

# **The Police and the Periodical: Policing and Detection in Victorian Journalism and the Rise of Detective Fiction, c. 1840-1900**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the connections between the nineteenth century periodical press and the development of detective fiction, between approximately 1840 and 1900. It argues that these two Victorian developments were closely interrelated, and that each had significant impacts on the other which has hitherto gone underexplored in academic scholarship.

The thesis argues that the relationship between the police and the periodical press solidified in the mid-Victorian era, thanks to the simultaneous development of a nationwide system of policing as a result of the passage of the 1856 County and Borough Police Act and the abolition of the punitive ‘taxes on knowledge’ throughout the 1850s and early 1860s. This established a connection between the police and the periodical, and the police were critically examined in the periodical press for the remainder of the nineteenth century from various perspectives. This, the thesis argues, had a corresponding effect on various kinds of fiction, which began to utilise police officers in new ways – notably including as literary guides and protectors for authors wishing to explore growing urban centres in mid-Victorian cities which had been deemed ‘criminal’. ‘Detective fiction’ in the mid-Victorian era, therefore, was characterised by trust in the police officer to protect middle-class social and economic values.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century however, everything changed. The thesis explores how journalistic reporting of a corruption scandal in 1877, as well as the Fenian bombings and Whitechapel murders of the 1880s, contributed to significant changes in the detective genre. This was the construction of the image of the ‘bumbling bobby’, and the corresponding rise of the private or amateur detective, which ultimately led to the appearance of the character who epitomised the relationship between the police and the periodical – Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes.

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# Introduction

## Policing and Periodicals: Summary, Rationale and Context

### 1. Thesis Summary

This thesis explores the relationship between the evolution of detective fiction and the periodical and magazine presses across the mid-to-late nineteenth century, between c. 1840 and 1900. There are two distinct gaps in scholarship which it rectifies by approaching the genre from this perspective. Firstly, broad studies of generic development (especially those which look at such a loosely-defined genre as ‘detective fiction’)<sup>1</sup> mistakenly tend to be insular, and explore sporadically-published texts which are often insecurely connected through their shared aspects in order to present a viable literary chronology. By contrast, this study uses a more neo-historicist model to explore the genre through external literary influences which, it argues, circulated the detective genre and affected how it was constructed and developed. Secondly, and more specifically, the project argues that detective fiction is rarely explored in the context of its connections with historical crime, detection and law enforcement more generally. Despite the fact that the genre is naturally centred on these themes, it is rarely examined through its connections to actual police officers, detectives or crimes taking place around it.

To redress these gaps, this thesis explores journalistic representations of police officers, detectives, crimes and convictions to help build greater understanding of how the detective genre was connected to wider perceptions of actual law enforcement and crime. In 1856, the periodical press, liberated from the ‘taxes on knowledge’ in the 1850s and early 1860s, openly critiqued the new concept of nationwide policing and detection which had emerged.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Rzepka, *Detective Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), p. 9.

This established a close relationship between police and periodical which continued beyond the end of the nineteenth century, and which had a fundamental influence over the development of detective fiction across this period. The first chapter establishes this relationship, and examines it through the lens of various political labels which publications affixed to themselves after the abolition of the 'taxes on knowledge'.<sup>2</sup> The chapter identifies how these partisan differences affected the way that police officers and detectives were presented to the 'mass reading public'.<sup>3</sup> Broadly speaking, there was an overarching and observable difference between conservative and liberal criticisms of the police. As establishing the police had been a Tory policy, conservative publications tended to present a generally supportive attitude towards policing. They often suggested that the police were patriotic manifestations of the state's responsibility to protect middle-class social values such as family, property, wealth and commerce, though this was sometimes presented with the caveat that the force was required to justify its considerable expense by operating successfully. By contrast, politically and socially liberal, radical or otherwise progressive publications were more suspicious and presented a critical view of the police, often depicting them as oppressive, militaristic, incompetent and expensive. These two perspectives, argues the chapter, were connected in the fact that both viewpoints tended to place the police in a liminal position between criminality and the rest of society. This is a theme which reoccurs throughout the remainder of the different kinds of material which appeared in periodicals across the nineteenth century, and which will be examined closely in this project. Finally, this opening chapter examines non-partisan views of the police, and contrasts them with those of

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: The Nineteenth Century* (London: Fontana, 1990), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> 'Mass reading public': the use of this phrase stems from Richard Altick's 1957 monograph *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public*, where the term is used both in the title and repeatedly throughout the text.

a political nature to present a cross-section of the diverse attitudes towards the concept of law enforcement as it stood in the mid-1800s.

Chapter 2 highlights how this periodical commentary on law enforcement was almost completely separate from commentary on crime. This was due in part to crime journalism's historic roots, as the eighteenth and early nineteenth century saw the development of a variety of journalistic forms which exclusively engaged with criminality. These included cheap but popular execution broadsides and chap-books, prison-chaplains' records such as the *Ordinary of Newgate's Accounts*, and the first issues of the *Newgate Calendar*. These forms of writing, the chapter suggests, influenced later crime 'round-up' features published in periodicals and newspapers as the press developed across the mid-nineteenth century. It also highlights how the police became socially indistinct by their occupation of a rapidly-broadening social space between respectability and criminality, and that earlier forms of crime journalism had constructed an entrenched methodology of reporting on crime which left little room for the police officer's involvement in the narrative. This led to the police's almost complete absence from periodical crime reporting. The chapter then argues that historic forms of crime journalism were thematically connected through their desire to transport readers into often-inaccessible spaces and moments associated with the criminal justice system such as court-rooms, prisons, executions and the domestic scenes where crimes took place. This thematic interest was transposed into periodical crime journalism and crime 'round up' features, which had extensive ramifications for the development of detective fiction.

The third chapter details how 'police criticism' and 'crime journalism' meshed to create new literary forms in the mid-Victorian era, including the first body of fiction which was contemporarily described as 'detective literature'.<sup>4</sup> The chapter suggests that the police's

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<sup>4</sup> Samuel Saunders, 'To Pry Unnecessarily into Other Men's Secrets': Crime Writing, Private Spaces and the mid-Victorian Police Memoir', *Law, Crime and History*, 8, 1 (2018), 76-90 (p. 84).

social ‘marginalisation’, brought about by their required association with criminals, made them useful as guides and protectors for journalists performing ‘social exploration’ into criminal spaces. The chapter traces the use of the police officer in journalism interested in entering, exploring and revealing the criminal underworld which was seen to lurk beneath society’s visible surface.<sup>5</sup> This kind of writing had roots in earlier texts such as Pierce Egan’s *Life in London* (1821) or Charles Dickens’s *Sketches by Boz* (1833-36), but it became more common and complex in mid-nineteenth century periodicals as cities grew and knowledge of the police proliferated. Journalists began to accompany police officers on their duties, famously including Dickens, whose exploits alongside inspectors Charles Frederick Field (1805-1874) and Jonathan Whicher (1814-1881) were published in *Household Words* in 1850-51. The chapter then explores how ‘social exploration’ journalism using the police as a guide mutated into new forms of writing, including fiction. Unlike journalism, fictional narratives did not need to adhere to the restriction of presenting truthful recollections of criminality and could therefore be much more inventive in their approach, especially when performing targeted social criticism.<sup>6</sup> ‘Social exploration’ journalism using the police as a literary guide and protector thus influenced the appearance of ‘police memoir fiction’, texts marketed as ‘true’ recollections of (usually retired) police officers or detectives. This was the first genre which was contemporarily described by one author, the journalist William Russell, as ‘detective literature’, and this thesis uses this to cement its hitherto neglected place in the generally-accepted scholarly chronology of detective fiction’s evolution.

Chapter four highlights how the police officer’s useful quality as a literary guide, protector or invader into the criminal or private was transposed into other forms of mid-

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<sup>5</sup> Anthea Trodd, ‘The Policeman and the Lady: Significant Encounters in Mid-Victorian Fiction’, *Victorian Studies*, 24, 4 (1984), 435-460 (p. 437).

<sup>6</sup> Jessica Valdez, ‘Dickens’s ‘Pious Fraud’: The Popular Press and the Moral Suasion of Fictional Narrative’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 44, 4 (2011), 377-400 (p. 378).

Victorian fiction. This chapter focuses on popular ‘sensation fiction’, using characters such as Charles Dickens’s Inspector Bucket (1853), Wilkie Collins’s Sergeant Cuff (1868) or Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s Joseph Peters (1860) and Robert Audley (1862) to show how the police were used in a similar fashion to police memoirs to invade the privacy of others. In sensation fiction, the scene also shifted away from the criminal underworld of the city to the bourgeois domestic spaces of the middle or upper classes; however the literary purpose of the police officer in these narratives remained connected to their purpose in contemporaneously-published police memoirs. By highlighting how both police memoirs and sensation fiction used the police officer in comparable fashions, the chapter cements *both* genres’ positions in the evolution of the detective genre, and this is an important part of this project’s contribution to the scholarly debate surrounding the development of detective fiction.

The fifth chapter represents a turning point in the thesis’s narrative of the connection between periodical journalism and detective fiction. It examines how the various public opinions of the police, which had been turbulent but generally-accepting across the mid-Victorian era, took a turn for the worse as the age entered the 1870s.<sup>7</sup> A number of widely-publicised events, such as the Clerkenwell Prison bombing and the Hyde Park demonstrations, both in 1867, damaged public confidence in the police. In 1877 it reached its lowest point of the nineteenth century, as four detective inspectors and a solicitor were indicted on charges of corruption and collusion with convicted criminals. Three of the detectives were convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment, sparking an enormous response in the press concerning the state of British policing. The police suffered severe damage to its image as a result of the scandal (and its journalistic coverage), and this chapter traces these reactions and highlights the changes in perceptions of the police. These included

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<sup>7</sup> Clive Emsley, ‘A Typology of Nineteenth-Century Police’, *Crime, Histoire et Sociétés/Crime, History and Societies*, 3, 1 (1999), 29-44 (p. 30).

the perspective that the police were inefficient, corrupt and lazy, that the detective department had been too free from governmental scrutiny since its inception, and that the police's reputation may never recover. Additionally, the hitherto confused and inconsistent distinction between a uniformed police officer and a plain-clothes detective, which had characterised mid-century periodical criticism, was largely rectified. This would prove significant as the nineteenth century approached its end, and the literary landscape of detective fiction was to fundamentally change again.

Chapter six, the final chapter, continues the narrative begun by chapter five. It highlights how the police's damaged reputation caused by the events in 1877 persisted into the 1880s, as a series of scandals such as the Fenian bombing campaign and the 1888 Whitechapel murders prevented the police from recovering their reputation. The chapter highlights how the changed perception of the police, from social protectors to inefficient blunderers, affected the way they were represented in fiction. The police were no longer seen as trusted guides into criminal or inaccessible spaces, and thus the reign of the police memoir as a standard incarnation of 'detective literature', which was built on continued public trust in the police, ended. The *private* detective subsequently came to dominate 1880s detective fiction, with official police officers now depicted as incompetent, bumbling and foolish. Often, private detectives were shown to take on cases that the police had failed to solve, and they had a much greater degree of success. The chapter ends by connecting this discussion to the meteoric rise of the most famous private detective of all, Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes', who appeared towards the end of the 1880s and who epitomised the underexplored connection between periodicals and detective fiction which this thesis reveals. The final sections of the thesis examine how Holmes and Inspector Lestrade fit into the narrative of the effective private detective and the incompetent, bumbling police officer, especially after the character appeared in the pages of the pioneering *Strand Magazine*.

## 2. Context, and Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks

This outline of the thesis highlights the strengths of this project's approach by exploring a literary genre through its journalistic contexts. However, it also raises a number of methodological and theoretical issues and aspects which must be addressed before close textual analysis can begin.

As this study purports to explore the evolution of a literary genre by exploring *other* forms of literary production which appeared around and alongside it, this study quite naturally situates itself in and amongst both new historicist and (to a lesser extent) cultural materialist schools of thought. This is evident from several different perspectives. Firstly, and perhaps most broadly, the project subscribes to the idea that there is a complicated relationship between literature, society and history. Stephen Greenblatt, famous as one of the originators of new historicism, succinctly summarises this idea as:

[...] [t]he work of art is itself the product of a set of manipulations, some of them our own [and] many others undertaken in the construction of the original work. That is, the work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society.<sup>8</sup>

Put more simply, John Brannigan correctly argues in *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (1998) that 'new historicist and cultural materialist critics [...] break down the simplistic distinction between literature and history and open up a complex dialogue between them'.<sup>9</sup> In 2000, Greenblatt, alongside Catherine Gallagher, revisited new historicism and argued that their original intention

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 'Towards a Poetics of Culture', in *The New Historicism*, ed. by Harold A. Veenser (Oxon: Routledge, 1989), p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> John Brannigan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 3.

is not to aestheticize an entire culture, but to locate inventive energies more deeply interfused within it. [and] to imagine that the writers we love did not spring up from nowhere and that their achievements must draw upon a whole life-world and that this life-world has undoubtedly left other traces of itself.<sup>10</sup>

This project uses this mantra to present a complicated and hitherto under-examined connection between detective fiction and the development of both nationwide policing and periodical journalism. It subscribes to Gallagher and Greenblatt's assertions that '[it is] crucially important to [...] to delve as deeply as possible into the creative matrices of particular historical cultures' and that 'the relative positions of text and context often shift, so what has been the mere background makes a claim for the attention that has hitherto been given only to the foregrounded and privileged work of art [...]'.<sup>11</sup> Or, in short, this project deliberately uses 'literary texts as equal sources with other texts in the attempt to describe and examine the linguistic, cultural, social and political fabric of the past in greater detail'.<sup>12</sup>

From a cultural materialist perspective which focuses on the ideological tensions contained *within* cultural artistic products,<sup>13</sup> this project rejects contemporary assertions regarding the canonicity of specific examples of 'detective fiction', and chooses to focus on understudied texts through their connections to non-literary paratextual material. It also analyses institutions of state power such as the police or criminal justice system in relation to how they were ideologically presented to the public. This was itself an act with its own ideological intentions and the project explores how forms of cultural production surrounding the police were affected by wider political motivations. Events such as the 1877 'Great

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<sup>10</sup> Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 12-13.

<sup>11</sup> Gallagher and Greenblatt, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Brannigan, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> Brannigan, p. 12.

Detective Case' were presented to the reading public through periodical journalism which often had its *own* agenda and which directly helped to shape public opinion as a result. These agendas, as the project argues, were transposed into *fictional* representations of the police.

However, it is important to clarify that the project does not use a concrete or linear 'history' (or set of histories) made of up that which Brannigan terms 'secure knowledge' to explore the development of detective fiction. Rather, it explores how that history was both constructed and presented to the contemporary public through *other* forms of material production – periodicals, magazines, newspapers and other literary forms.<sup>14</sup> The histories these forms of writing presented to their readers were, again, affected by their own politics and perspectives, and as Brannigan also correctly suggests:

[...] [New historicists and cultural materialists] refuse to see literary texts against an overriding background of history or to see history as a set of facts outside the written text  
[...] history is not objective knowledge which can be made to explain a literary text.<sup>15</sup>

As such, this project broadly aligns itself with some of the key tenets of these theoretical fields. In the introduction to his 1989 edited volume *The New Historicism* (1989), Harold A. Veenser argues that, among other things, the characterising features of new historicism is that 'every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices', secondly that 'literary and non-literary "texts" circulate inseparably', and finally that '[t]he New Historicists combat empty formalism by pulling historical considerations to the center [sic] stage of literary analysis'.<sup>16</sup> Veenser's idea that artistic productions are always placed within a wider network of material practices is a central concept to this study, as it argues that the detective genre was itself created and nurtured by the material practices of growing periodical journalism and the

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<sup>14</sup> Brannigan, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Brannigan, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Harold A. Veenser, 'Introduction', in *The New Historicism*, ed. by Harold A. Veenser (Oxon: Routledge, 1989), p. xi.

corresponding production of non-fiction explorations into policing, detection and crime. Naturally, therefore, the project agrees with Veeser's statement that both literary and non-literary texts constantly orbit each other, and the project demonstrates this by connecting non-fiction journalistic writing with the production of fiction and highlights how they circulated and affected each other's production. The project also shows this by actually linking different forms of *fiction* together which have retrospectively been subsequently labelled 'literary' and 'non-literary' by recent scholarly criticism. In short, this study performs Veeser's precise act of 'pulling historical considerations to the center [sic] stage of literary analysis', and is broadly an exploration into the impact of wider material and cultural practices such as the development of nationwide policing, changes to the criminal justice system, and (crucially) how these innovations were explored in a rapidly-changing periodical press.<sup>17</sup>

This discussion of where this thesis is situated in and amongst a critical or theoretical framework leads well into its first methodological issue which warrants discussion: a question of generic definition. 'Crime fiction' has historically been difficult to define, as scholars tend to arrive at their own conclusions as to exactly what constitutes the genre according to their individual purpose of study, or, indeed, the individual aspects of a particular text which the critic consciously chooses to look for. As such, both histories and definitions of the genre tend to look inwardly at texts' own textual features, rather than by situating them in a wider historical narrative or context. 'Detective fiction', 'crime fiction' 'mystery fiction' or 'police fiction' are all terms used to describe different iterations of the genre which give stronger focus to one or another aspect of the text, be it a 'detective', a 'crime' or a 'mystery'. Julian Symons claims that these sub-genres all constitute 'the same kind of literature', which he simply terms 'sensational literature':

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<sup>17</sup> Harold A. Veeser, 'Introduction', in *The New Historicism*, ed. by Veeser, p. xi.

The truth is that the detective story, along with the police story, the spy story and the thriller, all of them immensely popular in the past twenty years, makes up part of the hybrid creature we call sensational literature. [...] [H]owever unlike Sherlock Holmes and Philo Vance may be to Sam Spade and Superintendent Maigret, they all belong to the same kind of literature. [...] The tree is sensational literature, and these are among its fruits.<sup>18</sup>

Some have attempted to identify common features across different textual examples to help identify overarching connections between these sub-genres. Alma Murch argues that the common feature across different strands of the genre is a puzzling mystery: '[b]asically [...] a detective story [...] may be defined as a tale in which the primary interest lies in the methodical discovery, by rational means, of the exact circumstances of a mysterious event or series of events'.<sup>19</sup> Stephen Knight argues that there is 'always a crime (or very occasionally just the appearance of one)' and thus he opts for the broad term 'crime fiction'.<sup>20</sup>

There are, however, problems with these definitions in terms of this thesis. Murch's definition preoccupies itself with the presence and solution of a mystery, but whether or not a puzzle is resolved at the end of a text is not a concern for the fiction under study here. Similarly, Knight's definition is predicated on the presence of a crime in a text; however the presence of criminality in fiction is again not necessarily a prerequisite for inclusion in this project. These views tend to gravitate towards the famous, well-known and widely dispersed examples of the genre which make up much of the scholarly criticism on detective fiction. However, this thesis's approach does not select texts based on the presence of either a

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<sup>18</sup> Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972; repr. Basingstoke: Papermac, 1992), pp. 15-16.

<sup>19</sup> Alma Murch, *The Development of the Detective Novel* (London: Peter Owen, 1958; repr. 1968), p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. xii.

puzzling mystery or a crime, and selected texts are not ascribed value based on whether they meet these requirements.

Charles Rzepka brings us slightly closer to a useful way of defining the genre, by claiming that it is ‘any story that contains a major character undertaking the investigation of a mysterious crime or similar transgression [...]’.<sup>21</sup> This focus on the presence of a ‘detective’ character is a useful definition for Rzepka’s specific purpose of identifying examples of ‘detective’ fiction. However, it is rather narrow. As Rzepka himself admits, not all ‘detective fiction’ necessarily contains a crime, and similarly not all ‘crime fiction’ necessarily contains a detective.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, ‘mystery’ fiction, an archetypal category purported by John G. Cawelti,<sup>23</sup> need not contain either crime *or* detective.<sup>24</sup>

Rzepka’s definition also suffers another complication when one questions exactly what constitutes a literary ‘detective’. Must the detective figure in fiction necessarily be officially employed by the police? Or must they self-identify as a ‘detective’? True to the broad nature of this thesis, the answer here would be an unequivocal ‘no’, as several characters discussed here are neither official police detectives nor do they consider themselves to be ‘detectives’ even in an amateur sense. Nevertheless, Rzepka’s approach of focusing on the presence of significant literary characters as a way of identifying examples of the genre is a useful starting point. As this thesis explores representations of police officers or detectives in periodical journalism, it follows that it should look for the presence of the same police officers or detectives in periodical *fiction*. This thesis’s definition of the genre therefore combines both Rzepka and Knight’s approaches. It opts to use the term ‘detective fiction’, as

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<sup>21</sup> Rzepka, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> Rzepka, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> See John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

<sup>24</sup> Rzepka, p. 9.

the texts under study here loosely focus on the presence of characters in narratives which can be identified as ‘detectives’, in either official or amateur capacities. These characters attempt to elucidate the solution to a usually-present crime or mystery, which echoes Knight’s approach to generic definition. Thus, the methodological approach to identifying the genre here utilises the breadth of Knight’s categorisation alongside the specificity of Rzepka’s approach to the genre.

A second methodological problem this thesis faces stems from the nature of periodical studies itself, alongside how it has changed in recent years. Using periodicals as the primary resource for the study of a genre’s development engages with a unique and underexplored connection between literature and nineteenth-century society. As Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff correctly argue:

[The periodical press] is worth study in its own right because it represents and articulates, as nothing else does, what was ordinary about Victorian Britain, and we cannot understand Victorian Britain without understanding the ordinary [...] <sup>25</sup>

The convergence between periodicals and the everyday is fertile ground for exploration into the development of literary genre, and this helps demonstrate one of this thesis’s key claims to originality. Periodicals provide perhaps the closest indication of what everyday people were reading and discussing, and this phenomenon is almost exclusive to the nineteenth century. Before the early-to-mid nineteenth century, this was not the case simply due to a lack of diversity in the media market. Conversely, after the *fin-de-siècle*, new kinds of media began to supersede the periodical press as a reflector and shaper of public opinion, and the periodical press itself began to fragment exponentially. Thus, as Rosemary VanArsdel and J.

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<sup>25</sup> Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff, ‘Introduction’, in *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings*, ed. by Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp. xiii-xix (p. xiii).

Don Vann succinctly put it, '[n]ineteenth-century Britain was uniquely the age of the periodical'.<sup>26</sup> Periodicals and magazines were the forum in which Victorians both discussed pressing social issues and simultaneously received the bulk of their literary entertainment. In fact, as Michael Wolff argued in his landmark essay 'Charting the Golden Stream', a topic or social issue 'did not exist until it had registered itself in the press' and that a topic truly became prominent once a journal of its own study had been established.<sup>27</sup>

Despite their useful connection to the everyday, periodicals are an underutilised resource in the study of the development of literary genre, mainly due to the difficulty experienced by researchers using periodicals as their primary resource. Prior to the renaissance of 'periodical studies' in the last twenty years, embarking on a systematic study of the innumerable amount of periodicals which constituted the 'first of the mass media' was much more difficult than it is today.<sup>28</sup> Organised study of periodicals only earnestly began in the latter half of the twentieth century, notably with Walter E. Houghton's landmark compilation of the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* (1965-1988). However, even this substantial, five-volume endeavour only scratched the surface of potential material. Consequently, many studies of periodical or newspaper publications tended to focus on specific titles, authors or publications, and the larger, more famous titles attracted more sustained scrutiny than smaller ones. As Shattock and Wolff elegantly put it, '[...] the trees prevent[ed] us from seeing the forest.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Rosemary VanArsdel and J. Don Vann, 'Introduction', in *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*, ed. by Rosemary VanArsdel and J. Don Vann (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 3-8 (p. 7).

<sup>27</sup> Michael Wolff, 'Charting the Golden Stream: Thoughts on a Directory of Victorian Periodicals', *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 4, 3 (13) (1971), 23-38 (p. 26).

<sup>28</sup> Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff, 'Introduction', in *The Victorian Periodical Press*, ed. by Shattock and Wolff, p. xiii.

<sup>29</sup> Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff, 'Introduction', in *The Victorian Periodical Press*, ed. by Shattock and Wolff, p. xiii.

With the emergence of vast digital archives of periodical material, however, ‘periodical studies’ has progressed towards a rejection of the study of individual texts, authors and titles in favour of explorations which cast a wider net in order to identify patterns and trends. The creation of monumental, searchable repositories such as the *Gale Cengage 19<sup>th</sup> Century UK Periodicals* database, the *British Newspaper Archive*, or the even larger *ProQuest British Periodicals* database has enabled this approach to periodical study by making it much easier for scholars to access vast swathes of material.

This has generally been a positive development but has also raised a number of problems, the most significant of which is the opposite to that which Shattock and Wolff raise, in that we can perhaps no longer see the trees for the forest. Researchers are easily overwhelmed by the sheer amount of material available to them, which potentially leads to them finding it difficult to orientate themselves within an ocean of resources. They potentially lose the ability to distinguish between different titles, authors or publishers, and could miss important, useful or even critical material to their studies. Even in 1971, far before the creation of these databases, Michael Wolff identified this potential issue when he suggested that periodicals contain an enormous amount of diverse information which can go on forever:

‘There is something both overwhelming and overwhelmingly attractive about periodicals research. It is not just “that untravell’d world, whose margin fades for ever and for ever as I move.” It is that every new title investigated, almost every fresh page turned, is “[a] bringer of new things.”<sup>30</sup>

This is the most significant problem which this project must overcome, as it is grounded in the study of periodicals, and thus naturally studies as broad a cross-section of periodical material as possible. This aim raises a number of methodological questions. How is the

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<sup>30</sup> Wolff, pp. 23-38 (p. 24).

project to gauge the importance of different publications which are given an equal presence in large digitised repositories? How is it to ensure that all of the relevant (or, indeed, the *most* relevant) material has been identified and captured? How it to ensure that nothing vital is missed? And how is it to make an orderly sense of this vast amount of material, once it has been identified?

The answer to these questions lies within the final problem raised by the summary of the thesis. The period this project attempts to cover is significant, which means that the source material with which the project is concerned is broad. It addresses the years between c. 1840 and c. 1900, which constitutes almost all of the Victorian period. Throughout this era, society itself went through fundamental and permanent changes which make it impossible to characterise in simple or singular terms. Whilst this may seem like a difficulty, some of the larger and more significant changes and events which occurred throughout this era can quite helpfully provide ‘historic milestones’ around which journalistic material tended to cluster. This periodical material, in turn, helped to shape contemporaneously-published fiction, and so focusing on specific, galvanising events in this way becomes a useful methodology for the project to orientate itself. It also helps overcome both the problem of the project’s lengthy timescale, and additionally addresses the issue of the sourcing and analysis of periodical matter.

In terms of orienting searches for primary material (and making sense of it once it has been gathered), an understanding of these historical markers helps to identify specific subjects with which periodical material was engaging. As a result, search-strings inputted into large, digital repositories of material such as the *ProQuest British Periodicals* database or the *Gale Cengage Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals* database can be constructed using both key terms related to the individual historical event or milestone, and filters to narrow down relevant material. For example, when searching for material pertaining to the 1877 ‘turf

fraud' scandal, a combination of an advanced key-word search string such as ("detect\*") AND ("trial" OR "Drusco\*" OR "Meikle\*") and the use of filters to limit result hits to between April 1877 and September 1879 returns a manageable 631 results through which to explore.<sup>31</sup> This particular string's use of both wider concepts, such as the trial, but also the individual names of those involved in the case (in this case, detectives 'Druscovich' and 'Meiklejohn') also ensures that results which mention the case but potentially not those involved by name are also captured. The use of the wildcard asterisk (\*) in the search string also ensures that any variations on any of the words are captured. 'Detect\*' captures words such as 'detective', 'detection' or 'detected'. The use of the wildcard asterisk on the names of those involved (Inspectors Druscovich and Meiklejohn) ensure that the specific (and distinctive) names of the detectives indicted in the case are captured, but also allows for any potential spelling mistakes. 'Druscovich' was often misspelled 'Druscovitch' or 'Meiklejohn' miswritten 'Meiklejon', for example. This balance between specificity and breadth ensures that a healthy-sized dataset is captured in the first instance, before analysis of individual material can be performed.

It is also worth clarifying that this is one particular example of many different searches performed throughout the construction of this thesis, and that reference to the ways in which material was captured will be made at other stages throughout the remainder of the project. Where appropriate, the use of digital periodical material was augmented by explorations of physical periodical material. For example, the journalist and author William Russell, who wrote a great number of 'police memoirs' across the mid-Victorian era became a person of interest to this project after his work repeatedly appeared in searches of different online databases of periodical material. Much of this work appeared anonymously/pseudonymously on digital databases; however when cross-referenced with Allen J. Hubin's *Crime Fiction*

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<sup>31</sup> This search was conducted on the *ProQuest British Periodicals* database.

*1749-1980: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (1984), Russell emerges as the most prolific author of police memoirs in this era.<sup>32</sup> A significant amount of Russell's fiction appeared in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, and so this necessitated a visit to the National Library of Scotland which holds an archive of material retained from the offices of William Chambers. This provided extra material on Russell's relationships with his editors and the proprietors of the magazine as well information on how much he was paid, where he lived and precisely which pieces he contributed to the magazine (and *when* he contributed them).

This multifaceted approach to gathering source material means that the project itself is organised around a number of these different 'moments' which occurred throughout its period of study and which generate relevant source material to search for. These 'moments' are both cultural (such as the appearance of popular 'sensation fiction') and historic (again, such as the 1877 'turf fraud' scandal).

The first such historic milestone which can be used to orientate searches for primary material was the simultaneous abolition of the 'taxes on knowledge' and the passage of the 1856 County and Borough Police Act. These two events were intertwined with each other, and it is therefore necessary to provide a brief historical overview of the evolution of both periodical publishing and nationwide policing up to this moment, in order to contextualise their convergence and describe how they intersected. The remainder of the thesis then uses this background to explore how the relationship between periodical and police remained aligned across the rest of the nineteenth century, and how it affected the way that crime and detective fiction was constructed, published and received by an increasingly-literate readership.

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<sup>32</sup> Allen J. Hubin, *Crime Fiction 1749-1980: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984), p. 416. Hubin's reference book lists William Russell's work under his pseudonym 'Waters'.

In short, both developments were distinct facets of the overarching evolution which was taking place in early-nineteenth century Britain. The first Industrial Revolution had significantly contributed to the growth of new urban centres, had increased literacy rates among the growing professional working classes and had improved inter-city transportation links via canals, roads and railways. A secondary effect of this was the growth of a legitimate periodical press, which had been stifled by the punitive effects of the ‘taxes on knowledge’. These, however, were slowly repealed across the early-to-mid nineteenth century as society itself developed, urban centres significantly grew, public literacy rates increased and governmental fears of political radicalism diminished.

The development of a professional system of law enforcement was another facet of the same drastic evolution of nineteenth-century society. The new urban centres were sprawling, densely populated and difficult to control, and the establishment of the police was a reaction to this. Early police forces therefore largely focused on managing the growing cities, forming part of the march of professionalisation which came to characterise the early nineteenth century and the Industrial Revolution.<sup>33</sup> Thus, these two historical strands were interconnected, as the remainder of this introduction will explore more closely.

### **3. Historical Context I: The Repeal of the ‘Taxes on Knowledge’**

The ‘taxes on knowledge’ were pieces of Governmental legislation enacted to strangle the development of the cheap newspaper and periodical presses and to prevent the spread of what was perceived to be ‘political radicalism’.<sup>34</sup> The first tax was a charge on printing paper which appeared in 1712, and this began a long succession of punitive charges on publishing

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<sup>33</sup> Rosemary VanArsdel and J. Don Vann, ‘Introduction’, in *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*, ed. by VanArsdel and Don Vann, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1957), p. 321.

material that was not to end until the mid-Victorian era.<sup>35</sup> The stamps were imposed on three main areas: advertisements in newspapers, printing newspapers and a duty on printing paper,<sup>36</sup> and were placed on publications which carried informative or politically-oriented material and advertisements.

As Britain entered a new phase of industrialisation in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century the publishing industry began to grow, and as Patricia Anderson argues this was the first phase of a broad cultural transformation of the cultural experiences of ordinary working people.<sup>37</sup> During the Industrial Revolution, literacy rates increased, reading as a pastime increased in popularity and the first wave of the professionalisation of the working classes also meant that, for the first time, working people began to use their newly acquired reading and writing skills in professional capacities. Advances in printing technology also began to make reading material more accessible, and so the ability to read was no longer the domain of the bourgeoisie. By the middle of the nineteenth century, literacy had often become a precondition of employment.<sup>38</sup>

This spread of mass-literacy caused alarm in some political circles, which openly discouraged a 'mass-reading public' due to their fear that it would encourage political radicalism and would eventually incite outright revolution. Throughout the early nineteenth century, these dissenting discourses permeated both Parliament and the aristocracy,<sup>39</sup> though

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<sup>35</sup> Joel Wiener, 'Newspaper Taxes, Taxes on Knowledge, Stamp Taxes', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 454.

<sup>36</sup> Martin Hewitt, *The Dawn of the Cheap Press in Victorian Britain: The End of the 'Taxes on Knowledge', 1849-1869* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Patricia Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture: 1790-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> David Mitch, *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), p. 11.

<sup>39</sup> Stanley Harrison, *Poor Men's Guardians: A Survey of the Struggles for a Democratic Newspaper Press, 1763-1973* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), p. 54.

there was a contrasting political argument which suggested that mass public literacy *should* be developed as it would raise the general mental level and intelligence of the population as a whole. This, it suggested, would increase understanding of the dangers of radical and revolutionary politics and thus prevent them.<sup>40</sup>

This variety of voices created strong political tension surrounding the maintenance of the ‘taxes on knowledge’. Prominent political figures such as Henry Brougham (1778-1868)<sup>41</sup> as well as a number of periodical proprietors openly called for their abolition. In 1802, a petition was put before Parliament complaining about the effects that the ‘taxes’ were having on the publishing industry. In response, Parliament commissioned a report to explore its complaints.<sup>42</sup> This addressed four areas through examination of the booksellers’ complaints: the alleged decline in the trade of books, the apparent causes of this decline, suggested relief measures, and finally objections to these relief measures.<sup>43</sup> The report unanimously agreed that the ‘taxes on knowledge’ were to blame for a stranglehold on the bookselling and periodical publishing industry. Booksellers, publishers and engravers provided accounts of their lost business, and the report concluded that the duty on printing paper should be abolished.

Despite this, no charges were lifted, and publishers thus began to attempt to circumvent or negate their effects as far as possible.<sup>44</sup> Some decided to focus on monthly publication, which was cheaper than weekly or daily production and subject to less scrutiny (though publishers

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<sup>40</sup> Andrew King, *The London Journal: 1845-83* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), p. 23-24.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Lobban, ‘Brougham, Henry Peter’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3581>> [accessed 30 November 2015] (2008).

<sup>42</sup> William Young, *Report from the Committee on the Booksellers and Printers Petition*, <<https://parlipapers.proquest.com/parlipapers>> [accessed 25 November 2015] (1802), p. 164.

<sup>43</sup> Young, p. 164.

<sup>44</sup> Young, p. 167.

still avoided producing anything which could be considered ‘news’).<sup>45</sup> Other publications also began to print fiction by both professional and amateur writers in lieu of publishing material of an informative nature.<sup>46</sup>

The period 1810-1830 became even more challenging for the development of mass-market publishing.<sup>47</sup> Following a series of politically charged events, including the French Revolution in 1789, the Peninsular War (1807-1814), the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the Peterloo Massacre in 1819 and the Cato Street Conspiracy in 1820, the ‘taxes on knowledge’ were intensified in an effort to stamp out political radicalism in the legitimate press.<sup>48</sup> The notorious ‘Six Acts’, introduced in November 1819,<sup>49</sup> intensified the taxes already in place, and were meant to eradicate political radicalism by ‘extending the already stiff powers given to the government [...] to search for arms, control meetings and prosecute on seditious libel charges’.<sup>50</sup> The Newspaper and Stamp Duties Act, in particular, levied a 4*d.* tax on the publication of ‘news or comments on the news’, appearing at least once every 26 days and costing less than 6*d.*<sup>51</sup> As Altick suggests, this tax was not specifically aimed at news, but at politically radical views such as anti-governmental or anti-religious sentiments, and was directly targeted at underground radical magazines.<sup>52</sup> Publications which printed material

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<sup>45</sup> Graham Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Public Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> Law, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Law, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Joel Wiener, *The War of the Unstamped: The Movement to Repeal the British Newspaper Tax, 1830-1836* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Harrison, p. 53.

<sup>50</sup> Harrison, p. 53.

<sup>51</sup> Altick, p. 327-328.

<sup>52</sup> Altick, p. 328.

specifically of a pious, religious or charitable nature were exempt, and this left people in no doubt as to the Act's purpose.<sup>53</sup>

The 'Six Acts' had a significant, immediate and lasting impact. Joel Wiener suggests that many radical journalists 'either fled into exile or "legalized" [sic] their periodicals' by simply raising their prices and paying for a stamp,<sup>54</sup> and that across the 1820s 'a surface calm predominated in the field of journalism [and] [f]ew unstamped periodicals were published.'<sup>55</sup> In this era, therefore, most publications moved to operate *within* the law as opposed to against it, and Wiener further points out that this era was remarkable in that there were

few flagrant attempts to violate the stamp laws. Only a handful of publications were prosecuted, and no ministry faced the problem of pronounced resistance to the press laws.<sup>56</sup>

There were, however, at least a small number of publications which continued to publish in defiance of the taxes on knowledge. The publisher Leigh Hunt and his brother John, for example, were imprisoned for libel from 1812-1815 and John was incarcerated for a second time, again for libel, in 1821. Despite this, they continued to edit and publish the literary magazine the *Examiner*.<sup>57</sup> It is therefore worth clarifying at this stage that the intensified enforcement of the 'taxes on knowledge' did not prevent the formation of an early nineteenth-century periodical press. Instead, I suggest that their eventual abolition was a

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<sup>53</sup> Altick, p. 328.

<sup>54</sup> Wiener, p. 6.

<sup>55</sup> Wiener, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Wiener, p. 138.

<sup>57</sup> Leora Bersohn, 'Examiner (1808-1881)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 211. The *Examiner* is an excellent example of how some magazines were forced underground by the 'taxes on knowledge'. Stifled in the 1810s and 20s, especially in the wake of Waterloo, Leigh Hunt fits into Wiener's category of a journalist entering 'exile' after he left for Italy in 1821. His brother John subsequently managed the magazine from 1821 to 1828, when he passed it on to his son.

significant moment in publishing history which fundamentally changed the shape of the industry and how it operated. As Martin Hewitt suggests, ‘historians of mid-Victorian labour and politics have seen the final removal of the taxes as ‘amongst the most important legislative initiatives’ of Britain’s political stabilization [sic] in the 1850s’.<sup>58</sup>

The years 1830-1836 saw one of the most intense and concerted efforts to abolish the ‘taxes on knowledge’. Andrew King succinctly suggests that the duties were relaxed in this era as fear of revolution and political dissent brought about by earlier turbulent events had largely dissipated.<sup>59</sup> However, as Wiener more accurately and comprehensively highlights, the story was far more complicated than King’s assertion. Wiener suggests that the first concerted challenge occurred in 1830 – the publication of William Carpenter’s *Political Letters and Pamphlets*, which was swiftly crushed by a prosecution against him which took place in May 1831,<sup>60</sup> and the appearance of the radical printer Henry Hetherington’s weekly titled *The Penny Papers for the People, Published by the Poor Man’s Guardian*.<sup>61</sup> Like Carpenter, Hetherington was prosecuted, but as Wiener points out he refused to acquiesce and began to publish even more vociferously.<sup>62</sup> His illegal newspaper the *Poor Man’s Guardian* appeared in July 1831, directly sparking that which Wiener terms ‘the war of the unstamped’.<sup>63</sup> This ‘war’ raged between 1830 and 1836, with Hetherington and several other prominent publishers such as John Cleave leading the charge against the taxes on knowledge by repeatedly publishing a variety of illegal and politically radical magazines and newspapers, as well as speaking out publically at every opportunity. This war quickly became

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<sup>58</sup> Hewitt, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> King, p. 24.

<sup>60</sup> Wiener, p. 138.

<sup>61</sup> Wiener, p. 138.

<sup>62</sup> Wiener, p. 139.

<sup>63</sup> Wiener, p. 139. This particular citation is taken from this page of Wiener’s book, however the term ‘war of the unstamped’ is referred to both in the title of the volume itself and also repeatedly throughout it..

a war of attrition, and both sides suffered as a result. On one hand, illegal publishers almost continually made a loss on their activities and were motivated more by political idealism than by financial gain.<sup>64</sup> On the other, governmental opponents of abolition were unable to stop the spread of illicit publications, and prosecution more often served as an advertisement for illegal publishers than as a deterrent.<sup>65</sup> The relentless campaign of the radical underground press thus eventually had an effect; in 1836, the newspaper stamp was reduced from 4*d.* per copy, at which it had been set since 1815, to 1*d.* per copy.<sup>66</sup> Similarly in 1836, the excise duty on printing paper was halved from 3*d.* per lb to 1½*d.* per lb, at which it had been set since 1802.<sup>67</sup>

The easing of the taxes on knowledge also had an effect on other kinds of publication. Serialised fiction, for example, was already commonplace; as early as 1750, serialised novels numbered in their hundreds and some publications numbered copies into the thousands.<sup>68</sup> In the 1830s, however, the triumphant success of texts such as Charles Dickens's *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836-7) and its successors (such as *Oliver Twist* (1837-9)) demonstrated that part-issue fiction could also be profitable as well as popular.<sup>69</sup> The relaxation of the 'taxes on knowledge' and printing also caused an increase in the production of low-cost, weekly penny and half-penny magazines.<sup>70</sup>

The political fear of mass uprising and radicalism re-emerged in the 1840s due to the demands of the Chartists, and the spread of the 1848 revolutions across Europe. Political

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<sup>64</sup> Wiener, p. 183.

<sup>65</sup> Wiener, p. 195.

<sup>66</sup> Wiener, p. xii.

<sup>67</sup> Law, p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> Law, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> King, p. 24.

<sup>70</sup> Deborah Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001). Pp. 15-16.

focus shifted back towards what people might be reading, as it could potentially be perceived as ‘socially inflammatory’.<sup>71</sup> This was short lived, however. As Wiener suggests, after 1849 the movement to repeal the taxes gained momentum largely due to the failure of the Chartist movement.<sup>72</sup> By the early 1860s, the taxes on knowledge had all but vanished, and the landscape of the periodical press witnessed a dramatic shift towards mass production and quick-fire publication which was not to be echoed until the end of the nineteenth century. In 1853, the Advertisement tax was rescinded. In 1855 the Newspaper stamp was repealed, and lastly the Excise Duty on printing paper, which made the printing and publishing process so expensive, was abolished in 1861.<sup>73</sup> The abolition of the ‘taxes on knowledge’ therefore allowed what Patricia Anderson has termed a ‘cultural transformation’ to proliferate much more naturally than it had been able to previously, by allowing the periodical press to expand without fear of punitive taxation. As Warren Fox argues:

The abolition of these [...] “taxes on knowledge,” along with technological improvements in production and a population which was increasingly literate and concentrated in urban centers [sic], produced dramatic increases in some newspapers’ circulation rates and encouraged the launching of many others.<sup>74</sup>

The relaxation, leading up to the eventual abolition of the ‘taxes on knowledge’ was therefore tied closely to the broad, sweeping changes taking place in the early nineteenth century. The taxes’ repeal allowed the periodical, newspaper and other cheap presses to proliferate more freely than they had been able to before, and this gave rise to a diverse, richly populated and prolific cheap press which could now openly discuss politically-oriented material and, quite

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<sup>71</sup> King, p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> Wiener, p. xii.

<sup>73</sup> Hewitt, p. xiv.

