is to achieve social and narrative authority: knowledge.⁶⁰

Pip's Progress, Part Three: Detective Pip and the Case of Estella's Parents

The only event jarring enough to upset Pip's pattern of victimization and weakness in an environment populated by dominant characters from Estella and Miss Havisham to Orlick and Jaggers is the arrival of Magwitch at the end of the novel's second volume. One reviewer's claim, that there "is nothing in English fiction [. . .] fuller of engrossing and legitimate terror than the night scene of the convict's return [. . .]," indicates that this scene is pivotal for Pip and readers alike.⁶¹ In what amounts to the ultimate return of the criminal underworld to Pip's consciousness, Magwitch, alias Provis, provides the startling revelation that he has been Pip's secret benefactor, thereby forcing Pip, or freeing him in Peter Brooks's reading, to become the agent of his own life and the narrator of his own story.⁶² George Levine's attention to "the interaction of narrative and epistemology" can be usefully adapted to analyze *Great Expectations*; in *Dying to Know*, Levine argues that nineteenth-century characters, authors, and scientists,

⁶⁰ For more on Orlick as Pip's darker self, see William A. Cohen, "Manual Conduct in *Great Expectations*," *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Great Expectations*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 2000) 72. See also Buckley 55, Stone 660, and Jerome Meckier, *Dickens's Great Expectations: Misnar's Pavilion versus Cinderella* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002) 170-172.

⁶¹ Rev. of *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens, *The Athenaeum* 13 Jul. 1861: 44.

⁶² See Brooks, "Repetition," 510.

engaged in self-denial and even self-destruction in their pursuit of “truth.”⁶³ And Pip deliberately *suffers* to know. His narrative is intimately bound with both pain and knowledge. By accurately reading signs of pain in others and by placing the truth of the case above his own emotional and physical comfort, Pip earns a new position and decisively joins the authoritative, non-criminal company of those, like authors as well as law enforcement authorities, who reserve the right to “fill[] in the blanks of a broken story.”⁶⁴

Becoming a detective figure means Pip will attempt to gain authority by “explain[ing] an event that seems to be inexplicable to everyone else.”⁶⁵ In his analysis of Inspector Bucket, an important character in Dickens’s *Bleak House* (1852-1853) and the first fictional English detective, Peter Thoms identifies a “narrow track of blood” that inspires Bucket’s detection narrative as he solves the murder of Tulkinghorn.⁶⁶ Likewise, Pip tracks a case about blood, although for him it is about Estella’s biological origins. Social pain, confusion, and the urgency to understand and move forward with his own narrative cause Pip to become “hot on tracing out and proving Estella’s parentage,” and he is “seized with a feverish conviction” to “hunt the matter down [...] and come at the

⁶³ George Levine, *Dying to Know: Scientific Epistemology and Narrative in Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 8.

⁶⁴ Ronald R. Thomas, *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) 4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁶ Thoms 73.

bare truth.”⁶⁷ No one else in the novel, however powerful, knows the whole truth of Estella’s case, so Pip’s quest allows him to create a new authoritative position among the same set of characters that had formerly manipulated him, and he takes on the challenge as if his life depends on it. In fact, his life story does. To succeed, he must forget his expectations of Estella, leave his potential as a criminal in the past, and embrace the path of detective authority.

Characters who formerly guided or bullied young Pip become informants for Detective Pip. The identity of Molly, Jaggers’s housekeeper, is a key piece of evidence in Pip’s case, but he depends upon Wemmick’s “preparation” to pay attention to her.⁶⁸ Like Pip’s glances at the hanged men’s face casts and the interior spaces of Newgate, Pip’s first look at Molly is significant, but young Pip does not yet know how: he merely watches as Jaggers forces Molly to display her powerful, “disfigured – deeply seamed and scarred” wrist.⁶⁹ After he takes on the detective role, Pip’s second look at Molly more accurately reads her scars and significance, over twenty chapters later, when “a certain action of her fingers arrested [Pip’s] attention,” and he realizes, but does not yet tell others, that she is Estella’s biological mother.⁷⁰ This moment, as Brooks notes, is a triumph of “Pip as detective”; he finally displays what Ronald Thomas calls the

⁶⁷ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 408.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 390.

“remarkable powers of vision” associated with detective figures.⁷¹ But it also connects the memory of pain, in this case Molly’s, captured in her scarred wrists and distinctive mannerisms, to Pip’s knowledge and Estella’s body.

Pip’s own suffering will help his investigation as well. After his final, fiery encounter with Miss Havisham, Pip’s burned arms require careful medical attention, mark him as an injured man, and ensure that the remainder of his pain-memory narrative will forever associate physical pain with his difficult, if improving, psychological journey. When Herbert, formerly the pale young gentleman of the boyhood fight at Satis House and now Pip’s occasional assistant, changes the bandages covering Pip’s sensitive, burned skin while sharing fresh clues, Pip’s active decision to suffer in order to know the truth of the case becomes much clearer. Herbert’s careful solicitation of Pip’s comfort and well-being, though spoken explicitly about the physical wounds, is applicable to Pip’s emotional investigation of the Molly-Magwitch-Estella story as well. Italicizing references to physical pain highlights how they are embedded in this conversation about learning the truth. Herbert begins the dialogue with references to Pip’s bandages and information about the case:

“It seems [...] – *there’s a bandage off most charmingly, and now comes the cool one – makes you shrink at first, my poor dear fellow, don’t it? but it will be comfortable presently* – it seems that the woman was a young woman, and a jealous woman, and a revengeful woman; revengeful [...] to the last degree.”

“To what last degree?”

“Murder. – *Does it strike too cold on that sensitive place?*”

“*I don’t feel it.* How did she murder? Whom did she murder?”