<sup>74</sup> Warren Fox, ‘Murder in Daily Instalments: The Newspapers and the Case of Franz Müller (1864)’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 31, 3 (1998), 271-298 (p. 273).

simply, print news. Martin Wiener's assertion that '[i]n the nineteenth century, "media" meant newspapers' was plainly not true, as throughout the Victorian era a diverse range of printed media emerged and the media itself homogenised and went from a largely localised industry to a national one.<sup>75</sup> A roaring trade in magazines and periodicals, as well as cheaply-produced 'yellowback' books, serialised fiction, playbills, pamphlets, advertisements and other ephemera grew exponentially. Venerable titles including (but not limited to) Dickens's *Household Words* (1850), the *Leader* (1850), *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper* (1853), the *Daily Telegraph* (1855), the *Saturday Review* (1855) and the *Cornhill* (1860) all emerged in this era, directly benefitting from the slow but steady repeal of the 'taxes on knowledge'.<sup>76</sup> In short, and as John Drew accurately summarises:

From the 1860s onwards [...] with the repeal of the 'Taxes on Knowledge' and the widespread introduction of rotary presses, the stage was set for a dramatic expansion of what can now genuinely be considered a mass media market.<sup>77</sup>

#### **4. Historical Context II: The Development of British Policing**

The evolution of the police in Britain was also closely connected to the broad cultural and social changes which were taking place across Britain in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The police themselves formed a part of the march of 'emergent professionalism throughout the nineteenth century in nearly all walks of life' described by Don Vann and VanArsdel, both through emerging as a distinct 'profession' in themselves but also in that they were designed to manage and control steadily-growing urban centres filled with the new,

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<sup>75</sup> Martin Wiener, 'Convicted Murderers and the Victorian Press: Condemnation vs. Sympathy', *Crime and Misdemeanours*, 1, 2 (2007), 110-125 (p. 110).

<sup>76</sup> Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, 'Chronology', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), pp. ix-xxiii (pp. xv-xvi).

<sup>77</sup> John Drew, 'The Newspaper and Periodical Market', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 109-117 (p. 110).

professionalising working-classes which needed managing.<sup>78</sup> These ‘professionalising working classes’, as Don Vann and VanArsdel highlight, were formed as Britain entered a phase of extreme industrialisation, and occupied areas of society such as science, which ‘came to replace theology and philosophy as the supreme example of man’s intellectual endeavours’, as well as law, the military, public transport, advertising, retail, medicine and healthcare, and even sport.<sup>79</sup>

As these new, more ‘professional’ areas of Victorian society required an organisation to police them, it is consequently worth detailing how the British police force reached this point, in order to complete the contextual picture of how the periodical press linked with the state of national law enforcement by the mid-Victorian era. These two historical strands intersected and combined, to create a new environment where periodical writing focused on crime and policing could proliferate as it had not been able to before. The fact that both the police and the periodical press simultaneously homogenised and went from local to national also meant that any piece of fiction or periodical writing that engaged with the concept of a ‘police officer’ after 1856 worked with the same concept.

In the eighteenth century, before the establishment of an official uniformed police force, a number of volunteer constables or night-watchmen were appointed to maintain law and order in localised areas such as individual towns or parishes. These were usually ordinary citizens, who performed the role alongside their main occupation, paid either only in expenses or simply not at all. Several unofficial attempts at establishing organised law enforcement occurred in this era including Henry Fielding’s Bow Street Runners, formed in 1749, and the Liverpool Dock Police, established in 1811. Whilst these arrangements were relatively

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<sup>78</sup> Rosemary VanArsdel and J. Don Vann, ‘Introduction’, in *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*, ed. by VanArsdel and Don Vann, p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> Rosemary VanArsdel and J. Don Vann, ‘Introduction’, in *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*, ed. by VanArsdel and Don Vann, pp. 5-6.

privatised, there were also some legislative aspects to law enforcement. It was often enshrined in law that areas maintained a certain amount of volunteer constables and the Constables Protection Act was passed in 1750, designed to officially protect both constables and justices of the peace in the performance of their duties under the authority of the law itself.<sup>80</sup> In 1756 an additional Act was passed, designed to increase the number of these constables in order to maintain peace in Westminster, as well as to recruit specifically reputable people to become members of juries when required.<sup>81</sup>

The official police force as a uniformed and recognisable entity was established in 1829. The Metropolitan Police Act, dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 1829, was the brainchild of Tory politician Sir Robert Peel combined with the efforts of a group of political reformers including Edwin Chadwick, who felt that the old system of volunteer constables and night-watchmen was inadequate.<sup>82</sup> With this Act, the first official Metropolitan Police department was formed to police Westminster. This also created the Commissioner of Police position, which in 1829 was jointly filled by Sir Richard Mayne and Sir Charles Rowan, and which remains the head of the Metropolitan Police (and all UK police forces) today.

Interestingly, the passage of the 1829 Act was directly discussed in a number of periodicals despite the imposition of the ‘taxes on knowledge’. Several publications described the new police for interested readers and offered their support. The *Examiner*, for example, reprinted a brief article from the *Times* on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1829 which outlined the jurisdictional areas, uniformed appearance, expense and scale of the new Metropolitan Police force.<sup>83</sup> In

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<sup>80</sup> ‘The Constables Protection Act 1750 (24 Geo II, c. 44)’, *legislation.gov.uk* <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/apgb/Geo2/24/44/contents>> [accessed 21 January 2016].

<sup>81</sup> ‘Public Act, 29 George II, c. 25’, *UK Parliamentary Archive Portcullis* <<http://www.portcullis.parliament.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=HL%2fPO%2fPU%2f1%2f1756%2f29G2n124&pos=3>> [accessed 21 January 2016].

<sup>82</sup> Emsley, pp. 29-44 (p. 30).

<sup>83</sup> ‘Metropolitan New Police’, *Examiner*, 16 August 1829, p. 518.

July 1829 the *New Monthly Magazine* published 'The New Police', which pragmatically suggested that the new police were a 'beneficial innovation' that were, at the very least, an improvement on the old system of parochial volunteer constables and night-watchmen.<sup>84</sup>

The 1829 Act was designed to be a first, tentative step towards establishing a *nationwide* set of police forces. Slightly less well-known is the fact that an additional Act was passed three weeks prior to the Metropolitan Police Act, on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1829, which formed an equivalent police force in Cheshire. This force was designed and operated as an experiment into rolling out the concept of policing into non-urban environments.<sup>85</sup> However, it was largely seen as a failure due to a lack of control and a lack of officers (although the model may have been utilised for later rural county police forces).<sup>86</sup> Despite the experiment's failure, steps towards rolling the concept of policing out on a country-wide scale proceeded relatively quickly. Government went to great efforts to find the most effective way of creating regional police forces, using the knowledge gained from the trial in Cheshire as well as the experience of the Metropolitan Police. As the Cheshire experiment had been deemed a failure, the broadest concern was with how to manage the quickly-growing urban environments, and focus remained on urban centres where it was believed crime was more commonplace and policing more urgently required. A succession of smaller 'local' Acts thus followed 1829, which established and maintained similar forces in urban centres across

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<sup>84</sup> 'The New Police', *New Monthly Magazine*, July 1829, p. 426.

<sup>85</sup> Charles Lefevre, Charles Rowan and Edwin Chadwick, *First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire as to the Best Means of Establishing an Efficient Constabulary Force in the Counties of England and Wales* (London: Charles Knight and Co, 1839), p. 210.

<sup>86</sup> R. W. James, *To the Best of our Skill and Knowledge: A Short History of the Cheshire Constabulary 1857-1957* (Cheshire: Museum of Policing in Cheshire, 2005), pp. 10-11.

Britain, using the Metropolitan Police as a model.<sup>87</sup> In 1832 a force was also regulated for in Edinburgh,<sup>88</sup> a move that was rolled out to the rest of Scotland in 1833.<sup>89</sup>

A further step towards police-centralisation occurred as part of the Municipal Corporations Act, passed in 1835. This included several clauses that required reformed local authorities to appoint a sufficient number of constables and create a framework of operation for them if not already present.<sup>90</sup> However, this left a ‘significant legacy’ for established local administrators, as it did not strongly affect parish constables in rural counties.<sup>91</sup> A renewed focus on policing the *rural* community thus quickly followed, and in 1836, a report was commissioned to explore the most efficient ways of establishing rural police forces. This sought to establish and summarise the current state of crime throughout the country by contacting regional Justices of the Peace, and then to make recommendations as to how this crime level could be lowered.<sup>92</sup> It took three years to compile, and was published in 1839.<sup>93</sup> The report argued that the state of law enforcement in the country was limited to use of the military to keep the peace, and that this was inadequate. It also suggested that rural areas suffered from crime in the same way as urban areas despite their less dense population, and recommended that professionally trained police forces be established. It additionally argued that public information and records regarding levels of crime in the UK were widely

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<sup>87</sup> For example, Dublin’s police force was brought into line in 1836, Manchester and Bolton’s in 1839, and Birmingham’s in 1840.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Local and Personal Act, 2 & 3 William IV, c. lxxxvii’, *UK Parliamentary Archive Portcullis* <<http://www.portcullis.parliament.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=HL%2fPO%2fPB%2f1%2f1832%2f2%263W4n165&pos=69>> [accessed 4 December 2015].

<sup>89</sup> ‘Public General Act, 3&4 William IV, c. 46’, *UK Parliamentary Archive Portcullis* <<http://www.portcullis.parliament.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=HL%2fPO%2fPU%2f1%2f1833%2f3%264W4n199&pos=73>> [accessed 4 December 2015].

<sup>90</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community: The Formation of English Provincial Police Forces, 1856-80* (London: Routledge, 1984), p. 14.

<sup>91</sup> Steedman, p. 14

<sup>92</sup> Lefevre, Rowan and Chadwick, pp. 1-3.

<sup>93</sup> Lefevre, Rowan and Chadwick, pp. ix-1.

‘erroneous’,<sup>94</sup> and that unpaid and randomly appointed community constables kept no records of habitual criminals’ crimes, so they were known by reputation only.<sup>95</sup> A proposed solution was to recommend that policing be centralised, so that records of crime and criminals could be collected centrally to prevent the problem of habitual criminals simply moving to a location where they were not known. This had the effect of binding the police into bureaucratic trends of centralised governance which came to characterise this era. The report concluded that:

[...] from the want of an efficient preventative force, the peace and manufacturing prosperity of the country are exposed to considerable danger.<sup>96</sup>

This report directly caused a concerted effort to improve the police force in rural areas. In 1839 the County Police Act was passed, with an amended version passing a year later, both designed to improve the system already established and to allow individual counties to set up police forces (though it was not compulsory).<sup>97</sup> Government also recognised that these new forces lacked cohesion, and so they legislated to homogenize Police Rates across all of the established forces, further contributing to a sense of nationwide standardisation.<sup>98</sup>

The County Police Acts of 1839 and 1840 did not make the establishment of police forces mandatory; by 1853, only 28 out of 56 eligible areas had done so.<sup>99</sup> However, a series of riots

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<sup>94</sup> Lefevre, Rowan and Chadwick, p. 343.

<sup>95</sup> Lefevre, Rowan and Chadwick, p. 344.

<sup>96</sup> Lefevre, Rowan and Chadwick, p. 345.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Metropolitan Police’, *UK Parliament* <<http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/laworder/policeprisons/overview/metropolitanpolice/>> [accessed 19 November 2015].

<sup>98</sup> ‘Public General Act, 2 & 3 Victoria I, c. 95, *UK Parliamentary Archive Portcullis* <<http://www.portcullis.parliament.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=HL%2fPO%2fPU%2f1%2f1839%2f2%263V1n266&pos=3>> [accessed 4 December 2015].

<sup>99</sup> Richard Cowley, Peter Todd and Louise Ledger, *The History of HMIC: The First 150 Years 1856-2006* <<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/media/the-history-of-hmic-the-first-150-years.pdf>> [accessed 4 February 2016], pp. 9-10.

in towns such as Wigan and Blackburn in the early 1850s, coupled with the absence of much of the armed forces due to the Crimean War (1853-1856), acted as catalysts for the final compulsory establishment of nationwide civilian law enforcement. This finally occurred in 1856, as part of the County and Borough Police Act.

This caused the rapid and compulsory establishment of county-wide police forces across Britain. Forces set up under this act were now *required* to be county-wide, and smaller police forces that already existed in certain areas were merged with new, larger ones.<sup>100</sup> However, small ‘police districts’ could still exist if they were deemed necessary, allowing distinctions between inner-city forces and larger, rural county ones (this arrangement still operates in some areas today, such as the arrangement between the City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police, or that between the Port of Liverpool Police and Merseyside Police). There was a large movement towards centralising the police’s power into the county-towns, and small, local forces now uncomfortably found themselves accountable to powers residing in distant locations. The 1856 Act also created a national Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in order to maintain professional standards across the country through the provision of ‘certificates of efficiency’ to provincial police forces which matched the standards of London’s Metropolitan Police – an office that remains operational today.<sup>101</sup> A parallel act which set up the Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) was also passed in 1857.<sup>102</sup>

After 1856, the police force as it is recognised today was fully established across the country. The image of the police officer became universally recognised by the general public,

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<sup>100</sup> County and Borough Police Act 1856 (19 & 20 Victoria, c. 69), accessed via Parliamentary Archive, 2 September 2016, p. 361.

<sup>101</sup> Emsley, pp. 29-44 (p. 33). See also Cowley, Todd and Ledger, *The History of HMIC: The First 150 Years 1856-2006* for a more comprehensive history.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Creating the Nation’s Police Force’, *UK Parliament*, <<http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/laworder/policeprisons/overview/nationspoliceforce/>> [accessed 4 February 2016].

as the uniform, powers and structure of the police became nationwide. As Clive Emsley notes, '[t]he example of London provided [the rest of the country's police forces] a degree of uniformity', which meant that the new police officer had become a nationwide image.<sup>103</sup>

The universal image of the uniformed police officer gestures towards another important point, namely the formation of the 'detective department' as a separate arm of the Metropolitan Police. This proceeded slightly differently; the department was set up in 1842, and the first such named 'detectives' were appointed for the purpose of solving already-committed crimes and catching those responsible. It was established as a small department, consisting of just six constables and two sergeants at the time of its formation, rising only to fifteen permanent officers by the 1870s.<sup>104</sup>

Interestingly, the detective department itself was established at least partially due to a public outcry in the periodical press. A series of failings by the force to apprehend criminals had shaken public confidence in the police. The most prominent of these was the failure to apprehend a murderer named Daniel Good who, in 1842, eluded capture for five days before being apprehended by a civilian in a public-house in Kent. Public outcry found expression in the media, and the efficiency of the police was called into question. The *Examiner* reflected:

Now that the preliminary investigation into the facts of the murder at Roehampton have been brought to a close [...] public attention has become directed to [...] the important question, whether or not the metropolitan police [sic] are at all effective as a detective police. [...] we think quite enough has been shown to prove that the existing system of police is not a detective one, and that unless some most important alterations are made by

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<sup>103</sup> Emsley, pp. 29-44 (p. 33).

<sup>104</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 438).

the appointment of a detective police [...] the perpetrators of crimes, however horrid and revolting in their nature, will, in nine cases out of ten, escape the hands of justice.<sup>105</sup>

Despite disapproval surrounding the police's failings, the formation of the detective department was not widely publicised in periodicals, and the department appeared under a cloud of relative obscurity.<sup>106</sup> Even the establishment press (publications that were sympathetic to the decisions taken by Government and its branches, including publications such as the *Spectator* and the *Times*) did not report on the department's formation, and this suggests that an internal decision was taken without thought for the need of publicising it. This was potentially because the department itself was designed to operate in secrecy and that it was felt that its existence should not be broadcast. This decision led to some complex issues in later years, as will be explored further on in this thesis when it looks at the impact of the 1877 'turf fraud' scandal on perceptions of the police and detective forces. In short, the tangible distinction between regular police constables – those dressed in uniform that were actively patrolling on beats in an effort to maintain visible presences to prevent crime – and these new secretive detectives was not widely understood for a great many years.

The liberation of the periodical press from the punitive taxes on knowledge and the emergence of a nationwide, uniformed and professionalised form of policing were therefore intertwined, and this moment marks the opening of this project's main research period. Both movements were closely connected to the development of wider nineteenth century industrialised and urbanised society, and both formed part of the era's march of professionalism. The process of industrialisation had caused public literacy to increase substantially, and had also led to the growth of new urban centres which required a new form of law enforcement. Both periodical publishing and nationwide policing became professional

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<sup>105</sup> 'Efficiency of the Metropolitan Police,' *Examiner*, 30 April 1842, pp. 283-284.

<sup>106</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 439).

working spheres in of themselves throughout the mid-Victorian era.<sup>107</sup> An article titled ‘The New Police’, from the *New Monthly Magazine* in July 1829, connected the growth of law enforcement and the proliferation of the periodical press:

But these matters have been already touched upon in the newspapers, to the police reports of which, when confined to the substantial matter, it is incredible how much the country is indebted. [...] Let the newspapers be dumb respecting an offender, as the lawyers wish them to be, and he escapes. Reverse the thing. The police reports fly into every corner of the provinces: the strange comer to every country village and town is watched, and people have their conjectures about him. His case is read before his face: perchance he is confused, or soon flies to some other spot, and induces suspicion; there the fatal newspaper meets him again. He is arrested, found to be the “true man,” and delivered over to justice.<sup>108</sup>

The 1856 County and Borough Police Act and the repeal of the ‘taxes on knowledge’ were homogenising moments which took their respective concerns – namely the police and the periodical press – from a largely localised scale to a national one. They both contributed to a growing sense of national identity, and established themselves as uniquely Victorian institutions which can help to characterise the era as distinct.

Finally, the abolition of the ‘taxes on knowledge’ meant that periodical publishers’ fears about producing politicised commentary were diminished at a time when the politicised ideas regarding policing, law enforcement and crime would have been at the forefront of public consciousness due to their exponential growth. The 1856 County and Borough Police Act had made it compulsory for all regions in Britain to establish county-wide police forces, and thus,

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<sup>107</sup> Rosemary VanArsdel and J. Don Vann, ‘Introduction’, in *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*, ed. by. VanArsdel and Don Vann, p. 5.

<sup>108</sup> ‘The New Police’, *New Monthly Magazine*, July 1829, pp. 426-427.

the idea of policing, detection and criminality would be an easy and popular subject for newly-liberated periodicals to address. This, in turn, had significant ramifications for the development of detective fiction between 1850 and 1895, and so it is from this angle which this thesis begins its exploration into periodicals and detective fiction.

# Chapter 1

## Periodical Discourses on Policing and Detection: 1860-1890

### 1.1: Introduction: The Universal Concept of Uniformed Policing

Between 1829 and 1856, the sight of a police officer outside of larger urban environments would have been relatively rare. However, after the passage of the 1856 County and Borough Police Act, regions around Britain became obligated to establish forces which were visually and ideologically identical to London's Metropolitan Police. These new regional forces held the same authority and responsibility for maintaining a visual presence on the street, and were uniformed in blue in order to distinguish them from the red-clad military. Consequently, the police quickly became visible across the entire country, and this created a universal image of the police which permeated public consciousness. Periodical descriptions and illustrations subsequently became accurate reflections of police officers in their official attire, and the public could now recognise an officer no matter what kind of publication they were reading (see figs. 1 and 2).



Figures 1 and 2: Examples of illustrations of mid-Victorian police officers.

Left: 'Sellers in the Streets', *Leisure Hour*, 4 July 1861, p. 425.

Right: 'A London Police Court', *London Society*, October 1866, p. 321.

The spread of the new police force across mid-Victorian Britain caused their socio-political and economic implications to move to the forefront of public consciousness. The simultaneous abolition of the 'taxes on knowledge' allowed the press to publish much more freely on a variety of subjects which had previously been unavailable to them. It therefore follows that periodical commentary on the police quickly became just as prolific and diverse as the growing periodicals market in which they were critiqued, and discussion of law enforcement and criminal justice thus experienced a 'groundswell' of popularity in non-fiction, informative periodical criticism.<sup>109</sup>

This groundswell of discussion on the police has not been fully examined and this has led to conflicting arguments among scholars working in this field. Clive Emsley, for example, argues that pervading opinions of the police throughout the mid-nineteenth century were

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<sup>109</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 440).

generally positive,<sup>110</sup> yet other scholarly criticism (especially those limited to an exploration of specific cases) suggests a different view. In his examination of the Franz Müller case of 1864, for example, Warren Fox argues that the police were *not* held in high regard by the press.<sup>111</sup> However, in truth it was not as simple as *either* of these claims. Instead, the debate was diverse, fierce and constantly shifting.

The study of periodical criticism of the police helps illustrate how the wider Victorian community reacted to the presence of nationwide policing, and the conclusions it reaches can then be applied to other areas of Victorian society and culture, such as the production of fiction. As Barbara Korte suggests, a broad theme in mid-Victorian periodicals was an engagement with pressing socio-political debates, responding to the needs and problems of the public, and serving what she terms a ‘community building function’.<sup>112</sup> These ‘socio-political debates’, naturally, included those concerning law enforcement, and the way that the police worked their way into periodical discussion mirrored the way in which they worked their way into society itself. Consequently, this opening chapter looks at a wide variety of mid-Victorian periodical discourses on policing. It challenges both Emsley and Fox’s conflicting assertions, and suggests that periodical debate concerning the politicised nature of the police was far from universally agreed upon. The chapter concludes that the periodical press was instrumental in improving and disseminating public understanding of the police force as an organisation and the liminal social position which officers occupied. This, in turn, leads into later chapters’ explorations into how this had a significant impact on the development of the use of police officers and detectives in fiction. As Caroline Reitz argues, non-fictional debate presented in periodical material can be explored in conjunction with

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<sup>110</sup> Emsley, pp. 29-44 (p. 30).

<sup>111</sup> Fox, pp. 271-298 (p. 280).

<sup>112</sup> Barbara Korte, ‘On Heroes and Hero Worship: Regimes of Emotional Investment in Mid-Victorian Popular Magazines’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 49, 2 (2016), 181-201 (p. 181).

contemporary fiction to present what she terms a ‘coherent dialogue’, and so this chapter engages with non-fiction debate surrounding the police for the purpose of transposing the themes which emerge from this exploration into a discussion of fiction later on.<sup>113</sup>

## **1.2: Chapter 1 – A Methodological Note**

Exploring ‘the police’ through periodical discussion is complex. As this thesis’s introduction mentioned, organised study of a broad range of mid-nineteenth century periodicals has historically been difficult and has necessitated careful methodological approaches, due to the enormous amount of material available to researchers. The growth of the press, coupled with advancements in printing technology and improvements in public literacy also means that any periodical study must necessarily link itself to the development of nineteenth-century society.<sup>114</sup> The significant boost that the press experienced after the abolition of the ‘taxes on knowledge’ changed the way that the press could influence society, and the press began to embed itself ever more strongly as an influencer and reflector of public opinion through a variety of self-affixed political lenses.

This connection between the press and society necessitates the creation of a methodological framework through which to organise and understand different titles and their discussions on law enforcement. One way of doing this is through exploring the connections between different titles’ political orientations and applying this to their discussions of the police. Martin Hewitt argues that the ‘taxes on knowledge’ abolition was ‘amongst the most important legislative initiatives of Britain’s political stabilization [sic] in the 1850s’,<sup>115</sup> and Stephen Koss suggests that a direct consequence of the taxes’ eradication was a sudden,

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<sup>113</sup> Caroline Reitz, ‘Colonial ‘Gwilt’: In and Around Wilkie Collins’s *Armada*, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 33, 1 (*Cornhill Magazine Special Issue II*) (2000), 92-103 (p. 93).

<sup>114</sup> Altick, p. 81.

<sup>115</sup> Hewitt, p. 1.

dramatic politicisation of newspapers and periodicals. Koss argues that prior to the mid-nineteenth century newspapers had been, 'at best, crude and transitory weapons for partisan combat',<sup>116</sup> and claims that the politicised nature of the press was enhanced and cemented by the 'taxes'' abolition:

No sooner had legislative trammels been lifted from them than newspapers proudly affixed to themselves the labels Tory, Whig, or Radical, which broke down into such sub-categories as Peelite or Disraelian, Russellite or Palmerstonian, Cobdenite or Gladstonian.<sup>117</sup>

This way of categorising periodical titles by political allegiance is initially appealing, but it is worth pointing out that this issue has greater complexity than Koss's model suggests. This kind of identification cannot tell us much about readership, for example, as it is almost impossible to conclude exactly who would have actually read what, or whether the reader's political views aligned with the magazine which they were reading. Proof of a periodical's purchase also does not necessarily prove that it was read by the purchaser alone, or indeed whether it was read by the purchaser at all or merely bought and forgotten about (perhaps unlikely, but nevertheless possible).

As Richard Altick argues, the popular opinion of nineteenth-century society as well-regimented according to different social classes is largely oversimplified. Many contemporary employers and public figures found it difficult to establish which groups of people constituted the 'working' or 'middle' classes.<sup>118</sup> Altick applies this to readership, and explores how this confusion can be characterised by the publication of periodicals and

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<sup>116</sup> Koss, p. 2.

<sup>117</sup> Koss, p. 4.

<sup>118</sup> Altick, p. 82.

newspapers – some periodicals were labelled ‘middle class’, but were often read by the ‘working class’:

Whatever newspapers and other periodicals a household took in would, in the normal course of events, filter down to the servants’ quarters. In estimating the numbers of hands through which a given copy of a middle-class paper, or even a cheap book, might pass, one must not forget that the Victorian household contained not only a sizable family but also one or more servants with whom the paper wound up its travels.<sup>119</sup>

In an effort to avoid this kind of difficulty, this chapter explores the distinctions between particular ideologies of mid-century periodicals, rather than exploring specific readerships or how different publications were consumed. This allows the project to explore more clearly how detectives, the police and law-enforcement in general were represented, and to highlight how these representations solidified political and cultural viewpoints of law enforcement.

If exploration of readership is sidelined, then the way that Koss categorises politicised newspapers and periodicals is, despite its broad assumptions, a useful initial approach to explore how the new nationwide police were represented. This is also a particularly relevant way to approach periodical perspectives on the *police*, as the force was heavily politicised from its inception. As a result, overtly political periodicals often used discussion surrounding the police to promote their own wider political ideologies and, as Anthea Trodd argues, also began to make more concerted efforts to influence their readers’ opinions on matters which concerned law enforcement and criminality.<sup>120</sup> For example, as Martin Wiener points out, the press became much more directly involved in the criminal justice process as its confidence and place in the social fabric grew stronger, often making explicit efforts to either obtain either reprieves for those condemned to death or to actively support the sentence. This often

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<sup>119</sup> Altick, p. 83.

<sup>120</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 445).

depended on whether publications had a local connection to a crime or criminal, or whether the case was of a national scale.<sup>121</sup>

It is, however, worth noting that establishing exactly which publications can be ascribed political labels is often complicated. As Martin Hewitt argues, it is frequently difficult to get any clear picture of the political landscape of the periodical press.<sup>122</sup> Like Koss, Hewitt suggests that after the ‘taxes on knowledge’ began to disappear and the press gathered momentum, the press became increasingly politicised as some papers were being sustained by considerable political subsidy in exchange for their support.<sup>123</sup> This obscured political motives, and some titles even became deliberately anti-political.<sup>124</sup> Koss further argues that newspapers and periodicals occasionally amended their political allegiances as politics itself shifted, and other publications became increasingly reluctant to openly flaunt their political allegiances through fear of alienating potential readers, even more so when they were in receipt of party-related funds.<sup>125</sup>

Naturally, political publications did not constitute the entire periodical press after the ‘taxes on knowledge’ were abolished. Other titles also emerged which had alternative interests away from politics. This lack of political interest on the part of some periodical titles aimed at popularity or specific interests meant that these magazines often dealt with the ideas of crime, policing and punishment in different ways to political publications. Apolitical magazines are, however, slightly more difficult to work with, as the wider press cannot be as easily subcategorised as those that declared their political alignment. It also has a much

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<sup>121</sup> Wiener, pp. 110-125 (p. 122)

<sup>122</sup> Hewitt, p. 11.

<sup>123</sup> Hewitt, p. 11.

<sup>124</sup> Hewitt, p. 11.

<sup>125</sup> Koss, p. 4.

murkier history; with some scholars such as Rosalind Crone simply suggesting there was not really a ‘popular press’ until after the repeal of the taxes on knowledge.<sup>126</sup>

Categorisation of non-politicised periodicals is therefore a more complex and speculative process than the political press. However, there are some trends in popular periodicals that can be identified in order to loosely group publications together. Some prominent and useful examples include the literary or the satirical, whereas others include the historical, religious (or the deliberately secular), or those that serve a specific interest or particular social movement (such as the *Ragged School Union Magazine*, published between 1849 and 1875). Geographic location can also be a useful way of categorising popular periodicals. Some local magazines had differing perspectives on social issues than the larger, national publications.

Finally, it is also worth pointing out that political publications aligned with all sides of the political spectrum had little motivation to engage with the practical methods of detection or apprehension of criminals. In fact, it is rare to discover an article in a politically-orientated periodical that does so. Consequently, many political periodicals did not explore the methodology of policing, but instead related the profession itself to its wider socio-political implications. Political periodicals therefore used their explorations of the police, detectives and also the criminal justice system to present wider political commentary.

### **1.3: ‘[...] a baton in his hand and a blue coat upon his back’: Police, Detectives and the Law in Conservative Periodical Discourse, c. 1850-1875**

Victorian conservatism was characterised by several factors, including the defence of tradition; maintaining the status quo; the idea that political strength could be defined in social, rather than individual, terms; and the idea that every member of society was

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<sup>126</sup> Rosalind Crone, ‘Popular Press’, in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 501.

individually obligated to uphold it.<sup>127</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century, conservative attitudes stressed the importance of defending property, tradition and protecting against the dangers of political revolution,<sup>128</sup> which also accounted for many conservatives' support for the maintenance of the taxes on knowledge.

Robert Peel, the politician responsible for the formation of the police in 1829, presented the Tamworth Manifesto in 1834 and the Conservative Party itself was born between 1834 and 1835.<sup>129</sup> Across the Victorian era, the party maintained a significant but turbulent presence in British politics, and did not enjoy many majority Governments. After Peel's Government in 1841, the Tories did not taste majority power again until 1874, and they were ousted again in 1880 (compared with 5 Whig/Liberal majority governments between 1837 and 1874).<sup>130</sup> The Tories did, however, have substantial support in the periodical press, with many significant titles such as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*,<sup>131</sup> the *New Monthly Magazine*<sup>132</sup> and the *Quarterly Review*<sup>133</sup> all leaning towards political and social conservatism.

These conservative magazines often displayed support for law-enforcement authorities, including the new uniformed police. They were frequently seen as necessary and effective protectors of middle-class social, economic and cultural capitals, and helped to protect the respectable part of society from latent and occasionally invisible criminality. *Blackwood's*

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<sup>127</sup> Sally Mitchell, *Victorian Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1988; repr. 2012), p. 188.

<sup>128</sup> Mitchell, p. 189.

<sup>129</sup> Mitchell, p. 189.

<sup>130</sup> Mitchell, p. 189.

<sup>131</sup> David Finkelstein, 'Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (1817-1980)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 60.

<sup>132</sup> Damian Atkinson, 'New Monthly Magazine (1814-1884)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 443.

<sup>133</sup> David Ian Morphet, 'Quarterly Review (1809-1967)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 522.

*Edinburgh Magazine*, a conservative monthly originating in April 1817 in response to the Whig-leaning *Edinburgh Review*,<sup>134</sup> often praised the skill and conduct of law-enforcement authorities at finding hidden criminals. This concept of the police's ability to understand and interact with the criminal classes is a central theme to this thesis, and it will be returned to frequently as it develops. In March 1858, whilst musing on the concept of convicted prisoners, the magazine reserved some dedicated space for some overt praise of the skill of the police and detective forces in apprehending concealed offenders:

The detective officer knows the thief, not only individually but generically. [...] the accomplished detective will mark his man among the thousands of faces in a full night in Covent Garden, with such precision that he does not hesitate to run the risk of immediately apprehending him without a warrant. When we remember the serious consequences to an officer of thus seizing an innocent person, the frequency of such captures and the rarity of mistakes are a singular testimony to the generic character of criminality.<sup>135</sup>

The article continued by suggesting that appointing more police officers could only have a positive impact on society, and argued that, 'an increased force will be an eminent boon to the honest portion of the community'.<sup>136</sup>

*Blackwood's* also often demonstrated supportive attitudes towards the criminal justice system more broadly. In February 1861 the magazine published an article by John Paget which discussed the case of Eliza Fenning, hanged in 1815 for the attempted murder of her employer and his children. It analysed the way that the case was handled and how the conviction was received by the public, acknowledging that many believed that Fenning had

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<sup>134</sup> Philip V. Allingham, 'Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine', *Victorian Web* <<http://www.victorianweb.org/periodicals/blackwood/allingham.html>> [accessed 15 February 2016] (2013).

<sup>135</sup> 'Our Convicts – Past and Present', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, March 1858, p. 299.

<sup>136</sup> 'Our Convicts – Past and Present', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, March 1858, p. 299.

been wrongfully convicted. Far from questioning the adequacy of how the case was conducted, however, the article instead argued:

[...] it must be remembered that Fenning was defended by able counsel; that after her conviction the case was again investigated by the law advisers of the Crown; that the trial took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, and the execution was delayed until the 26<sup>th</sup> of July – a period of more than three months, during which time every opportunity was afforded for bringing forward any circumstance that might tell in the prisoner's favour; that the result of this enquiry, the patience and impartiality of which there seems to be no reasonable ground to doubt, was a confirmation of the verdict of the jury.<sup>137</sup>

This placed irrefutable faith in the judgment of the law as an institution which, it felt, could be trusted to protect civilised society. This theme reappeared in 1863 in another of Paget's articles, titled 'The Wigtown Martyrs'. This analysed the case of two Scottish women (Margaret McLachlan and Margaret Wilson), who were executed by drowning in 1685 for refusing to acknowledge James VII as head of the Church. *Blackwood's* again leapt to the defence of the judicial system, where others had strongly criticised it:

Much sympathy has been claimed for these women, on the supposition that they were the victims of a novel and unusual mode of death. All capital punishments must be revolting; new and strange modes of death are peculiarly so [...] In 1685, drowning was the ordinary mode of executing capital sentences upon females in Scotland [...] Neither the Government nor its agents can therefore be justly held answerable for the mode of execution [...] <sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> John Paget, 'Judicial Puzzles – Eliza Fenning', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, February 1861, pp. 236-237.

<sup>138</sup> John Paget, 'The Wigtown Martyrs', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, December 1863, p. 743.

This connection between the law and the state was a theme frequently raised by other conservative magazines. The *Quarterly Review*, which appeared in 1809 as another response to the *Edinburgh Review*, provides a second example of how politically conservative periodicals often defended law enforcement authorities and openly linked their authority to that of the state. In a particularly clear example from 1870, an article titled ‘Judicial Statistics’ summarised the magazine’s position on the police’s effectiveness and the political impetus:

For the same reason that the lawless classes arrayed against society are weak, the constabulary forces arrayed in defence of society are strong. The baton may be a very ineffective weapon of offence, but it is backed by the combined power of the Crown, the Government, and the Constituencies. Armed with it alone, the constable will usually be found ready, in obedience to orders, to face any mob, or brave any danger. The mob quails before the simple baton of the police officer, and flies before it knowing the moral as well as the physical force of the Nation whose will, as embodied in law, it represents. And take any man from that mob, place a baton in his hand and a blue coat upon his back, put him forward as a representative of the law, and he too will be found equally ready to face the mob from which he was taken, and exhibit the same steadfastness and courage in defence of constituted order.<sup>139</sup>

Here, the police manifested the will, apparent moral incorruptibility and physical force of the nation-state and the article connected the police force and unwavering patriotism bordering on jingoism. The police were also seen here to manifest an ideological barrier between the respectable and the criminal, which suggests that the police were viewed as socially positioned in a liminal, threshold space as both tools for protecting middle class social and cultural values and as enforcers of rigid social divisions.

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<sup>139</sup> Samuel Smiles, ‘Judicial Statistics’, *Quarterly Review*, July 1870, p. 90.

This idea that the police protected middle-class financial and cultural capital and maintained social distinctions to create a sense of deliberate segregation of the ‘criminal classes’ away from ‘decent’ society was frequently evident in conservative commentary. In 1861, *Blackwood’s* published an article titled ‘Uncivilised Man’, written by George Henry Lewes (1817-1878). This discussed the merits of ‘civilisation’ juxtaposed with ‘barbarism’, and explored the difficulties that ethnologists had in reconstructing societies before the ‘commercial age [of the nineteenth century], with its sophistications, prejudices, rivalries, luxuries, and over-stimulated egotism’.<sup>140</sup> The magazine highlighted a sense of dissociation for readers who can experience these ‘other’ societies without having to actually go to them. It went on to describe ‘barbaric’ customs in detail, but the sentence of particular interest here stated:

Although there are no police [...] to protect the trader [in these ‘barbaric societies’], it very rarely happens that a trader is attacked for the sake of booty [...]<sup>141</sup>

This short sentence gestured towards a perspective from which some conservative periodicals viewed the police; that of capitalist protection. It intimated how other societies held different values than their own, and placed less importance on material worth of goods and commerce. ‘Traders’, therefore, were at less of a risk of attack than those in, capitalist Victorian society. This, in turn, suggests the opinion that one of the fundamental roles of the police in was to protect the businesses, material possessions and financial wealth of the middle classes.

Another example of conservative magazines highlighting the police and law’s role as protectors of financial capital appeared in the *Quarterly Review* in October 1874, when it published ‘Tables of the Number of Criminal Offenders’ attributed to Anglican priest Robert Gregory (1819-1911). This was a compilation of statistics of criminals committed for trial,

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<sup>140</sup> George Henry Lewes, ‘Uncivilised Man’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, January 1861, p. 27.

<sup>141</sup> Lewes, p. 35.

imprisoned or convicted of capital offences between 1805 and 1873.<sup>142</sup> The article attempted to make sense of this data by building an overarching narrative on the national state of crime, and to enhance it by spotting loopholes in it.<sup>143</sup> It also engaged directly with the role of the police:

Let us look next at the means used to *protect property* and discover crime [my italics].

For these we naturally turn to the strength and efficiency of the police force kept on foot at the different periods.<sup>144</sup>

The phrase ‘protect property’ is listed above all other responsibilities of the police, distinct from their responsibility to ‘discover crime’. This focus on economic issues indirectly connects to a further theme often present in conservative periodical discourses on the police, namely the economic impact of the police on the taxpayer and the financial cost of crime and criminals. Conservative discourses were concerned by the ever-increasing expense of the police, and argued that it must be justified by their consistent effectiveness in detecting criminals and their success in the prevention of crime. The article continued in this fashion by highlighting the economic cost of the police though still supporting it):

Since the passing of this Act [the 1856 County and Borough Police Act], the strength of the police force has been steadily growing, its efficiency has been tested, and its general utility acknowledged. At the census of 1861 the total police and constabulary force gave one for every 937 of the population; at the census of 1871 there was one for every 828; last year there was one for every 795. In 1871 there were 27,425 men engaged in this work, including Commissioners, Superintendents, Chief Constables of Counties and Head

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<sup>142</sup> Robert Gregory, ‘Tables of the Number of Criminal Offenders’, *Quarterly Review*, October 1874, pp. 527-529. The tables in these pages begin showing statistics from 1834, however the same pages state that records began in 1805.

<sup>143</sup> Gregory, ‘Tables of the Number of Criminal Offenders’, pp. 533-534.

<sup>144</sup> Gregory, ‘Tables of the Number of Criminal Offenders’, p. 533.

Constables of Boroughs, and the expenditure was almost two and a quarter millions last year the number had risen to 28,550 and the cost to 2,567,491l.<sup>145</sup>

*Fraser's Magazine*, which appeared in 1830 as *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* and for which *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was both a model and chief competitor,<sup>146</sup> also focused on this balance between the police's expense and its effectiveness. In 1868, it published an article by Edwin Chadwick, titled 'On the Consolidation of the Police Force and the Prevention of Crime'. Chadwick referred to his own report into the state of policing and crime in Britain, written in collaboration with Charles Lefevre and Charles Rowan and published in 1839. Chadwick revisited the methodology of this report, and recounted the history of the development of county police forces between the report's publication and the 1856 Act which made the establishment of police forces compulsory.<sup>147</sup> Chadwick linked the requirement for country-wide policing to crimes committed against trade and commerce, and argued that manufacturers and individual workers suffered without the existence of adequate law-enforcement authorities to protect them.<sup>148</sup> Chadwick also argued that further centralisation of the police into a national system, as opposed to a series of disjointed constabularies, would be more economically efficient in the long term:

In respect to two separate county police forces, it was proved that the expense was not greater than of the old and comparatively inefficient and in many cases the so-called 'unpaid' system of parochial constables, and if all the borough forces had been included, the expense would have been less and the efficiency greater. It may be averred that, under

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<sup>145</sup> Robert, 'Tables of the Number of Criminal Offenders', p. 533.

<sup>146</sup> Mark W. Turner, '*Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (1830-1882)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 229.

<sup>147</sup> Edwin Chadwick, 'On the Consolidation of the Police Force and the Prevention of Crime', *Fraser's Magazine*, January 1868, p. 11.

<sup>148</sup> Chadwick, p. 7.

a proper administration the services of a united and systematised force of twenty-five or twenty-six thousand men, including Scotland, may be had for nothing; that is to say, at no greater expense than the total expense of the existing disconnected forces; and two millions of expenditure now squandered on an ineffective system of repression would be largely economised.<sup>149</sup>

In connection to this, conservative magazines also critiqued the economic expense of criminals as well as that of the police. *Fraser's Magazine*, for example, criticised the way that criminals were handled as a public expense. John Ruskin, writing in 1863, commented on the expense of keeping prisoners in prisons and made quite a startling suggestion:

All criminals should at once be set to the most dangerous and painful forms of [manual labour], especially to work in mines and at furnaces, so as to relieve the innocent population as far as possible [...]<sup>150</sup>

By today's standards, this attitude seems barbaric, and appears to confirm Christopher Casey's assertion that the mid-Victorian era saw a return to the 'more brutal forms of punishment' due to a widespread anxiety concerning an apparent lack of effectiveness in the criminal justice system.<sup>151</sup> However, it should be considered in context. Transportation was abolished in 1857 by the Penal Servitude Act, and the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 had reduced the number of offences which carried capital sentences from hundreds to only four. Imprisonment as a form of punishment consequently increased dramatically and prisons became overcrowded. There was thus increasing concern about what to do with growing numbers of prisoners, and this anxiety was even echoed in mid-Victorian fiction, notably the looming presence of the prison-hulk ships in the opening pages of Charles Dickens's *Bleak*

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<sup>149</sup> Chadwick, p. 15.

<sup>150</sup> John Ruskin, 'Essays on Political Economy', *Fraser's Magazine*, April 1863, p. 442.

<sup>151</sup> Christopher Casey, 'Common Misperceptions: The Press and Victorian Views of Crime', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 41, 3 (2011), 367-391 (p. 368).

*House* (1853). Prison-work details such as bakeries and carpenter workshops became popular, alongside the more feared treadmills and other menial tasks designed to keep prisoners economically functional. A schematic of Coldbath Fields prison from 1884 shows evidence of increased use of work-details inside prisons, as well as the rapid expansion of prisons as a form of punishment (see fig. 3). Rosalind Crone has also shown that some prisons, notably Reading, were transformed into religiously-oriented learning environments for prisoners, in an effort to improve their prospects when they were released and prevent them from reoffending.<sup>152</sup> Casey's assertion that the return of various forms of corporal punishment throughout the mid-Victorian era was due to the desire to instil more vicious forms of deterrence is therefore slightly oversimplified in this context, and I suggest that its return was also borne out of concern regarding prison overcrowding.<sup>153</sup> Corporal punishment allowed a criminal to be punished immediately and then released, without their taking up any room or consuming resources in already-overstretched prisons.

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<sup>152</sup> Rosalind Crone, 'The Great 'Reading' Experiment: An Examination of the Role of Education in Nineteenth-Century Gaol, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History and Societies*, 16, 1 (2012), 47-74 (pp. 47-50).

<sup>153</sup> Casey, pp. 367-391 (p. 368).

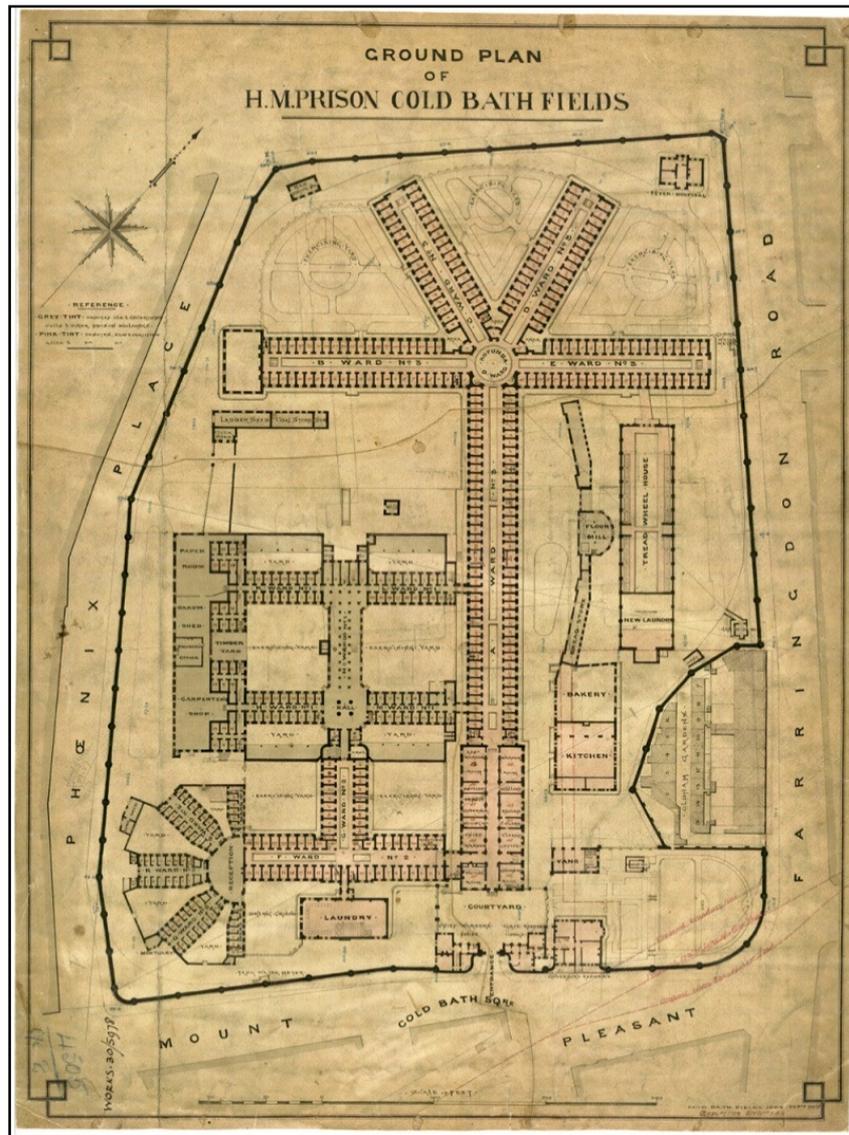


Figure 3: 'Ground Plan of HM Prison Cold Bath Fields', National Archives

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/a-victorian-prison-source-1.jpg>

[accessed 19 February 2016] (1884). New prison work details are visible, and the remarkable expansion of the prison itself (the highlighted pink sections) demonstrates the necessity for the creation of more space.

Finally, conservative discourses on policing and law-enforcement often highlighted the position of the police as a force designed to enforce and maintain class distinctions.

'Uncivilised Man' characterised the way that some conservative magazines, aimed at the comfortable, well-off middle classes, attempted to provide a textual 'experience' of the 'uncivilised', which again can be linked to the emergence of crime and detective fiction later on in the nineteenth century which was also designed to perform the same task. This idea of

‘social exploration’ in journalism will be looked at in considerable detail later on, but an effective example of this to help briefly highlight it comes from the *National Review*. In 1883, it published the first in a long series of articles titled ‘Homes of the Criminal Classes’, authored by politician Hugh E. Hoare (1854-1929, who was ironically a Liberal politician in later years), who wrote about his experiences inside this ‘criminal world’. Hoare identified a distinct ‘criminal’ class that was segregated and isolated by the presence of the police themselves:

[...] a street in the East End, which I knew by repute as having the best claim to the title of the worst street in London. I had only twice walked through the street, and the first time I was warned by a policeman, as I turned down into it, to “look out where I was going to”<sup>154</sup>

In conservative periodical discourses, then, the police enforced social divisions, maintained the status quo, and protected financial or cultural capital. As Martin Wiener argues, politically conservative newspapers almost always perceived social and moral dangers in crime, and urged firm punishment rather than compassion and understanding in order to preserve the comfortable status quo for the middle classes.<sup>155</sup> They also tended to marginalise and isolate the perceived ‘criminal classes’. The fact that Hoare’s article suggested that this street was ‘almost exclusively inhabited’ by the ‘criminal classes’, implies that this ‘criminal class’ tended to group together and existed in its own space, separate from everyone else. Hoare’s experience ‘inside’ this atmosphere is presented as an explorer entering ‘uncharted territory’, allowing the reader to experience this thrilling yet unpleasant aspect of society from a safe distance.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Hugh E. Hoare, ‘Homes of the Criminal Classes’, *National Review*, April 1883, p. 224.

<sup>155</sup> Wiener, pp. 110-125 (p. 124).

<sup>156</sup> Hoare, pp. 224-225.

#### **1.4: ‘[...] the vigilance of the police is notoriously inferior’: Police, Detectives and the Law in Liberal Periodical Discourse, c. 1850-1875**

In some respects, socially and politically liberal (and, by extension, radical) periodicals had a slightly stronger vested interest in critiquing the police than those which were broadly conservative, as they were at the opposite end of the political spectrum from that which was responsible for the force’s creation. Liberal and radical magazines also had a historic precedent for engaging with the concept of law enforcement negatively, as throughout the early nineteenth century a number of publications had criticised the police as an unwanted, corrupt, untrustworthy and, crucially, *continental* invention. The fact that the first French system of policing had predated the British meant that a number of British periodicals were sceptical of the concept, especially during the turbulence created by the Napoleonic Wars. In one particularly strong example, in December 1816 the *Weekly Entertainer* published an article titled ‘The French Police (Cautions to all British Travellers)’, which argued that France’s revolutionary activity at the end of the eighteenth century had extensively corrupted its public officials:

Since the reign of democracy in France, rudeness, oppression and imposition, meet foreigners the moment they set their feet on French ground. [...] Their passports are imperiously demanded by the Police Commissaries on their arrival, to pay for the inspection of them, and they are often obliged to exhibit them [...] to every impertinent thief-taker, ruffian gen-d’armes, or corrupt police agent, whom mere curiosity, or a display of power may incite.<sup>157</sup>

This historic precedent, combined with natural anti-Tory rhetoric after the politicisation of the periodical press in the aftermath of the abolition of the taxes on knowledge, meant that liberal magazines were often suspicious of the police and were far more interested in the

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<sup>157</sup> ‘The French Police (Cautions to all British Travellers)’, *Weekly Entertainer*, 2 December 1816, pp. 971-972.

police force's overall efficiency, how the force was constructed, operated and its impact on the wider population. They also critiqued the police's economic expense, broadly questioning whether organised law enforcement was worth its cost. Martin Wiener succinctly summarises the position of many Liberal-aligned publications, arguing that they were much more ready than their conservative counterparts to take up the cause of mercy for condemned criminals, and shied away from supporting authoritarian or oppressive law enforcement systems.<sup>158</sup> This had a historic precedent, as a number of liberal or politically radical magazines such as Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* had directly opposed the maintenance of the oppressive 'taxes on knowledge' and Hunt had famously been imprisoned for his trouble. That said, the perspectives from which liberal magazines approached policing and law enforcement were actually broadly similar to those which conservative magazines often utilised, such as effectiveness and economic expense, although the conclusions they reached were vastly different.

Politically-liberal periodicals tended to link the police with oppressive state interference, and argued that the police were designed to keep the lower echelons of society as downtrodden as possible. This view, asserts Warren Fox, was shared by some particularly radical publications such as *Reynold's Newspaper*, founded in 1850 (as *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper*) by the famously radical pressman G .W. M. Reynolds. In July 1864, the newspaper wrote:

In one sentence, the police of London are taught to look upon a really liberal politician as a more "dangerous character" than a burglar or a murderer – as a being who is to be more closely watched and more severely dealt with than a Bill Sykes, a Manning, or a Greenacre.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Wiener, pp. 110-125 (p. 124).

<sup>159</sup> 'The Progress of Murder', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 17 July 1864, p. 1. Cited in Fox, pp. 271-298 (p. 281).

*Reynolds's Newspaper* maintained this sceptical view of the police as social oppressors in a number of different articles. In 1861, a letter to the editor of the paper, signed only from 'Northumbrian', was printed which accused the police of 'scandalous behaviour' and 'trumping up false charges of assault and disorderly conduct against unoffending citizens'.<sup>160</sup>

This idea that the police were little more than a force for political repression was replicated in less radical, but certainly liberal-aligned publications. The *Fortnightly Review*, hailed by Mark W. Turner as 'the vanguard of change in mid-century periodical publishing', can highlight this.<sup>161</sup> This was a free-thinking and politically experimental publication in which, 'sought to combine the opinion-forming, serious journalism of the quarterlies, with the more responsive criticism of the weeklies, together with the entertainment value of a shilling monthly.'<sup>162</sup> Fortnightly publication was an untested publication frequency, which highlighted the periodical's experimental nature, and after 20 months it actually became a monthly, though the name '*Fortnightly*' stuck. Eventually, the journal became known as a socially-liberal, progressive publication.<sup>163</sup> The magazine used its platform to suggest that the police were an oppressive form of state control, and in 1868 made this connection clear by arguing that the police were a tool of Governmental oppression which could conceivably be used against the masses, though it clearly believed that it would not go well for the force against the strength of the people: '[t]he Government would be mad which seriously attempted to face an angry people on the strength of several thousand police staves'.<sup>164</sup> The magazine maintained this link between police and state through complex explorations of the

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<sup>160</sup> 'Our Perjured Police', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 6 September 1861, p. 2.

<sup>161</sup> Mark W. Turner, '*Fortnightly Review* (1865-1954)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 227.

<sup>162</sup> Turner, '*Fortnightly Review* (1865-1954)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Brake and Demoor, pp. 227-228.

<sup>163</sup> Turner, '*Fortnightly Review* (1865-1954)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Brake and Demoor, p. 228.

<sup>164</sup> Frederic Harrison, 'The Transit of Power', *Fortnightly Review*, April 1868, p. 384.

concept of criminality. In 1865 it published an article titled ‘Civilisation and Crime’ written by Sheldon Amos, which argued that the state of law enforcement in any country was directly related to the level of ‘civilisation’ that a nation had attained:

[...] the existing state of crime is an accurate test of the whole moral and intellectual acquirements of a people.<sup>165</sup>

Crime, and consequently its prevention and punishment, was seen as a gauge of the state of society as a whole, and the article explained why it was such a good determination of social evolution. It argued that the greater number of violent or deviant acts that were considered ‘criminal’, then the further ‘evolved’ a civilisation was. Thus, when society was in a more ‘primitive’ state, fewer offences were considered ‘crimes’.<sup>166</sup> Predictably, the article went on to discuss the role of the police in maintaining this ‘state of civilisation’:

[...] any prevalent laxity or indolence in apprehending and punishing offenders is a sure token of national prostration. [...] Such was the case not so long ago in England, when armed highwaymen infested every thoroughfare, and the executive authorities tried to atone for the inefficiency of the police by savage and indiscriminate cruelty in punishment.<sup>167</sup>

The effectiveness of the police and the judicial system here became a measurable gauge of social evolution. The article argued that the inefficiency of the police in its mandate to apprehend criminals was balanced by ‘indiscriminate cruelty’ on the part of the state in its brutal treatment of criminals that the police actually *had* managed to capture. In other words, the police caught fewer criminals than they should, and the state treated these more brutally in order make up for their lack of efficiency. This linked both the state and the police

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<sup>165</sup> Sheldon Amos, ‘Civilisation and Crime’, *Fortnightly Review*, 15 September 1865, p. 320.

<sup>166</sup> Amos, p. 320.

<sup>167</sup> Amos, p. 328.

together, with a view to presenting the idea that the police were ineffective, and that the state which controlled them could be corrupt, cruel and oppressive. Indeed, the spectacular violence of judicial punishment was designed also to act as a deterrent to other would-be offenders, as well as atone for the police force's inefficiencies.

This apparent concern with punishment gestured towards a wider theme which liberal-aligned periodicals often explored – the physical and psychological treatment of criminals. As we have seen, conservative periodicals commented on the expense and upkeep of convicts in the light of the abolition of transportation and a reduction in the number of capital offences, and their broad concern was with how to keep the imprisoned contributing to society. Liberal periodicals frequently addressed the same problem of what to do with imprisoned criminals, but they instead approached it from the perspective of the impacts that the criminal justice system had on the people themselves.

Some work published in the *Edinburgh Review* can help exemplify this. This was one the most venerable Liberal periodicals of the era, published between 1802 and 1929. It began as a vehemently Whig publication, and remained aligned to the liberal side of the political spectrum, promoting Romanticism and liberal political thinking.<sup>168</sup> In 1865, it published 'Our Convicts', an article which specifically explored the way that becoming a 'criminal' affected those branded with this label and caused fundamental and irreparable changes to their identities. It also looked at how the more centralised, bureaucratic system of law-enforcement affected the ways in which the public perceived criminals, and how these perceptions created a marginalised identity from which they could not escape even if they had paid their social debt:

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<sup>168</sup> Joanne Shattock, 'Edinburgh Review (1802-1929)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), pp. 190-191.

A blind man is thought of not as a man who is blind, but as one separated from the rest of mankind by his blindness. A man addicted to liquor, becomes to all but his household connexions, a drunkard and there's an end. So a man who has once transgressed the boundaries of the criminal law, is thenceforward a *criminal* [original emphasis], and in that term we seem, as it were, to drown many of the common attributes of human nature, though it is by the temptations of human nature itself that he has fallen.<sup>169</sup>

The concern of the *Edinburgh Review* was therefore not the political implications of establishing a centralised police force, but instead the effect that centralised and nationwide law enforcement had on the population as a whole. Even the article's title, '*Our Convicts*', implied a sense of social inclusion of the criminal portion of society, and was a gentle reminder to readers that the criminal population were still society's responsibility. This indirectly criticised the police (and the governmental reach into society which they manifested), by suggesting that they oppressed those who had been criminalised and prevented them from re-entering society. In some ways, this indirectly connected with the conservative view that the police also occupied a threshold social space between criminals and wider society, though the conclusions reached here were vastly different.

Liberal periodicals were often just as concerned with the expense and upkeep of the police as their conservative counterparts; however they reached very different conclusions. In May 1869, for example, the *Contemporary Review* published a review of a pamphlet entitled *The Police Force of the Metropolis in 1868*, anonymously written by an author named 'Custos'. In the review, the magazine explicitly summarised its opinion on the condition of mid-Victorian policing bluntly:

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<sup>169</sup> 'Our Convicts.', *Edinburgh Review*, October 1865, p. 338.

Our property is notoriously insecure, our persons by no means safe, and our police force certainly quite as large as the British payer of taxes is likely to tolerate.<sup>170</sup>

Another example of this focus on cost appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* in August 1865. The article, by Herbert Graham and titled 'Public and Private Prosecutors', lamented that there was no centralised and publically funded system for prosecuting offenders in Britain, once their crimes had been detected and the offender apprehended. Here, the article detailed the judicial processes that occur after a criminal had been caught, and argued:

Many criminals go unpunished because the person injured has no wish to incur trouble and expense, and other people have no desire to mix themselves up in a matter with which they have no personal connection, and for their trouble in regard to which they would receive no adequate remuneration, but, on the contrary, run the risk of being involved in subsequent litigation, and, it may be, compelled to pay heavy damages.<sup>171</sup>

As many simply could not afford justice, the indirect argument here was that the police, despite their best efforts, were often wasting their time, energy and public money in their pursuit of offenders that were often never prosecuted.

As we have seen, politically interested periodicals often explored a number of similar themes when discussing the police. These included their expense and economic impact, the treatment of criminals, the link between the police force and the state, and the idea that the police occupied the space between criminality and the rest of society, thus keeping them apart. However there were several ways that conservative and liberal magazines differed in their criticism of the police, the clearest example being the arguments concerning the police's overall effectiveness. In short, while conservative periodicals broadly praised the police's

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<sup>170</sup> 'Review of Books: The Police Force of the Metropolis by Custos, London: Ridgway', *Contemporary Review*, May 1869, p. 477.

<sup>171</sup> Herbert Graham, 'Public and Private Prosecutors', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 August 1865, p. 676.

efficiency, liberal publications often disputed it. Indeed, the review of ‘Custos’s’ pamphlet published in the *Contemporary Review* in May 1869 argued:

Crime is on the increase, and the vigilance of the police is notoriously inferior to the skill of our professional thieves. Of course the question which the general public has been for some time repeating is, not, Why don’t the police succeed in recovering our property and bringing the criminal to justice? but, How is it that thousands of notorious criminals are allowed to live in our midst, and carry on their practices under our very eyes, when the police know them, their vocation, and their abodes? It may be well to recover stolen property, but it is far better to stop the thief [...]<sup>172</sup>

One of the most vocal in its attacks on the police was the Liberal-aligned *Saturday Review*. This was perhaps one of the most interested periodicals in providing criticism of the police, and frequently published articles which attacked its efficiency, especially towards the end of the nineteenth century, for reasons which will be detailed in Chapters 5 and 6. In April 1870, it published an article titled ‘Inefficiency of the London Police Force’, where it complained that the police were ‘not quick enough for the work’,<sup>173</sup> and that:

[...] in the centre of civilization, and amid a dense population of three millions [...] society has almost returned to its primitive condition, in which men can find safety only in their own strength, and women can find safety nowhere.<sup>174</sup>

A month later, the *Saturday Review* published ‘The Jewel Robberies’, which argued that victims of burglaries or thefts would do well to remember that the police were not

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<sup>172</sup> ‘Review of Books: The Police Force of the Metropolis by Custos, London: Ridgway’, *Contemporary Review*, May 1869, p. 477.

<sup>173</sup> ‘Inefficiency of the London Police’, *Saturday Review*, 30 April 1870, p. 575.

<sup>174</sup> ‘Inefficiency of the London Police’, *Saturday Review*, 30 April 1870, p. 575.

omniscient.<sup>175</sup> However this pragmatic view was short lived, and far from defending the police's ability to track criminals, the article argued that the police should at least have some leads on most crimes and that its largest problem was simply laziness:

It is scarcely possible that the police should not have a very shrewd suspicion as to some of the people engaged [in criminal activity] [...] from which we may infer that they have been wanting in [...] energy and ingenuity [...]<sup>176</sup>

Finally, in 1872 the *Saturday Review* published the rhetorically-titled, 'Where are the Police?'. This detailed recent convictions of those operating in violation of the Licensing Act by illegally selling alcohol. However the piece focused its attention on the conviction of two police officers, who were seen fraternising with barmaids and staff at a drinking establishment whilst on duty.<sup>177</sup> The article thus answered its own question posed in the title with the response 'usually in the pub', and lamented that there were no dedicated officers to prevent those who were not licensed to sell alcohol from doing so. It argued that the police force was clearly unsuited for the job and should not have been the organisation from which such enforcers were taken.<sup>178</sup>

### **1.5: Scrutiny of the Police in Non-Partisan Periodicals: 1860-1890**

Away from partisan periodical discourses, the wider periodical press was just as interested in scrutinising nationwide law enforcement. Some periodicals, such as the *Examiner*, were political but not party-aligned, which created different dynamics regarding how publications explored law enforcement. Additionally, specific interest periodicals on subjects such as

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<sup>175</sup> 'The Jewel Robberies', *Saturday Review*, 14 May 1870, p. 640.

<sup>176</sup> 'The Jewel Robberies', *Saturday Review*, 14 May 1870, p. 640.

<sup>177</sup> 'Where are the Police?', *Saturday Review*, 12 October 1872, p. 465.

<sup>178</sup> 'Where are the Police?', *Saturday Review*, 12 October 1872, p. 465.

literature, art, music, and religion, as well as those targeted at certain members of society such as children, women, and the elderly all saw increases in volume and frequency. For example, the *Boy's Own Magazine*, launched by Samuel Beeton and which was one of the first boy's magazines to achieve success, appeared in 1855.<sup>179</sup> There was also an increase in magazines aimed at those working in specific professions, or even just working in general. The *British Workman* and *British Workwoman*, for example, appeared in 1855 and 1863 respectively, all benefiting seemingly from the abolition of the taxes on knowledge.<sup>180</sup>

These periodicals were also interested in the police force's development across the country. However, there were differences in the way that they could critique it. While party-aligned periodicals used the police to present commentary which was broadly in line with their own partisan ideologies, the non-partisan press was not bound by such ideological restrictions. As a result, the scrutiny of the police force in the popular periodical press was more ambiguous, complex and varied (even within the pages of single publications) and helped to cement the police firmly in the mid-Victorian social fabric. Some magazines were sceptical, others merely curious, and still others, such as Charles Dickens in *Household Words*, were keenly interested.

*Chambers's (Edinburgh) Journal*, a magazine which was published between 1832 and 1956 under various names, examined the police in a variety of ways. It was a popular magazine aimed at young people and the lower-to-middle classes as an accessible, general interest magazine.<sup>181</sup> It particularly praised the young police force and the way it operated,

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<sup>179</sup> Christopher M. Banham, 'Boy's Own Magazine (1855-1874)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 70.

<sup>180</sup> Frank Murray, 'British Workman (1855-1921)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 80 and Margaret Beetham, 'British Workwoman (1863-1896)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 80.

<sup>181</sup> E. Foley O'Connor, 'Chambers's (Edinburgh) Journal (1832-1956)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 106.

and in January 1860 it published 'Criminal Statistics', which examined recent numbers of crimes and criminals at the end of 1859. Whilst the article did not specifically concern itself with the processes of solving crime, it suggested that the police were 'conservators of life, limb and property' and stated that the 'labours of the police are by no means light', sympathising with the difficult task that officials had to perform to maintain law and order.<sup>182</sup>

This supportive attitude towards the police was common in *Chambers's*. In 1864, the magazine returned to the topic of the police's effectiveness in 'The Metropolitan Police and what is Paid for Them'. This argued that it was understandable that an entity so widespread and essential incurred considerable financial expense:

So valuable an organisation as the police force, so essential to the social order of this great metropolis and the comfort of its denizens, cannot be maintained without considerable aggregate cost. Few, however, who fairly examine the various items of expenditure for the metropolitan police, will find much to criticise.<sup>183</sup>

The politically-minded but non-partisan magazine the *Examiner* was another publication that actively commented on the state of crime and policing, though its conclusions were wildly different to *Chambers's*. It was founded by brothers John and Leigh Hunt in 1808 as a literary magazine, which Leora Bersohn argues was the lens through which they wished to approach political critique.<sup>184</sup> In 'The Police', published in August 1866, the *Examiner* mused on the failings of the police force when it comes to using physical force in the midst of rioting, where innocent bystanders have found themselves on the receiving end of blows and have had their complaints dismissed:

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<sup>182</sup> 'Criminal Statistics', *Chambers's Journal*, 11 February 1860, p. 84.

<sup>183</sup> 'The Metropolitan Police and what is Paid for Them', *Chambers's Journal*, 2 July 1864, p. 424.

<sup>184</sup> Leora Bersohn, 'Examiner (1808-1881)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by. Brake and Demoor, p. 211.

In one instance of great unprovoked violence, the magistrate said the officer was justified in breaking the complainant's head by mistake. That the mistake could be excused we admit, but we cannot see how a knock on the head of A., deserved and intended for B., can be justified.<sup>185</sup>

This slightly contemptuous attitude intensified in other articles. In 1869, the magazine ran a story titled 'Capital Punishment Without Trial', which related the case of Hannah Saunders, driven insane after she was evicted and who attempted suicide by throwing herself into a canal. She was picked up by a local police officer, who (the magazine laments) instead of conveying her to a hospital or infirmary, placed her unceremoniously in a cell and left her unattended for several days. The experience led to Saunders's death, and the paper attacked the police-force's incompetence at refusing her bail, refusing to seek medical attention and blamed it for her 'execution'.<sup>186</sup>

In 'The London Police', which appeared in 1872, the *Examiner* asserted that the police force's incompetence may have been due to disaffection in the force itself. Intolerable working conditions led to a mutiny among the force in the early 1870s, and several officers were consequently dismissed.<sup>187</sup> The article suggested that this was perhaps not without justification:

That the police had serious grounds for disaffection hardly any one now appears to doubt. Their work was very hard. Their pay was miserably small. Even at present [...] it is far from liberal. But the scanty pay was the least grievance. One very sore point with the force was that duties had been put upon it which tended to make it ridiculous and even unpopular. To say nothing of the new Licensing Act [...] gave the force an infinitude of

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<sup>185</sup> 'The Police', *Examiner*, 11 August 1866, p. 498.

<sup>186</sup> 'Capital Punishment Without Trial', *Examiner*, 9 January 1869, p. 19.

<sup>187</sup> 'The London Police', *Examiner*, 23 November 1872, p. 1148.

trouble, and made the men very dissatisfied with their duty [which] under Colonel Henderson the life of a policeman has become almost intolerable.<sup>188</sup>

Perhaps some of the most striking images of the police in non-partisan magazines from this period came from the satirical press. The ‘Victorian institution’<sup>189</sup> *Punch, or, the London Charivari*, true to its satirical nature, tended to lean towards mockery of the police. In March 1856, it produced an article which commented on the spread of the police into rural areas as a result of the County and Borough Police Act, and remarked that this was perhaps ill-advised:

The policemen, disgusted at the accusation that has so long been hurled at them, that they are never to be found when wanted in the Metropolis, are about to throw themselves on the Country.<sup>190</sup>

*Punch*’s attacks also occasionally centred on the police’s abilities, and in January 1856 it published an article titled ‘Policeman’s Logic’, which argued that police officers seldom displayed intelligent qualities:

We find [...] from a recent police case at Marylebone, that the reasoning powers of a metropolitan constable are occasionally used by himself to supply a want of actual knowledge, as may be seen in the following brief dialogue:-

“MAGISTRATE. Do you think the pork was stolen?”

“POLICEMAN. I have no doubt of it, or she would not have let it drop.”

[...] This species of circumstantial evidence must be received with considerable caution, for there are many articles that one might very innocently drop [...] which one would not

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<sup>188</sup> ‘The London Police’, *Examiner*, 23 November 1872, p. 1148.

<sup>189</sup> Brian Maidment, ‘*Punch* (1841-2002)’, in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 517.

<sup>190</sup> ‘The Rural Police’, *Punch, or, the London Charivari*, 15 March 1856, p. 107.

like to be accused of stealing, unless one was prepared to burn one's fingers. The policeman [...] should be careful to avoid such nonsense [...]<sup>191</sup>

Another of *Punch's* remarkable depictions of the police emerged in 1863, when it printed an image of two police officers in the guise of Gog and Magog. These were famously the colloquial names of two effigies of giants displayed at London's Guildhall and locally known as the city's guardians.



*Figure 4: Gog and Magog depicted as police officers, beset by London's masses who 'seem to think they ain't no sort o'use'.*

*'The City Police' Punch, or, the London Charivari, 11 April 1863, p. 151.*

<sup>191</sup> 'Policeman's Logic', *Punch, or, the London Charivari*, 5 January 1856, p. 10.

Far from depicting them as protectors of the masses, however, *Punch* showed the two giants as beset by them (see fig. 4), and this is quite telling in this context. It suggested that the position of the police as either trusted guardians or useless interferers was under discussion even in non-partisan and satirical periodicals.

Away from *Punch*, other satirical magazines also attacked the competence of the police force throughout its lifespan. *Fun*, as Brian Maidment argues, was one of the more successful of *Punch*'s imitators,<sup>192</sup> and followed its style so closely that William Makepeace Thackeray was reputed to have dubbed it 'Funch'.<sup>193</sup>



Figure 5: Final panel depicting the 'idiot detective' as a triumphant yet corrupt version of Lady Justice.

*'The Idiot Detective, or, the Track! The Trial!! and the Triumph!!!'*, *Fun*, 2 January 1869, p. 13.

In 1869 it produced a contemptuous comic-strip titled 'The Idiot Detective, or, the Track! The Trial!! and The Triumph!!!', which depicted a hapless police officer following incorrect scents after a criminal. He arrests another officer (who had actually managed to apprehend

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<sup>192</sup> Brian Maidment, 'Fun (1861-1901)', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 237.

<sup>193</sup> Alvin Sullivan, *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837-1913* (London: Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 135.

the *real* criminal), before assaulting a child, much to the appreciation of an overfed magistrate with a hair-style that resembles devil-horns. The magistrate labels the child's resistance '[...] one of the most brutal and *unmanly* [original italics] assaults ever committed on the police'. The 'idiot detective' is then pensioned for life for his 'services', and is depicted as 'triumphant' in the final panel of the strip, drawn in a pose that resembles the statue of Lady Justice, peering out from underneath a blindfold over his eyes, truncheon in one hand and scales in the other, striking others down before him (see fig. 5).<sup>194</sup>

The incompetent detective represented all police officers who, the comic-strip suggested, frequently apprehended the wrong suspects and made poor and occasionally outrageous decisions in the execution of their duties. The fact that the incompetent detective peers out from underneath the blindfold when arranged like the statue of Justice also intimated at an accusation of corruption within the force. The fat, devil-horned magistrate also represented the bureaucratic arm of the justice system, accepting and even rewarding the police's inadequacies and presenting them as qualities. In March 1873, *Fun* also published an article simply titled 'Police!' which again presented the apparent idiocy of police officers. It described a police officer who insists that residents of a particular street clear their doorways of snow, in the middle of a blizzard. However when it was suggested to him that the task should perhaps wait until the blizzard has ceased, the officer responds aggressively.<sup>195</sup>

## **1.6: The Police and the mid-Victorian Periodical Press: Chapter 1**

### **Conclusions**

Overall, an enormous variety of periodicals and magazines published between 1850 and 1870 were concerned with the social, economic and political implications of nationwide policing

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<sup>194</sup> 'The Idiot Detective, or, the Track! The Trial!! and the Triumph!!!', *Fun*, 2 January 1869, p. 13.

<sup>195</sup> 'Police!', *Fun*, 8 March 1873, p. 106.

from its inception in 1856. The fact that a keen interest in the police was shown in such an eclectic variety of periodicals suggests a wider public interest in the police in general.

The differences in non-fiction periodical explorations of the police came through external influences on the publications themselves, including the different kind of publications that they were and the topics they were meant to address. In the political press, explorations of nationwide policing were distorted by each publication's own political ideologies. Socially or politically conservative magazines were generally supportive of the police, whilst those of a more liberal persuasion were often more suspicious. As Martin Wiener concludes:

[e]lite and politically conservative newspapers were ready to perceive social and moral dangers in an outburst of particularly offensive crime, and to urge firm punishment, while local, popularly aimed and more liberal newspapers stood ready to take up the cause of mercy for those facing the gallows.<sup>196</sup>

However, magazines of all political leanings shared some perspectives on the police which are important to highlight at this stage, as this thesis will return to these ideas in subsequent chapters. These included, most importantly, the idea that the police occupied a transitional or indistinct space between the criminal classes and the rest of respectable Victorian society, and that they maintained rigid class distinctions between different social sects. Conservative periodicals saw this as a protecting and positive feature, which protected middle-class values such as property and commerce. Periodicals which were politically and socially liberal, however, largely saw it as oppressive on the class of people the police kept isolated from the rest of society. In either case, the fact that the police occupied a space between criminality and respectability is important to note when considering how the police were represented in other forms of periodical journalism and, crucially, periodical fiction across the Victorian era.

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<sup>196</sup> Wiener, pp. 110-125 (p. 124).

A final important yet simple point to be noted is that the periodical press was instrumental in permeating greater understanding of the appearance, the role, the political and social remit of the nationwide police force as a whole, and for bringing 'policing' directly to the forefront of public consciousness. Public understanding of law enforcement in the years after 1856 could not have been achieved without the influence of periodical discussion, as the periodical press was the largest mid-Victorian mass-media outlet. Periodical debates concerning law enforcement entrenched the police officer into wider public consciousness, even if this was through a discussion of how they were not effective at performing their duties. In other words the press was responsible for helping the public make sense of the new, nationwide system of law enforcement, and helping the public realise that the police were becoming an intrinsic part of the 'criminal process'. This, as the next chapter will detail, had a significant effect on crime-reporting.

## Chapter 2

### ‘A Condemned Cell with a View’: Crime Journalism c. 1750-1875

#### 2.1: Introduction: From Execution Broad­sides to Crime ‘Round-Ups’

The police force received extensive criticism in mid-Victorian periodicals between 1850 and 1875. In the aftermath of the 1856 County and Borough Police Act, commentators became interested in the social and political implications of nationwide law enforcement, and used their medium to discuss this point at length in order to help serve a ‘community building function’.<sup>197</sup> However, the discussion of the implications of law enforcement remained separate from mid-Victorian periodical engagement with *crime*. Alongside non-fiction discussion of the police, mid-century periodicals, magazines and newspapers simultaneously ran regular features which ‘rounded-up’ or summarised criminal events from up and down the country. Martin Wiener argues that, as the nineteenth century progressed, the ‘press played an increasing role in criminal justice by publicizing criminal acts, reporting trials and discussing sentencing.’<sup>198</sup>

These periodical ‘crime round ups’ from the mid-Victorian era had evolved from much earlier forms of writing which had also concerned crime,<sup>199</sup> and which had been popular from their outset.<sup>200</sup> Judith Knelman quotes Richard Altick in suggesting that:

The policy of the new aggressive, circulation-hungry journalism was to give the broadening public what it wanted; and high on the list of what it wanted was Murder.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Korte, pp. 181-201 (p. 181).

<sup>198</sup> Wiener, pp. 110-125 (p. 110).

<sup>199</sup> Anne Rodrick, ‘Only a Newspaper Metaphor: Crime Reports, Class Conflict and Social Criticism in Two Victorian Newspapers,’ *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 29, 1, (1996), 1-18 (p. 2).

<sup>200</sup> Casey, pp. 367-391 (p. 375).

‘Crime reporting’ is thought to have originated in the eighteenth century, where it had established for itself a diverse literary tradition.<sup>202</sup> Its first incarnation was as the cheaply-peddled execution broadside, pamphlet or chap-book (although the ‘broadside’ form had actually appeared in the sixteenth century).<sup>203</sup> As Heather Worthington summarises, a broadside generally consisted of, ‘an unfolded sheet of paper with printed matter on one side only – a proclamation, poster, handbill, or ballad-sheet’.<sup>204</sup>

Broadsides which focused on executions were sold by peddlers in the crowds gathered at executions, and were popular between around 1750 and 1840. They were single-sheet, sensationalised accounts of the lives of criminals, their crimes and a usually gruesome description of their punishments. They were also cheap, typically costing 1*d.* (or less) and some were even sold by the dozen for a mere 2 to 2½*d.*<sup>205</sup> Execution broadsides were designed to both instil fear of judicial vengeance on potential would-be offenders, and to provide their readers with a grisly form of entertainment.

The chaplains of prisons who had the physical and spiritual responsibility for those condemned to death realised the lucrative potential of publishing their own experiences with criminals.<sup>206</sup> Consequently, they began producing their own accounts of their interactions with prisoners, and a ‘brisk trade in chaplains’ accounts of a prisoner’s last hours took

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<sup>201</sup> Richard Altick, *Victorian Studies in Scarlet: Murders and Manners in the Age of Victoria* (London; W. W. Norton and Co., 1970), p. 66, cited in Judith Knelman, *Twisting in the Wind: The Murderess and the English Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 35.

<sup>202</sup> Knelman, p. 25. See also Vic Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>203</sup> Judith Rowbotham, Kim Stevenson and Samantha Pegg, *Crime News in Modern Britain: Press Reporting and Responsibility, 1820-2010* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 14.

<sup>204</sup> Heather Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth Century Popular Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 6.

<sup>205</sup> Gatrell, p. 159.

<sup>206</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 7.

shape.<sup>207</sup> These were less sensationalised than broadsides and were more expensive; in 1770, a typical pamphlet would cost potential readers 6d., compared to a broadside's 1d. price tag. Especially popular were those which emerged from inside Newgate Prison, which became known collectively as the *Ordinary of Newgate's Accounts* and which were published frequently throughout almost the entire eighteenth century.

Both execution broadsides and prison chaplains' accounts enjoyed considerable popularity, and so it was perhaps only a matter of time before they were given a more permanent form of publication. This took the form of what Knelman terms 'compendiums of criminal careers', the most famous of which was the *Newgate Calendar*.<sup>208</sup> As with the broadsides and chaplains' accounts before them, the *Calendars* were designed to both entertain readers and to attempt to steer them away from criminality. They also demonstrated the power of the law and, as Stephen Knight argues, highlighted how society was thought to manage and regulate its own system of law enforcement prior to the emergence of the police.<sup>209</sup> The first *Newgate Calendar* appeared in 1773,<sup>210</sup> however they remained popular throughout almost the entire nineteenth century and were continuously republished throughout the era under various titles, including the *Chronicles of Crime, or, the New Newgate Calendar* and the *Modern Newgate Calendar*.<sup>211</sup> Additionally, they opted not to exclusively focus on contemporary criminals, but instead several editions published accounts of historic crimes alongside more recent ones.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Knelman, p. 27.

<sup>208</sup> Knelman, p. 27.

<sup>209</sup> Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980), p. 12.

<sup>210</sup> Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, p. 9.

<sup>211</sup> Knelman, p. 27.

<sup>212</sup> For example, in the 1824 edition, the first story detailed the criminal career and execution of Reverend Thomas Hunter, executed for murdering two of his pupils in 1700. For more information, see Andrew Knapp and William Baldwin, *The Newgate Calendar: Comprising Interesting Memoirs of the Most Notorious Characters who Have Been Convicted of Outrages on the Laws of England Since the Commencement of the*

All these early forms of crime journalism presented their readers with sensationalised narratives detailing the lives of criminals, their crimes, trials and executions. As Knelman argues, each form catered for different readerships with varying levels of literacy.<sup>213</sup> By the mid-Victorian era, however, these early forms of crime writing had been ‘largely supplanted by the popular press’, and articles which reported on recent criminal occurrences appeared alongside non-fiction criticism of the newly-established police force.<sup>214</sup> Newspapers and periodicals, especially once they had been released from the ‘taxes on knowledge’, began to constitute the largest medium through which to relate ‘crime intelligence’ to readers.<sup>215</sup>

This second chapter examines how the various older forms of crime reporting were connected with mid-nineteenth century periodical crime intelligence through shared literary characteristics, with a view to demonstrating their significant impact on the construction of mid-Victorian detective fiction in later chapters. It initially explores how the introduction of the professional police as responsible for maintaining law and order allowed crime journalism to diversify away from acting as a deterrent to readers, and that the force increased the distance between criminality and the rest of ‘respectable’ society. It then progresses to look at how the police themselves occupied a liminal social space in mid-Victorian crime journalism, as they themselves began to occupy the growing space between ‘criminality’ and ‘respectability’ – a feature which has already been demonstrated in some contemporary criticism on the police. The chapter finally argues that crime reporting, in both mid-Victorian periodicals and in its older forms, were quasi-voyeuristic, in that crime journalism catered for

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*Eighteenth Century; with Occasional Anecdotes and Observations, Speeches, Confessions, and Last Exclamations of Sufferers* (London: J. Robins and Co, 1824).

<sup>213</sup> Knelman, p. 25.

<sup>214</sup> Knelman, p. 35.

<sup>215</sup> Rowbotham, Stevenson and Pegg, p. 17.

readers' desires to take a peek inside criminalised spaces such as court rooms, condemned cells, executions or even criminals' domestic arrangements.

This chapter ultimately highlights how these various perspectives meshed with public discussion of the police. This had a significant impact on the development of mid-Victorian detective fiction, as the collision of the two journalistic discourses, namely the police and crime itself, created new forms of writing including the first fictional genre which was contemporaneously described by authors and commentators as 'detective literature'.

Methodologically, this chapter moves away from the politically-focused approach Chapter 1 took with its explorations on periodical criticism of the concept of policing. This is not to suggest that reporting on crime in periodicals was not politicised; in fact some scholars, recently such as Edward Jacobs, suggest that crime writing in newspapers and periodicals engaged with politics more than has hitherto been recognised.<sup>216</sup> Jacobs laments that scholars tend to avoid observing political debates in crime journalism in favour of arguing that sensationalism was designed to distract readers from radical politics.<sup>217</sup> However, this chapter opts to utilise a more thematic approach to explore how crime was reported to readers in different periodicals, because there were multiple common themes in a number of different forms of crime journalism which emerged across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in periodicals with varying political or cultural interests.

## **2.2: Mid-Victorian Crime Reporting and the Police Officer**

A large number of mid-Victorian periodicals published regular features which described the latest criminal happenings from up and down the country. These were published alongside

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<sup>216</sup> Edward Jacobs, 'Edward Lloyd's Sunday Newspapers and the Cultural Politics of Crime News, c. 1840-1843', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 50, 3 (2017), 619-649 (p. 620).

<sup>217</sup> Jacobs, pp. 619-649 (p. 620).

the non-fiction criticism of the police which this thesis explored in Chapter 1, and were designed to furnish the reader with digestible snippets of information on the latest criminal occurrences. The *Leader*, writing in 1851, usefully clarified that, '[t]he records of the assizes and of the police courts sometimes furnish stories as dramatic and extravagant as any detailed by the novelist.'<sup>218</sup> Judith Knelman helpfully provides a list of newspapers which became interested in producing this kind of crime-reporting around the 1840s and 50s:

[...] *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* and the *Illustrated London News*, founded in 1842, the *News of the World* (1843), the *Daily Express* and the *Daily News* (1846), the *Weekly Times* (1847), and *Reynolds's Newspaper* (1850) [...] pushed the established papers [such as] the *Times*, the *Observer*, the *Advertiser*, the *Chronicle*, the *Herald*, the *Post*, the *Standard*, the *Globe*, and the *Sun* [...] to publish more and more about crime.<sup>219</sup>

Away from newspapers, which are not under direct scrutiny here, periodicals and magazines also began to regularly publish these crime 'round-ups', including *John Bull*, the *Sixpenny Magazine*, *Bell's Life in London*, the *Lady's Magazine*, the *Leader*, the *London Review*, *Once a Week* and the *Spectator*. Crime features appeared as regular columns, and were given titles such as 'Law and Police' (*John Bull*), 'Police Intelligence' (*Bell's Life in London*), 'Criminal Record' (the *Leader*), or 'Law and Crime' (the *Sixpenny Magazine*). They were often prominently placed and long-running; *John Bull's* 'Law and Police' column was published weekly throughout the entire 1860s and well into the 1870s. The features were so common, in fact, that satirical magazines like *Punch* also occasionally published mock-versions of popular crime 'round-up' features published in their contemporaries or rivals.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> 'Criminal Conversation, Divorce, etc.', *Leader*, 26 January 1851, p. 700.

<sup>219</sup> Knelman, p. 36.

<sup>220</sup> A good example was the 'Police Intelligence' feature published in *Punch*, the title of which acted as a double entendre to suggest that the police possessed, in actual fact, very little intelligence. For a good representative example, see 'Police Intelligence', *Punch, or, the London Charivari*, 21 January 1865, p. 29.