“[...] Mr. Jaggers defended her, and the reputation of that defence first made his name known to Provis [...].”

“Was the woman brought in guilty?”

“No; she was acquitted. – *My poor Handel, I hurt you!*”

⁷¹ Brooks, “Repetition,” 517. Thomas 114.

“It is impossible to be gentler, Herbert. Yes? What else?”

“This acquitted young woman and Provis [...] had a little child: a little child of whom Provis was exceedingly fond [...] the young woman presented herself before Provis for one moment, and swore that she would destroy the child (which was in her possession), and he should never see it again; then, she vanished. – There’s the worst arm comfortably in the sling once more, and now there remains but the right hand, which is a far easier job. I can do it better by this light than by a stronger, for my hand is steadiest when I don’t see the poor blistered patches too distinctly. – You don’t think your breathing is affected, my dear boy? You seem to breathe quickly.”

“Perhaps I do, Herbert. Did the woman keep her oath?”

“There comes the darkest part of Provis’s life. She did.”

“That is, he says she did.”⁷²

Pip’s knowledge is intertwined with and builds alongside his physical pain.

Although Herbert can hardly bear to see the wounds he is working on, Pip’s responses demonstrate his eagerness to learn about Magwitch’s past rather than a reaction to Herbert’s dressing of his wounds. In his penultimate line, Pip admits, perhaps, to breathing more quickly, but it is more likely a response to his sense that facts of the case are becoming clearer, as Pip begins to see the implications of Herbert’s information, than a reaction to physical pain stimuli alone. Pip consciously faces the pain, he is willing to suffer to know, and, as Levine describes, as a result of this and his other trials, he is one of Dickens’s characters whose “selfishness [is] burned away.”⁷³ Like Wemmick, Herbert provides useful clues but only Pip can piece together the full narrative. Pip’s knowledge of the case soon outstrips even Jaggers’s understanding of the mystery, providing one of many role reversals throughout Pip’s *Bildung*.

⁷² Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 405-406. Emphasis mine.

⁷³ Levine, *Dying*, 169.

In his final and most profound second-look reassessment of clues, Pip belatedly acknowledges Magwitch as an appropriate and fortuitous father figure for him, emotionally if not socially. Pip becomes aware of his active devotion to Magwitch after the convict sustains “some very severe injury in the chest and a deep cut in the head” from going overboard with Compeyson: “my repugnance to him had all but melted away, and in the hunted wounded shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously, towards me with great constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe.”⁷⁴ Although Pip displays a sullen underestimation of both Magwitch and Joe throughout his narrative, the very first contact between young Pip and Magwitch belies the notion that Pip was ever truly capable of cruelty. In fact, Pip endangers himself, brushing even nearer to the criminal world, by breaking the law twice for Magwitch: stealing food and the file for him as a child and attempting to smuggle him out of the country, and away from a death sentence, as a young man. Pip’s newfound authority allows him to retain Jaggers’s services on Magwitch’s behalf, to represent Magwitch’s interest in court, and to walk into the Old Bailey and witness the convict’s sentence of death. Pip’s anxiety over Magwitch’s legal status and physical condition cause him “unreasonable restlessness and pain of mind,” but, significantly, Pip remains strong and remembers having experienced this episode as

⁷⁴ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 445-446.

an adult rather than a child.⁷⁵ He maintains his physical well-being, does not record memories of physical pain or torture, and does everything he can to support Magwitch. In fact, on Magwitch's deathbed in the prison infirmary, Pip gives Magwitch the two most important keys to his own education: sympathy and knowledge.

Intense illness toward the end of the novel's third volume renders Pip temporarily unable to function at his recently attained level of adulthood, in a world in which Estella is married, and Miss Havisham and Magwitch are gone. Jill Matus argues that these brain fevers, not uncommon in nineteenth-century fiction, "*imply* emotional or psychological rather than purely physiological causes for the imperiled condition."⁷⁶ But in Pip's case, the pattern of emotional-physical pain is so well-established throughout the narrative that readers will readily connect mental and bodily causes, as he lies in his rooms "with a heavy head and aching limbs, and no purpose and no power" while his nights are filled with "anxiety and horror."⁷⁷ His illness blurs the distinction between Pip's psychology and physiology once more, but, unlike Miss Havisham's "bad illness" following her betrayal years earlier, Pip's is a brief setback, not a permanent refusal, like Miss Havisham's, to move on with the plot of his life.⁷⁸ The inherently self-reflexive nature of both the *Bildungsroman* and the detective plot prove that older, narrating Pip will be the

⁷⁵ Ibid., 458.

⁷⁶ Matus 6. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁷ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 461.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 182.

author of his own story. He leaves his *Bildungsroman*, scarred but wiser, a psychologically realistic character. Pain is essential to Pip's process.

In fact, pain is necessary to all of the varied discourses explored in this project. The representations of physical pain in Gaskell's, Reade's, Russell's, and Dickens's texts create entirely different realisms: all of them can claim to communicate some truth about pain. Each demonstrates an awareness of audience and sensitivity to political climate, using greater graphic detail when an issue is still hidden from or ignored by the public, and striking a more understated tone to inspire readers' understanding when an exposé is not necessary. On interpersonal and institutional levels, injustice haunts all of their protagonists, who fight back in various ways. By so often associating pain with injustice, these works contribute to a growing cultural consensus, rooted in turn-of-the-nineteenth-century notions of sensibility and sympathy, that the pain of others is unacceptable and requires attention. But these narratives also share the common thread of Reade's paradox: whether brutal or subtle, these novels must feature fictionalized pain, dragging agony into the public sphere, in order to fight the real thing.

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