A case-study into a single periodical's publication of crime round-ups effectively illustrates this point surrounding the journalistic form's sheer diversity and popularity, and also simultaneously highlights some of the methodological approaches this project takes to sourcing its primary material. The magazine the *Leader* was a regular publisher of crime round-ups throughout its entire publication run of the ten year period between 1850 and 1860, and can help to highlight how common, diverse and popular crime round-ups were even within a single title. The *Leader* published crime round-ups under various different names, some of which were regularly-appearing features and others which were more sporadic or individualised. The first priority, therefore, is to identify precisely what the *Leader* called its crime round-up features. To identify as many different titles of the magazine's crime round-ups as possible, a broad search string incorporating wildcard search-terms was inputted into the *ProQuest British Periodicals* database, as this repository carries the entire print-run of the *Leader* from 1850 to 1860. This search string used was:

ti("crim\*" OR "polic\*" OR "murder\*") AND PUBID(3053)

Broken down, this string searched for variations on the words 'crime', 'police' or 'murder', with wildcard asterisks included on each term to ensure words such as 'criminal', 'policing' or 'murderers' were captured. The search was limited (by the inclusion of the expression 'ti' at the string's beginning) to the titles of each article, rather than their content. The PUBID, 3053, refers exclusively to the *Leader* as a publication, restricting the search to that title only.

This search returned 580 hits, highlighting the sheer frequency of the appearance of the crime round-up even in a single periodical title – an average of 58 articles per year. It also revealed some of the most commonly-used titles for crime round-ups contained in the *Leader*, as well as some of the more individual or sporadic examples. The most common titles of crime round-ups in the *Leader* were revealed to be 'Criminal Record' and 'Gatherings from

the Law and Police Courts'. The search could then be rerun using these titles to help break down the dataset even further, using terms which searched for those articles individually:

ti("criminal record") AND PUBID(3053)

ti("gatherings from the law and police courts") AND PUBID(3053)

Respectively, the 'Criminal Record' feature appeared in the *Leader* a total of 80 times between 1850 and 1860, first appearing on January 22 1853. The 'Gatherings from Law and Police Courts' feature appeared a total of 71 times, and appeared between 1857 and 1860. Both of these common features typically stretched to about 1.5 to 2 columns of information, and included several distinct cases; the first issue of 'Gatherings from Law and Police Courts' from February 14 1857, for example, was 1.5 columns long, and included 7 accounts. Each case varied in length; in this example alone, the length of each case range from lengthy paragraphs to a mere three lines describing a spate of cruelty to horses, although a paragraph was certainly typical.<sup>221</sup> Other, more individualised titles also revealed by the broad, wildcard search-string could also be captured – in 1851, the *Leader* published 6 articles titled 'Crimes and Accidents' before the feature was dropped, and it also published three articles titled 'Murders and Suicides' in April 1851, October 1851 and April 1852. Perhaps the most specific crime round-up article published in the *Leader* appeared only once in April 1851, and was titled simply 'Crime in Suffolk'. Thus, this methodological approach to sourcing material from digitised periodical resources highlights how crime round-ups were both widespread in a number of periodical titles and diverse in their nature, and can also show how this material can quickly be broken down into manageable pieces.

A typical example of one of these features can be seen in the illustration on the next page (see fig. 6).

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<sup>221</sup> 'Gatherings from Law and Police Courts', *Leader*, 14 February 1857, p. 152.

*Viva! Viva i fratelli Lombardi!* At a grand promenade of gondolas given in honour of the Milanese, those in which Austrian officers and functionaries were seated were run against with great violence. Several of the gondolas also hoisted tri-colored flags. To the cries of *Viva l'Italia!* many of the crowd added, *A basso l'Austria!* The Austrian police took no notice of what occurred; but this first pleasure train will be the last."

AUSTRIA.

Christian refugees from Bosnia continue to cross the Austrian frontier, where they are well provided for by the Emperor's direct order. A military cordon has been established near the frontier to protect the Christians, and the Turks, on their side, have stationed a large force to intercept the fugitives.

Rumour at Vienna speaks of the concentration of an Austrian corps d'armee of 30,000 to 33,000 men of all arms in Southern Hungary, on the points nearest the Turkish, Bosnian, and Servian frontiers. According to rumour, this army is to be provided with provisions for one year, and with everything requisite for it to take the field immediately, should circumstances render it necessary. The *Cologne Gazette* gives a similar rumour, but with a far less number of troops.

GERMANY.

"The German-Danish quarrel," says the *Morning Star*, "has now arrived at a serious crisis. The special committee of the Federal Diet has recommended the rejection of the Danish proposition, and proposed that execution—that is, the entrance of Federal troops into Holstein, accompanied by Federal commissioners, to take the Government of the Duchy into their hands—should be proceeded with in a fortnight."

RUSSIA.

The efforts which Russia has been making for some time past to increase her navy are so considerable (says a letter from Poland in the *Vienna Gazette*) that her own building-yards are not sufficient for the purpose. She has had vessels built in England, France, and America, under the superintendence of officers of the Russian navy. The reorganisation of the Baltic fleet is now complete, and reckons twenty-seven ships of the line and several smaller vessels, without counting gunboats. As the number in the Black Sea has been reduced, the Government has endeavoured to compensate for this loss by increasing the flotilla in the Caspian Sea, and by creating a respectable naval force in Eastern Siberia and at the mouth of the River Amoor.

Kamiesh, the wooden seaport town erected by the French during the war in the Crimea, still exists, and boasts of inhabitants.

POLAND.

The Revolutionary Committee of London has, it is said, recently distributed in Poland copies of a manifesto exciting the Poles to rebellion. A copy has been seized by the authorities of Posen.

HOLLAND.

The Minister of the Interior has submitted to the King a detailed report on a new submarine telegraphic line between the British and Dutch coasts. The Minister proposes, contrary to the opinion of his predecessors, to grant a new concession to M. Ruyssenars, who has obtained it from Hanover and Denmark.

CRIMINAL RECORD.

**CHILD MURDER.**—The wife of a collier at Nailsea has cut the throat of her little boy while, apparently, in a state of temporary insanity. She was then about to make a similar attack on her other children, but their cries brought assistance to the spot, on which the woman gashed her own throat, though not fatally. An inquest has been held on the body of the child, ending in a verdict of Wilful Murder against the mother, who will be committed for trial when sufficiently recovered.

**DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS.**—Four human skeletons have been discovered by the workmen employed in digging for the foundations of the Westminster Palace Hotel. They were found in the centre of the ground where formerly stood some old structures of a very disreputable character. The remains were probably those of persons who had been murdered; but an inquiry would now be fruitless, from lapse of time.

**MURDER AT RYE.**—John White, a man against whom a coroner's jury, on Friday week, returned a verdict for the wilful murder of his wife at Rye, was captured between four and five miles of that town last Saturday evening. He made very little effort to escape, saying that he could not leave his children, of whom he has seven. He confesses that he was the murderer. He was examined at the Town Hall, Winchelsea, on Tuesday, when a scene of unexampled pathos and misery took place. It was found necessary to administer water frequently to the prisoner, who was in a state of lamentable prostration; and, on his daughter being brought forward to give evidence, he uttered a terrible groan, fell on his knees, and exclaimed, "Oh, Lord, look down upon my poor soul, and my dear blessed wife! Oh, keep my children from temptation! Oh, let me see my children! The temptation has been too great for me." Several young girls who were present were so overcome at this that it was found necessary to take them out. The prisoner was attended to by medical men, and in

time became calmer, and shed tears. His daughter was removed, and another witness examined; on which the prisoner cried out, "Where is that girl? Oh, where is that girl?" adding, to one of the medical men, "Direct me, sir, direct me. Lost, lost!" One of the witnesses having alluded to the suspicions felt by the accused with respect to his wife's fidelity, the prisoner started up, clenched his fists, ground his teeth, and made a horrid noise. Several policemen restrained him, and he then said, "I won't hurt anybody." After a time, he asked, "Where are my poor boys?" The girl was again brought in, and screened from her father's observation; but, as she was leaving, he caught sight of her, cried out, "Oh, there is my girl!" and burst into tears again. Having been committed for trial, and been asked if he wished to say anything, he replied, "No, gentlemen. I want to see my children, if you please. Oh, let me see my children!" He was then removed to Lewes gaol.

**A NEW TRICK.**—A correspondent writing to the *Times*, mentions a new device of policy of the rogues who are always looking out for victims among the shop-keeping class:—"Mrs. Underwood, an elderly lady, keeps the post-office, and a small stationer's shop, in Ladbrook-grove, Notting-hill. On Friday last (July 30th) at eleven a.m., a man came to her shop for some note paper. At the same time, a smart dog-cart, no doubt driven by an accomplice, drove up, which the man in the shop, affecting to see it through the window, pointed out with the words, 'Holla, ma'am! here's somebody wants you.' Mrs. Underwood thereupon left her shop to attend to the driver, who it is needless to say, contrived to detain her by questions about the post sufficiently long to enable the confederate in the shop to rob her and make off, and then drove away. Upon Mrs. Underwood returning in-doors, she found the man gone, and with him her cash-box, containing over 20*l.* in gold and some silver."

**MURDER OF A BOY.**—The dead body of a youth, sixteen years of age, was discovered a few days ago in a hayrack in a stable at Wick, near Berkeley, Gloucestershire. He had been missing for two days, and had last been seen in company of two carters, named Daniels and Bailey. It was Daniels who first announced the discovery of the body, which he hid in a very cool and flippant manner. He and Bailey have been apprehended, and committed for trial on a charge of Wilful Murder.

**MANSLAUGHTER ON A RAILWAY.**—The adjourned inquest on the body of William Pine, the engine-driver, on the London and North-Western Railway, who came by his death in an accident on the Willesden junction, caused by the negligence of the pointsman, Henry Lamb, was brought to a conclusion on Tuesday, when the jury returned a verdict of Manslaughter against Lamb, and appended the following remarks:—"The jury recommend that an extra man should be appointed to work the points, and that the men should be confined to that work and nothing else; also, that the telegraph signal-box should be placed just opposite the points. The jury also attach great blame to the manager of the North London Railway in consequence of the irregularities that mark the time of starting their Kew trains from their stations."

**MURDER OF A YOUNG LADY BY HER LOVER.**—Miss Mary Jane Scaife, the daughter of a farmer at Darley, near Ripley, on the line of the Leeds Northern Railway, was murdered on Sunday night by a young gentleman, named Atkinson, to whom she was engaged. Atkinson is the son of a flax-spinner, and he has been intimate with the young lady since they were both children together; but the mother of Miss Scaife and the father of Atkinson did not approve the match, and it was broken off for a time, during which interval Miss Scaife received the attentions of a Mr. Gill. But that intimacy was also put an end to, and the young lady again accepted Atkinson as her suitor. On Tuesday week, however, Atkinson saw Miss Scaife at a gala talking with Gill, and this appears to have awakened a strong feeling of jealousy. Nevertheless, the young couple went to chapel together on Sunday evening, and left in company. Miss Scaife did not return home; but it was thought she had gone to the house of her uncle, and no alarm was felt. Atkinson reached home a little after nine o'clock, and went to bed very soon. At daybreak, his brother, who slept in the same room, observed blood on his shirt, and asked the cause. Atkinson replied that he had murdered Mary Jane Scaife on the previous night; on which the brother roused the family, and told them the dismal news. In with the throat cut, and the eyes starting from the sockets. Everything betokened that a frightful struggle for life had taken place. Atkinson was apprehended, and at the police office at Ripon made some vaunting remarks, among which were:—"I have been very happy ever since I left Pateley-bridge (the place to which he was first taken on being apprehended); I have committed a great crime, but I am quite content; I can go freely to the gallows; I can forgive the vilest of the vile; I am guilty; I left her about half-past nine o'clock last night." According to one account, Atkinson's brother slept in another room, and the murderer came in early in the morning, exclaiming, "What have I done? Oh, Lord, have mercy on me! What have I done? I have murdered Mary Ann Scaife." The noise of the death-struggle had been heard at a distance by some people, but they had not inquired into it. On

Wednesday, Atkinson was examined before the county magistrates at Knaresborough, and he then made a verbal confession of his guilt. The girl had refused to marry him, as she did not think they would be happy together. He then threatened to murder her, and ultimately clutched her round the throat. She cried out, and he released his hold, and walked on with her a little way farther, but soon pulled out a knife, and showed it her. "She cried out, 'Let's go home, Jim—let's go home, Jim!' Then I seized her and cut her throat, and she cried out, 'It's all my mother, Jim—it's all my mother that's caused this disturbance.' She cried out 'The Lord help me' three times, to the best of my recollection, and then she fainted away, and I left her. I went over the wall, shut the knife, and put it in my waistcoat pocket. I went into the fields, and wandered about, perhaps an hour or an hour and a half. I laid me down and thought I would go and tell her parents, but I could not go. I then thought I would go to her again, and I went back; but, when I got a little way up the lane, my heart failed me and I couldn't go to her. Then I got over the other wall into the field on the other side. I took the knife out of my pocket again and opened it, and I put it in a wall top, after which I took across the fields home to a little dam of my father's, to wash the blood off my hands and face. I then crossed another field home. When I got home, my father and them were up. I did not go into the house. I went into the shed where the carts were, and sat me down until I thought they had all gone to bed. Then I went into the house. I could not eat any supper, and went to bed. I could not rest all the night." After this statement, Atkinson was committed for trial at the next York Assizes.

THE ASSIZES.

**ALBERT HUSKEY TURNER** was tried at Maidstone on Friday week on a charge of murdering his wife. He had some reason for supposing that a man named Taylor had been unduly familiar with her (though Taylor solemnly denied the fact at the trial); and, on the night of Saturday, April 17th, being greatly exasperated at a meeting which he supposed to have taken place, he struck her three times on the head with a poker, and then cut her throat. The act was first discovered by some lodgers in the room below, on to whose bed the blood dripped through the ceiling. Turner made no attempt to deny his guilt, but said he would rather see his wife lying dead than that she should live to be a prostitute. The defence simply sought to soften the charge from murder to manslaughter. The jury took this view of the case, and Turner was sentenced to penal servitude for life.

Captains Matheson and Fox, who were recently committed for trial on a charge of murdering a sailor by throwing him overboard off Hamburg, have been acquitted at the Durham Assizes. The case for the prosecution broke down.

Mr. Frederick Swan Todd has been found guilty at Newcastle-on-Tyne of a murderous attack with a knife on Mr. George Tallentyre Gibson, a solicitor, in his office, on the night of the 24th of last March. The defence was a suggestion of insanity, caused by losses and misfortunes. Todd was sentenced to imprisonment for six months.

In the case of John Franklin, the man charged with the murder of Joseph Owen, at Ryton, near Coventry, the Grand Jury at Warwick threw out the bill.

Selina Cranmore, a married woman, has been tried at the same Assizes on a charge of strangling her infant in its cradle. It was clear, however, that she was insane at the time; and she was therefore acquitted. On the day on which the child was born, a neighbour hanged himself, which made so great an impression on the woman that she accused herself of being the cause of the act. She will be kept in an asylum till she is quite cured.

William Ayerst, a medical gentleman between eighty and ninety years of age, has been tried at Maidstone on a charge of being concerned with a quack named Baldwin (found guilty at the Spring Assizes) in the manslaughter of the wife of a labouring man. The case was one of imputed unskillfulness in the delivery of the woman during childbirth. The jury acquitted the accused.—A similar case has been tried at Guildford. The accused in this case was Mr. Francis Ward, a surgeon practising at Streetham; but the evidence altogether failed to prove negligence, and the accused was acquitted, with a compliment from the Judge.

William Barker, a farmer owning considerable property near Canterbury, was tried at Maidstone last Saturday on a charge of setting fire to some of his own buildings which were insured. He only applied to the fire-office for the exact value of the buildings destroyed; the object, therefore, was not to gain in the ordinary sense of the word; but it is thought that he wanted the insurance company to provide him with new buildings in the place of the old. He was found guilty; but Baron Bramwell postponed sentence, as Barker appeared to be of rather weak intellect. On a subsequent day, however, he was sentenced to three months' hard labour.

An action was brought at the same Assizes against Mr. John Webb Roche by a Miss Smith, to recover 62*l.* 10*s.* being five quarters' arrears of an annuity of 50*l.* granted

Figure 6: A typical example of the 'Criminal Record' feature from the Leader, 1850-1860.

'Criminal Record', Leader, 7 August 1858, p. 767.

These crime ‘round-ups’ were, at their core, designed to help publications sell more copies. Anne Rodrick quotes the radical pressman Henry Hetherington (of *Poor Man’s Guardian* fame)<sup>222</sup> musing on the idea of publishing crime-journalism in his newspaper the *Twopenny Dispatch* for this reason:

Even the ultra-Radical pressman Henry Hetherington, setting out on a new publishing venture [the *Twopenny Dispatch*], catalogued the “sort of devilment that will make it sell”: “Police Intelligence, [...] Murders, Rapes, Suicides, Burnings, Maimings, Theatricals, Races, [and] Pugilism”.<sup>223</sup>

Hetherington’s list also helps to highlight the sheer diversity of these narratives across different magazines and even across different issues of the same publication. They were visually varied, sometimes condensed into small corners or sometimes dominating an entire page, and this depended largely on the different types of case available for that issue or how interesting recent criminal activity was deemed to be. The length of each individual narrative also depended on how many crime-narratives needed to be included as part of a feature column, and in some cases each feature would contain several short narratives published in sequence.

It is worth noting that these periodical crime ‘round-ups’ were also diverse in terms of the kinds of crimes that they reported, and were more sanitised than the kinds of writing which had preceded them. Historically, crime writing in the form of the chap-book, the broadside or the early *Newgate Calendars* had tended to focus on gruesome and serious crimes such as murder, treason or piracy, which were all punished capitally. This was at least partially

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<sup>222</sup> Malcolm S. Chase, ‘Hetherington, Henry (1792-1849)’, in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 281.

<sup>223</sup> Ivon Asquith, ‘The structure, ownership and control of the press, 1780-1855’, in *Newspaper History from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present Day*, ed. by George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (London: Constable, 1978), pp. 98-116 (p. 107), qtd. in Rodrick, pp. 1-18 (p. 2).

because these historic forms of crime writing had all been designed to manifest a form of ‘law enforcement’ themselves, by either instilling fear of judicial or divine retribution in readers, or by attempting to create a communal feeling of contempt for criminals who were to suffer the ultimate punishment.<sup>224</sup> However, distaste for corporal and capital punishments (especially in public forms) combined with law enforcement’s professionalisation began to take shape in the early-to-mid nineteenth century.<sup>225</sup> In this era the new police steadily took on responsibility for maintaining law and order, and drove both a physical and an ideological ‘wedge’ between criminality and the rest of society. There appeared the first sense that the police were becoming the ‘thin blue line’. This harkens back to the idea that some magazines saw the police as a force for maintaining social segregation and, as later sections of this thesis explore, some authors actually found this to be a useful characteristic as they realised that they could use the marginalised, socially-mobile police officer as a literary figure of protection to explore criminality.

As the police had taken over management of the criminal section of society, it was no longer the responsibility for increasingly self-identified respectable middle-class readers to engage with it. The force thus also supplanted the historic necessity for crime journalism to actively attempt to prevent crime through the application of fear, which in turn allowed the press greater freedom to report on more varied cases. The types of crime that were reported therefore diversified, though murders and robberies still largely took precedent.<sup>226</sup> It also meant that the spectacle of the public execution was becoming less necessary as a deterrent, and this was an attitude which was reflected in both public opinion and corresponding

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<sup>224</sup> Knelman, p. 21.

<sup>225</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 8.

<sup>226</sup> The article ‘Police Intelligence’ taken from the July 7<sup>th</sup> 1866 issue of *Bell’s Life in London*, for example, included reports on cases of ‘horse coping’, ‘cruelty to a dog’ and, simply, ‘throwing vitriol’. In August 1861, the *Sixpenny Magazine* even reported a highly complicated case of libel in great detail, which can be found in ‘Law and Crime’, *Sixpenny Magazine*, August 1861, p. 251.

legislative measures which steadily progressed towards the abolition of public executions.<sup>227</sup>

The Offences Against the Person Act 1861 reduced the number of crimes punishable by death from hundreds to four, and the Capital Punishment (Amendment) Act followed this in 1868, which legislated that prisoners under death sentences were to be executed within the prison walls, away from the prying eyes of the public.<sup>228</sup>

This shift in opinion regarding public punishment was reflected in periodical commentary, and public executions were openly reviled by prominent members of mid-Victorian society. Charles Dickens, who frequently published his disdain for execution in its public form, and famously wrote a scathing letter on the subject to the *Times* after he had attended the execution of Frederick and Maria Manning at Horsemonger Lane in 1849. Additionally, an article titled 'Cain in the Fields' appeared in *Household Words* in 1851, where Dickens suggested that:

Within the last month, several rural crimes have ended in the spectacle of death upon the scaffold [...] [w]e believe that no worse spectacle could, by any ingenuity, be exhibited to such beholders. [...] It is not good for the hangman to flourish in the papers like the toastmaster at a public dinner. He is best as a horrible shadow, obscure and shunned.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> The simmering resentment towards public executions sparked governmental investigations into the state of capital punishment, and a dedicated commission was set up in 1864. The Royal Commission on Capital Punishment published their report in 1866, and made various recommendations based on evidence provided by figures working within the criminal justice system. It recommended, among other things, that 'an Act be passed putting an end to public executions, and directing that sentences of death shall be carried out within the precincts of the prison, under such regulations as may be considered necessary to prevent abuse, and satisfy the public that the law has been complied with' (p. 50-51). For full details, see Charles Henry and others, *Report of the Capital Punishment Commission; Together with the Minutes of Evidence* (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode (HMSO), 1866).

<sup>228</sup> Capital Punishment Amendment Act 1868, (31 & 32 Vict., c. 24), *legislation.gov.uk*, <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/31-32/24>> [accessed 25 July 2017].

<sup>229</sup> Charles Dickens, 'Cain in the Fields', *Household Words*, 10 May 1851, p. 151.

In 1864, whilst musing on the execution of Franz Müller, the *Examiner* presented a common argument that public executions attracted the very criminal classes which readers and journalists were now seeking to distance themselves from:

The execution was well attended as all executions are, by all the worst characters with all their worst conduct. The neighbourhood was a pandemonium from Sunday night to Monday morning. Robbery was the least offensive part of that horrid night's work, for it seemed only a due penalty for the presence of any person pretending to respectability at such a spot.<sup>230</sup>

In 1867, the *London Review* echoed this sentiment by suggesting that the scene underneath the gallows reduced society to a state bordering on barbarism:

Hitherto it may have served its purpose as a penalty, but it has not served its purpose as an example. We have allowed roughs and scoundrels to make holiday under the gallows, and the scenes which have been acted there would have shamed the Roman circus. [...] [T]he nation is scandalised at the saturnalia of pickpockets taking place in the very sight of the offended majesty of the law.<sup>231</sup>

It is also worth noting that even the views of those who advocated public executions had been forced to become more complex. As Michel Foucault suggests, the argument for the continued use of public executions by the mid-Victorian era had shifted from simple assertions about deterrence and the exhibition of state power to a more sophisticated argument regarding the public's mistrust in the criminal justice system itself.<sup>232</sup> Foucault argues that the spectacle of a public execution was originally designed to manifest the power of the state, but that it also provided assurance that the sentence had been carried out

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<sup>230</sup> 'Public Execution, *Examiner*, 19 November 1864, p. 737.

<sup>231</sup> 'Murder and its Punishment', *London Review*, 23 February 1867, p. 225.

<sup>232</sup> Foucault, p. 58.

properly.<sup>233</sup> If, Foucault argues, it were to take place behind closed doors, then there was no guarantee that justice had been done:

The right to be witnesses was one that they possessed and claimed; a hidden execution was a privileged execution, and in such cases it was often suspected that it had not taken place with all its customary severity. There were protests when at the last moment the victim was taken away out of sight.<sup>234</sup>

The changing attitude towards the spectacle of public executions was reflected in crime-reporting published in periodicals. Some commentators displayed open disdain for reporting the gruesome aspects of crime and punishment, and stated that they would avoid doing so. In December 1862, the *National Magazine* wrote:

We do not propose to sicken the hearts of our readers by minutely describing the horror which have recently shocked the public mind.<sup>235</sup>

Some openly rejected the idea that these narratives were designed to provide gruesome sensationalism in the same way as earlier forms of crime writing. The same article from the *National Magazine* also argued:

[...] were 'sensation' our object, it would not be difficult to cull from the Newgate Calendar [sic.] scenes and actions sufficiently terrible and startling. But why should we bring back murdered Banquos to fill their empty seats and shake their "gory locks" at society?<sup>236</sup>

The new presence of the police in society thus changed the way that journalists reported on crimes, and had impacted the purposes behind the printing of crime narratives. However,

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<sup>233</sup> Foucault, pp. 57-58.

<sup>234</sup> Foucault, pp. 58.

<sup>235</sup> 'Recent Trials for Murder', *National Magazine*, December 1862, p. 81.

<sup>236</sup> 'Recent Trials for Murder', *National Magazine*, December 1862, p. 81.

another interesting aspect of mid-Victorian crime ‘round-ups’, was the fact that police officers themselves were almost completely absent. One might be forgiven for assuming that, once the police had been established as a nationwide organisation, they would begin to be included in periodical and newspaper crime reporting, yet this was not the case.

This occurred due to a combination of factors. Firstly, this was most obviously because periodical crime ‘round-ups’ had evolved out of earlier literary influences, and that by 1856, ‘crime-journalism’ was well-established and had no need for the presence of a police officer to function. Secondly, a form of Stephen Knight’s argument concerning early-nineteenth century law enforcement still persisted. Knight argues that writers depicted society as self-regulating and that criminals would always be caught by a vigilant society,<sup>237</sup> and this was an attitude reflected in crime journalism which often took it for granted that criminals would be apprehended with or without the police’s intervention, and where police officers manifested ‘the law’ as a whole. A symptom of this included the fact that police officers were rarely referred to by name, instead usually dubbed ‘a police-detective’ or other similar term. Additionally, there was also no literary precedent for the printing of a narrative which was focused on the exploits of the police or detective in apprehending a criminal, and the fact that the criminal had already been apprehended and proven guilty was usually the reason for the narrative’s printing.

Additionally however, as the police were beginning to occupy a steadily-growing space between criminality and respectability, they became socially mobile and often invisible. This, I suggest, was reflected in periodical crime journalism, where police officers were often seen to ‘pop up’ whenever they were necessary to make an arrest, and then to disappear again when their duties were complete. This has extensive ramifications for the development of mid-Victorian detective fiction, as a variety of fictional writings made use of the liminal

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<sup>237</sup> Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, p. 12.

position of the police officer as a useful characteristic when constructing their narratives. As D. A. Miller succinctly argues, the police in fiction often occupied a marginal space even when they were central to a narrative.<sup>238</sup>

The absence of the police officer in crime-reporting is best illustrated through examples. When police officers or detectives were mentioned in dedicated crime-reporting, it was most often only through short, passing references. In 1860, the *Examiner* published an account of a crime in which the detective appears only at the end in order to validate the criminal's arrest:

Mr. Bevan, solicitor [...] obtained the services of Spittle, the city detective, went in search of the prisoner Gilson, whom they found at a small coffee-house in Brewer street [...]<sup>239</sup>

Neither detective nor prisoner is titled here, which associates them with each other and distances them from the solicitor, *Mr. Bevan*, who thus becomes elevated above them both. A second example can be taken from a January 1860 issue of the *Examiner*, where a criminal had fled Britain for Australia:

J. Brett, city detective, deposed that a warrant for the apprehension of the prisoner was placed in his hands in April last, and he proceeded to Melbourne and found him at a place called South Yarrow [...]<sup>240</sup>

Again, the officer acted as little more than a *deus ex machina* who appeared at the end of the narrative to make the arrest.

It was even the case that police officers or detectives were absent from crime 'round-ups' even when they themselves were central to the narrative. In January 1858, for example, the *Leader* reported the case of a murdered detective, but the detective himself is only mentioned

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<sup>238</sup> D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (California, University of California Press, 1988), pp. 2-3.

<sup>239</sup> 'Law', *Examiner*, 4 February 1860, p. 76.

<sup>240</sup> 'Law', *Examiner*, 7 January 1860, p. 12.

in the opening line.<sup>241</sup> The remainder of the article discussed the criminal's motive, which was based on revenge against the detective rather than an attempt to escape the law. Yet the background information explaining *why* the criminal was seeking revenge is disappointingly omitted.

Police officers in mid-Victorian periodical crime 'round-ups' also often received information from other members of society, before disappearing from the narrative altogether in order to perform their duties out of sight. This again hearkened to Stephen Knight's argument that society was a united, self-regulating force from a law-enforcement perspective, from which a felon could not possibly escape no matter where they turned.<sup>242</sup> However, it also demonstrates how the police themselves were often socially invisible. In December 1862 the magazine *John Bull* wrote:

Holding told this to the Blackburn police on Saturday, and on Sunday the men were apprehended.<sup>243</sup>

In this instance, a member of society informed the police of an offender's location, and within 24 hours they were apprehended. The reader does not receive information as to how this was done, but is instead required to trust to the fact that justice would prevail. Invariably it did in this context, which demonstrates the fact that the police manifested social authority that sporadically appeared only when it was necessary. In another example, taken from an October 1862 issue of *John Bull*, the police again received information from the public:

She gave information to the police, but heard nothing of the prisoner until the night before, when she was taken to the station-house and identified her.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> 'Gatherings from Law and Police Courts', *Leader*, 30 January 1858, p. 104.

<sup>242</sup> Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, p. 12.

<sup>243</sup> 'Law and Police', *John Bull*, 6 December 1862, p. 781.

<sup>244</sup> 'Law and Police', *John Bull*, 4 October 1862, p. 637.

The principle character in this narrative provides the police with information, and again the police apprehend the criminal out of sight. Once more, readers are not given a view into the methodology of the offender's apprehension, but are asked to assume that it was guaranteed. In a final example, taken from *John Bull and Britannia* in June 1860, a priest supplies the police with information, which directly leads to an offender's arrest:

The Rev. Mr. Hodgson, on learning the flight of young Vansittart, took steps to have him apprehended by the police.<sup>245</sup>

In many periodical crime reports the police were also seen as an instrument whose purpose was merely to validate information which the reader already knew to be true, which further highlights how police officers appeared in these narratives only when necessary. In January 1860, in the feature 'Police', the *Examiner* reported how the lady of a house apprehended a burglar herself:

Mrs Snell [...] said: Between nine and ten o'clock on the previous night I had occasion to go up stairs, and found the prisoner coming out of my bed-room. I called him a thief, and laid hold of him by the throat and held him. [...] The police proved, finding the missing brooch, a wax taper, a jemmy, some skeleton keys, and lucifer matches on the prisoner's person. Prisoner was remanded for a week.<sup>246</sup>

The police here are squeezed into the final two sentences of the narrative. The officer is seen as an agent designed to act as nothing more than the confirmation of that which was already known, namely the fact that a criminal has violated the law and has been caught. In another example, in August 1859 the *Leader* wrote:

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<sup>245</sup> 'Law and Police', *John Bull and Britannia*, 16 June 1860, p. 381.

<sup>246</sup> 'Police', *Examiner*, 14 January 1860, p. 28.

A burglary was committed on the premises of Messrs. Greer and Sons, Newgate-street, when a large quantity of cutlery was carried off. Subsequently upwards of 200 packets of the stolen property was discovered by the police, in the house of a man named Richard Tucker, a type-founder.<sup>247</sup>

The police are again present only to validate the property as matching that which had been stolen and to identify the criminal. Again the process of discovery remained absent from this narrative. In a third example, also taken from the *Leader*, the sole reference to the police was:

Inquiries which have been made by the police confirm the poor creature's statements.<sup>248</sup>

Obviously, there was no elaboration of the inquiries made by the police in order to establish the truthfulness of the victim's statements, how they went about them or what the results were. Instead, the police here were required only to confirm the truth of the evidence. These passing mentions of methodology remained a tantalising aspect of these narratives, and were almost never elaborated on. In a final example of this, in 1860 the magazine *John Bull and Britannia* wrote:

The prisoner was very cleverly caught by a detective, just as he was about to take his departure for America [...]<sup>249</sup>

The fact that the prisoner was said to have been 'cleverly' tracked leaves the option open for the narrative to discuss exactly how, but the article disappointingly does not elaborate.

Overall, crime 'round up' features in a number of different periodicals were produced separately from the earlier police criticism discussed in this thesis's first chapter. However, this is not to suggest that crime 'round ups' were not *affected* by the growth of law

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<sup>247</sup> 'Law, Police and Casualties', *Leader*, 20 August 1859, p. 954.

<sup>248</sup> 'Gatherings from Law and Police Courts', *Leader*, 2 October 1858, p. 1022.

<sup>249</sup> 'Law and Police', *John Bull and Britannia*, 28 January 1860, p. 61.

enforcement. Historically, crime journalism had focused on gruesome or violent forms of crime and punishment in an attempt to maintain law and order through the direct application of terror or appeals to religious sentiment. As the police took over responsibility for maintaining law and order as part of the early-to-mid nineteenth century march of professionalism, periodical crime round ups were able to diversify in retelling more varied crimes and punishments. This sanitising effect of the police on crime journalism was to resurface later as the police themselves moved towards the centre of periodical narratives and readers became ever more interested in the process of detection, including in fiction.

A secondary effect of the police's assumption of responsibility for maintaining society's law and order was their steady transition into a liminal social space. The police drove a wedge between criminality and the rest of society, which was a space that they themselves came to directly occupy. This effect is also observable in contemporary periodical criticism (see Chapter 1), and in crime 'round-ups' as the police officer was often depicted as a figure who appears only when it is necessary, who exists only to validate pre-existing information and who operated largely invisibly.<sup>250</sup> This also had a significant effect on the construction of mid-Victorian detective fiction, as the police's liminal nature became a useful quality for authors of a number of different kinds of writing, which are explored in the next chapter.

### **2.3: Crime Journalism and the Criminal Space**

The effects of the appearance of the police on crime journalism had significant impacts on both other forms of periodical writing and the evolution of detective fiction. In order to begin to demonstrate exactly how this was the case, we must explore another common theme observable in mid-Victorian periodical crime reporting; their interest in projecting the private

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<sup>250</sup> Miller, pp. 17-18.

spaces and moments of crime for readers. Mid-nineteenth century periodical crime reports were often centred on quasi-voyeuristic acts of revealing the details of usually-private criminal spaces. This theme also betrays the periodical crime-report's connection with older forms of crime writing, which Anne Rodrick succinctly summarises:

Crime reports linked these new journals and newspapers to the traditional modes of popular culture: the sensation aspects of the chapbook, broadside, and last dying speech literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century [and] the scandalous journalism of the early nineteenth century.<sup>251</sup>

Alyce Von Rothkirch suggests that the 'criminal' in crime round-up articles was grounded in reality, as the articles themselves were manifestations of contemporary social and cultural anxieties, and thus it was necessary for them to be both believable and accessible.<sup>252</sup> This final section of this chapter examines how mid-century crime reporting was thematically connected to older forms of crime journalism through their shared interest in uncovering and revealing the private or inaccessible realms of criminality which readers would ordinarily not have been able to safely explore.

From its beginnings, crime reporting was interested in providing views inside various impenetrable spaces and moments associated with crime, including court-rooms, prisons, the moments before executions, and domestic spaces which became crime-scenes. Execution broadsides, for example, allowed a grisly form of 'vicarious participation' in the crime on the part of witnesses to the execution,<sup>253</sup> and as Heather Worthington argues:

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<sup>251</sup> Rodrick, pp. 1-18 (p. 2).

<sup>252</sup> Alyce Von Rothkirch, 'His face was livid, dreadful, with a foam at the corners of his mouth': A Typology of Villains in Classic Detective Stories, *Modern Language Review*, 108, 4 (2013), 1042-1063 (p. 1043).

<sup>253</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 7.

[...] broadsides made their appeal to the voyeuristic interests of the masses, exposing the gory and sometimes salacious details of the crimes and making public what had been private.<sup>254</sup>

Broadsides also complemented the grisly spectacle of a public execution by augmenting their interactivity. As Michel Foucault argues, spectators were required to participate in a public execution in order to both view the ‘law’s triumph’ and also to validate that justice had been done, and it was therefore largely an interactive experience.<sup>255</sup> Broadsides which accompanied executions therefore allowed witnesses to vicariously participate in it and, as Judith Knelman argues, they ‘encouraged the public to [...] poke sticks through the cage’ at those accused of murder.<sup>256</sup> Broadsides also provided valuable contextual information on the condemned through the inclusion of sensationalised passages which described their crime, alongside penitent verses which warned others away from criminality. These were often marketed as written by the condemned themselves (even if they were not), and as a result broadsides helped the reader gain a clearer window into the crime and execution by allowing them to see ‘inside’ the criminal’s circumstances and history, and to participate in it from a safe distance. Martin Wiener’s argues that the public execution itself was a ‘pornographic invasion of the integrity of the body’,<sup>257</sup> and by extension the broadside helped to publicise a moment usually desired to be kept private – the precise moment of death.

Prison chaplains’ records were also quasi-voyeuristic in a similar fashion, yet they had an obvious edge over the broadside. Chaplains had direct access to condemned criminals and

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<sup>254</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 7.

<sup>255</sup> Foucault, pp. 57-58.

<sup>256</sup> Knelman, p. 21.

<sup>257</sup> Martin Wiener, *Reconstructing the Criminal: Culture, Law and Policy in England, 1830-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; repr. 1994), p. 96.

they could obtain information far beyond the broadside's reach.<sup>258</sup> Even if their account was fictionalised, the fact that the prison chaplain had written it gave their account a degree of legitimacy. The bulk of the writing in chaplains' accounts was thus naturally reserved for a condemned prisoner's last hours. They often depicted heartfelt moments of farewell, repentance or confession, or in some cases defiance or even attempted suicide to escape the humiliation of the gallows:

[...] two or three gentlemen [...] wanted to see Tilling [the condemned]. At his own earnest request, they were admitted to him [...] One of the gentlemen [...] was so nearly touched and so much overcome [...] that he could scarce be supported, had thought to have stayed and attended prayers with the convicts, but could not bear it.<sup>259</sup>

These scenes of farewell were at least partially designed to be didactic, and this was a different pedagogical approach to the broadside. Broadside motivated readers away from criminality largely through fear, whilst chaplains' accounts appealed less to the reader's sense of terror and more to the conscience. They usually depicted the condemned as penitently accepting of their sentence, and in some cases 'reprinted' letters in which they expressed penitence and a desire for forgiveness. In one example from 1772, the criminal William Siday wrote to his father, and requested that the Ordinary of Newgate publish his letter so that others would 'take warning' in a manner which he himself had not.<sup>260</sup> Aside from pedagogy however, these scenes simply made for sensational reading and figuratively 'opened up' the condemned ward for the reader to look inside. In a clear example from 1767, the Ordinary of

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<sup>258</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 7.

<sup>259</sup> 'Ordinary's Account, 28<sup>th</sup> April 1760', *Old Bailey Online* <<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?name=OA17600428>> [accessed 20 March 2017], (1760).

<sup>260</sup> 'Ordinary's Account, 8<sup>th</sup> July 1772', *Old Bailey Online* <<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?name=OA17720708>> [accessed 20 March 2017], (1772).

Newgate describes a close, intimate moment of farewell with the infamous Elizabeth Brownrigg:

[...] she appeared to be much affected [...] we went up to chapel; where her husband and son were again permitted to be with her, and joined in receiving the holy sacrament. After which she prayed with the utmost fervency [...] She seemed quite composed and resigned, and continued in prayer with her husband and son upwards of two hours, when she took leave of them, which exhibited a scene too affecting for words to describe, and which drew tears from all present.<sup>261</sup>

The *Newgate Calendars* were also quasi-voyeuristic, and allowed readers to feel what Charles Rzepka dubs, ‘smug condemnation of [...] despicable villains.’<sup>262</sup> However the *Calendars* gave less attention to the criminal’s punishment and instead focused on the criminal’s domestic life and the moment of the crime. The *Calendars* often depicted private scenes or moments within domestic spaces, and included detail from before the crime and the precise moment of the crime taking place. For example, the 1824 edition of the *Newgate Calendar* detailed a bitter domestic battle between a man named Robert Hallam and his wife:

She sat, partly undressed, on the side of the bed, as if afraid to go in [...] At length she ran down stairs, and he followed her, and locked the street-door to prevent her going out. On this she ran up into the dining-room, whither he likewise followed her, and struck her several times. He then went into another room for his cane, and she locked him in.

Enraged at this, he broke open the door, and, seizing her in his arms, threw her out of the

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<sup>261</sup> ‘Ordinary’s Account, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1767’, *Old Bailey Online* <<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=OA17670914>> [accessed 2 February 2017], (1767).

<sup>262</sup> Rzepka, p. 52.

window, with her head foremost, and her back to the ground, so that, on her falling, her back was broken, her skull fractured, and she instantly expired.<sup>263</sup>

No prior form of crime writing had gone into such detail surrounding the domestic arrangements of the criminal before their apprehension as the *Newgate Calendar*. However this is not to suggest that courtroom or prison cell scenes were abandoned. On the contrary, the *Newgate Calendar* often replicated prison chaplains' accounts in that it depicted the criminal's experiences in Newgate and inside the courtroom. They were, however, much less pronounced.

Mid-Victorian crime 'round-ups' published in periodicals were closely linked with these older forms of crime writing. The interest in presenting views inside criminalised spaces and moments was also transferred from older forms of crime reporting and into crime 'round-ups'. Jessica Valdez suggests that 'the goal of news [was] not to be discriminative but simply to produce enough to satiate the public's "constant craving[s]" [...] or in other words, to appeal to the desires of those interested in reading about the latest criminal occurrences and to be figuratively transported into the spaces and moments that came with it through reading.'<sup>264</sup> Judith Knelman also makes this point, and quotes an article from *Punch* which suggested that exposing the private details of criminals was a prevalent feature in mid-Victorian crime journalism:

[...] we notoriously spare no pains to furnish the nation with [a criminal's] complete biography; employing literary gentlemen, of elegant education and profound knowledge of human nature, to examine his birthplace and parish register, to visit his parents, brothers, uncles and aunts, to procure intelligence of his early school days, diseases which he has passed through, infantile (and more mature) traits of character, etc. [...] we employ

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<sup>263</sup> Knapp and Baldwin, p. 311-312.

<sup>264</sup> Valdez, pp. 377-400 (p. 377).

artists of eminence to sketch his likeness as he appears at the police court, or views of the farm-house or back-kitchen where he has perpetrated the atrocious deed [...] we entertain intelligence within the prison walls with the male and female turnkeys, gaolers, and other authorities, by whose information we are enabled to describe every act and deed of the prisoner, the state of his health, sleep and digestion, the changes in his appearance, his conversation, his dress and linen, the letters he writes, and the meals he takes [...]<sup>265</sup>

This desire to furnish readers with the criminal's biographical history as well as the details surrounding their crimes can be directly observed in action in mid-century periodical crime 'round-ups'. This passage is taken from an article from the March 1862 issue of the

*Examiner*:

On Saturday last a short, dark, thick-set young man, named Belsey, made an attempt to shoot Louisa King, cook to Mr D'Alquen, of Brighton. It appears that Belsey was to have been married to Lucy Walder, house maid at Mr D'Alquen's, on that morning. He then appeared to be on the most affectionate terms with her, and they all proceeded to St. Nicholas's Church, Belsey walking with Lucy Walder's mother, and the rest following. All at once, Belsey said he had forgotten his gloves, and that he must go back and get them, adding that he should be with them in a few minutes. He went back, and the party proceeded to church, where they waited for his arrival about an hour. No bridegroom appearing, they left. [...] Nothing was seen of Belsey till about half-past one o'clock, when he knocked at Mr. D'Alquen's door [...] Belsey asked to see Lucy Walder, and Mr. D'Alquen, jun., told him he could not see her, upon which he presented a six-barrel revolver at the breast of Mr D'Alquen, sen. Louisa King, the cook [...] went to assist her

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<sup>265</sup> 'The Proper Time for Public Executions', *Punch, or, the London Charivari*, 1 December 1849, p. 214. Quoted in Knelman, pp. 21-22.

master in closing the door against the prisoner. [...] King put her head out of the door too far, not knowing that Belsey had a pistol, when he fired [...]<sup>266</sup>

The narrative format of this excerpt recalled the interest in domestic arrangements of stories published in the *Newgate Calendars*. The reader obtained an insight into the criminal's domestic life and circumstances, as well as the particular situation that led them to commit the crime – in this case a disagreement between the criminal, his fiancée and his father-in-law to be. The narrative then gave a detailed account of the crime itself, before eventually going on to discuss the situation that the prisoner found himself in after he had been apprehended.

In a second example, in 1858 the *Leader*, as part of the column 'Criminal Record', detailed the domestic arrangements between the criminal and his contemporaries which led to murder:

Atkinson is the son of a flax-spinner, and he has been intimate with the young lady since they were both children; but the mother of Miss Scaife and the father of Atkinson did not approve the match, and it was broken off for a time, during which interval Miss Scaife received the attentions of a Mr. Gill. But that intimacy was also put an end to, and the young lady again accepted Atkinson as her suitor. On Tuesday week, however, Atkinson saw Miss Scaife at a gala talking with Gill, and this appears to have awakened a strong feeling of jealousy.<sup>267</sup>

This contextual information provided here not only gave the reader insights into the details surrounding why the murder was committed, but it also depicted intimate domestic relationships between the people involved. I have selected this example because the murder (itself an intimate and 'private' moment) was retold in detail, crucially using testimony *from the murderer himself* to paint a public portrait of a private scene:

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<sup>266</sup> 'Murders and Murderous Crimes', *Examiner*, 29 March 1862, p. 201.

<sup>267</sup> 'Criminal Record', *Leader*, 7 August 1858, p. 767.

Atkinson was examined before the county magistrates at Knaresborough, and he then made a verbal confession of his guilt. The girl had refused to marry him [...] He then threatened to murder her, and ultimately clutched her round the throat. She cried out, and he released his hold [...] but soon pulled out a knife, and showed it her. “She cried out, ‘let’s go home, Jim – let’s go home, Jim!’ Then I seized her and cut her throat [...]”<sup>268</sup>

The fact that the testimony came from the Atkinson himself guaranteed the reader that the tale was true and accurate. This use of a figure that was physically, psychologically or emotionally close to the principle figures in these narratives to provide as many private details as possible became a common trope in mid-Victorian periodical crime reporting. In this example, the murderer himself provided the testimony. Another example taken from the *Leader* can also highlight this:

On Thursday morning early a young woman went to her sister’s house in Little-Lever-street. She knew that her sister and her husband had not been living comfortably together, and was taking her some bread and butter. She looked through the kitchen window before opening the door, and saw her sister lying with her head on the floor [...]”<sup>269</sup>

The fact that the article’s source of information was the victim’s sister legitimised the insider-information she provided. It was not hearsay or rumour, but fact told by one close to the story. The young woman who discovered the body again provided the reader with information that nobody else would have been able to obtain, and which nobody else would have known. The domestic arrangements that led to the murder quickly followed:

At the inquest a neighbour said that the deceased and her husband were drinking and fighting every night. About three o’clock that morning witness was awoke by a great

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<sup>268</sup> ‘Criminal Record’, *Leader*, 7 August 1858, p. 767.

<sup>269</sup> ‘Criminal Record’, *Leader*, 2 October 1858, pp. 1021-1022.

noise in the prisoner's house. She heard three successive heavy falls down the stairs, and then a female cried out. [...]<sup>270</sup>

The article again used those close to the case, this time a neighbour, to present the sense that their information was both legitimate and secret. The inclusion of the neighbour's testimony opened up the closed world of the domestic sphere to the reader, using those characters as close as possible to the crime as a window through which readers could enter it. By stating that details had been obtained from those close to the case, these 'crime round-ups' were also able to better market their tales as informed by 'insider information'.

Finally, the *London Review* provides another, slightly different example of reprinting evidence given by those close to the case in order to produce the illusion of truthful representation of private areas associated with the crime. In 1866, it published 'The Cannon Street Murder', which reproduced evidence given by a witness:

It appears from the evidence of Terry that he had been instrumental in procuring for Mrs. Milson a loan of money from a Mrs. Webber, and that he had entered into some sort of arrangement with Smith for acting as his "adviser" in endeavouring to recover the sum. Smith, according to the statement of Terry, went at his request one day to Messrs. Bevington's warehouse, and got fourteen shillings from the deceased.<sup>271</sup>

This article used the testimony of the housekeeper at a neighbouring property to, again, produce the insider information vital to the narrative to give the effect of providing the reader with truthful and privileged information. In this case, however, the magazine expressed exasperation that the neighbour's testimony is less reliable. This frustrated the purpose of the narrative, which is forced to rely on it despite its vagueness:

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<sup>270</sup> 'Criminal Record', *Leader*, 2 October 1858, p. 1022.

<sup>271</sup> 'The Cannon Street Murder', *London Review*, 16 June 1866, p. 669.

The testimony of Mrs. Robbins, the housekeeper at a neighbouring warehouse in Cannon-street, was most unsatisfactory. She said that on the night of the murder she heard Messrs. Bevington's door shut violently at about ten minutes past ten, and saw a man come from the door whom she subsequently recognised at the station-house in the person of the prisoner, who was placed with a number of others. But it appears that on the previous day Smith [the prisoner] was taken past the house by the police, and that Mrs. Robbins, though told beforehand what was going to be done, could not recognise the man.<sup>272</sup>

The word 'unsatisfactory' has a double-meaning. It both highlights how the evidence is not enough to secure a conviction, but it also laments the fact that it does not provide accurate enough insider-information to the reader. The fact that 'Mrs. Robbins' was merely the 'housekeeper at a neighbouring warehouse' was not a close enough relationship to the crime or the criminal, and it is disappointed in the quality and quantity of 'insider information' which she can present.

## **2.4: Looking Ahead to 'Detective Literature': Chapter 2 Conclusions**

As this chapter has demonstrated, there was a distinction between non-fictional critique of the police in mid-Victorian periodicals, and 'round-up' features. However, this is not to suggest that crime reporting in mid-Victorian periodicals was not influenced by the police's establishment across Victorian Britain. The kinds of crime which crime reporting could relate to readers diversified exponentially across this era as the new professionalised police force took over responsibility for maintaining law and order, and crime reporting no longer needed to influence its readers into obeying the law through the application of fear or appeals to morality. A secondary effect of the establishment of the police was the growth in distaste for

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<sup>272</sup> 'The Cannon Street Murder', *London Review*, 16 June 1866, p. 669.

reporting on violent or gruesome crimes and punishments, as the force increased the distance between criminality and respectability, and came to occupy this widening space. This was also visible in periodical crime round-ups, as the police were often relegated to a marginal position in the narratives, appearing only when necessary to make an arrest or to validate a crime.

As this chapter has also shown, mid-Victorian periodical ‘crime round-up’ features were thematically connected to earlier forms of crime-writing through their shared interest in voyeuristically exposing the private or secret world of criminality.<sup>273</sup> Crime writing had a historically observable desire to take private spaces and moments associated with criminal justice and make them publically viewable for readers to both witness and, on some levels, experience for themselves. These included the moment of execution, the scene inside the condemned cell prior to execution, as well as the domestic and social arrangements of the criminals themselves.

All of these aspects of periodical journalism had significant consequences for the development of other forms of journalism and, crucially, the first form of so-called ‘detective fiction’. As the next chapter will explore in detail, the steadily-growing interest in the police in non-fictional discussion began to combine with their liminal social position, as well as the journalistic interest in the revealing the private details of the diverse crimes reported in periodicals. This created a situation where *new* narratives began to be constructed which purposefully explored criminality using the police officer as a guide and protector in order to delve ever deeper into the criminal.

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<sup>273</sup> Rodrick, pp. 1-18 (p. 2).

## Chapter 3

### **“Detective” literature, if it may be so called’: The Police Officer and the Police Memoir**

#### **3.1: Introduction: The Merging of ‘Non-Fiction Police Criticism’ and ‘Crime Round-Up’ Journalism**

The forms of periodical crime and police writing discussed so far, police-criticism and crime journalism, had profound impacts on the development of detective fiction across the Victorian era. The non-fiction, often-politicised debates surrounding the police created wider, deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the force and their unclear, liminal social position. Simultaneously, the periodical ‘crime round-up’ feature, which evolved out of earlier forms of crime reporting, catered for readers’ desires to know about local and national incidents of crime, and also to figuratively view ‘inside’ private spaces, moments and relationships associated with criminality. These included court-rooms, condemned cells within prisons and scenes of executions, as well as the domestic scenes and relationships of criminals and their victims. As this chapter will explore, in the mid-Victorian era these two interests began to mesh together in new literary forms.

The first of these forms included ‘social exploration journalism’; articles which were designed to explore and reveal criminalised urban spaces of inner cities which readers would potentially not have frequented. In this, readers obtained an ‘inside view’ of the criminal world made popular by crime reporting, and the police’s threshold social position, brought about by new knowledge of the force provided by periodical criticism, helped readers to penetrate it more effectively. In fact, the police officer was to become an obligatory figure in this kind of writing, to allow the author or journalist access to a criminal or an otherwise inaccessible space. Articles that explored urban ‘crime gardens’, as one example eloquently

put it, became much more common as society became more urbanised and chaotic.<sup>274</sup> Anthea Trodd suggests that by the 1860s a pervading ideology had developed that there was a ‘subterranean world of [...] crime concealed just below the surface’ of everyday society, and which rejected the face-value of mid-Victorian culture.<sup>275</sup> This ‘subterranean world of crime’ was difficult to access, except to those who possessed the authority to enter it (and, naturally, those who accompanied them). As a result, social exploration articles almost always included the presence of a police officer or detective figure to guide and protect the writer, and police officers therefore began to move steadily towards the centre of these narratives.<sup>276</sup>

The second literary form that was an evolution of this ‘social exploration journalism’ was ‘police memoir fiction’. This focused on the recollections of the experiences of retired, deceased or occasionally still-serving police officers and it became popular at mid-century. Interestingly, police memoir-fiction was also contemporarily described as ‘detective literature’ by some mid-Victorian authors and periodical commentators, and is perhaps one of the first literary genres to be ascribed this label. However, it is under-discussed in genre models of detective fiction, due to the perception that it was merely cheap fiction unworthy of critical attention and the fact that its impact on the genre’s development is only fully revealed when studied in conjunction with the periodical press.

### **3.2: Early Nineteenth Century ‘Social Exploration Journalism’**

In the early nineteenth century, there was already some journalistic interest in exploring criminal environments and projecting their experiences for readers. Pierce Egan the Elder’s *Life in London* (1821), for example, depicts its protagonists, Corinthian Tom, Jerry Hawthorn

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<sup>274</sup> ‘Haunts of Crime’, *Ragged School Union Magazine*, May 1869, p. 104.

<sup>275</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 437).

<sup>276</sup> Von Rothkirch, pp. 1042-1063 (p.1042).

and Bob Logic, wandering through the metropolis relating their experiences to the reader. They pay a memorable visit to Newgate Prison, where they witness several prisoners being prepared for execution, and this may have been influenced by earlier texts such as Daniel Defoe's *The History of the Press-Yard* (1717) which gave a similar account.<sup>277</sup> My quote from Egan's text refers to an image printed on the opposite page, and so this is included here for clarity (see figure 7):

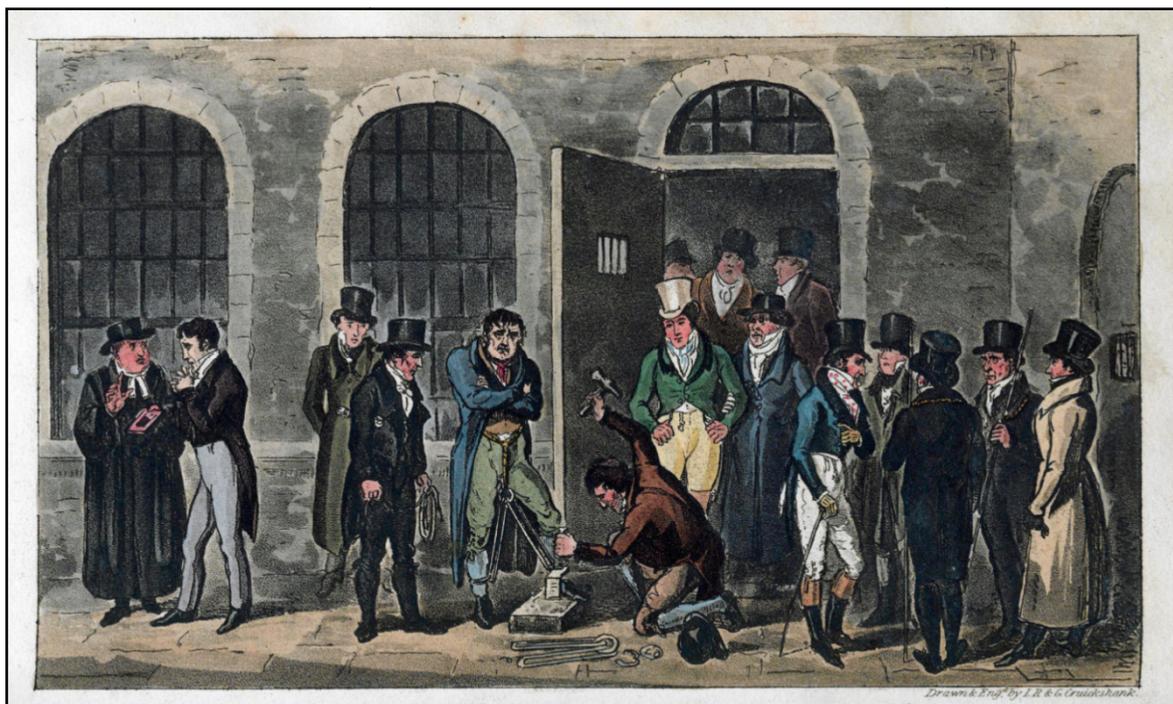


Figure 7: George Cruikshank, 'Symptoms of the finish of Some Sorts of "Life in London". Tom, Jerry and Logic, in the Press Yard, at Newgate', British Library <<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/tom-and-jerry-life-in-london>> [accessed 22 September 2017] (1821).

An opportunity presented itself to our TRIO to visit the Condemned Yard in NEWGATE. [...] The Plate represents the Morning of Execution, and the malefactors having their irons knocked off previous to their ascending the fatal platform that launches them into eternity. The Yeoman of the Halter is in waiting to put the ropes about them. The

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<sup>277</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The History of the Press-Yard: or, a Brief Account of the Customs and Occurrences that are put in Practice and to be met with in that Ancient Repository of Living Bodies, called, His Majesty's Gaol of Newgate* (London: T. Moor, 1717), pp. 8-9.

Clergyman is also seen administering consolation to these unfortunate persons in such an awful moment [and] neither the PEN nor the PENCIL, however directed by talent, can do it adequate justice, or convey a description of the “*harrowed feelings*” of the few spectators that are admitted into the Condemned Yard [...]<sup>278</sup>

This could almost have been taken from a prison-chaplain’s recollection or even from a *Newgate Calendar*. It figuratively opened up the scene of confession, penitence and farewell that older forms of crime reporting had popularised, and the expression ‘launched into eternity’ was also a common turn of phrase within contemporary crime journalism, which intimates at a strong journalistic connection.<sup>279</sup> In fact, the Ordinary of Newgate is present in the image, depicted with his hand raised on the far left-hand side as he ministers to one of the unhappy condemned (a figure referred to as ‘Lively Jem’).<sup>280</sup>

*Life in London*’s illustrations were completed by George Cruikshank; these were his first as a book illustrator.<sup>281</sup> Cruikshank went on to draw for a great number of other novels across a long career, famously including those by a young Charles Dickens. Dickens, considered by Walter Bagehot to be the ‘quintessential reporter and writer of urban life’, is perhaps the most important author to consider when examining the evolution of ‘social exploration journalism’, its use of the police officer, and its subsequent development into fictional versions of itself.<sup>282</sup> In his 1833-1836 work *Sketches by Boz*, Dickens provided another early example of this kind of journalism designed to penetrate and reveal private and criminal

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<sup>278</sup> Pierce Egan, *Life in London, or, The Day and Night Scenes of Jerry Hawthorn, Esq. and his Elegant Friend Corinthian Tom in their Rambles and Sprees through the Metropolis* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1821; repr. 1881), p. 316.

<sup>279</sup> Gatrell, p. 29.

<sup>280</sup> Egan, p. 317.

<sup>281</sup> Robert Patten, ‘George Cruikshank’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6843>> [accessed 22 September 2017] (2006).

<sup>282</sup> Valdez, pp. 377-400 (pp. 377-378).

spaces. Originally, it was published in a variety of periodicals and magazines between 1833 and 1836, including in the *Monthly Magazine*, the *Evening Chronicle* and *Bell's Life in London*, however it was collected together and published as two volumes in 1836 and again as a single volume in 1839. The 'sketches' contained two essays which were similar to the scene from *Life in London*; 'Criminal Courts' and 'A Visit to Newgate'. As Philip Collins argues, Dickens's purpose in authoring 'A Visit to Newgate' was to provide the reader with as detailed a picture of the prison's interior as possible.<sup>283</sup> Collins argues:

[...] as he explained to his publisher, Macrone, he would add a few pieces to fill out the two volumes. In particular, he was seeking permission to go over Newgate – 'I have long projected sketching its Interior, and I think it would tell extremely well.' Three weeks later, he had finished writing 'a long paper' on the subject [...] and was very anxious for Macrone to see a corrected proof of it.<sup>284</sup>

'A Visit to Newgate' explicitly states its purpose of revealing the prison's interior:

It was with some such thoughts that we determined not many weeks since to visit the interior of Newgate – in an amateur capacity, of course; and [...] we proceed to lay its results before our readers, in the hope [...] that this paper may not be found wholly devoid of interest.<sup>285</sup>

The piece is devoted to projecting the interior of Newgate prison in as much detail as possible. Some of this can be exemplified here, however; immediately after Dickens is admitted to the prison, he provides the reader with an exceptionally detailed passage which truly transports the reader inside the prison:

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<sup>283</sup> Philip Collins, *Dickens and Crime* (London: Macmillan, 1962; repr. 1965), p. 27.

<sup>284</sup> Collins, *Dickens and Crime*, p. 27.

<sup>285</sup> Charles Dickens, *Sketches by Boz* (London: John Macrone, 1836; repr. London: Penguin Classics, 1995), p. 235.

Leaving this room [...] we found ourself [sic] in the lodge which opens on the Old Bailey; one side of which is plentifully garnished with a choice collection of heavy sets of irons [...] From this lodge, a heavy oaken gate, bound with iron, studded with nails of the same material, and guarded by another turnkey, opens on a few steps [...] which terminate in a narrow and dismal stone passage, running parallel with the Old Bailey, and leading to the different yards, through a number of tortuous and intricate windings, guarded in their turn by huge gates and gratings, whose appearance is sufficient to dispel at once the slightest hope of escape that any new comer may have entertained: and the very recollection of which, on eventually traversing the place again, involves one in a maze of confusion.<sup>286</sup>

Dickens's eye for detail presented here, complemented by his direct statement that he wished to 'project' the interior of the prison, certainly suggests that his desire was to figuratively transport the reader inside the prison walls. There is also interestingly a hybridised mixture of journalistic and fictional writing techniques at work, as Dickens saves his description of Newgate's condemned cells for a later part of the essay, wishing to leave the reader waiting for that happy moment:

These yards, with the exception of that in which prisoners under sentence of death are confined (of which we shall presently give a more detailed description) [...] <sup>287</sup>

This technique foreshadows the development of this kind of social exploration journalism into fictionalised writing. Dickens certainly delivers on his promise and devotes the second half of the essay to a description of the prison's condemned ward. Particularly harrowing is the account of one of the condemned cells in which a prisoner is left on the night prior to their execution:

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<sup>286</sup> Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, p. 236.

<sup>287</sup> Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, p. 236.

We entered the first cell! It was a stone dungeon, eight feet long by six wide, with a bench at the further end, under which were a common horse-rug, a bible, and prayer-book. An iron candlestick was fixed into the wall at the side; and a small high window in the back admitted as much air and light as could struggle in between a double row of heavy, crossed iron bars. It contained no other furniture of any description. [...] Conceive the situation of a man, spending his last night in this cell.<sup>288</sup>

The description which follows this is a hypothetical account of the prisoner's thoughts over his final night, flitting from panic to helplessness to disbelief. The article ends with the prisoner falling into an uneasy sleep, dreaming that he has escaped, only to be reawakened at 6:00am by the turnkey entering the cell. As Dickens puts it in the final line, 'in two hours more he is a corpse'.<sup>289</sup> This again highlights the piece's connection to fiction, as much of the atmosphere created in this scene is reminiscent of the final chapters of Dickens's 1837-9 novel *Oliver Twist*. In this, the career-criminal Fagin is left languishing inside the condemned cells of Newgate awaiting execution, and some of the description of his last night are startlingly reminiscent of 'A Visit to Newgate'.<sup>290</sup> Indeed, George Cruikshank's famous illustration of this scene, titled 'Fagin in the Condemned Cell', certainly recalls the panicked description of the condemned man in the latter half of Dickens's essay (see fig. 8).

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<sup>288</sup> Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, p. 246.

<sup>289</sup> Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, p. 248.

<sup>290</sup> Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (London: Richard Bentley, 1837-1839; rpt. London: Penguin Classics, 2003), pp. 443-450.

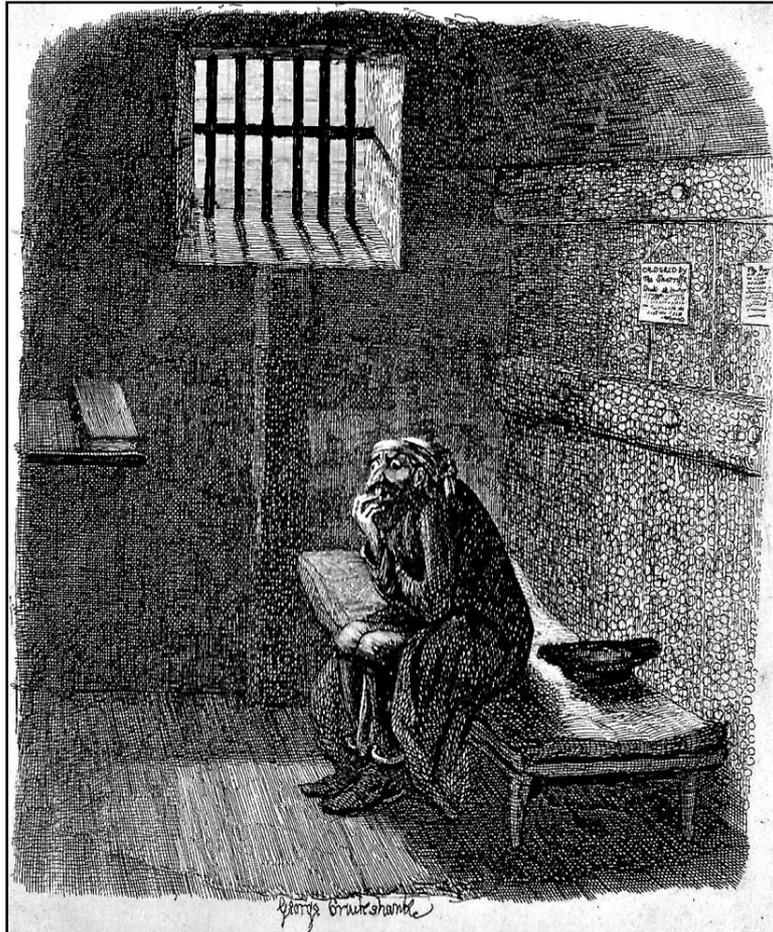


Figure 8: George Cruikshank, 'Fagin in the Condemned Cell', *The Adventures of Oliver Twist, or, the Parish Boy's Progress*, Victorian Web

<http://www.victorianweb.org/victorian/art/illustration/cruikshank/ot24.html> [accessed July 2 2018],  
scanned and uploaded by Philip V. Allingham (1839, uploaded 2014).

Newgate was not the only prison which Dickens wished to 'project' to his readers. As Collins states, he became close friends with the governors of Coldbath Fields and Tothill Fields prisons – Captain George Laval Chesterton and Lt. Augustus Frederick Tracey.<sup>291</sup> He wished to supplement 'A Visit to Newgate' with a comparative piece on Coldbath Fields, but quickly realised that his essay on Newgate had 'stolen all the thunder which the prison-theme could produce'.<sup>292</sup>

<sup>291</sup> Collins, *Dickens and Crime*, p. 52.

<sup>292</sup> Collins, *Dickens and Crime*, pp. 52-53.

Another of Dickens's essays from *Sketches by Boz*, titled 'Criminal Courts', also concerned itself with depicting the interior of a private realm of criminality. It chiefly concerns the revelation of a different criminal space: the scene within the court:

There sit the Judges, with whose great dignity everyone is acquainted, and whom therefore we need say no more. Then, there is the Lord Mayor in the centre, looking as cool as a Lord Mayor *can* look, with his immense *bouquet* before him, and habited in all the splendour of his office. Then, there are the Sheriffs, who are almost as dignified as the Lord Mayor himself, and the Barristers, who are quite dignified enough in their own opinion, and the spectators, who having paid for their admission, look upon the whole scene as if it were got up especially for their amusement.<sup>293</sup>

This is a comical scene where Dickens mocks the appearance and the sense of self-importance that the officials of the court have. However focus moves sharply to the plight of the unfortunate man in the dock, turning the scene from one of light-hearted amusement to a commentary on how the court system has enormous power over everyday people often barely recognised by those within it:

Look upon the whole group in the body of the Court – some wholly engrossed in the morning papers, others carelessly conversing in low whispers, and others, again, quietly dozing away an hour – and you scan scarcely believe that the result of the trial is a matter of life or death to one wretched being present. But [...] watch the prisoner attentively for a few moments, and the fact is before you, in all its painful reality. [...] a dead silence prevails as the foreman delivers in the verdict – 'Guilty!' A shriek bursts from a female in

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<sup>293</sup> Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, pp. 231-232.

the gallery [...] The clerk directs one of the officers of the Court to ‘take the woman out,’ and fresh business is proceeded with, as if nothing had occurred.<sup>294</sup>

Dickens’s scathing attitude towards the criminal justice system connects with some of the politically liberal or radical ideas of the new professionalised form of law enforcement as a force of social oppression and interference, highlighted in Chapter 1. However, as well as performing a form of social commentary on the bureaucratic, self-important and indifferent state of the court system with enormous power over citizens, Dickens’s early writing can also be linked to earlier forms of crime writing in that it desired to reveal these private spaces through exploratory journalism.

Writing which explored and projected the private spaces and moments of criminality for their readers was therefore already growing across the early years of the nineteenth century, influenced by the voyeuristic interests of earlier crime-reporting. However it was to develop in the mid-Victorian era, as the introduction of the police changed the way that the form of writing was constructed as the police officer became a useful presence within the narrative thanks to his liminal social status. Additionally, the expansion of the press meant that social exploration writing moved into periodicals. This progression mirrored the development of society itself, which became rapidly urbanised leading to new criminal spaces to explore.

### **3.3: ‘In company with detectives, he has visited beershops [...]’: Social Exploration Journalism in the Mid-Victorian Era**

In the mid-Victorian era, crime-focused social exploration journalism was to fundamentally change as knowledge of the police proliferated throughout periodical criticism.<sup>295</sup> Caroline Reitz suggests that there was a wider perception that the criminal justice system was going

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<sup>294</sup> Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, p. 232.

<sup>295</sup> See Chapter 1.

‘down and out’ due to the expansion of the ‘criminal classes’, resulting in a journalistic fixation on criminals and their habitats.<sup>296</sup> However, I argue that criminally-focused mid-Victorian ‘social-exploration journalism’ was also a by-product of the interests of ‘crime reporting’ and ‘police criticism’ meshing together. It became a literary space where journalists could utilise the police officer as a guide and as a form of protection to delve further into criminal spaces and depict them for readers’ interest or amusement.

The progress of urban expansion also changed the way that social exploration was performed, as the city itself began to evolve. Urban spaces grew quickly throughout the mid-nineteenth century, and journalists naturally became interested in depicting the increasing chaos of street-level activity to readers. As a result, crime-focused social exploration journalism diversified from depicting the interiors or court-rooms or prisons out onto the streets. By way of an example, in 1861 *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* published an article discussing the case of Eliza Fenning, and opened with a description of a part of London that, it assumed, its readers would not frequent:

Immediately adjoining to High Holborn, and parallel with the southern side of Red Lion Square runs a long, narrow gloomy lane, called Eagle Street. Sickly children dabble in the gutters [...] Vendors of tripe and cat’s-meat, rag and bottle dealers, marine-store keepers, merchants who hold out temptations in prose and verse, adorned with apoplectic numerals, to cooks and housemaids to purloin dripping, kitchen-stuff, and old wearing apparel, barbers who “shave well for a penny,” shoe vampers, fried fish sellers, a coal and potato dealer, and a bird-stuffer, share the rest of the street, with lodging-houses of the filthiest description.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Reitz, pp. 92-103 (p. 95).

<sup>297</sup> Paget, ‘Judicial Puzzles – Eliza Fenning’, p. 236.

As Christopher Pittard suggests, the pedestrian's perspective of these urban spaces was chaotic and undisciplined, which defied the attempts of planners and improvers to make them more orderly.<sup>298</sup> This tension between order and chaos was reflected within the content of crime-focused social exploration journalism, and Pittard suggests that at street-level the ordered world of law-enforcement quickly gave way to the subterranean and chaotic world of criminality.<sup>299</sup> Similarly, Paul Fyfe points out that this kind of writing grew alongside the city itself, and that the sheer diversity of print media was seen to share the qualities of chaos and randomness with the metropolis.<sup>300</sup> The growth of the urban environment, as Warren Fox argues, also created brand new urban spaces, such as railway carriages, which could hide new kinds of criminality and which needed exploring in order to iron out public anxieties surrounding modern progress:

[t]he development and rapid growth of the railways [...] had undoubtedly helped to make life faster and more efficient [...] becoming an integral part of industrialization and urbanization of their society. However, new technologies inevitably produce new dangers, and railway accidents resulting in large numbers of fatalities and injuries appeared with alarming regularity in the columns of all Victorian newspapers. Now, it seemed, a new kind of menace rode the rails.<sup>301</sup>

Fox specifically refers to the Franz Müller case from 1864, who was convicted of murdering a commuter on a London train. Interestingly, just as the growth of mechanisation, urbanisation and technology was seen to be creating new problems, it was also seen as part of their solution. Advances in technology played their part in solving crimes that had emerged

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<sup>298</sup> Christopher Pittard, 'Cheap, Healthful Literature: The *Strand Magazine*, Fictions of Crime and Purified Reading Communities', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 40, 1 (2007), 1-23 (p. 4).

<sup>299</sup> Pittard, 'Cheap, Healthful Literature', pp. 1-23 (p. 4).

<sup>300</sup> Paul Fyfe, 'The Random Selection of Victorian New Media', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 42, 1 (2009), 1-23 (pp. 2-5).

<sup>301</sup> Fox, pp. 271-298 (p. 277).

out of the same social progressions and Fox cites the Müller case again, which was solved through the assistance of telegraphs, steamships, photography and (perhaps most crucially) the new mass-media itself.<sup>302</sup>

A parallel was also regularly drawn between criminality and poverty. An article from the *National Magazine* from March 1861, titled 'Homes of the Poor', recounted the experiences of a Berkshire magistrate named Tucker as he attempted to raise awareness about the squalid conditions of the poor living in West London. The article relates these conditions in harrowing detail:

On another occasion [...] our relieving officer visited a house in [Plumtree Court, Holborn], between 12 and 1 o'clock in the morning, for the apprehension of a man who had deserted his wife, [sic] in attempting to go into one room he was compelled to wait until the inmates had risen from the floor behind the door, so that the door could be opened. The people lay so thick on the floor that he had to be cautious in stepping between them. In this room there was one child suffering from measles and another from the small-pox.<sup>303</sup>

As knowledge of the police was spreading, authors of social exploration journalism began to realise that the police officer could help them perform their task of penetrating and revealing these criminalised locations more effectively. As the previous chapters have suggested, the police became socially mobile by the fact that they both increased and occupied a growing space between criminality and respectability. The force manifested a reaction to increased awareness of latent criminality in a steadily-growing society, and was essentially an attempt to correct it, which placed officers in a liminal space between good and evil.<sup>304</sup> The police

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<sup>302</sup> Fox, pp. 271-298 (p. 282).

<sup>303</sup> 'Homes of the Poor', *National Magazine*, March 1861, p. 263.

<sup>304</sup> Reitz, pp.92-103 (p. 100).

officer effectively existed in a precarious position *outside* of the rigid Victorian class system,<sup>305</sup> and they were seen as both respectable professionals yet also as forced to associate with criminals and social outcasts on a daily basis. Barbara Korte, when musing on the idea of hero-worship in mid-Victorian magazines, does not mention the police officer as a heroic figure.<sup>306</sup> She instead lists other figures which are today seen as similar to police officers who received various forms of hero-worship for their actions, including Orderlies, engineers, and (particularly) firemen, yet not police officers, who were marred by their association with criminals and not singled out for this kind of hero-worship.<sup>307</sup> This attitude of the police officer occupying an in-between class-space was also often reflected in the way that police officers were physically represented, too, as often officers were depicted as inhabiting an actual space between ‘respectable’ and ‘undesirable’ areas of cities. They stopped people from entering into dangerous places, and stopped members of the criminal classes from leaving them and, as D. A. Miller puts it, the police created an ‘enclosed world’ of delinquency from which it was difficult to escape or penetrate.<sup>308</sup> In an example of this from the *National Review* in 1883, the author was warned away from a dangerous ‘criminal’ area by a police officer.

I had only twice walked through the street, and the first time I was warned by a policeman, as I turned down into it, to “look out where I was going to”<sup>309</sup>

However, the police officer (unlike the author) was free to exit and enter dangerous criminal spaces, and could cross the boundaries between ‘underworlds of crime and poverty’ and the ‘sunshine of bourgeois domesticity’ at will – a right usually reserved, argues Susan Zlotnick,

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<sup>305</sup> Miller, pp. 3-5 and p. 76.

<sup>306</sup> Korte, pp. 181-201 (p. 187).

<sup>307</sup> Korte, pp. 181-201 (p. 187).

<sup>308</sup> Miller, p. 5.

<sup>309</sup> Hoare, p. 224

only for those with true bourgeois identities.<sup>310</sup> Journalists therefore realised that they could accompany police officers into undesirable and criminal spaces that they themselves would otherwise not have been able to penetrate, and could help them explore them more closely and in greater detail. Interested journalists who made this connection thus began to perform social exploration journalism in the company of police officers, who moved ever closer to the centre of the narratives.<sup>311</sup> The presence of the police officer as a figure that accompanied and protected the journalist in their explorations of closed criminal spaces which formed a part of the growing city, also meant that a much more diverse spectrum of spaces were now open to explore. These included aforementioned slums, but also more specific locations like public-houses, opium dens, gin-shops or dancing-houses.

It is Charles Dickens who again provides us with an example of how this occurred in the mid-Victorian period. Building on his earlier work in *Sketches by Boz*, Dickens picked up on the fact that accompanying police officers afforded him the opportunity to expand his wanderings and enter into ever more dangerous and varied criminal spaces. Accounts of his infamous exploits alongside police Inspectors Field and Whicher appeared in *Household Words* in 1850-51. These foreshadowed the crossover into fictional narratives as Field famously became the inspiration for Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House*, which appeared in 1853.<sup>312</sup> Jessica Valdez suggests that Dickens deliberately structured *Household Words* to mirror the chaos of mid-Victorian urban society to help the reader become more discerning of

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<sup>310</sup> Susan Zlotnick, 'The Law's a Bachelor: *Oliver Twist*, Bastardy and the New Poor Law', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 34, 1 (2006), 131-146 (p. 132).

<sup>311</sup> Von Rothkirch, pp. 1042-1063 (p. 1042).

<sup>312</sup> Rzepka, p. 90.

patterns and broader social trends,<sup>313</sup> and Valdez also echoes Christopher Pittard's sentiments that periodicals and their content directly mirrored the chaos of urban cities.<sup>314</sup>

Dickens's accounts included 'A Detective Police Party' (1850), 'Three Detective Anecdotes' (1850) and 'On Duty with Inspector Field' (1851).<sup>315</sup> These provided readers with an 'internal' view into the closed world of crime, using the figure of the police officer as a literary protector and guide. Valdez correctly argues that Dickens's additional motive was to highlight the positives in law-enforcement, such as improvements in detection.<sup>316</sup> This was thus another example of the continued meshing of non-fictional critique of the police and periodical crime-journalism which gave readers a voyeuristic view into private criminal spaces. An extract from 'On Duty with Inspector Field' can highlight the interest in entering and revealing the realms of criminals to the reader:

Saint Giles's church strikes half-past ten. We stoop low, and creep down a precipitous flight of steps into a dark close cellar. There is a fire. There is a long deal table. There are benches. The cellar is full of company, chiefly very young men in various conditions of dirt and raggedness. Some are eating supper. There are no girls or women present.

Welcome to the Rat's Castle, gentlemen, and to this company of noted thieves!<sup>317</sup>

The line '[w]elcome to the Rat's Castle, gentlemen, and to this company of noted thieves!' is particularly interesting, as it suggested both Inspector Field speaking to Dickens, but also *Dickens speaking directly to the reader*, who accompanied him.

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<sup>313</sup> Valdez, pp. 377-400 (p. 378).

<sup>314</sup> Pittard, 'Cheap, Healthful Literature', pp. 1-23 (p. 4).

<sup>315</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 164.

<sup>316</sup> Valdez, pp. 377-400 (pp. 382-383).

<sup>317</sup> Charles Dickens, 'On Duty with Inspector Field', *Household Words*, 14 June 1851, p. 266.

Dickens tended to highlight the nature of the crimes committed in these narratives, as the result of poor moral or social choices (such as alcoholism), which hearkened back to the idea that crime narratives were, at least on some basic or perhaps pretended level, aimed at the provision of social or moral instruction.<sup>318</sup> We witness this perspective in action directly, as Dickens provides descriptions of who was being held inside the police-station, where several prisoners are depicted as having been apprehended for being intoxicated.<sup>319</sup>

‘On Duty with Inspector Field’ is described by Anthea Trodd as ‘Dickens’s most extravagant tribute to the new detective force’, and she suggests that Dickens himself operated within the narrative as a distinct figure from everything else contained within it – in other words, as a middle-class participant in police raids on the darkest areas of London.<sup>320</sup> As D. A. Miller suggests, ‘[o]utside and surrounding the [closed] world of delinquency lies the middle-class world of private life’.<sup>321</sup> Dickens thus occupies a position as a middle-class journalist who uses the police officer as a protector, and Field protects Dickens both from physical danger, but also in a social sense by allowing him to retain his middle-class status whilst venturing into the criminal underworld. Indeed Field, argues Trodd, manifests the opposite qualities to Dickens in that he is a ‘model of courage, mental sharpness, and [possesses extensive] knowledge of the urban labyrinth’.<sup>322</sup> Field manifested a force for protection that Dickens, as an external observer, required to perform his task.

The use of the police as protection for journalists appeared in numerous other examples of periodical journalism designed to penetrate, explore and reveal criminal spaces. In May 1869, the *Ragged School Union Magazine* published a description written by a journalist who

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<sup>318</sup> Valdez, pp. 377-400 (pp. 382-383).

<sup>319</sup> Dickens, ‘On Duty with Inspector Field’, p. 265.

<sup>320</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 439)

<sup>321</sup> Miller, p. 6.

<sup>322</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 439).

explored particular ‘low areas’ of London. Under the necessary protection of a police officer, the author visited numerous locations where the criminal class apparently frequented.

Throughout the duration of his visit, an officer accompanied him for his safety:

A well-known member of the “Times” staff has recently devoted about a week to the visitation of the “crime gardens” of London. In company with detectives, he has visited beershops, lodging-houses for travellers, and dolly shops in Tiger Bay, Kent Street, the Mint, and the other favourite haunts of our criminal classes.<sup>323</sup>

The use of the phrase ‘crime-gardens’ colourfully highlights the article’s purpose. These areas were deemed to be spaces where criminal behaviour figuratively ‘grew’, and were thus spaces which respectable Victorians would not have been able to visit under normal circumstances without the presence of a police officer. Warren Fox suggests that the police officer or detective finding and apprehending a criminal was seen as ‘the best way to restore people’s faith in their own security’, and thus they acted as a metaphorical shield between security and insecurity.<sup>324</sup> Again, the idea that the detective was present for the author’s ‘safety’ had a double-meaning, as they keep the author ‘safe’ both from physical harm and from flouting restrictions on where respectable members of society could and could not go. The author was careful to state that all of his explorations are ‘in company with detectives’. In a further example of this, in June 1865 an article by J. C. Parkinson and published in *Temple Bar* wrote:

From Stepney police-station, again, I have started – *always with the Inspector* [my italics] – to go the round of the cheap gaffs, squalid saloons, small music-halls, dancing taverns, and concert-rooms of the Ratcliffe Highway and Whitechapel. [...] where the shottishe

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<sup>323</sup> ‘Haunts of Crime’, *Ragged School Union Magazine*, May 1869, p. 104.

<sup>324</sup> Fox, pp. 271-298 (p. 279).

[sic] is danced by foreign gentlemen and ladies [...] habitually carry knives, and occasionally use them.<sup>325</sup>

The phrase ‘always with the Inspector’ is particularly significant, as the presence of the police officer was again included to highlight how the author would never have dreamed of entering these criminal spaces without their presence. In December 1874 John Burns, writing in *Good Words*, suggested that an entire *party* of police officers needed to be present for the author to enter the haunts of the criminal class:

It was considerably arranged by the chief constable that everything should be shown to be in the worst haunts, and accordingly under the guidance of a lieutenant and picked escort of detectives, we made a sally from the Central Police Office [...]<sup>326</sup>

In a final example, in 1851 the *Ragged School Union Magazine* wrote how a police officer provided escort to a group of determined journalists who had travelled from Scotland to see the ‘criminal underworld’ of London. The detective-officer is described as both a guide and protector of this group, and the author argues that without the protection of the police the entire operation would certainly not have been possible:

But we were anxious to get to the very bottom of the social fabric, to explore the lowest depths where human beings are to be found. Without the protection of the police such an enterprise would of course have been impossible; but on presenting a letter which we had brought from Scotland, we found the authorities ready to afford every facility, and as the best method of accomplishing our object, we were intrusted to the guidance of J. H. Sanders, an officer of the detective force.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> J. C. Parkinson, ‘On Duty with the Inspector’, *Temple Bar*, June 1865, p. 349.

<sup>326</sup> John Burns, ‘A Wild Night’, *Good Words*, December 1874, pp. 211-212.

<sup>327</sup> ‘The Low Haunts of London’ *Ragged School Union Magazine*, January 1851, p. 200.

Again, we see the presence of the police officer as necessary, in order for respectable people to enter the haunts of the criminal classes. The officer thus keeps ‘respectable’ people physically separate from these ‘low haunts’ which they perceived that the ‘criminal classes’ inhabited.

These kinds of article, where journalists used the presence of a police officer to accompany them into urban spaces deemed ‘criminal’, were thus a form of writing which blended various conventions of both police-criticism and crime-journalism together. They displayed the fact that the police officer had become an inherent yet liminal part of the social fabric. They could physically enter or exit criminal areas at will, and could assist others who did not have that innate ability. On the other hand, these articles also catered for the voyeuristic interests of crime-journalism. Journalists entered into criminal spaces with the express intention of finding out as much as possible about the people that inhabited those spaces, in order to render those spaces public for their readers.

Using the police officer to accompany those who wished to explore criminalised or ‘dangerous’ urban spaces apparently extended beyond journalists to wider members of the public. A letter to the *London Review* published in January 1864 made a startling argument in respect to this practice:

One of the strangest pilgrimages that can be made among the wonderful sights of London used to be accomplished [...] by visitors who had the permission of the authorities and the aid of the police in “going the rounds” through the lowest haunts of crime. [...] A recent visit of this kind for many hours in company with officers who could not be denied admittance anywhere, opened up large fields for observation [...]<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> ‘A Visit to Low Haunts’, *London Review*, 30 January 1864, p. 113.

According to the correspondent, the practice of using police officers to accompany people into slum areas was not limited to journalists interested performing social exploration, but was a possibility for anyone wishing to perform a form of ‘poverty tourism’. The police were a trusted social institution to maintain the distinctions between respectable middle-class values and the chaos of criminality, which further serves to highlight the fact that the police themselves occupied an indistinct and liminal social position. The correspondent also directly points to the fact that this kind of practice ‘opened’ various closed, private or dangerous spaces for exploration, as the police officer’s power and influence allowed them an unprecedented level of access. The power of the police officer to do this is referenced in this letter:

Here is the grand entrance of a huge theatre, with flaring gas, and a tide of people flowing in. But a few taps at a dark back door, and a magic word or two from our leaders, open the way [...]<sup>329</sup>

The ‘magic word’ spoken by the police officer symbolically ‘opened’ the way into the darker recesses of the underworld for the correspondent, and the use of a theatre here was also symbolic. Entering through the back door hinted at the idea that the distinction between visible front-stage and hidden backstage mirrored wider society itself.

The ‘criminal areas’ of London and other cities were therefore spaces which were largely hidden from public view, and went unnoticed by the vast majority of people who only saw the visible part of the ‘stage production’ of Victorian society. Indeed, as the aforementioned article ‘A Wild Night’ in *Good Words* from 1874 suggested:

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<sup>329</sup> ‘A Visit to Low Haunts’, *London Review*, 30 January 1864, p. 113.

Our neighbour the moon always shows her bright side: we never see that which is in the gloom, and so it may be said of most people who live in great cities. They know by report, but few practically have seen, the vicissitudes of vast populations [...]<sup>330</sup>

The police officer, a figure which had been socially blurred by the tension between their ‘respectable’ status as a uniformed professional and their association with criminals and their perceived inefficiencies, were seen as a means through which journalists could enter this criminal underworld. However, as the era progressed and as the periodical press developed, this trope began to be transposed into more creative kinds of writing as the pretence at maintaining an ‘illusion of truth’ in these narratives gave way to the desire to present entertaining fiction to readers. This, I suggest, influenced the appearance of the first genre of fiction to be contemporarily ascribed the label ‘detective literature’ – police memoir fiction.

### **3.4: “‘Detective” literature, if it may be so called’: The Police-Memoir as ‘Detective Fiction’**

Between c. 1850 and 1870, a sizable amount of fiction marketed as ‘memoirs’ or ‘recollections’ of police officers emerged. These were (usually) fictional first person narratives told from the perspective of a police officer directly to the reader, relating individual cases in their policing career. These, as the remainder of this chapter will explore in detail, were an evolution of the previously-examined forms of periodical writing and were enormously popular.

Police memoirs catered for the same interests and used some of the same literary techniques as ‘social exploration journalism’, including the quasi-voyeuristic interests of crime-reporting and the useful protective quality of the police officer to penetrate the criminal

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<sup>330</sup> Burns, p. 211.

space. As a result, there is a direct, observable correlation between ‘social exploration’ journalism and police memoirs. As Erich Goode points out, memoirs appealed to readers’ sense of inclusion within a given text:

What is the appeal of autobiography and memoir? Autonarrative is appealing to the extent that it permits the reader to enter the author’s time and place, to see the world behind the author’s eyes, to vicariously live another life – to both voyeuristically and experientially live the life of another person.<sup>331</sup>

Police memoirs allowed readers to witness and experience the life and exploits of a police officer from a place of safety. This helps to answer a question posed by Catherine Nickerson, who rhetorically asks:

The world of the detective novel is a place of untimely death, cruelty, suspicion and betrayal. If detective fiction is a literature of escape, why would anyone want to be transported to such anxious locales?<sup>332</sup>

Nickerson also suggests that detective fiction and its enduring popularity is almost always connected to the acceleration and public perception of true crime, which leads us to one of the reasons for the growth in the police-memoir’s popularity during the mid-Victorian era.<sup>333</sup>

The fictional police memoir offered the reader higher entertainment value than social-exploration journalism. As Warren Fox notes when discussing the Franz Müller case, some truthfully-told tales of police officers tracking and apprehending true criminals eventually lost their entertainment value, as the criminals and detectives simply were not imaginative enough:

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<sup>331</sup> Erich Goode, *Justifiable Conduct: Self-Vindication in Memoir* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), p. 27.

<sup>332</sup> Catherine Nickerson, ‘Murder as Social Criticism’, *American Literary History*, 9, 4 (1997), 744-757 (p. 744).

<sup>333</sup> Nickerson, pp. 744-757 (p. 744).

It was with a certain derision, almost amounting to annoyance, that the newspapers reported the ease with which Müller had been taken: “It seems marvellous,” the *Morning Star* commented, “how any man who had the evil ingenuity to plan and the wicked resolution to attempt a murder could have acted with such utter and abject imbecility when it became necessary to attempt an escape from the consequences of his crime.” Some writers even began to wonder whether the police might not have pursued and arrested the wrong man, or at least a dim-witted accomplice rather than the mastermind behind the crime [...] <sup>334</sup>

In cases such as this, apparently the truthful element to crime-journalism was losing its appeal in favour of the more sensational elements of storytelling. Indeed, as Alyce Von Rothkirch suggests, the villain of crime-storytelling manifested ‘contemporary social and cultural anxieties’ and were representations of ‘the public imagination about crime’. <sup>335</sup> Thus, the ever-growing reality surrounding criminals, namely that they were losing their entertainment value, gave way to more imaginative responses.

As well as higher entertainment value, fictional memoirs also simply allowed authors a much greater degree of creative freedom, which in turn allowed for more targeted social or political commentary, as the necessity to maintain an illusion of truth in a narrative was no longer an issue. This is perhaps explained most succinctly by Jessica Valdez, who explores Charles Dickens’s movement away from social journalism and into fictional story telling. Valdez suggests that Dickens’s move from *Household Words* to *All the Year Round* represented a ‘hardening of his views on journalism and a greater reliance on fictional narrative to provide readers with an understanding of their positions in the Victorian social

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<sup>334</sup> Fox, pp. 271-298 (pp. 282-283).

<sup>335</sup> Von Rothkirch, pp. 1042-1063 (p. 1043).

framework'.<sup>336</sup> Essentially, reality itself sometimes obstructed the construction of writing designed specifically to critique society, and thus the production of fictional narratives were a natural move for journalists looking to perform socio-political commentary.

The influx of police memoirs which occurred during the mid-nineteenth century is often dismissed today as unworthy of scholarly scrutiny, as it has become characterised as little more than cheap and nasty. Indeed, Ian Ousby argues:

This cheap and cheerful reading, published in series such as Routledge's Railway Library [...] included a flood of books presented as the reminiscences of real policemen but actually fiction written by hacks.<sup>337</sup>

Others only glance towards police memoirs, and briefly acknowledge that there was an increase in the genre's presence and popularity. Many commentators prefer to focus instead on sensation fiction and its relation to the development of the detective genre throughout the 1860s, examined in the next chapter. Indeed, Anthea Trodd ignores the influx of mid-Victorian police memoirs when she makes the assertion that, by 1862, the 'police detective [was] a character still in search of a genre'.<sup>338</sup> Charles Rzepka acknowledges the presence of the police-memoir style, but prefers to focus on the work of Emile Gaboriau.<sup>339</sup> Rzepka admits that police memoirs have a place in the genre's chronology, but is clearly suspicious of the attribution of the title 'detective fiction' to the memoir genre when he suggests:

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<sup>336</sup> Valdez, pp. 377-400 (p. 378).

<sup>337</sup> Ian Ousby, *The Crime and Mystery Book: A Readers Companion* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), p. 34.

<sup>338</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 436).

<sup>339</sup> Rzepka, pp. 90-92.

With the possible exception of the police ‘recollections’ and ‘memoirs’ of the 1850s and 1860s, detective novels and stories remained largely submerged in other types of Victorian literature [...] <sup>340</sup>

Stephen Knight similarly mentions several memoir-authors, but instead pays closer attention to the development of ‘detection’ as a literary technique. <sup>341</sup> This ambivalence towards the mid-Victorian police memoir has caused it to remain largely unrecognised as a legitimate moment in the evolution of detective fiction, because the role of the periodical press itself (where much of this material appeared) has not yet been properly examined in relation to the development of the detective genre. There are very few studies which give explicit focus to the rise and popularity of police memoirs, and those that do exist are largely unsatisfactory. Haia Shpayer Makov’s chapter ‘Explaining the Rise and Success of Detective Memoirs in Britain’, published in *Police Detectives in History, 1750-1950* (2006) is a rare example of a scholarly piece which focuses on the genre, but its conclusions are disappointingly limited. Makov argues that the popularity of the police memoir owed much to the pervading interest in crime which had stemmed from earlier centuries, but concludes that the literary shift away from crime and towards detection was merely due to the creation of the detective department in 1842. <sup>342</sup> Makov also suggests that the shift towards fiction was simply due to the literary attraction of recounting detectives’ experiences, but does not provide any analysis of their content. <sup>343</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Rzepka, p. 99.

<sup>341</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000*, pp. 30-33.

<sup>342</sup> Haia Shpayer-Makov, ‘Explaining the Rise and Success of Detective Memoirs in Britain’, in *Police Detectives in History, 1750-1950*, ed. by Clive Emsley and Haia Shpayer-Makov (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 103-134 (pp. 105-106).

<sup>343</sup> Shpayer-Makov, ‘Explaining the Rise and Success of Detective Memoirs in Britain’, in *Police Detectives in History, 1750-1950*, ed. by Emsley and Shpayer-Makov, pp. 103-134 (p. 109)

However, some scholarly work does recognise this form of writing as a significant moment. Heather Worthington, for example, argues that the police memoir was the first literary genre where the police officer or detective took centre stage:

In these 'Recollections' the investigative policeman is brought firmly into the public domain and public popularity.<sup>344</sup>

Worthington asserts that the police-memoir was the space where the official police detective was brought to the forefront of a narrative for the first time. Haia Shpayer-Makov, in her monograph *The Ascent of the Detective* (2011), provides a much more satisfactory analysis than in her previous chapter, and suggests that the genre was important for raising awareness surrounding the use of detectives in literature:

[T]he pseudo-memoirs of detectives [...] not only expanded the presence of the official detective figure in literature significantly, but also accorded him a central role in the plot.<sup>345</sup>

This point regarding the centralisation of the detective within the plot is noteworthy, as it denotes the fact that journalism focused on crime had absorbed the understanding and interest in the police permeated by periodical criticism of the police force and the thus became the central focus of these narratives. Alyce Von Rothkirch makes this point succinctly, when she agrees with Shpayer-Makov that 'gradually [...] the detective assigned to a case attained parity with the criminal as a literary character, and in time replaced him as a dominant figure in aesthetic discourse.'<sup>346</sup> In other words, the rise of the fictional police memoir was part of

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<sup>344</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 4.

<sup>345</sup> Haia Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective: Police Sleuths in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 232-233.

<sup>346</sup> Von Rothkirch, pp. 1042-1063 (p. 1042).

the movement away from the criminal, and a motion towards the police officer as the central figure within fiction focused on crime.

The most important point regarding the merit of police memoir-fiction in terms of its contribution to the evolution of the detective genre is that mid-Victorian authors and periodical commentators themselves demonstrated an awareness of ‘detective fiction’ as an emerging, distinct literary genre, and directly associated police memoir fiction with it. In the first issue of ‘Experiences of a Real Detective’, published in the *Sixpenny Magazine* throughout 1862 under the pseudonym ‘Inspector F.’, the journalist and author of police memoirs William Russell argued that detective fiction itself was an emergent literary genre, which was directly characterised by the police memoir:

“Detective” literature, if it may be so called, appears to have acquired a wide popularity, chiefly, I suppose, because the stories are believed to be, in the main, faithfully-told, truthful narratives.<sup>347</sup>

Russell’s attempt at genre categorisation anticipates an argument made by Paul Fyfe. Fyfe suggests that the flood of cheap literature which emerged throughout the mid-Victorian era took commentators aback, and they naturally attempted to make sense of it using what he terms the ‘classificatory rhetoric of natural history’.<sup>348</sup> The phrase, ‘if it may be so called’ denotes this uncertainty. However whilst the label itself may only be tentatively ascribed, it was clearly necessary to distinguish police memoirs from other emergent literary forms. Russell suggested that the idea of ‘detective literature’ specifically *was* ‘police memoir writing’, because the point of ‘detective literature’ was to be ‘faithfully-told, truthful narratives’ of the experiences of police officers. For all intents and purposes, therefore, I

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<sup>347</sup> William Russell, ‘Experiences of a Real Detective’, *Sixpenny Magazine*, March 1862, p. 325.

<sup>348</sup> Fyfe, pp. 1-23 (p. 3).

suggest that in the 1860s ‘detective fiction’ simply was ‘police memoir fiction’. A review of Russell’s work from the *Dublin Review* of May 1861 makes the point:

Just now books of narratives of detectives and ex-detectives are all the fashion. Diaries, note-books, and confessions issue from the press in shoals, and one would naturally expect to find amongst them a complete disclosure of an ingenious and successful system.<sup>349</sup>

Other authors also picked up on this. In December 1864 a story titled ‘An Australian Detective’s Story’ appeared in *Once a Week*, which commented directly on police memoirs’ contemporary popularity and suggested that ‘detective literature’ was designed to illustrate the ‘science of crime discovery’, or in other words, ‘detection’:

[...] the story I am about to tell [...] well deserves a place among those detective notabilia which of late years have furnished such curious illustrations of the science of crime-discovery.<sup>350</sup>

As the genre was contemporarily viewed (at least by some) as an emergent form of ‘detective fiction’, the police memoir became extremely important to the development of detective fiction. The ascription of the label ‘detective literature’ suggests that the genre was already distinctive, with its own characteristics separate from other emerging genres.

### **3.5: The Police Memoir: c. 1830-1875**

It is important to point out that the ‘memoir’ genre itself was not a mid-Victorian invention, and was also distinct from ‘autobiography’ in that memoirs focused on certain aspects of the protagonists’ lives (such as their profession), rather than their entire experiences from birth.

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<sup>349</sup> ‘Recollections of a Detective Police Officer, by “Waters”’, *Dublin Review*, May 1861, p. 153.

<sup>350</sup> ‘An Australian Detective’s Story’, *Once a Week*, 24 December 1864, p. 25.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were peppered with examples of would-be memoirs which dealt with a variety of subjects and did not focus on the activities of police officers. In fact, at this stage, there was *no* discernible trend in subjects. A short list of titles published in early nineteenth century periodicals highlights this eclectic mixture, including ‘Memoirs of a Missionary’ (the *Satirist*, 1810), ‘Memoirs of a Recluse’ (the *European Magazine*, 1816), ‘Recollections of a Metropolitan Curate’ (the *European Magazine*, 1819), ‘Memoirs of a Misanthrope’ (the *London Magazine*, 1822), ‘The Memoir of a Hypochondriac’ (the *London Magazine*, 1822), ‘Real Scenes in the Life of an Actress’ (the *Weekly Entertainer*, 1823), ‘The Recollections of a Student’ (the *New Monthly Magazine*, 1823), and ‘Recollections of a Tour in France’ (the *Weekly Entertainer*, 1824). There were also some more playful titles which fit into the memoir genre, including ‘Memoirs of a Haunch of Mutton’, published in the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1823.

These memoirs were published for a variety of different authorial purposes. There was firstly an apparent interest in representing the distant and occasionally dangerous experiences of the author to the reader. However crucially, as Heather Worthington puts it, memoir fiction made ‘public what had been private’.<sup>351</sup> It is this aspect of the genre which connects memoirs with the broad interests of other forms of writing discussed already in this thesis.

The memoir genre became earnestly concerned with crime and law enforcement in the middle of the nineteenth century. However, there were some earlier proto-examples which foreshadowed this mid-century boom. Texts such as ‘Diary of a Barrister during the Last Wexford Assizes’, which appeared in January 1826 in the *New Monthly Magazine*, were marketed as direct excerpts from the private notebooks of law enforcement officials, and this example was marketed to be wholly separate from the official records of assize Judges.<sup>352</sup> It

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<sup>351</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 7.

<sup>352</sup> ‘Diary of a Barrister During the Last Wexford Assizes’, *New Monthly Magazine*, January 1826, p. 296.

claimed that it provided readers with information on cases that crime reporting in newspapers and periodicals would have either missed or omitted, and the author asserted that readers could glean ‘insider information’, designed to ‘gratify the curiosity of the [...] reader’.<sup>353</sup>

The anonymous<sup>354</sup> novel *Richmond, or, Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Runner* (1827) is also an early example of a police memoir. It is relatively unknown today, though it is occasionally recognised among scholarly circles which explore the chronology of detective fiction. Heather Worthington suggests that *Richmond* was a ‘teenage text’

situated between the ‘infancy’ of policing in its semi-feudal form with parish constables and watchmen, and its ‘coming of age’ as the New Metropolitan Police.<sup>355</sup>

Outside of scholarly discourse, however, *Richmond* is rarely recognised. Haia Shpayer-Makov mentions the novel but almost instantly dismisses it, arguing that the author was ‘most probably not a Runner himself, and the book [...] did not prove a great success’.<sup>356</sup> Charles Rzepka also performs a cursory glance, suggesting that it was a text ‘ahead of its time’, but he is suspicious of the assertion that *Richmond* be categorised as ‘detective fiction’ at all.<sup>357</sup> None of Ian Ousby’s *The Crime and Mystery Book*, John Scaggs’s *Crime Fiction*, or Stephen Knight’s *Crime Fiction 1800-2000* mention *Richmond*.

However, it is worth some critical attention with regard to its connection with mid-Victorian police memoirs. The novel relates the experiences of ‘Tom Richmond’, a member of the Bow Street Runners (a loosely-organised group of law-enforcement officials working in London prior to the establishment of the Metropolitan Police, eventually closed in 1839).

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<sup>353</sup> ‘Diary of a Barrister During the Last Wexford Assizes’, *New Monthly Magazine*, January 1826, p. 303.

<sup>354</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 104.

<sup>355</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 105.

<sup>356</sup> Shpayer-Makov, ‘Explaining the Rise and Success of Detective Memoirs in Britain’, in *Police Detectives in History, 1750-1950*, ed. by Emsley and Shpayer-Makov, pp. 103-134 (p. 108).

<sup>357</sup> Rzepka, p. 66-68.

Richmond provided readers with insights into the Runners' experiences, and also into isolated or marginalised communities such as gypsies and circuses, where he spent much of his early life. Richmond acts as the reader's guide into these communities, allowing them a window into their society which they would not otherwise have been privy to. Richmond, like his later literary descendents, thus occupies a transitional social position between communities, and uses it to his advantage. In one example he questions his old friends in a gypsy encampment in order to obtain information and assistance in the capture of a criminal:

Marshall showed me every disposition to assist me in the inquiry. I took care, indeed, not to let him know what authority I now possessed, nor give him any hint of my official situation; otherwise he might have been shy of renewing our old acquaintance.<sup>358</sup>

This curiously foreshadows later depictions of police officers, where they occupied a similar social position between criminality and respectability. As with the police officer in 'social exploration journalism', Richmond recognises the useful quality in occupying a space between classes, and directly uses it to his advantage.

A third important proto-example of a police memoir was the satirical *Life of a Policeman by an Ex-Constable*, which appeared in the *Penny Satirist* in 1843. This is significant as it was apparently genuinely authored by a police constable employed by the Liverpool Police in the late 1830s. It provides readers with a cheerful, half-fictional, half-truthful<sup>359</sup> view into the 'daily drudgery of the lowly police-constable on the beat'.<sup>360</sup> It is largely satirical, and offers

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<sup>358</sup> 'Richmond' (attrib. T. S. Surr), *Richmond, or, Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Runner* (London: H. Colburn, 1827; repr. New York: Dover Publications, 1976), p. 93.

<sup>359</sup> Nick Foggo, 'The Life of a Liverpool Policeman, or, Fact and Fictionalisation in the Early Years of the Liverpool Constabulary Force', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* (TBC, 2018), p. 3. This article is in a draft stage and has been accepted but not yet published by the journal. However, I am grateful to Dr. Foggo for providing me with an advance-copy.

<sup>360</sup> Foggo, p. 1.

tongue-in-cheek views of the police, including officers sneaking off for a drink or hiding to avoid patrolling Inspectors:

Tom, in his usual hurry, came bang against me with the force of a thunderbolt; he fell, and I nearly fell upon him, which circumstance excited the unrestrained laughter of every constable present. Having received orders from the superintendent to appear before the commissioners [...] on the charge of being drunk on duty, Tom and I immediately afterwards resorted to our cousin's, where we formed a council of three, and adopted plans and resolutions necessary to bring us out of our disgrace before the commissioners.<sup>361</sup>

The fact that it was a satire of the police force, coupled with its description of the police constables,<sup>362</sup> somewhat separates this text from later police memoirs from what could perhaps be termed the 'golden age of the police memoir', which presented the police as incorruptible and highly professionalised members of a structured and powerful organisation.

Police memoir fiction reached the peak of its popularity during the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>363</sup> The potential of the police officer to act as a guide and protector for readers which had been so useful for journalists performing 'social exploration' into crime and criminal areas, was transposed into an enormous number of fictional narratives throughout the mid-Victorian era. Non-fiction criticism of the police in periodicals had created a wider awareness of their image, purpose and remit, and thus allowed authors who had no direct connection with the police to create realistic and convincing literary police officers. The voyeuristic interests of crime reporting, combined with the useful capacity of the police officer to act as literary guide and protector prevalent in social exploration journalism, were the driving force

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<sup>361</sup> 'The Life of a Policeman, by an Ex-Constable', *Penny Satirist*, 28 October 1843.

<sup>362</sup> Foggo, p. 6.

<sup>363</sup> Martin Kayman, *From Bow Street to Baker Street: Mystery. Detection and Narrative* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 122.

behind the purpose of these narratives. Titles therefore appeared which marketed themselves as the dangerous experiences of police officers which readers were able to witness and share in directly.

William Russell, today a largely forgotten fiction author, was perhaps the most prolific producer of police memoirs of the mid-Victorian era. Russell was a journalist living in London throughout the 1850s, contributing considerable amounts of fiction to periodicals and magazines, notably *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* and the *Sixpenny Magazine*. Russell was an unsettled figure; a search through the *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* business ledgers reveals that he had no fewer than nine different North-East London addresses between 1845 and 1856. However, on the 1851 census, Russell also listed his occupation as 'Author Writer for Chief Periodicals', implying that his income was substantial enough for him to be able to make a living from writing.<sup>364</sup>

Russell made extensive use of that which Shpayer-Makov terms an 'innovative and popular form', and his bibliography is impressive.<sup>365</sup> His works included 'Experiences of a Barrister' (1849) and 'Recollections of a Police Officer' (1849), both published in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*. 'Recollections of a Police Officer' proved popular enough to be republished as a novel in 1856, retitled *Recollections of a Detective Police Officer*, and a 'second series' of stories from this novel also appeared in 1859.<sup>366</sup> The process of publishing a single edition provided Russell with the opportunity to explain the idea behind his creation. In a new preface, Russell suggests that the text was originally written with the intention of providing the reader with a literary window into the exploits of the police:

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<sup>364</sup> 1851 UK Census, Ecclesiastical District of: West Hackney, Borough of: Tower Hamlets, entry 255: 9 Southgate Place, *ancestry.co.uk* <<http://www.ancestry.co.uk>> [accessed 24 November 2016].

<sup>365</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 234.

<sup>366</sup> 'Recollections of a Detective Police Officer, by "Waters"', *Dublin Review*, May 1861, p. 150.

I [...] offer no apology, for placing these rough sketches of the police experience before the reader [...]<sup>367</sup>

*Recollections of a Detective Police Officer*'s popularity directly caused Russell to write and publish *Leaves from the Diary of a Law Clerk* a year later in 1857. Again, Russell used the preface to highlight how the text was a direct evolution of the journalistic purpose of exploring the private realms of criminality:

The general favour with which the 'Recollections of a Detective Officer' have been received, induces the publishers to reprint, by permission, the following papers, by the same author, - who, in these sketches as in the 'Recollections,' has endeavoured to render as faithfully as might be, the *records of a real experience* [my italics].<sup>368</sup>

*Leaves from the Diary of a Law Clerk* was followed up by 'Experiences of a Real Detective' and 'Undiscovered Crimes' in 1862, both published in the *Sixpenny Magazine*. Finally, Russell also published *Autobiography of an English Detective* in two volumes in 1863.

Despite this impressive list of published fiction, Russell's work has been dismissed by some, including Ian Ousby and Christopher Pittard, as a 'hack'.<sup>369</sup> However, it is premature to dismiss his writing merely because it was cheap and to suggest that it is of little historical or scholarly value. Indeed, by the early 1860s, the police memoir genre had become 'all the fashion'.<sup>370</sup> A review published in the *Dublin Review* in May 1861 directly acknowledged the police memoir's popularity, and suggested that the genre was designed to give readers 'complete disclosure' of the dangerous experiences of the police. In fact, the review lamented that many of the recollections were not actually truthful *enough* to give readers the insider-

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<sup>367</sup> William Russell, *Recollections of a Detective Police-Officer* (London: J & C Brown and Co., 1856), p. vi.

<sup>368</sup> William Russell, *Leaves from the Diary of a Law Clerk* (London: J & C Brown and Co., 1857), p. 3.

<sup>369</sup> Ousby, p. 34. See also Christopher Pittard, 'Victorian Detective Fiction', *Crimeculture* <[http://www.crimeculture.com/?page\\_id=135](http://www.crimeculture.com/?page_id=135)> [accessed 21 May 2018] (2003).

<sup>370</sup> 'Recollections of a Detective Police Officer, by "Waters"', *Dublin Review*, May 1861, p. 153.

information that they desired, hearkening back to the idea that some periodical crime ‘round-ups’ complained that their sources of ‘insider information’ were sometimes not close enough to provide adequate detail.<sup>371</sup> The review argues:

With, however, one or two exceptions, there is evidently no reality in any of these productions.<sup>372</sup>

The perceived truthfulness of these narratives was therefore apparently a factor that contributed to the texts’ quality. The more truthful the narrative, the better it was deemed to be, as it gave a more realistic account of the police’s exploits into the dangerous criminal locales. Thus, memoir fiction focused on the experiences of the police blended the non-fiction critique of the police published in periodicals and the voyeuristic interests of periodical crime journalism, using the protective quality of the police officer evident in social exploration journalism.

Russell’s earliest example of a memoir centred on the activities of the police was the popular ‘Recollections of a Police Officer’, which appeared in *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal* between 1849 and 1853.<sup>373</sup> The stories follow the career of an officer named ‘Waters’, who was not naturally inclined to join the police but instead was forced to after getting himself into a dire financial situation that left him with no alternative.<sup>374</sup> The opening issue paragraphs of the first instalment establish ‘Waters’ as a character with a potentially criminal past, which serves to highlight him instantly as a figure occupying a social space between respectability and criminality:

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<sup>371</sup> See Chapter 2, Section 2.4.

<sup>372</sup> ‘Recollections of a Detective Police Officer, by “Waters”’, *Dublin Review*, May 1861, p. 154.

<sup>373</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 234.

<sup>374</sup> William Russell, ‘Recollections of a Police-Officer’, *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal*, 28 July 1849, p. 55.

‘I think I have met you before,’ he [the Chief Police Officer] remarked with a meaning smile on dismissing me, ‘when you occupied a different position from your present one? Do not alarm yourself: I have no wish to pry unnecessarily into other men’s secrets. Waters is a name common enough in *all* ranks of society [...] At all events, the testimony of the gentlemen whose recommendation obtained you admission to the force [...] is a sufficient guarantee that nothing more serious than imprudence and folly can be laid to your charge.’<sup>375</sup>

‘Waters’ is therefore a perfect character to act as a literary guide and protector for the reader to enter the criminal underworld lurking just beneath the surface of society. This indirectly connects him to older characters such as Tom Richmond, who also progresses from would-be criminal to officer of the law. It also indirectly connects him to real historic figures, famously such as Eugène François Vidocq (1775-1857), who famously turned from a career criminal to a founding member of Paris’s Sûreté security force. Waters’s position as a criminal turned police officer additionally serves to further highlight the *police’s* marginal position, and his literary purpose to enter the private realms of criminality (and for the reader to ‘come along for the ride’ under his protection) is explicitly mentioned in the text:

‘Here is a written description of the persons of this gang of blacklegs, swindlers and forgers,’ concluded the commissioner, summing up his instructions. ‘It will be your object to *discover their private haunts* [my italics], and secure legal evidence of their nefarious practices [...]’.<sup>376</sup>

Waters regularly penetrates the invisible underworld of criminality lurking beneath the surface of society and reveals it for the reader, who accompanies him as he goes about his duties. In one example, he gains access to a house where a large group of criminals is hiding.

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<sup>375</sup> Russell, ‘Recollections of a Police-Officer’, 28 July 1849, p. 55.

<sup>376</sup> Russell, ‘Recollections of a Police-Officer’, 28 July 1849, pp. 55-56.

As Waters has only just joined the force and is unknown as a detective in London, he passes inside undetected. As events unfold, it almost seems as if the reader is standing just over Waters's shoulder:

We soon arrived before the door of a quiet, respectable-looking house in one of the streets leading from the Strand: a low, peculiar knock, given by Sandford, was promptly answered; then a password, which I did not catch, was whispered by him through the key-hole, and we passed in. [...] We proceeded up stairs to the first floor, the shutters of which were carefully closed, so that no intimation of what was going in could possibly reach the street. [...] a roulette table and dice and cards were in full activity: wine and liquors of all varieties were profusely paraded. [...] Play was proposed; and though at first stoutly refusing, I feigned to be gradually overcome by irresistible temptation, and sat down to a blind hazard with my foreign friend for moderate stakes. I was graciously allowed to win and in the end found myself richer in devil's money by about ten pounds.<sup>377</sup>

This is startlingly reminiscent of the 'Rat's Castle' scene in Dickens's article 'On Duty with Inspector Field', which also depicted the protagonist entering into a lowly haunt where criminals were lounging around, playing cards and dice.<sup>378</sup> The fact that Waters 'pretends' to play dice and cards and was 'graciously allowed to win' again highlights his liminal position. He resists play, but ultimately 'feigns' to be overcome by temptation. This makes him an excellent guide and protector for readers to enter the private locations of criminality under his literary protection, in an almost identical fashion to how police officers and detectives were used in this way in contemporary 'social exploration' journalism.

Waters's apparent knowledge of criminality also proves useful to demonstrate to readers how the criminal 'underworld', which lurked underneath everyday society, was occasionally

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<sup>377</sup> Russell, 'Recollections of a Police-Officer', 28 July 1849, p. 57.

<sup>378</sup> Dickens, 'On Duty with Inspector Field', p. 266.

discoverable in that which was actually visible to the general public. In a story titled ‘Mary Kingsford’ published in the May 1851 issue of *Chambers’s*, Waters is forced off of a train by heavy snow, and ushered into a waiting room with a collection of other passengers.

Immediately, the reader is provided with an example of his skill at ‘reading’ the appearance of other passengers and discovering the deviant which hides in plain sight. In this example, the devil is certainly in the detail:

To an eye less experienced than mine in the artifices and expedients familiar to a certain class of ‘swells,’ they might have passed muster for what they assumed to be [...] but their copper finery could not for a moment impose upon me. The watch-chains were, I saw, mosaic; the watches, so frequently displayed, gilt; eye-glasses the same; the coats, fur-collared and cuffed, were ill-fitting and second hand; ditto of the varnished boots and renovated velvet waist-coats; while the luxuriant moustaches and whiskers, and flowing wigs, were unmistakably *pieces d’occasion* – assumed and diversified at pleasure.<sup>379</sup>

Waters’s technique of analysing the appearance of members of the public and drawing conclusions surrounding their character or personality was replicated in later detective fiction. However at this point it was, again, designed to give readers a closer, personal and privileged insight into the criminal underworld hiding in plain sight, under the literary protection of Waters the detective, who possesses the skill to assess people from a distance and who acts to protect ‘true’ respectability and middle-class values.

Waters therefore exemplifies how the mid-Victorian police memoir was a blend of a variety of other forms of contemporary journalism which this project has explored so far. It performed the task of periodical crime round-ups as it catered for the voyeuristic, curious interests of readers who wished to see ‘inside’ the closed world of criminal and private spaces

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<sup>379</sup> William Russell, ‘Recollections of a Police-Officer’, *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal*, May 3 1851, p. 274.

such as prisons, court-rooms and the private moments before executions, and at this point it is also possible to add the inner workings of the police itself to this list of spaces. It also drew inspiration from police criticism and social exploration journalism, as it utilised the figure of the police officer to ‘protect’ readers as they metaphorically ventured into dangerous criminal places that they would not otherwise have frequented. For his part, Russell remained interested in the police-memoir genre as it developed over the mid-nineteenth century. Russell continuously recycled stories and material and collated different parts of different publications into new titles. Indeed, *Recollections of a Detective Police Officer* was republished at least three times more: once in 1859 (which was marketed as the ‘second series’),<sup>380</sup> as well as again in 1878 with the addition of three short stories and the new title of *The Detective Officer and Other Tales*. It was published yet again in 1887, as *The Recollections of a Detective*. The latest and final reprint of *Recollections of a Detective Police Officer* appeared (relatively) recently, in 1972.

The police memoir genre did not just consist of Russell’s work; other authors quickly sought to capitalise on the genre’s popularity. As Shpayer-Makov argues, Russell’s writing served as a ‘direct model’ for other authors of police memoirs.<sup>381</sup> Some, in fact, were indeed the recollections of actual police detectives, such as *Autobiography of a French Detective*, which was originally titled *Mémoires de Canler, anciens chef du service de sûreté* by M. Louis Canler. Both the French and English versions of this text appeared together in 1862. In Scotland, James McLevy’s *Curiosities of Crime in Edinburgh, Sliding Scale of Life* and *The Disclosures of a Detective* were all published throughout the 1860s, and cemented McLevy’s reputation as both an effective sleuth and entertaining author. However, these factual reminiscences were largely in the minority, and for the most part the genre concerned cheap,

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<sup>380</sup> ‘Recollections of a Detective Police Officer, by “Waters”’, *Dublin Review*, May 1861, p. 150.

<sup>381</sup> Shpayer-Makov, ‘Explaining the Rise and Success of Detective Memoirs in Britain’, in *Police Detectives in History, 1750-1950*, ed. by Emsley and Shpayer-Makov, pp. 103-134 (p. 109).

formulaic fiction. Again, as the *Dublin Review* lamented, there was evidently ‘no reality’ in a great many police memoirs published in this era.<sup>382</sup>

There were numerous other examples of police memoir fiction published between 1860 and 1875. These included Charles Martel’s *Diary of an Ex-Detective* (1860), ‘Recollections of a New York Detective’ published in *Twice a Week* (1862), ‘An Australian Detective’s Story’ which appeared in *Once a Week* (1864), *The Female Detective* (1864), *Revelations of a Lady Detective* (1864), ‘From a Detective’s Note-Book’ which appeared in the *Argosy* (1872) and ‘My Detective Experiences’ published in *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal* (1886). This is merely a brief list of just some of the police memoirs published across the mid-Victorian era, however they are worth listing together as they emphasise a point that can be drawn surrounding the development of the police memoir across the mid-Victorian era. As Martin Kayman correctly suggests, these memoirs deliberately followed Russell’s success in a search for new ingredients to liven up and diversify (without completely reforming) the growing genre.<sup>383</sup> This was done, essentially, in order to help texts ‘stand out from the crowd’.

This point is perhaps best illustrated through examples. The 1860 novel *Diary of an Ex-Detective* by Charles Martel (a pseudonym for Thomas Delf), portrayed the work of an anonymous, solitary detective (known only as ‘F-’, though later referred to as John). In order to open up private realms and inaccessible spaces for readers, ‘F-’ rejects the authority to enter anywhere that the uniform or title of ‘police officer’ gives him, and instead works more secretly. Instead of using his uniform as a source of authority and protection, he frequently disguises himself in order to spend time amongst different crowds of people:

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<sup>382</sup> ‘Recollections of a Detective Police Officer, by “Waters”’, *Dublin Review*, May 1861, p. 154.

<sup>383</sup> Kayman, p. 122.

“[...] at that particular time [...] I was in the habit of visiting a certain public-house in Lower Thames Street, where I was in the hopes of meeting a sea-captain, who was ‘wanted’ for trying to sink his ship and defraud the underwriters. I made-up as a working-man, and used to spend the evening in blowing a cloud, and reading [...] the newspaper through and through, from beginning to end. Sometimes, if the company was sociable, I would get into an interesting conversation [...]”<sup>384</sup>

This highlights the transitional nature of the identity of detectives which allow them to change appearance to infiltrate closed or private scenes. This had the effect of ‘opening up’ private realms of criminality for multiple kinds of reader. Firstly, the reader who would *not* frequent this kind of environment was able to view inside it, essentially using the detective’s disguise as their own. However, for those readers who may have recognised themselves in the places that ‘F-’ visited, it revealed how the police could infiltrate their spaces and helped to cement the idea that anyone in any public space could potentially be a disguised detective.

Two other important police memoirs which diversified away from Russell and which helped merge police criticism, crime reporting and social exploration journalism appeared in 1864; Andrew Forrester’s *The Female Detective* and William Stephen’s Hayward’s *Revelations of a Lady Detective*. These were ‘unique’ in that they used female protagonists, and consequently they have been quite extensively discussed in academic circles that explore gender in relation to crime and detective fiction. For example, Joseph Kestner argues that they diversified a male-dominated literary genre but that they were threats to male power centres and were therefore crushed, which helps explain why they have been forgotten today.<sup>385</sup> Kathleen Gregory Klein dismisses both texts in terms of their importance to the

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<sup>384</sup> Charles Martel, *Diary of an Ex-Detective* (London: Ward and Lock, 1860), p. 158.

<sup>385</sup> Joseph Kestner, *Sherlock’s Sisters: The British Female Detective 1864 – 1913* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), p. 229-230.

genre's development, arguing that they were anomalies in a male-dominated genre.<sup>386</sup> Others attempt to make sense of the appearance of female detectives, arguing that the change in domestic laws (such as the 1857 Matrimonial Clauses Act) caused an interest in the uncovering of a 'domestic secret' to appear, which helps to explain these texts' publication.<sup>387</sup>

*The Female Detective* and *Revelations of a Lady Detective* have therefore been consistently viewed as literary milestones as they are the first texts to feature professional female detectives, or, feature female characters that collaborate professionally with the police force to solve crimes.<sup>388</sup> However, these texts should also be historicised alongside police memoirs, as this is the genre in which their narrative structures fit.<sup>389</sup> Indeed, Andrew Forrester also authored and published another police memoir, titled *Secret Service, or, Recollections of a City Detective* in the same year as *The Female Detective* in 1864, which suggests that he was more concerned with the memoir-genre than specifically with gender. Within this memoir-context, I suggest that these texts were influenced by the contemporary popularity of the other police memoirs, but that they were written with the purpose of making them slightly different by including female detective protagonists. This was done in order to distinguish them from other examples of the genre and to perform a different task and, perhaps, sell more copies.<sup>390</sup>

The concept of a female detective protagonist was historically impossible, as women were not permitted to join the police as officers until after the First World War. However,

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<sup>386</sup> Kathleen Gregory Klein, *The Woman Detective: Gender and Genre* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 29.

<sup>387</sup> Dagni Bredesen, 'Conformist Subversion: The Ambivalent Agency in *Revelations of a Lady Detective*', *Research and Creative Activity* (Illinois: Eastern Illinois University, 2006), 20-32 (p. 20).

<sup>388</sup> Kestner, p. 14.

<sup>389</sup> Kayman, p. 122.

<sup>390</sup> Saunders, pp. 76-90 (p. 88).

both authors realised that this made ladies perfect for undercover detection, as they aroused next to no suspicion compared to their male counterparts. Female detectives were able to complete some of the duties of a detective more effectively, such as eavesdropping and infiltrating areas which were inaccessible to male detectives. Indeed, in *The Female Detective*, the detective Ms. Gladden suggested that ‘the woman detective has far greater opportunities than a man of intimate watching and of ‘keeping her eyes upon matters near’.<sup>391</sup> Similarly, in *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, the principle detective character, Mrs. Paschal, argued a similar point by suggesting that the practice of employing women as detectives was more widespread than was commonly known, and argued that they hid in plain-sight in much the same way as the criminal underworld itself.<sup>392</sup>

This quality of lady detectives to pass unnoticed and unsuspected therefore allowed the reader to safely accompany the detective into even more diverse and inaccessible places than they had been able to in the company of male detectives. In a clear example of the author using a female detective to infiltrate (and thus ‘open’) a space inaccessible to men, Paschal was depicted as going undercover as a novice in a convent. Paschal discussed this point with her client, Alfred Wriniker:

Colonel Warner told him [Wriniker] that, in his opinion, it was just the case for a Lady Detective [...] [Wriniker, to Paschal] “I like your plan very much. It is a clever conception, and worthy of a Lady Detective” [...] “You think so?” I replied, with a smile. [...] [Wriniker, to Paschal] “It is one of those cases that a man could not manage for any

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<sup>391</sup> Andrew Forrester, *The Female Detective* (London: Ward, Lock and Tyler, 1864; repr. London: British Library Publishing, 2012), p. 4.

<sup>392</sup> William Stephens Hayward, *Revelations of a Lady Detective* (London: George Vickers, 1864; repr. London: British Library Publishing, 2013), p. 18.

one whatever.” [...] [Paschal, to Wriniker] “Certainly not. The appearance of a man in a convent would be like that of a wolf amongst a flock of sheep, or a hawk in a dovecot.”<sup>393</sup>

As Paschal and her client Wriniker discuss, a male detective would be unable to infiltrate a convent, yet a female detective can do so quite easily. Through reading about Paschal’s experiences, the reader again effectively infiltrates the convent along with her, under her guidance and her protection.

### **3.6: The Memoirs of a Detective: Chapter 3 Conclusions**

The mid-Victorian police-memoir therefore constituted a blending together of a diverse range of journalistic interests, and was a direct fictional counterpart to ‘social exploration journalism’. The periodical commentary focused on the police discussed in Chapter 1 had provided wider understanding of the liminal social position of the police alongside greater understanding of how they operated. The nature of the police officer as occupying a social space somewhere between criminality and respectability combined with the quasi-voyeuristic interests of crime journalism, and this meant that authors sought to use the police as a tool to explore the criminal. This was initially done in reality, as in ‘social exploration journalism’, but it quickly gave way to fiction as this allowed much greater creative freedom and entertainment value, directly leading to the emergence of the fictional police memoir.

The figure of the literary police officer therefore became a necessary literary tool through which authors could render these inaccessible or criminal spaces public and to act as a protector for the reader who accompanied them. This adds significant weight to both Worthington and Shpayer-Makov’s suggestion that the police memoir genre was the first

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<sup>393</sup> Hayward, pp. 142-145.

literary form in which the police officer or detective was afforded a central role.<sup>394</sup> In addition, it cements the importance of the police memoir genre as an early yet fully-formed genre of ‘detective fiction’. As William Russell argued in 1862, police memoir writing was actually contemporarily considered to be an early legitimate form of ‘detective fiction’, and consequently it should be remembered as such within criticism today.

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<sup>394</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, pp. 232-233.

## Chapter 4

### ‘The Romance of the Detective’: Sensation Fiction and Police Memoir Fiction

#### 4.1: Introduction: From Memoirs to Sensations

The previous chapter argued that mid-Victorian police memoirs constituted a concrete form of ‘detective literature’, and that the genre should consequently have a stronger place in the chronology of detective fiction’s evolution than it has previously been afforded. The scant attention paid to police memoir fiction within academic discourse is, at least partially, due to its perception as a cheap, common and low-brow literary genre written only by ‘hacks’ seeking little more than financial gain.<sup>395</sup> However, there is perhaps a second reason why police-memoirs have been pushed to the rear of scholarly discussion on the evolution of detective fiction across the mid-Victorian era. The mid-nineteenth century witnessed the heyday of another form of fiction which has received extensive attention in terms of its connection with the development of detective fiction. This was ‘sensation fiction’, a label applied to a style of writing originally by Margaret Oliphant writing in 1862 in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*.<sup>396</sup> In her article, titled simply ‘Sensation Novels’, Oliphant made a conscious attempt to define exactly what it was that constituted a ‘sensation novel’, and suggested that it included such characteristics as

fierce expedients of crime and violence, by *diablerie* [original italics] of divers [sic] kinds, and by the wild devices of a romance which smiled at probabilities [...] Hectic rebellion against nature – frantic attempts by any kind of black art of mad psychology to

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<sup>395</sup> Ousby, p. 34.

<sup>396</sup> Kayman, p. 173.

get some grandeur and sacredness restored to life – or if not sacredness and grandeur, at least horror and mystery, there being nothing better in earth or heaven [...],<sup>397</sup>

This next chapter connects the meteoric rise of sensation fiction with police memoir fiction, in order to solidify *both* genres' place in the chronology of detective fiction. It explores how sensation fiction has been identified as a significant moment in the evolution of the detective genre, and highlights how this has been at the expense of other genres which potentially also contributed to detective fiction's development. The chapter looks at a variety of connections between mid-Victorian police memoir fiction and sensation fiction, and argues that they were more thematically similar than it initially seems.

The chapter also explores how mid-Victorian critics in periodicals suggested that the emergence of sensation fiction was directly connected to the already-popular police memoir genre. In some cases, periodical commentators identified how sensation fiction was, at least in some ways, a direct evolution of the police memoir and that it performed many of the same functions and used several of the same features. Both police memoir fiction and sensation fiction were concerned with the revelation of secrets which lay beneath the surface of society, which again connected them. As Lyn Pykett suggests:

The narrative structure and methods of narration of sensation novels are organized [sic] around concealment and the prolongation of mystery and suspense in a kind of narrative 'hide and seek'.<sup>398</sup>

Finally, and most importantly, both police memoir fiction and sensation fiction utilised the figure of the police officer or detective for largely similar literary purposes to reveal these secrets to the reader, who accompanied the detective under their authority, guidance and protection. The development of the detective genre across the mid-Victorian era was not

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<sup>397</sup> Margaret Oliphant, 'Sensation Novels', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, May 1862, p. 565.

<sup>398</sup> Lyn Pykett, *The Nineteenth Century Sensation Novel* (Devon: Tavistock Publishing, 1994, repr. 2011), p. 57.

limited to merely one form of writing or another, but was instead the by-product of a variety of other forms of writing shifting, meshing and evolving as the period progressed.

## 4.2: Sensation Fiction and Detective Fiction in Scholarship

Academic scholarship has consistently connected sensation fiction with detective fiction.<sup>399</sup> However, whilst sensation fiction certainly impacted detective fiction's development, it has not been explored in as much detail as it potentially could be and in some cases the ways in which this connection is made is problematic.

There is an observable scholarly focus on situating the sensation genre within a chronology of texts which emerged both before and after it, placing it in a linear pathway of the evolution of the detective genre across the nineteenth century. The texts often placed before and after the sensation genre respectively tend to be Edgar Allan Poe's 'C. Auguste Dupin' stories from the 1840s, and the 'Sherlock Holmes' stories of the late-Victorian and Edwardian era. These two moments are separated by around 50 years of history, and sensation fiction is often inserted into this chronological gap in order to fill it because it often focuses on relatively similar ideas to detective fiction. For example, John Scaggs pays brief attention to the work of Emile Gaboriau, before arguing that in the mid-Victorian era Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins made the most important contributions to the development of the detective genre – Dickens through Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House*, and Collins through Sergeant Cuff in *The Moonstone* (1868).<sup>400</sup> After this glance at the period between the 1840s and the 1880s, Scaggs immediately turns to the 'Sherlock Holmes' stories as the next

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<sup>399</sup> Saverio Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow: Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Victorian Literary Genres* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 79.

<sup>400</sup> John Scaggs, *Crime Fiction: The New Critical Idiom* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 22-24.

significant moment in the detective genre's evolution. Scaggs eventually summarises his position:

[...] the line of the modern crime thriller can be traced from the Gothic novel (and even from revenge tragedy...), through the novels of Charles Dickens and on to the Victorian 'sensation fiction' of the 1860s and 1870s [...]<sup>401</sup>

Charles Rzepka also suggests that sensation fiction was one of the 'types of Victorian literature' which carried the narrative of the detective genre through the mid-nineteenth century. Rzepka argues that 'detective novels and stories [of the mid-nineteenth century] remained largely submerged in other types of Victorian literature', and that sensation fiction was 'particularly fertile' in this respect.<sup>402</sup> Rzepka grudgingly admits that the police memoir genre may have been an 'exception' to this, but he does not go into any kind of detail surrounding how or why.<sup>403</sup>

As well as placing the sensation genre in the period between Poe's Dupin stories and Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories as a literary bridge which connects these two moments, scholars exploring the chronology of the detective genre also tend to place an over-importance on Wilkie Collins's 1868 novel *The Moonstone*. This may go some way to explaining why the sensation genre has received the bulk of critical focus regarding the evolution of the genre, as *The Moonstone* is considered to be a hallmark sensation text. A number of critics unflinchingly subscribe to the (in)famous T. S. Eliot quote regarding this novel, where he referred to it as 'the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels'.<sup>404</sup> Scaggs, again, argues that *The Moonstone* is generally accepted to be the

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<sup>401</sup> Scaggs, p. 106

<sup>402</sup> Rzepka, p. 99.

<sup>403</sup> Rzepka, p. 99.

<sup>404</sup> Rzepka, p. 101.

first English detective novel,<sup>405</sup> while Martin Priestman asserts that *The Moonstone* was influenced by works such as those by Emile Gaboriau and Edgar Allan Poe, and that this fact established it as a link in a narrative chain of the genre's evolution.<sup>406</sup> Rzepka, alongside Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surrige,<sup>407</sup> also singles out *The Moonstone* as a pivotal moment in the genre's evolution due to its connection with modern conceptions of detective fiction:

In *The Moonstone* we find, for the first time, all the essential components of the classic novel of detection deployed in proper relation to each other.<sup>408</sup>

Rzepka's 'components' of a classic detective novel include a crime, clues, suspects, red herrings, victims, accomplices, 'detectives' and a solution to the mystery. These elements, argue Rzepka, constitute that which a reader would normally expect to find in a detective novel, a fact which affords *The Moonstone* its place at the pinnacle of sensation fiction's connection with the evolution of the crime genre.

Other scholarly explorations link the sensation genre to the evolution of detective fiction through characterisation of figures within the text. Martin Priestman, for example, suggests that multiple characters from different sensation novels could be described as 'detectives', despite their frequent amateur status and their disassociation from the police. Priestman declares:

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<sup>405</sup> Scaggs, p. 23.

<sup>406</sup> Martin Priestman, *Crime Fiction: From Poe to the Present* (Devon: Northcote House, 1998; repr. Devon: Northcote House, 2013), p. 13.

<sup>407</sup> Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surrige, 'The Transatlantic Moonstone: A study of the Illustrated Serial in *Harper's Weekly*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 42, 3 (2009), 207-243 (p. 207).

<sup>408</sup> Rzepka, p. 103.

[...] guilty parties and protagonists [...] are, to a greater or lesser extent, detectives. In Walter Lester, Robert Audley and Collins's Marian Halcombe and Walter Hartright, it could be argued that we have precursors of [...] amateur detective protagonists [...]<sup>409</sup>

Priestman goes on to link the amateur nature of these 'detective' figures with much later amateur sleuths, including Dorothy L. Sayers's Lord Peter Wimsey or Margery Allingham's Albert Campion. By connecting these characters with examples of detective fiction published both before and much after them, Priestman entrenches sensation fiction within a narrative chronology of the genre's evolution. Stephen Knight concurs with Priestman, and also connects the development of the genre with the emergence of sensation writing, suggesting that 'crime and excitement' were central mechanisms to the genre which bridged earlier Gothic writing and later detective fiction.<sup>410</sup> Rzepka echoes these claims, also arguing that central protagonists in sensation novels could be considered as 'amateur detectives' and he suggests that 'the 'sensation novel' of the 1860s and 1870s was particularly fertile in such characters', including Collins's Walter Hartright from *The Woman in White* (1860) and Franklin Blake from *The Moonstone*.<sup>411</sup>

Christopher Pittard offers a more complex and convincing connection between sensation fiction and detective fiction than the argument that it bridged a literary gap between the works of Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle. He looks retrospectively, and suggests that the sensation novel underwent an observable able 'transformation' into the recognisable form of late-Victorian detective fiction. He uses Fergus Hume's *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1887) as a representative example of how the sensation genre mutated into what is now

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<sup>409</sup> Priestman, p. 37.

<sup>410</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000*, p. 38.

<sup>411</sup> Rzepka, p. 99.

called the ‘detective genre’.<sup>412</sup> Pittard connects sensation fiction and later detective writing thematically, suggesting that the text’s themes surrounding the discovery of the secret of the Frettlby family coupled with the ability of an hansom cab to ‘cross social and geographical boundaries’ mirrors the overarching themes of the sensation genre of discovering hidden family secrets and exploring private, middle-class realms.<sup>413</sup> This connects to Caroline Reitz’s perceptive suggestion that the detective crossed textual borders, from the sensation novel and into the detective novel.<sup>414</sup>

It should be noted that whilst there is broad scholarly consensus that a connection between detective fiction and sensation fiction exists, there is disagreement about how it actually works. Martin Kayman, for example, remains suspicious of the sensation genre’s label as part of the development of detective writing. Quite apart from consistently placing the word ‘detective’ in inverted commas when referring to characters in sensation novels that others have characterised as amateur sleuths, Kayman uniquely suggests that sensation novels are structurally different from classic detective writing as they are more inclined to play with the expectations of the reader.<sup>415</sup> However, Kayman’s most important argument stems from the fact that he connects the ‘sensational’ aspects of sensation fiction with what he terms ‘dramatic press reports of contemporary crimes’.<sup>416</sup> He suggests that press-coverage of criminal activity was a ‘fund for sensation’, which helpfully characterises the connection drawn in the present project between fiction and the sensationalised crime-journalism in the

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<sup>412</sup> Christopher Pittard, ‘From Sensation to the *Strand*’, in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Rzepka and Horsley (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), p. 108.

<sup>413</sup> Pittard, ‘From Sensation to the *Strand*’, in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Rzepka and Horsley, p. 108.

<sup>414</sup> Reitz, pp. 92-103 (p. 93).

<sup>415</sup> Kayman, p. 175.

<sup>416</sup> Kayman, p. 175.

periodical and newspaper presses.<sup>417</sup> This is a unique argument, and it helps to demonstrate how sensation writing was connected to police memoir fiction. Both police memoir fiction and sensation-novels were influenced by various forms of crime-focused journalism as inspiration for their explorations into the private and the criminal. Indeed, Anthea Trodd suggests that encounters between police officers and (specifically female) characters in sensation fiction were actually renderings of anxieties surrounding the still-young worlds of law-enforcement, domestic surveillance and subterfuge.<sup>418</sup> This chapter builds on this scholarship by demarcating the links between police memoirs and sensation fiction, *through* exploration of contemporary periodical journalism – a hitherto under-utilised methodological approach to these literary genres.

### **4.3: Contemporary Periodical Connections: Sensation and Police Memoir Fiction**

A significant number of periodical commentators made connections between police memoirs and sensation fiction – sometimes directly, and at other times unconsciously. As a result, the connection between police memoirs and sensation fiction which this chapter makes is not original but has rather been forgotten.

Perhaps the clearest, most explicit example of a contemporary commentator connecting the police memoir genre to the sensation genre appeared in the *London Review* in 1862. This piece directly mentions Russell's character 'Waters', and suggested that sensation fiction was a direct evolution of the police memoir genre which Waters manifested. It also argued that the sensation genre could perform literary functions which police memoirs could not:

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<sup>417</sup> Kayman, p. 175.

<sup>418</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 436).

It is now some years since the name of “Waters” first became familiar and welcome to readers in railway trains. [...] [i]n fact, it was discovered that a new vein of literature was opened up. The note-books of “barristers” next supplied strange stories of crime and its detection [...] the policeman line of writing was found to possess an interest often sadly wanting to more decorous publications. The multitude of novel writers had worn out every conceivable theme when this welcome discovery was made. Accordingly the criminal novel is now the *mode*. The crime is, of course, a mystery; and the plot is the statement of the means by which the mystery is detected. Mr. Wilkie Collins was perhaps the first to adopt this fashion.<sup>419</sup>

According to this article, sensation fiction superseded police memoir fiction in terms of popularity and publication frequency, due to the fact that authors of police memoir fiction eventually simply ran out of ideas. As a result, the article argues, the police memoir genre began to diversify from formulaic retellings of the police experience and broadened out into wider tales of crime. The article sarcastically suggested that the diversification of the genre was also a lucrative opportunity for authors:

The result is that instead of a dozen criminals, discoveries, and executions from “Waters,” in the space of one volume, and for the price of one shilling, we have the detection of only one criminal – without any execution at all, – extending over three volumes, and charged at the exorbitant rate of thirty-one shillings and sixpence.<sup>420</sup>

Other commentators defined ‘sensation fiction’ as tales that directly followed a detective in their attempts to solve a puzzling crime or mystery, which is structurally similar to the police memoir. In the June 1864 issue of the *Saturday Review*, for example, the author argued that

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<sup>419</sup> ‘The Last Sensation Novel’, *London Review*, 29 November 1862, p. 481.

<sup>420</sup> ‘The Last Sensation Novel’, *London Review*, 29 November 1862, p. 481.

‘detective literature’ (as Russell had dubbed it in 1862) formed one of the most common kinds of ‘sensation’ writing:

Of all forms of sensation novel-writing, none is so common as what may be called the romance of the detective.<sup>421</sup>

Others connected police memoir fiction with sensation fiction through structure and narrative purpose. They identified the fact that both police memoirs and sensation novels recounted a series of ‘incidents’ retold by a police officer or detective, in a linear fashion which kept the reader involved. A review of Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Sir Jasper’s Tenant* published in the *Saturday Review* in 1865 complimented the novel on the way it retold what it termed ‘incidents’ in a linear, connected and accurate manner – a trait which, the article argued, was often ascribed to a detective writing about their policing experiences:

A clever detective with a literary knack could not have reported incidents with greater accuracy or more befitting simplicity.<sup>422</sup>

A review of Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret* from the *Critic* in December 1862 shared this sentiment that the reader’s attention was kept through a linear stream of ‘sensational scenes’:

[...] we have a complete series of what it is the fashion to call “sensation scenes,” through which the reader’s attention never for an instant flags.<sup>423</sup>

An article titled ‘Sensation Novels’ from the April 1863 *Quarterly Review* suggested that sensation novels were, in a similar fashion to police memoirs, designed to keep the readers interest through the continuous presentation of action:

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<sup>421</sup> ‘Detectives in Fiction and in Real Life’, *Saturday Review*, 11 June 1864, p. 712.

<sup>422</sup> ‘Sir Jasper’s Tenant’, *Saturday Review*, 21 October 1865, p. 521.

<sup>423</sup> ‘Lady Audley’s Secret’, *Critic*, December 1862, p. 179.

A sensation novel, as a matter of course, abounds in incident. Indeed, as a general rule, it consists of nothing else. [...] ‘Action, action, action!’ [...] is the first thing needful, and the second, and the third.<sup>424</sup>

In terms of structure, some also noticed the connection between memoir fiction and sensation novels through the fact that sensation novels were occasionally told as a series of recollections by the author. A review article titled ‘Sensation Recollections’ (which itself connects memoirs with sensation fiction) published in the *Reader* in September 1864 made this clear:

There are some more sensation stories in the book [referring to Flora Dawson’s *Princes, Public Men, and Pretty Women: Episodes in Real-Life* (1864)], particularly one of a *vivandière*, who poisons her canteen in order to be revenged on the Emperor of Russia and his officers for an injury done to her husband. [...] *The author writes either from her personal experience* [my italics] or the accounts of others upon whom she can rely [...]<sup>425</sup>

A review of William Russell’s novel *Autobiography of an English Detective* published in the *Reader* in January 1863 highlighted this structural connection between the two genres, where it suggested that the format of the novel set as a series of recollections actually helped to make it *more* ‘sensational’ than even sensation fiction itself:

Is this book really what it pretends to be upon its title-page? Its contents do not form a consecutive story of a life, and it is no strict sense of the word an autobiography. [...] If it be so, then, not only is truth stranger than fiction – as we all know – even than such fiction *as that of the sensation kind*, so popular just now [my italics] [...]<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> ‘Sensation Novels’, *Quarterly Review*, April 1863, p. 486.

<sup>425</sup> ‘Sensation Recollections’, *Reader*, September 1864, p. 377.

<sup>426</sup> ‘Autobiography of a Detective’, *Reader*, 23 January 1864, p. 104.

Perhaps most interestingly, some connected police memoir fiction with popular sensation fiction through how they both employed the figure of the police officer. An article attributed to Margaret Oliphant titled 'Novels', published in August 1863 in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, suggested that the central pillar of a number of genres of popular mid-Victorian fiction lay in how they utilised police officers to track down criminals, and that readers followed them in their wake:

This is what fiction has come to. Yet though we laugh at it, sneer at it, patronise it, we continue to read, or somebody continues to read [...] We turn with a national instinct rather to the brutalities than to the subtleties of crime. Murder is our *cheval de bataille* [...] The horrors of our novels are crimes against life and property. The policeman is the Fate who stalks relentless, or flies with lightning steps after our favourite villain.<sup>427</sup>

The magazine here argued that a variety of genres were focused on crime, murder, and detection, and the image of the policeman who 'stalks' (or 'flies') after the reader's 'favourite villain' intimates at the ways in which the reader accompanied the policeman as they did so. Indeed, in police memoir fiction, this concept of the police officer chasing his prey was the main way of constructing the entire narrative and the reader, acting on some level as the detective's sidekick, followed the officer in his wake. This trope was transposed into sensation fiction, as an article by the poet Alfred Austin from a June 1870 issue of *Temple Bar* suggested:

[...] in the stories we are discussing [sensation novels] there is always a wonderful detective [...] who has nothing else to do but to go about and unravel the mysterious threads [...] <sup>428</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Margaret Oliphant, 'Novels', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1863, p. 168.

<sup>428</sup> Alfred Austin, 'Our Novels', *Temple Bar*, June 1870, p. 416.

Other commentators felt that sensation fiction was popular because it was tied to the everyday, the familiar or that which was visible yet concealed beneath the surface. This, again, mirrored the purpose of police memoirs, which were designed to reveal the criminality which lurked beneath the surface of society and which was usually invisible or inaccessible to everyday readers. This is also a point which the present chapter returns to later. The article ‘Sensation Novels’ from the April 1863 *Quarterly Review* wrote:

The sensation novel, be it mere trash or something worse, is usually a tale of our own times. It is necessary to be near a mine to be blown up by its explosion; and a tale which aims at electrifying the nerves of the reader is never thoroughly effective unless the scene be laid in our own days and among the people we are in the habit of meeting. [...] we are thrilled with horror [...] by the thought that such things may be going on around us and among us.<sup>429</sup>

The important point to be drawn here is that the ‘sensation novel’ was seen to be grounded in the everyday, and that the author felt that sensation fiction was at its most effective when it was dealing with the secrecy and criminality which lurked just beneath the visible surface of society. This was also the purpose of the police memoir which was built around delving into criminal areas and activities which took place in and amongst everyday society.

There was, therefore, a variety of connections made between police memoir fiction and popular sensation fiction in mid-Victorian periodical journalism. Some made structural connections, whilst others connected the genres through their shared narrative purpose. Still more looked at the common role of the police officer between genres, and finally some commentators addressed the connections between police memoirs and sensation fiction,

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<sup>429</sup> ‘Sensation Novels’, *Quarterly Review*, April 1863, pp. 488-489.

arguing that the sensation genre was symptomatic of the diversification of the police memoir genre away from focusing on the police officer and onto wider tales of scandalous crime.

This final point is perhaps the most important. The sensation genre was seen by some to have at least partially developed *out* of the police memoir, and some characteristics (including the use of police officers and detectives as literary guides and protectors for characters and readers) were retained as the genre evolved. The literary potential of the police officer or detective character to act as a literary invader of the private or criminal is therefore directly observable in a number of examples of sensation novels. Anthea Trodd gestures towards this argument where she suggests that:

‘The sensation novel is [...] a literary institutionalisation of the habits of mind of the new police force. Both the new genre and the new profession encourage the construction of ingenious hypotheses about the private lives of others, and treat as a game their private agonies.’<sup>430</sup>

Trodd hypothesises that sensation fiction concerned itself with the private lives of others, using the police officer as a lens through which readers could explore them. She also indirectly highlights how the sensation genre was a manifestation of a movement in fiction away from a *focus* on the police towards their *utilisation* in fiction for alternative narrative ends and to drive the plot. In other words, the police shifted from a central focus of the narrative in police memoir fiction, to performing secondary tasks in sensation fiction, as they were no longer the central interest of the story itself.

This development was perhaps natural, as fiction itself steadily became more diverse and creative. As Warren Fox points out, true crime narratives eventually lost out to more sensational (and entertaining) depictions of criminality and law enforcement by the mid-

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<sup>430</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (pp. 436-437).

Victorian era, which seems to suggest that police memoirs simply lost out to sensation fiction as the latter could be more imaginative, entertaining and less formulaic.<sup>431</sup> As Jessica Valdez also argues, fictional crime narratives rather counter-intuitively offered potential authors of fiction greater scope for commenting about society than true crime itself, as elements of the writing could be accentuated or diminished according to its purpose, without the need for truthful narration intruding on the author's creative process.<sup>432</sup>

#### **4.4: Secrets of the Home Revealed: Shifting Perspectives onto Domesticity**

Contemporary periodical journalism therefore made numerous, diverse connections between police memoir fiction and sensation novels. It is thus the task of the remainder of this chapter to explore exactly how the two genres were connected and identify where this is evident.

The first connection this chapter makes is the fact that both genres were concerned with revealing that which was being kept hidden just beneath the surface of everyday society. As the previous section argued, some contemporary periodical commentators noticed this connection. The *Quarterly Review*, which mused on the concept of sensation fiction in April 1863, highlighted how the genre was centred on revealing the criminality or the scandal which lurked just beneath the surface of society:

[...] we are thrilled with horror, even in fiction, by the thought that such things may be going on around us and among us. The man who shook our hand with a hearty English grasp half an hour ago – the woman whose beauty and grace were the charm of last night, and whose gentle words sent us home better pleased with the world and with ourselves –

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<sup>431</sup> Fox, pp. 271-298 (pp. 282-283).

<sup>432</sup> Valdez, pp. 377-400 (pp. 378-379).

how exciting to think that under these pleasing outsides may be a concealed demon in human shape, a Count Fosco or a Lady Audley!<sup>433</sup>

This concept of revealing the secrets or scandal which lurked beneath the surface of everyday society was also a central theme of police memoir fiction. However, there was a shift in the kinds of secrets which the texts were designed to reveal, and also the locations on which they focused to look for them. Put simply, police memoir fiction concerned itself with utilising a literary police officer to explore and reveal criminality which was contained in urban slum areas and in locations frequented by the criminal under-classes, and to allow readers to experience them alongside them under their protection. By contrast, however, sensation fiction moved away from exploring criminality contained within urban environments and progressed, essentially, indoors. It concerned itself with revealing different kinds of secrets; those of bourgeois domesticity. Novels such as Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860), *No Name* (1862), *The Moonstone* (1868), and *The Law and the Lady* (1875), as well as Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Trail of the Serpent* (1860/61) or *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) shifted their prying focus away from urban criminality and onto the domestic sphere. Stephen Knight makes this point clear, arguing that crimes or sensational occurrences within sensation novels were deliberately placed within the private domestic sphere to create maximum sensationalism:

What the sensation novel did was bring both Gothic sensibility and that popular energy into the domain of conventional respectable fiction – and so achieve a greater effect by suggesting that strange and terrible events could occur right with the respectable home, that shrine of Victorian values.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> 'Sensation Novels', *Quarterly Review*, April 1863, pp. 488-489.

<sup>434</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000*, p. 39.

Christopher Pittard echoes Knight by pointing out that sensation narratives had progressed from the urban spaces of the streets and criminal slums of cities which were so prominent in police memoirs and into the ‘family home’:

The sensation novel [...] caused controversy not only because of a potential glamorizing of crime along the lines of the penny dreadful, but also in terms of its treatment of the middle-class family as the site of a destructive mystery. The sensation novel marked the shift of the crime narrative from the public space of the streets and slums to the private realm of the family home [...]<sup>435</sup>

There are two observable reasons for this shift. Firstly, as the *London Review* observed in 1862, sensation fiction was a diversification of the police memoir genre in an attempt to prevent it from becoming stagnated through lack of originality.<sup>436</sup> Secondly, the ‘movement indoors’ of the location of the ‘secret to be discovered’ in sensation fiction has been connected to a new, significant focus on *female* criminality, and also on the criminality lurking within the idyllic mid-century family unit.<sup>437</sup> As Andrew Mangham suggests, mid-nineteenth century notions of femininity (influenced by widely publicised cases involving female criminals, such as the trial of Maria and Frederick Manning) ‘perceived there to be a ghastly, destructive energy lurking beneath female spaces and feminine graces’.<sup>438</sup> This focus on feminine and family criminality, combined with the popular mid-Victorian association between women and the interior domestic space (highlighted especially by the contemporary publication of Coventry Patmore’s now-infamous poem ‘The Angel in the House’ in 1862)

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<sup>435</sup> Pittard, ‘From Sensation to the *Strand*’, in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Rzepka and Horsley, p. 107.

<sup>436</sup> ‘The Last Sensation Novel’, *London Review*, 29 November 1862, p. 481.

<sup>437</sup> Tomaiuolo, p. 79.

<sup>438</sup> Andrew Mangham, *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction: Crime, Medicine and Victorian Popular Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 9.

can help explain why the focus shifted away from revealing the secrets of the urban underworld to revealing the secret criminality lurking within bourgeois domesticity.

Anthea Trodd suggests that the common ‘feature’ which characterised a variety of social anxieties manifested in sensation fiction was the ‘encounter between a detective policeman, intruder into the sanctuary of the home, and a young lady, representative of that home’s sanctities’.<sup>439</sup> Lyn Pykett, also, argues that a common trope in sensation fiction was to include the presence of a police officer or detective character that was a part of the bourgeois family unit and which was specifically designed to root out the criminality lurking within it.<sup>440</sup> Saverio Tomaiuolo agrees that the relationship between sensation fiction and the detection of crime manifested a variety of social anxieties, including (though not limited to) the increasing independence of women.<sup>441</sup> Trodd additionally argues that authors such as Braddon, Gaskell, Dickens, Trollope and Collins explored new possibilities of relations between domestic and public spheres in these commonly presented encounters between police officers and ladies in sensation fiction.<sup>442</sup> Pittard concurs that criminals contained within middle-class homes (who were often female) were sympathetically portrayed,<sup>443</sup> which complements Trodd’s suggestion that there was a sense of indignation at the presence of a police officer as an ‘intruder’ within the domestic sphere.<sup>444</sup> She argues that police officers were seen as invaders of the domestic space, yet they were not truly a part of it as they were not themselves members of the bourgeoisie. This made them ineffective operatives within that space, and thus most textual examples of sensational detectives, such as Wilkie Collins’s Sergeant Cuff

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<sup>439</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 435).

<sup>440</sup> Pykett, p. 55 and p. 81.

<sup>441</sup> Tomaiuolo, p. 79.

<sup>442</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (pp. 435-436).

<sup>443</sup> Pittard, ‘From Sensation to the *Strand*’, in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Rzepka and Horsley, p. 107.

<sup>444</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 436).

or Grimstone from Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* (1863), are left unable to solve the novel's central mystery.<sup>445</sup> This point regarding the detective occupying a position outside of the domestic sphere is a point which this chapter will refer to later, as this also indirectly connects police memoir fiction with sensation fiction.

The shift in interest from revealing the hidden secret from 'streets and slums' and into 'bourgeois domestic spheres' was therefore symptomatic of both detective fiction's diversification away from the stringently-structured and rigidly-categorised police memoir, and a renewed literary focus on the gender of the fictional criminal-cum-heroine and the physical spaces which mid-Victorian women (and, by extension, the family unit) usually inhabited. As a result, this first thematic connection between sensation fiction and police memoir fiction becomes clearer – namely the revelation of the underlying criminality hiding in plain sight, which had evolved out of one genre, and into another.

The second connection between the two genres centres on the shared use of the police officer in both police memoir fiction and sensation fiction. The police officer in sensation fiction, as Trodd correctly asserts, existed *outside* of the bourgeois domestic sphere and the middle-class family, and was thus capable of crossing geographical and social boundaries, just as in social exploration journalism and police memoir fiction.<sup>446</sup> This thematic connection helps to cement sensation fiction's connection to the police memoir genre, as police officers in sensation fiction frequently crossed geographical boundaries and penetrated usually private, inaccessible domestic spaces, and offered protection and guidance to readers (and occasionally other characters) who accompanied them as they did so. They also had the ability to cross social boundaries, and were able to contradict or openly refute those of a class

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<sup>445</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (pp. 446-450).

<sup>446</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (pp. 446-450).

significantly higher than themselves, by shielding themselves with their politically ascribed authority as police officers.

#### **4.5: ‘Time and place cannot bind Mr Bucket’: Police Officers, Sensation Fiction and the Police Memoir**

The most prominent thematic connection between sensation fiction and police memoir fiction is the presence of the police officer in both genres. This may seem quite obvious initially, but it is worth detailing how their uses in both genres are startlingly similar in thematic terms.

The shared figure of the police officer effectively anchors the two genres together. Their job in both genres was to uncover the texts’ secrets to the best of their ability and expose them for the reader, who accompanied them closely under their guidance and protection.

The first, and perhaps most prominent, feature was the use of the police officer as a character who was able to ignore either geographical or social conventions, and therefore had the ability to move wherever he pleased and converse with whoever he wanted. Police officers served this specific purpose in both police memoir fiction and in sensation fiction, and this characteristic has already received some oblique critical attention. Christopher Pittard, for example, when musing on *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1886) and the various connections between sensation fiction and detective fiction, suggests that a hansom cab had the significant ability to ‘cross social and geographical boundaries. Pittard suggests that this, combined with the revelation of the secret of the Frettlby family in the novel, mirrored the overarching themes of the sensation genre of discovering hidden family secrets and exploring private, middle-class spaces.<sup>447</sup> Philipp Erchinger also makes an interesting point surrounding Wilkie Collins’s novel *The Woman in White* (1859-60), where he suggests that it is the law

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<sup>447</sup> Pittard, ‘From Sensation to the *Strand*’, in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Rzepka and Horsley, p. 108.

itself which affords Walter Hartright and subsequently the reader the right to uncover the events depicted in the novel in much the same invasive way as would take place within a court of justice.<sup>448</sup> Erchinger makes a ‘theoretical comparison between the conduct of a legal investigation and a reader’s construction of a narrative plot’, and argues that this ‘legal justification’ for reading itself constitutes the authority to uncover the secrets of the novel’s content.<sup>449</sup> Caroline Reitz suggests that the detective is also able to cross *textual* borders, moving eventually from the sensation novel and into the detective novel.<sup>450</sup> Sensation fiction was thus more effective at depicting the police officer as ingrained into the wider social fabric than police memoir fiction. This was because the police memoir was driven by the fact that the police officers were socially indistinct, and thus isolated.

Charles Dickens’s *Bleak House* (1853) can help demonstrate the connection between police memoirs and sensation fiction through the shared use of police officers. The novel is often cited as an early example of sensation fiction as it uses many of the tropes which came to characterise mid-Victorian sensationalism, and Dickens himself suggested that the novel ‘dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things’.<sup>451</sup> Some contemporary critics argued that Dickens’s work was, at least on some level, sensational. Margaret Oliphant, writing in *Blackwood’s* in 1862, suggested that ‘Mr. Dickens rarely writes a book without an attempt at a similar effect by means of some utterly fantastic creation, set before his readers with all that detail of circumstance in which he is so successful.’<sup>452</sup> Interestingly, Oliphant also thematically connects Dickens’s work with police memoir fiction, suggesting that his skill at

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<sup>448</sup> Philipp Erchinger, ‘Secrets Not Revealed: Possible Stories in Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White*’, *Connotations*, 18, 1-3 (2008/2009), 48-81 (p. 48).

<sup>449</sup> Erchinger, pp. 48-81 (pp. 49-50).

<sup>450</sup> Reitz, pp. 92-103 (p. 93).

<sup>451</sup> Winifred Hughes, *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 16.

<sup>452</sup> Oliphant, ‘Sensation Novels’, pp. 565-566.

portraying (and thus revealing) the criminal underworld of London catered for the same reader interests as police memoirs:

It was he [Dickens] who brought us first to the crowded London lanes to find wit, and worth, and quaint generosity and virtue among the despised multitude; and it is he who now bends his powers to the popularising among us of that instrument of literary excitement [...] Whether his own fantastic oddities and tamed criminals will do it [...] we will not venture to fantasy.<sup>453</sup>

This image of the ‘crowded London lanes’ and the ‘despised multitude’ certainly seems to connect to the images created in police memoir fiction of the criminal underworld lurking beneath the city’s visible surface. George Augustus Sala, writing in *Belgravia* in 1868, also claimed that Dickens’s work was inherently sensational. Sala argued:

The only wonder is that the charitable souls have failed to discover that among modern “sensational” writers Mr. Charles Dickens is perhaps the most thoroughly, and has been from the very outset of his career the most persistently, “sensational” writer of the age.<sup>454</sup>

*Bleak House*’s detective, Inspector Bucket – famously based on the detective Inspector (Charles Frederick) Field (1807-1874) – highlights the way in which police officers and detectives in sensation fiction could cross geographical boundaries and intrude upon almost anywhere at will, taking the reader along with them. As D. A. Miller points out, Bucket’s escort of Mr Snagsby through Tom-all-Alone’s mirrors Dickens’s own exploits with Inspector Field,<sup>455</sup> and Dickens’s description of Bucket in the novel certainly suggests that he operated outside of rigid social constraints:

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<sup>453</sup> Oliphant, ‘Sensation Novels’, p. 584.

<sup>454</sup> George Augustus Sala, ‘On the “Sensational” in Literature and Art’, *Belgravia*, February 1868, p. 454.

<sup>455</sup> Miller, p. 76.

In his fondness for society, and his adaptability to all grades [of it], Mr Bucket is presently standing before the hall-fire [...] <sup>456</sup>

Bucket has a natural tendency to ignore social conventions and go wherever he pleases. In a particularly strong example, he ignores a request to remain where he was standing (in the hallway), but instead follows Mr Jarndyce upstairs without invitation:

Mr Jarndyce begs him to remain there, while he speaks to Miss Summerson. Mr Bucket says he will; but acting on his usual principle, does no such thing – following upstairs instead, and keeping his man in sight. <sup>457</sup>

Bucket's 'usual principle' refers to his penchant for disregarding boundaries and entering wherever he pleases, using his authority as a police officer in order to do so. He readily adapts himself to occupy any space, opening it up for those that accompanied him in the process. Dickens himself elaborates on this idea when he describes Bucket as unconstrained by almost anything when executing his duty:

Time and place cannot bind Mr Bucket. Like man in the abstract, he is here today and gone tomorrow – but, very unlike man indeed, he is here again the next day. This evening he will be casually looking into the iron extinguishers at the door of Sir Leicester Dedlock's house in town; and tomorrow morning he will be walking on the leads at Chesney Wold [...] Drawers, desks pockets, all things belonging to him Mr Bucket examines. <sup>458</sup>

Bucket's 'unconstrained' characteristics place him in a position very similar to the detectives of police memoirs such as Tom Richmond or 'Waters', who could (and did) perform the

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<sup>456</sup> Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1853; repr. London: Penguin Classics, 1988), p. 777.

<sup>457</sup> Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 823.

<sup>458</sup> Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 769.

same act. Bucket's presence in the novel also highlights his connection with the liminal nature of the police in crime journalism, as he is a character who is not constantly present but who appears simply when he is required (regardless of whether he is wanted or not) and then disappears again when his work is done. He is, as Miller puts it, '[a] master of disguise, who makes himself appear in as "ghostly" a manner as, with a touch of his stick, he makes others "instantly evaporate"'.<sup>459</sup>

Detective characters in both police memoirs and sensation fiction also offered the reader guidance and protection, as they are temporarily covered by their authority. There are moments in some sensation novels where other characters accompany police officers in the same way, and in these situations the characters manifest the reader themselves.<sup>460</sup> *Bleak House*'s protagonist, Esther Summerson, is one such example of a character who accompanies the detective and occupies a similar literary space to the reader. Chapter 57 (one of many titled 'Esther's Narrative') depicts Esther whisked away by Bucket in pursuit of the missing Lady Dedlock. Bucket believes Esther may be able to convince Lady Dedlock to return home, and drags her from her bed to accompany him. Bucket himself flits in and out of various areas of London, crossing bridges and going through gates, in another demonstration of how his authority affords him the ability to go anywhere (see fig. 9).

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<sup>459</sup> Miller, p. 79.

<sup>460</sup> Goode, p. 27.

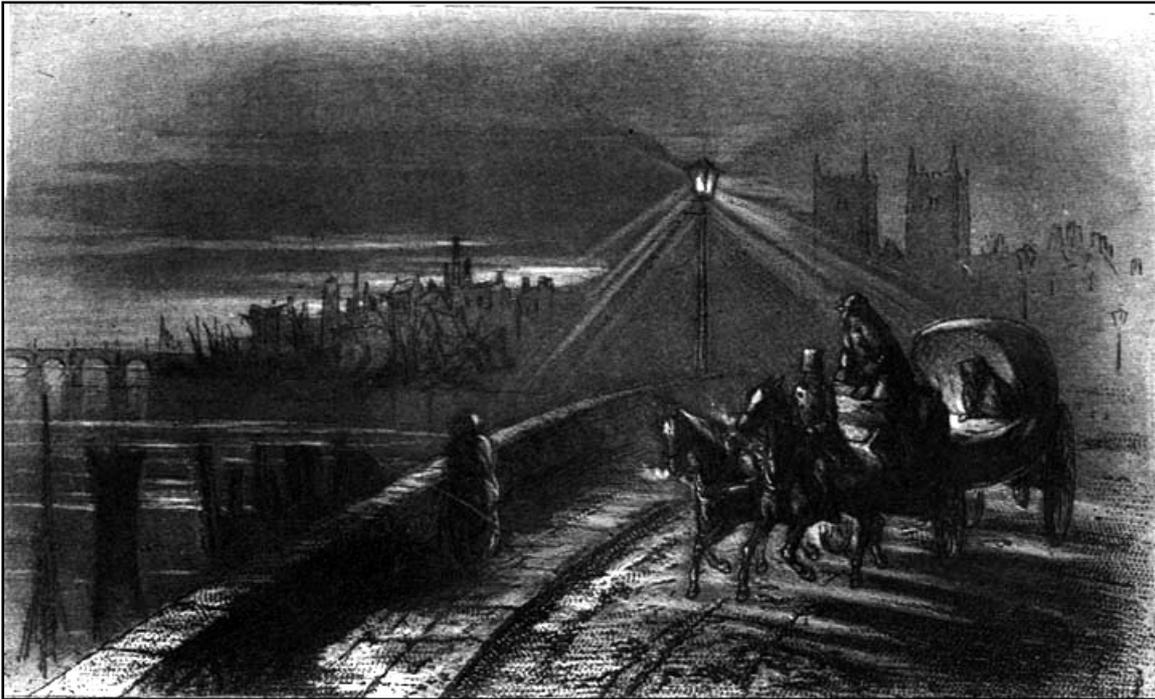


Figure 9: 'Phiz' (Hablot Knight Browne), 'The Night', Victorian Web  
<<http://www.victorianweb.org/victorian/art/illustration/phiz/bleakhouse/36.html>> [accessed February 28 2018], scanned and uploaded by George P. Landow (1853, uploaded 2007).

Esther, under the protective cover of Bucket's authority, is temporarily imbued with the same ability, and ends up exploring places that she would ordinarily never have entered:

We rattled with great rapidity through such a labyrinth of streets, that I soon lost all idea where we were; except that we had crossed and re-crossed the river, and still seems to be traversing a low-lying, waterside, dense neighbourhood of narrow thoroughfares, chequered by docks and basins, high piles of warehouses, swing-bridges, and masts of ships. At length, we stopped at the corner of a little slimy turning [...] After some [...] conference, Mr Bucket (whom everybody seemed to know and defer to) went in with the others at a door [...]<sup>461</sup>

In this moment, Esther manifests the reader, who accompanies Bucket in just as confused a state as Esther herself. This confusion is a trope which Trodd identifies as common in

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<sup>461</sup> Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 827.

sensation narratives where heroines encounter police officers, though she suggests that this is to allow the female character to avoid ‘possible contamination by the police habit of mind’.<sup>462</sup>

Bucket’s position as a police officer also allows him to bypass certain social boundaries as well as physical ones. This affords the reader, again who accompanies him, a window into different, perhaps inaccessible social situations and an inside-view of their hierarchies. In police memoirs, detectives are depicted interacting with characters from all walks of life in much the same way, as they operated outside of the stringent class-structure. In a scene where Bucket has gathered together various characters, he demonstrates that he is able to converse with (and accuse) all social levels, from shopkeeper to Baronet:

‘Now, perhaps you may know me, ladies and gentlemen [...] I am Inspector Bucket of the Detective, I am; and this,’ producing the tip of his convenient little staff from his breast-pocket, ‘is my authority [...]’<sup>463</sup>

This is developed further in a scene where Bucket informs Sir Leicester Dedlock of his suspicions surrounding Lady Dedlock and Mr Tulkinghorn’s murder. Sir Leicester is angry at Bucket’s suggestion that Lady Dedlock may have been involved, yet he remains powerless to control him:

[Sir Leicester Dedlock, to Bucket] ‘Do your duty; but be careful not to overstep it. I would not suffer it. I would not endure it. You bring my Lady’s name into this communication, upon your responsibility – upon your responsibility. My Lady’s name is not a name for common persons to trifle with!’ [...] [Bucket] ‘Sir Leicester Dedlock, Baronet, I say what I must say; and no more.’<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 437).

<sup>463</sup> Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 785.

<sup>464</sup> Dickens, *Bleak House*, pp. 782-783.

Sir Leicester Dedlock warns Bucket not to accuse Lady Dedlock, as this would overstep the social boundary between them, which gestures towards Trodd's suggestion that police-detectives were seen as 'unwelcome interlopers' within the domestic sphere.<sup>465</sup> Bucket's presence, not to mention his accusations against Lady Dedlock, upsets the typical social hierarchy, and causes Sir Leicester to see him now as an intruder.

This scene also raises a further point. Trodd argues that the fact that the detective provoked an unwelcome reaction from the occupants of bourgeois domestic spaces revealed uncertain questions about their own social status, as most police officers came from working-class backgrounds.<sup>466</sup> The authority of the police thus supersedes the social status of the person actually wearing the uniform, and again, as the reader acts as Bucket's companion, they too are temporarily imbued with this authority regardless of their own social status.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon's novel *Three Times Dead, or, The Secret of the Heath* (1860), republished under the name of *The Trail of the Serpent* in 1861, contains another detective who demonstrates one of the strongest and perhaps most striking connections between police memoirs and sensation fiction. Braddon made a significant number of changes and revisions on the advice of her publisher between the novel's original publication in 1860 and the revised and retitled edition published after 1861, and one of these changes was the name of the novel's principle detective. In the revised edition, the character's name was Joseph Peters, however in the original 1860 text Peters's name was, in fact, Mr. *Waters*. This may be simply coincidence, but the connection here between this character and his contemporary namesake created by William Russell is certainly startling.

The character has other connections with detectives from police memoirs besides his name. Waters/Peters (hereafter referred to as Peters to avoid confusion with Russell's

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<sup>465</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (p. 436).

<sup>466</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (pp. 435-436).

detective) is a mute who communicates through the use of a written alphabet, and may be one of the earliest detectives with a disability to appear in fiction. However, far from being disadvantageous, Peters uses his marginal social position as both police officer and as disabled to enhance the Bucket-esque social fluidity of police detectives. It also allows him to keep certain aspects of his profession to himself more effectively than his counterparts:

‘[...] there were secrets and mysteries of his art he did not trust at all times to the dirty alphabet [sic]; and perhaps his opinion on the subject of the murder of Mr. Montague Harding was one of them.’<sup>467</sup>

Peters’s secretive nature is augmented by the fact that he cannot verbally communicate, as it makes him a natural at keeping secrets from characters whilst simultaneously revealing them to the reader. This aspect of Peters, combined with the description of his appearance and personality, helps to demonstrate how depictions of the police officer in sensation novels mirrored that of their purpose in police memoir fiction to pass unhindered and in many cases completely unnoticed:

‘He might have passed in a hundred crowds, and no one of the hundreds of people in any one of these hundred crowds would have glanced aside to look at him.’ [...] ‘You could only describe him by negatives. He was neither very tall nor very short, he was neither very stout nor very thin, neither dark nor fair, neither ugly nor handsome; but just such a medium between the two extremities of each as to be utterly commonplace and unnoticeable.’<sup>468</sup>

Peters fulfils a similar textual purpose as Bucket. He possesses the ability to go wherever he pleases, usually unseen or unremarked, and the reader accompanies him as he does.

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<sup>467</sup> Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *The Trail of the Serpent* (London: Ward, Lock and Tyler, 1860; repr. London: Ward, Lock and Tyler, 1866), pp. 54-55.

<sup>468</sup> Braddon, *The Trail of the Serpent*, pp. 29-30.

Braddon's deliberate construction of Peters as a forgettable individual denotes his invisible nature in his profession, and a scene which can demonstrate this includes a moment where he overhears a conversation in a public-house between the novel's villain and his lover:

But in I walks, past the bar; and straight afore me I sees a door as leads into the parlour – the passage was jolly dark; and this 'ere door was ajar; and inside I hears voices. [...] so I listens.<sup>469</sup>

Peters walks directly into the scene to overhear the conversation better, and uses his muteness to his advantage in order to penetrate the scene:

[I]n I walks, very quiet and quite unbeknownst. He was a-sittin' with his back to the door, and the young woman he was a-talkin' to was standin' lookin' out of the winder; so neither of 'em saw me. [...] He turned round and looked at me. [...] I says to myself, if ever there was anything certain in this world since it was begun, I've come across the right 'un: so I sits down and takes up a newspaper. I signified to him that I was dumb, and he took it for granted I was deaf as well [...] so he went on a-talking to the girl.<sup>470</sup>

In this scene, Peters utilises his skill as a detective to identify the criminal ('I've come across the right 'un [...]'), and also makes use of his disability to penetrate the scene even further than a conventional police officer would have been able to. He plays on the prejudices of his target, and allows him to assume that he is incapable of understanding the situation. The scene reads almost identically to a number of examples of police memoir fiction which use the detective figure in the same way, both in terms of narrative structure (the first person retelling of the event directly to the reader) and content. In fact, the 1860 novel *Diary of an Ex-Detective*, by Charles Martel, includes a similar scene taken from inside a public-house,

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<sup>469</sup> Braddon, *The Trail of the Serpent*, p. 275.

<sup>470</sup> Braddon, *The Trail of the Serpent*, pp. 276-277.

from the first-person perspective of a detective. I am not suggesting that one text directly influenced another, but the similarities in the way the scene is retold certainly helps to connect the memoir genre with sensation fiction:

[I]n a few minutes I was drying myself before a huge fire in the kitchen of the Rising Sun. [...] There were some very rough, ill-looking fellows hanging about the room, drinking their beer. I fancied I was the subject of conversation with one group, for they conversed in whispers, and sent some very sinister, furtive glances at me from across the room.<sup>471</sup>

Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) provides a third example of a detective figure who performs these actions which connect the sensation and memoir genres. However, this novel's 'detective character' is not a self-identified detective, but is instead the barrister Robert Audley. That said, Robert Audley is often cited as a pseudo-detective figure and is actually depicted in the text as influenced by detective fiction when he turns sleuth to discover what has happened to his friend, George Talboys:

'I haven't read Alexander Dumas and Wilkie Collins for nothing,' he muttered. 'I'm up to their tricks, sneaking in at doors behind a fellow's back, and flattening their white faces against window panes, and making themselves all eyes in the twilight. [...]'<sup>472</sup>

Similarly to his true-detective counterparts, Robert Audley also possesses the ability to go wherever he pleases in a comparable fashion to Bucket and Peters. In a particularly strong example of this from the novel, Robert enters Lady Audley's private dressing room by utilising a secret passage of which she is unaware. However, there is a difference here. As Robert Audley is not actually a detective, his authority to invade the boudoir does not stem from socially-ascribed authority given to police officers. Rather, it comes from the fact that

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<sup>471</sup> Martel, pp. 139-140.

<sup>472</sup> Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (London: William Tinsley, 1862; repr. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1997), p. 320.

he is more legitimately a family member than Lady Audley is herself (indeed, he is the family's heir), and as Lyn Pykett argues, the detection of the novel's 'dreadful secret' comes from a character who 'polices the family'.<sup>473</sup> The combination of his familial status and his position as the novel's detective character means that Robert's authority to enter into Lady Audley's private boudoir supersedes her own authority to keep it concealed. As Robert Audley is both legitimate family member and the novel's pseudo-'detective', the tension between these two oft-conflicting figures is resolved before it begins, leaving Lady Audley with no chance of escaping detection. Indeed, the plot-driver in *Lady Audley's Secret* is not the discovery of the criminal, but is instead the fact that Robert Audley discovers the perpetrator quickly and the remainder of the novel working out how to prove it.

The invasion of Lady Audley's boudoir is a particularly clear example of the sensation novel's connection with the police memoir genre through their mutual depictions of detectives, and contains a number of similar ideas. The reader, again, accompanies the 'detective' into a usually-inaccessible location, this time through the use of a secret passageway. The scene also reveals the fact that the boudoir does not genuinely belong to Lady Audley; and thus it was not her space to conceal:

Robert Audley lifted a corner of the carpet [...] and disclosed a rudely-cut trapdoor in the oak flooring. [...] George, submissively following his friend, found himself, in five minutes, standing amidst the elegant disorder of Lady Audley's dressing-room.<sup>474</sup>

In Robert Audley's company, the reader is allowed to enter into this private domestic space, in much the same way as George Talboys. Again, this helps reinforce the fact that the mid-Victorian sensation genre was connected with police memoir fiction through the use of the detective figure as the reader's guide and protector into usually inaccessible locations. Just as

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<sup>473</sup> Pykett, L., p. 81.

<sup>474</sup> Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*, pp. 55-56.

Esther Summerson was temporarily imbued with the Inspector Bucket's authority to wander around wherever he went, so too is Talboys temporarily imbued with Robert Audley's authority to accompany him into Lady Audley's boudoir:

George Talboys saw his bearded face and tall gaunt figure reflected in the cheval-glass, and wondered to see how out of place he seemed among all these womanly luxuries.<sup>475</sup>

Talboys feels a sense of displacement, and he assumes that it is because he is occupying a 'womanly' space filled with unusual things. However Talboys also feels out of place because he does not enter or occupy the dressing-room through his own authority, but instead through that provided by Robert Audley as the 'family police officer'.<sup>476</sup> Talboys is therefore correct in his assertion that he should feel out of place, however his own interpretation of his feelings was only partially true. Conveniently enough, throughout the remainder of the novel Talboys is replaced by the reader, who accompanies Robert Audley in his quest to find out what has happened to Talboys after he disappears. The reader therefore occupies the same space as the reader of police memoir fiction – as the companion of the detective figure.

Wilkie Collins's novel *The Moonstone*, which appeared serially in *All the Year Round* before appearing as a three-volume novel in 1868, is another important text to consider when exploring connections between sensation fiction and police memoir fiction through their shared use of the police officer. There are a number of useful perspectives to be examined in relation to the detective, the famous Sergeant Cuff. Cuff manifests several of the elements of the sensational detective already mentioned in this chapter – he is able to intrude on the Verinder's household, and both fails and succeeds in solving the mystery and revealing the novel's underlying domestic secret.

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<sup>475</sup> Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*, pp. 56.

<sup>476</sup> Pykett, p. 81.

Cuff, who for multiple different reasons is often lambasted for his failure to solve the mystery of the theft of the diamond,<sup>477</sup> helps demonstrate how the ‘detective’ in sensation novels allow readers to enter and explore a multitude of private, domestic and bourgeois spaces. When the reader is introduced to Sergeant Cuff, they are immediately greeted with a demonstration of his ability to invade anywhere, domestic, private or otherwise, without invitation, occupation or reason, thanks to his authority as a police officer:

Asking for my lady, and hearing that she was in one of the conservatories, we went round to the gardens at the back, and sent a servant to seek her. While we were waiting, Sergeant Cuff looked through the evergreen arch on our left, spied out our roseray [sic], and walked straight in [...]<sup>478</sup>

Cuff’s rejection of etiquette as less important than his own interest in roses shows his ability to ignore physical barriers due to his authority as a police officer. Indeed, Cuff demonstrates the same disdain when entering the house, by inviting himself to look over the room in which the crime occurred:

[Superintendent Seegrave] ‘The Sergeant wishes to see Miss Verinder’s sitting-room,’ says Mr Seegrave, addressing me with great pomp and eagerness. ‘The Sergeant may have some questions to ask. Attend the sergeant, if you please!’ [...] While I was being ordered about in this way, I looked at the great Cuff. The great Cuff, on his side, looked at Superintendent Seegrave in that quietly expecting way which I have already noticed.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>477</sup> Robert P. Ashley, ‘Wilkie Collins and the Detective Story’, *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 6, 1 (1951), 47-60 (p. 52).

<sup>478</sup> Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1868; repr. London: Penguin, 1998), p. 107.

<sup>479</sup> Collins, *The Moonstone*, pp. 108-109.

As Miller argues, Cuff's presence disrupts the routine and hierarchy inside the Verinder household.<sup>480</sup> This is often meant to be the catalyst by which the domestic secrets of the bourgeois family are revealed to readers of sensation novels, but the fact that Cuff does *not* make use of this to present the solution to the crime often leaves readers feeling underwhelmed. Lyn Pykett also correctly suggests that Cuff is defeated by the silence of women (Rosanna Spearman and Rachel Verinder), and also argues that his success stems largely from Cuff getting the 'family to police itself'.<sup>481</sup> R. P. Ashley argues that Cuff never actually achieves full detective-status as he plays only a minor part in the novel,<sup>482</sup> and Anthea Trodd suggests that Cuff moves outside of his remit as detective when his suspicion shifts from Rosanna Spearman to Rachel Verinder herself. The fact that Cuff initially fails to solve the novel's mystery as he is not part of the middle-class family itself seems to confirm Trodd's theory.<sup>483</sup> D. A. Miller concurs, labelling him an 'eccentric outsider'.<sup>484</sup> Franklin Blake, who *is* a member of the household from which Cuff is disassociated, is revealed to be the actual culprit, and consequently Cuff is not able to solve the mystery and 'reveal the underlying secret'.

However, there is an alternative perspective to be uncovered in this novel. Cuff resurfaces at the end of the novel in a dramatic scene in a hospital ward, to disclose that Godfrey Abelwhite is the novel's true antagonist:

[Blake] At the moment when I crossed the threshold of the door, I heard Sergeant Cuff's voice, asking where I was. He met me, as I returned into the room, and forced me to go

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<sup>480</sup> Miller, p. 36.

<sup>481</sup> Pykett, p. 55.

<sup>482</sup> Ashley, 'Wilkie Collins and the Detective Story', pp. 47-60 (pp. 52-53).

<sup>483</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (pp. 446-450).

<sup>484</sup> Miller, p. 36.

back with him to the bedside. [...] ‘Mr Blake!’ he said. ‘Look at the man’s face. It is a face disguised – and here’s a proof of it!’<sup>485</sup>

D. A. Miller dismisses this moment in the novel as unimportant, arguing that Cuff’s reappearance is merely an exercise in clearing up some ‘incidental matters at the end’ and that the mystery is largely solved without Cuff’s assistance.<sup>486</sup> However, I suggest that Cuff uncovers the true ‘secret’ of the novel more successfully than any of the other characters – namely the fact that Godfrey Abelwhite was the true criminal hiding behind the scenes:

He traced with his finger a thin line of livid white, running backward from the dead man’s forehead [...] ‘Let’s see what’s under this,’ said the Sergeant ... [Cuff proceeds to remove hair, beard and face-paint] [...] ‘Come back to the bed, sir!’ [Cuff] began. He looked at me closer, and checked himself. ‘No!’ he resumed. ‘Open the sealed letter first – the letter I gave you this morning.’ [...] I read the name that he had written. It was – *Godfrey Abelwhite*. [...] ‘Now,’ said the Sergeant, ‘come with me, and look at the man on the bed.’ [...] I went with him, and looked at the man on the bed. [...] GODFREY ABELWHITE!<sup>487</sup>

Cuff undermines Trodd’s argument that the police-figure’s existence outside of the family space in sensation fiction leaves him powerless to penetrate it. On the contrary, it is Cuff who proves Abelwhite to be the true criminal, fully exonerating Blake, directly *because* of his existence outside of the family sphere, which has largely ‘failed to know itself’.<sup>488</sup> The theft of the diamond in *The Moonstone* is, throughout the entirety of the novel, arguably the central crime with which all of the detective figures, from Franklin Blake to Gabriel Betteredge to Ezra Jennings, work to resolve. However, Cuff actually reveals the true ‘secret underlying

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<sup>485</sup> Collins, *The Moonstone*, p. 447.

<sup>486</sup> Miller, p. 37

<sup>487</sup> Collins, *The Moonstone*, pp. 447-448.

<sup>488</sup> Miller, p. 41.

crime' of the novel; Godfrey Abelwhite's theft of a trust fund. This places Cuff in a similar position to other sensational detectives, and also connects him to detectives in police memoir fiction as he works to uncover the text's latent, hidden criminality.

Alongside the detective character in sensation fiction, some *criminals* also occupied socially awkward positions. Aviva Briefel cites the position of Eustace Macallan (alias Woodville) in Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady*, which was serialised in both *Harper's Weekly* and in the *Graphic* between 1874 and 1875, before being published in three volumes in 1875. Macallan is ostracised by the shadow of a 'not-proven' verdict, which made him neither guilty nor innocent of murdering his first wife.<sup>489</sup> However, the most interesting character in this novel, as regards the present chapter, is Macallan's second wife, Valeria Brinton, who assumes the identity of a 'detective' in order to try and uncover the secret beneath the surface of the novel and overturn Eustace's verdict. Valeria consciously assumes this role, which effectively places her in the same position as other 'detectives' in sensation fiction, such as Inspector Bucket, Joseph Peters, Robert Audley and Sergeant Cuff. As Valeria operates within the family unit, she seems to conform to Pykett's suggestion that sensation detectives were often designed to 'police the family unit'.<sup>490</sup> However, Valeria's position as the novel's sleuth stems from an external perspective, as she works to uncover the secret of Eustace's *previous* marriage, with which she had no involvement or knowledge. Consequently, she marginalises herself as both wife (internal) and detective (external). This is a position which Valeria recognises, and she proceeds to create for herself a new self-identity – the wife-detective. This combination of different social positions allows her to perform the same tasks as other sensational detectives and fluidly move between social classes, taking the reader along with her as she makes headway on the case where others before her had either

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<sup>489</sup> Aviva Briefel, 'Cosmetic Tragedies: Failed Masquerade in Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 37, 2 (2009), 463-481 (p. 466).

<sup>490</sup> Pykett, p. 55 and p. 81.

failed. In Valeria's response to a letter which Eustace sends her, informing her that he has fled England, she argues that the law's failed procedures can be fixed by the resolute doggedness of a devoted wife:

How am I to help you? [...] The question is easily answered. What the Law has failed to do for you, your Wife must do for you. [...] the Law and the Lady have begun by understanding one another. [...] I mean to win you back, a man vindicated before the world, without a stain on his character or his name – thanks to his Wife.<sup>491</sup>

Valeria's identity as a detective has been recognised within scholarship, and Robert Ashley places her on the same level Sergeant Cuff (although he somewhat strangely labels her a 'detectivette').<sup>492</sup> However Ashley does not explore Valeria's position between social identities as both wife and detective, the combination of which allowed Valeria to make headway and explore places and engage with people with which she would not otherwise have been able to. Valeria uses both identities to cross a variety of social boundaries, especially restrictive due to her position as a woman, under the pretext of solving the mystery and uncovering the secret, and when one identity (as either Eustace's troubled wife or as determined pseudo-detective) does not serve her immediate purpose, Valeria simply switches to the other or combines them together, depending on which serves her purpose. A good example of this from the novel is Valeria's attempts to obtain a meeting with the deformed eccentric Miserrimus Dexter. In this scene, Valeria is advised against meeting Dexter by Major Fitz-David who argues that, under ordinary circumstances, Valeria should not engage with such a person:

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<sup>491</sup> Wilkie Collins, *The Law and the Lady*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1875; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 117.

<sup>492</sup> Ashley, 'Wilkie Collins and the Detective Story', pp. 47-60 (p. 56).

[Fitz-David] ‘In all England you could not have picked out a person more essentially unfit to be introduced to a lady – to a young lady especially – than Dexter. Have you heard of his horrible deformity? [...] Forgive me if the inquiry is impertinent. What can your motive possibly be for wanting an introduction to Miserrimus Dexter?’<sup>493</sup>

Without her combined identities as both detective and wife of the ‘accused’ party, Valeria would have no response to this question. However to combat this, she utilises her position *between* wife, detective and woman to convince Fitz-David that the introduction is necessary in order for her to continue her inquiries into Eustace’s trial. Fitz-David eventually succumbs and promises to attempt an introduction (although this is not a promise which he actually fulfils).

Valeria therefore demonstrates a final example of how detective figures in sensation novels connected with those in police memoirs, in a similar way to Dickens’s Inspector Bucket and Sergeant Cuff. Bucket utilises his politically-assigned authority as a police officer to address (and indeed, congregate) people of all different social classes in a situation where class is forgotten, and Cuff is deliberately able to pick and choose which kinds of social conventions he follows or does not follow. Valeria Macallan (alias Woodville alias Brinton) has a more complex relationship with social structures, assigning herself multiple identities as woman, wife and detective, the application of which to herself allows her to transcend social conventions in much the same way as the other detective figures in sensation fiction.

#### **4.6: ‘Sensation Recollections’: Chapter 4 Conclusions**

Initially, it seems that the police memoir genre and the sensation genre were two distinct and separate literary moments which coexisted throughout the mid-nineteenth century. Police

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<sup>493</sup> Collins, *The Law and the Lady*, pp. 191-192.

memoir fiction, which was designed to provide the reader with literary windows into urban criminality through accompanying the detective-protagonist on the surface seems disconnected from the sensation novel's purpose of providing a thrill to readers by depicting murder, arson, bigamy or various other crimes that usually tend to take place within a middle-class or occasionally aristocratic domestic setting.

On closer inspection, however, I suggest that they were much more connected than they initially seem. In essence, they were two sides of the 'coin' of the development of detective fiction from the 1860s and 1870s, both of which connected to earlier forms of crime, social exploration and police-focused periodical journalism. When one analyses the sensation genre using a common denominator, namely the tropes which emerged in the pages of contemporary periodicals, various similarities between the two genres emerge. Police detectives in both memoir fiction and sensation fiction were designed to help uncover various underlying secrets from a variety of settings – in police memoir fiction this was urban spaces deemed to be criminalised, and in sensation fiction this setting was the bourgeois or middle-class family home. Indeed, uncovering a criminal or domestic 'secret' was often the purpose of sensation writing in the first place, as Trodd suggests.<sup>494</sup> The settings for the discovery of criminal secrets therefore differed across the two genres, but their purpose of secret-discovery and allowing readers to participate in the process of discovering it was mutual.

The police-detective was therefore a character which anchored both memoir fiction and sensation fiction together. In both genres, they had (and utilised) the power to transcend most boundaries – both geographical and social. In both memoir and sensation fiction, police detectives were often depicted entering and exiting various private and often criminal spaces where other characters, for one reason or another, were not permitted to enter. The detective figures in both police memoir fiction and in sensation fiction were also able to almost ignore

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<sup>494</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (pp. 435-436).

social conventions in both the tasks that they perform (such as Robert Audley looking through George Talboys's possessions in *Lady Audley's Secret*) and the other characters that they associate with (such as Inspector Bucket's refusal to desist from his accusation of Lady Dedlock of murder in *Bleak House*, or Sergeant Cuff's refusal to leave when commanded by Lady Verinder in *The Moonstone*).<sup>495</sup> Alongside this, the reader (and occasionally other characters in the novel, which manifest the reader's presence within the text) accompanied the police officer or detective in their exploits and under their protection, thus vicariously participating in and viewing the criminal underworld.

There were some differences in purpose. Whilst police memoir fiction was strictly focused on the police officer, and concerned itself with representing the operations and methodologies of the police the sensation genre was more strongly concerned with revealing domestic secrets and less interested in police procedure as this created maximum sensational impact for the reader. It is for this reason, argues Stephen Knight that the sensation genre repeatedly places itself in domestic situations.<sup>496</sup> As Pittard suggests, the sensation novel took the crime narrative, and moved it firmly to within the family home, rather than keeping it on the street or in the slum,<sup>497</sup> and this difference has helped keep the two kinds of writing separate, despite their thematic connections in how they represented police officers.

These connections between sensation novels and police memoir fiction help to legitimise the police memoir genre as a moment in the development of the detective novel in a stronger fashion than has previously been granted to it. As the sensation novel (often considered to be a significant moment in the development of detective fiction) has numerous similarities with

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<sup>495</sup> Collins, *The Moonstone*, p. 167

<sup>496</sup> Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000*, p. 39.

<sup>497</sup> Pittard, 'From Sensation to the *Strand*', in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Rzepka and Horsley, p. 107.

the police memoir genre from the perspective of how it represented detectives and police officers, the memoir genre can perhaps be looked at from a more sympathetic perspective.

However, as the next chapter will explore, the comfortable position of the police officer as a literary guide and protector for both other fictional characters and, consequently, the reader themselves was not to last. This literary relationship was built on a level of trust existing in the concept of policing at a wider social level, and this trust was to be catastrophically damaged as the mid-Victorian era gave way to the late-Victorian years and the *fin-de-siècle*.

## Chapter 5

### ‘...people are naturally distrustful of its future working’: The 1877 Detective Scandal in the Victorian Mass Media

#### 5.1: Introduction: The 1877 Detective Scandal

Hitherto, this project has constructed an image of the landscape of detective fiction across the mid Victorian era as consisting of two main chronologies, which were interwoven through their connections to periodical journalism. The first strand consisted of the police memoir, which had been influenced by periodical criticism of the police and journalistic reports of criminality merging together to create a genre which appealed to interests of readers keen to explore and safely experience criminality in the company of the socially-mobile police officer. The second strand was sensation fiction, which has hitherto often been connected with the detective genre due to its interest in crime and scandal, but which this project connected directly to police memoir fiction through shared literary characteristics and through direct periodical commentary. It was a genre which utilised many of the same thematic tropes in order to drive the narratives forward, such as using police officers or detectives to invade of private spaces, the revelation of domestic and criminal secrets, flouting social conventions and, of course, crime itself. This was, therefore, the literary climate of detective fiction across the mid-Victorian era.

This climate was, however, predicated on the maintenance of a certain level of public trust in the police themselves. Throughout this period, the force had enjoyed at least some support in the periodical and newspaper presses, despite the differences of political opinion detailed in this project’s first chapter. As Clive Emsley asserts, mid-Victorians were, on the whole, ‘proud of their police’, and periodical commentary in *any* guise (supportive or

otherwise) helped to cement the police as a necessary and intrinsic part of the social fabric of mid-Victorian society.<sup>498</sup> However, this was to fundamentally change after 1870, as public estimation of the police force began to decline. As Charles Rzepka notes, historical events such as the actions of the Reform League (including the Hyde Park demonstration of 1867) and the Clerkenwell Prison bombing, also in 1867, called into question the public's confidence in the police's ability to prevent such 'outrages':<sup>499</sup>

[...] after 1870 the competence, and even the integrity, of the London police became increasingly suspect. During the late 1860s, labourers rioted in Hyde Park for an extended franchise and Irish nationalists began a prolonged campaign of public disruption with the bombing of Clerkenwell Prison. Several well-publicized [sic], unsolved murders occurred in the early years of the next decade, and a major corruption scandal led to the complete reorganization of Scotland Yard in 1878.<sup>500</sup>

The series of unsolved murders to which Rzepka refers included several widely publicised cases, notably the 1876 Charles Bravo murder; a poisoning which captured the public imagination and which remains unsolved. Press reactions to these (and other) events resulted in articles with scathing titles and content, such as 'Inefficiency of the London Police' or 'Where are the Police?', both published in the *Saturday Review* in 1870 and 1872 respectively.

However, the reputation of the police in public view was most seriously damaged by a corruption scandal which engulfed the detective branch of the Metropolitan Police in 1877, coupled with the fact that it was extensively publicised in both periodical and newspaper

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<sup>498</sup> Emsley, pp. 29-44 (p. 30).

<sup>499</sup> 'Outrages': The use of this word here comes from 'Detectives and their Work', *All the Year Round*, 25 April 1885, p. 135.

<sup>500</sup> Rzepka, p. 111.

presses. As a result of this scandal, public estimation of the police force reached its lowest point of the nineteenth century.

In 1877, four detective inspectors from the Metropolitan Police's 'detective department' named Meiklejohn, Druscovich, Palmer and Clarke, as well as a solicitor named Froggatt, were arrested and charged with conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice.<sup>501</sup> They were specifically accused of receiving bribes from convicted criminals in return for information regarding the police's own movements against them. Their crime was connected to the infamous 'turf fraud' scandal in which several criminals, among them the well-known William Kurr and Harry Benson, had illegitimately obtained £10,000 from a French noblewoman named Madame de Goncourt by convincing her to invest money in fraudulent horse races which they guaranteed that she would win, but which were actually fictitious.<sup>502</sup>

The corrupt inspectors provided a constant stream of information to Kurr, Benson and their associates, warning them of their impending arrests, and thus they were able to continuously elude the police's clutches. However, their luck ran out in April 1877, and both Kurr and Benson were apprehended and sentenced to penal servitude for ten and fifteen years respectively.<sup>503</sup> In order to try and reduce their sentences, the criminals almost immediately betrayed the informant-inspectors and, as George Dilnot points out, it was likely that this had been their intention all along as they had 'carefully preserved and secreted every scrap of correspondence [they] had received from [their] detective tools'.<sup>504</sup> By July 1877, Kurr and Benson's statements had been heard, and enough corroborating evidence gathered to affect an

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<sup>501</sup> George Dilnot, *The Trial of the Detectives* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), pp. 51-52.

<sup>502</sup> The actual method through which the criminals managed to obtain money from Madame de Goncourt is highly interesting, but is rather too complex to detail in this brief summary of the case. For a comprehensive account of the criminals' methodology, consult Dilnot, p. 28.

<sup>503</sup> Dilnot, p. 51.

<sup>504</sup> Dilnot, p. 51.

arrest.<sup>505</sup> The four inspectors and Froggatt were apprehended and a long inquiry and subsequent trial began. Inspectors Meiklejohn, Druscovich and Palmer (as well as the solicitor Froggatt), were eventually found guilty and each sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labour.<sup>506</sup> The fourth inspector, Clarke, was acquitted.

The scandal caused widespread public outrage, and Dilnot goes so far as to argue that, '[e]normous and wide-world [sic] interest was taken in the trial'.<sup>507</sup> Consequently, it deepened the already-declining public distrust of law enforcement. It also brought the detective department sharply into the administrative spotlight, whereas it had hitherto been able to operate without any great deal of external or political scrutiny. This, coupled with the fact that the public opinion of the police had already been in decline before the scandal, caused the Home Secretary, R. A. Cross, to order an immediate investigation into the operations of the department. It was subsequently restructured into the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in 1878, which still operates today.<sup>508</sup>

This narrative is well-known amongst those who explore the history of Victorian policing, although it is rarely explored in detail except to iterate how the department was restructured towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>509</sup> It is also rarely explored in relation to the development of detective fiction. Charles Rzepka and Martin Kayman, for example, both make only brief allusions to the scandal. Rzepka notes that public estimation of the police was already falling in the early 1870s, but suggests that it peaked slightly earlier than

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<sup>505</sup> Dilnot, pp. 51-52.

<sup>506</sup> Dilnot, pp. 301-302.

<sup>507</sup> Dilnot, p. 52.

<sup>508</sup> Sarah Manwaring-White, *The Policing Revolution: Police Technology, Democracy and Liberty in Britain* (Brighton: Harvester, 1983), p. 8.

<sup>509</sup> Manwaring-White, p. 8.

the 1877 scandal and that the detective department's restructure was unconvincing.<sup>510</sup> Martin Kayman opts for a different approach, and suggests that the restructure was an effort to bring the British detective system more into line with the French *Surêté*, which was perceived as a more effective organisation.<sup>511</sup> Heather Worthington makes a more comprehensive and useful connection between the case and the rise of detective fiction, by suggesting that it may have contributed to the unflattering portrayal of police detectives in the early Sherlock Holmes stories that emerged in the late 1880s.<sup>512</sup> Perhaps the most detailed piece of scholarship which directly addresses the 1877 corruption scandal in detail is Haia Shpayer-Makov's *The Ascent of the Detective*, where Makov argues that it 'confirmed what the public had initially feared: corrupt practices, including the collusion of the police with criminals'.<sup>513</sup> Makov also includes an image of the detectives on trial from the *Illustrated London News*<sup>514</sup> and returns to the case periodically as the book progresses – even briefly mentioning how the case was presented to the public in popular journalism.<sup>515</sup>

However, these mentions of the case are in the minority when it comes to scholarly criticism of the development of the detective fiction genre across the late Victorian era. Indeed, Stephen Knight, Martin Priestman, John Scaggs and John Cawelti do not mention the scandal as impacting the development of detective fiction towards the end of the nineteenth century at all.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to rectify this gap in scholarship. I explore the 1877 corruption scandal in relation to how it was presented to the public through periodical

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<sup>510</sup> Rzepka, p. 111.

<sup>511</sup> Kayman, p. 95.

<sup>512</sup> Heather Worthington, *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 65.

<sup>513</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 38.

<sup>514</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 39.

<sup>515</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, pp. 202-203.

and newspaper journalism, and relate this to how the press perceived the police and detectives both before and after the scandal came to light. This chapter performs this task so that the next and final chapter can connect this to the development of the detective genre, which examines how the falling public opinion of the police force contributed to changes in detective fiction's evolution towards the end of the century. The final chapter ultimately links this to the emergence of the private detective or the 'gifted amateur' detective,<sup>516</sup> by suggesting that the loss of trust in the police meant that they had lost their privileged position as guides into the criminal underworld, which had been solidified by the popularity of mid-Victorian police memoirs. This shift in interest towards the amateur or private detective eventually culminated in one of the most famous private detectives of the literary canon – Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.

## **5.2: 'Surely [...] every policeman ought to be a detective': Periodical Perceptions of *Detectives*, 1842-1877**

As the opening chapter of this project highlighted, the periodical press and the activities of the police were closely tied together through political and socioeconomic commentary.<sup>517</sup> Surprisingly however, this commentary was relatively inconsistent when it came to knowledge surrounding the differences between regular, uniformed police officers, and plain-clothes detectives.

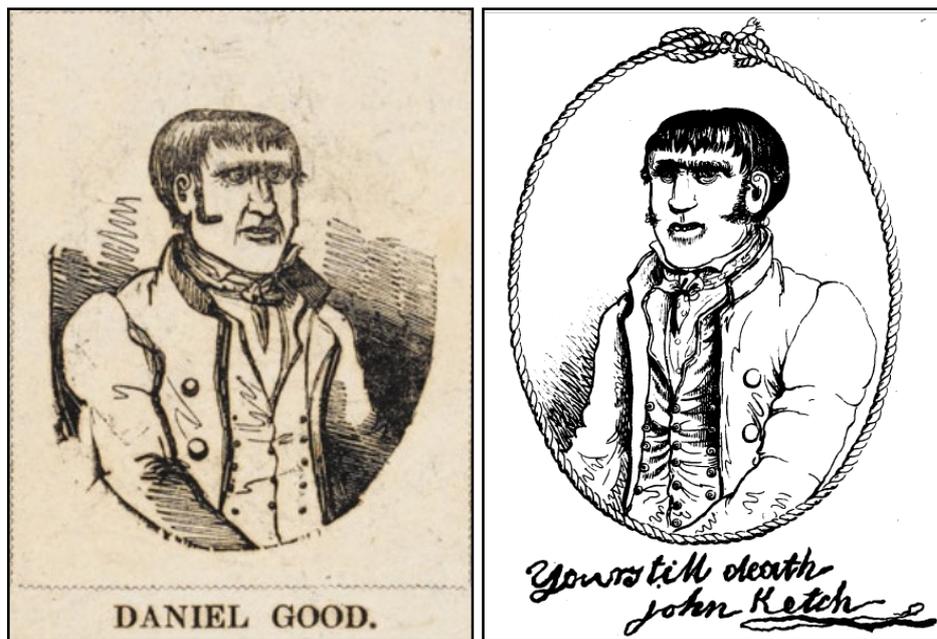
The 'detective department' of the Metropolitan Police had been established in 1842, ironically influenced at least partially by a public outcry in the popular press, just as the department's 1878 restructure was also caused by press-outrage. The uproar which led to the founding of the detective department resulted from the incompetence of uniformed police

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<sup>516</sup> Rzepka, p. 111.

<sup>517</sup> See Chapter 1 for full details.

officers in apprehending a murderer named Daniel Good. Originally under suspicion of theft, Good was convicted of murdering his girlfriend, Jane Jones, but eluded capture for five days, before being apprehended by a civilian in a public-house in Tonbridge Wells.<sup>518</sup> The mass media was quick to demonise Good. In fact, one 1842 broadside stylistically illustrated Good identically to an illustration of the notorious seventeenth-century executioner Jack Ketch, from the popular *Autobiography of Jack Ketch* (1835) (figs. 10 and 11).



Figures. 10 and 11: Illustrations of Daniel Good from 1842 and of John (Jack) Ketch, 1835.

Left: 'Apprehension of Good for the Barbarous Murder of Jane Jones', British Library <<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/broadside-apprehension-of-good-for-the-barbarous-murder-of-jane-jones>> [accessed 1 January 2018], (c. 1842).

Right: Anonymous, *Autobiography of Jack Ketch* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1835).

The failure of the uniformed police to capture Good motivated the establishment of a department dedicated to hunting criminals. The uniformed police had originally been designed to prevent crime from occurring in the first place by maintaining a visible street

<sup>518</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 32.

presence, rather than to solve those which had been already committed.<sup>519</sup> The failure to apprehend Good embarrassingly exposed this flaw in the system, and so consequently the establishment of a detective force designed to *solve* crimes quickly followed.

Despite the public resentment surrounding the inefficient nature of the Good investigation, the detective department itself was established relatively quietly in terms of press coverage, perhaps due to a latent mistrust in plain-clothes policing, or perhaps because the detective department was designed to operate secretively and thus promoting it seemed counterintuitive.<sup>520</sup> The *Morning Post* was one of a small number of larger papers to run a short column declaring that a small force of detectives had been established. Usefully, this article declared that the reason for the detectives' establishment was directly linked to the failings of the police to apprehend criminals:

Several cases having lately occurred, in which criminals have not been taken into custody so promptly as the public had a right to expect, the commissioners of police have arranged that a new company shall be immediately raised out of the present police, to be called the "Detective Force," [...] <sup>521</sup>

This new 'Detective Force' was to operate in plain-clothes, in strict secrecy and its operatives designed to 'mingle unnoticed in mass gatherings, keep 'felons' and 'persons of bad character' under observation [...] and follow perpetrators once a crime was committed'.<sup>522</sup>

This set of responsibilities again perhaps explains why the department appeared quietly, as it was designed to be unnoticed by the general public.

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<sup>519</sup> Clive Emsley, *The Great British Bobby: A History of British Policing from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present* (London: Quercus, 2009), p. 40.

<sup>520</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 33.

<sup>521</sup> 'New Police Arrangement, *Morning Post*, 12 July 1842, p. 7.

<sup>522</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 33.

However, as the detective department had appeared under a cloud of relative obscurity, mid-Victorian periodical criticism of the police made largely inconsistent distinctions between uniformed police officers and plain clothes detectives. Some periodicals and journalists (such as Charles Dickens writing in the early 1850s) went out of their way to attempt to understand the distinction between uniformed police officers and plain-clothes detectives. A commentator for the *Leisure Hour*, writing in October 1857, made this difference clear:

For ordinary offences – such as shoplifting, stealing from the person, street impostures, begging letters, passing false coin, and others of a like kind – the services of the detective are rarely called into requisition. Such offenders mostly fall into the hands of the regular police, who haul them before the magistrates to be summarily dealt with. It is the practitioners who work under covert, and aim at higher game, that set the detectives on the alert and try their mettle.<sup>523</sup>

Similarly, the *Saturday Review* demonstrated this understanding in February 1868:

In addition to the ordinary force, there is a special department of detective police at Scotland Yard, consisting of once chief inspector, three inspectors and fifteen sergeants.<sup>524</sup>

This line is easily overlooked, but highlights how some understood that the detective department operated separately from the bulk of the official police force. For the *Saturday Review*, this is perhaps understandable as it was one of the most engaged publications when it came to criticising the police across the mid-to-late Victorian era. However, the slightly offhand nature of this quote also suggested that some periodical commentators were aware of the distinctions between detectives and uniformed officers, but did not think it worth going

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<sup>523</sup> 'Police Detectives', *Leisure Hour*, 29 October 1857, p. 692.

<sup>524</sup> 'The Police and Mr. Speke', *Saturday Review*, 8 February 1868, p. 172.

into any kind of detailed examination of the department. This lack of scrutiny, even within periodical journalism which was aware that the detective department existed in the first place, was later to become problematic.

Other commentators outright rejected the notion of a distinction between police officers and detectives. In 1860, for example, the *Examiner* commented on the state of distinctions between police officers and detectives in a much different way, suggesting that there shouldn't even *be* a distinction. When musing on the organisation and the administration of the Irish Constabulary, formed in 1837, the *Examiner* indirectly questioned whether the need for a separate section of a police force to detect and apprehend offenders was necessary:

We are told, indeed, that there does exist a detachment of detectives, constituting a part of the force, but this really makes the system more ridiculous, for surely, to a certain extent, every policeman ought to be a detective [...]<sup>525</sup>

Understanding of detectives as a separate arm of the police force was therefore erratic across the mid-Victorian era in periodical journalism. Some commentators merely stuck to using the terms 'police officer' or 'detective' interchangeably, with little regard for the distinctions between them. In October 1871, the *Examiner* wrote:

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that our metropolitan detective police force is inadequate to the work which it has to perform. [...] We may take the Camden Town murder as a typical instance. The body of a young woman is found in the canal. [...] There is nothing upon her to point out her name. The *police* are absolutely without a clue. And without a clue, the *detective* cannot work [my italics].<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> 'The Irish Constabulary', *Examiner*, 3 March 1860, p. 131.

<sup>526</sup> 'Murderers and Detectives', *Examiner*, 28 October 1871, p. 1063.

In another example, *St. Paul's Magazine* also made the mistake of labelling a detective figure as a 'policeman' when discussing prospective qualities which made excellent policing in William Brighty Rands's article 'The Apotheosis of the Policeman' (1874):

It was, therefore, all the more remarkable when, one Christmas-tide, in the dusk of the afternoon in our great metropolis, Policeman Q – one of the Detective Moralists in plain clothes [...] <sup>527</sup>

Still other commentators simply combined the two terms into the portmanteau 'police-detective' or 'detective police' in order to avoid this pitfall altogether. <sup>528</sup> Some also demonstrated ignorance of the distinctions between uniformed police officers and detectives through illustration. Whilst historical accuracy was likely not its main objective, in 1869 the magazine *Fun* published a comic-strip titled 'The Idiot Detective, or, the Track! The Trial!! and the Triumph!!!', in which the 'detective' is actually depicted in uniform (see fig. 12).

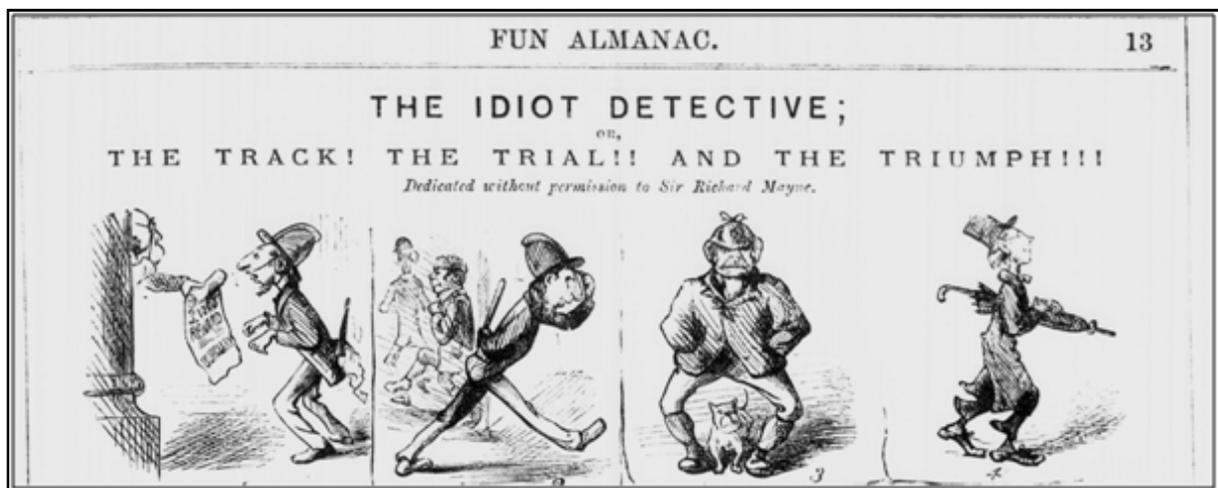


Figure 12: 'The Idiot Detective, or, the Track! the Trial!! and the Triumph!!!', *Fun*, January 1869, p. 13. The 'idiot detective' is shown in panel 1, receiving his orders, and in panel 2 searching for his suspect. In both illustrations, the 'idiot detective' is depicted as a uniformed police officer. In panels 3 and 4, the actual suspect and an innocent bystander are shown respectively; however the 'idiot detective' opts to pursue the bystander, rather than the suspect.

<sup>527</sup> William Brighty Rands, 'The Apotheosis of the Policeman', *St. Paul's Magazine*, February 1874, p. 240.

<sup>528</sup> The title of the article 'Police Detectives' from the *Leisure Hour* from 1857 helpfully demonstrates this, though this was by no means the only example.

This irregularity, again, was perhaps due to the lack of understanding of the distinctions between police officers and detectives, or else it may have been due to the lack of a contemporary stereotypical mid-Victorian image of a ‘detective’ for the cartoonist to utilise in order to demonstrate the character’s profession clearly to the reader. In either case, the implication here was that any clear stereotyped image of the plain-clothes detective as distinct from the uniformed branch of the police had not yet permeated public consciousness.

Overall, despite the valiant efforts of some contemporary commentators, the distinctions between uniformed officers and plain-clothes detectives was not yet widely understood by the periodical press or, by extension, the general public. By 1877, the year in which the extent of the department’s corruption had been revealed, this still seemed to be the case. In December 1877, the *Saturday Review* helpfully summarised:

[...] there does not appear to be [...] the means of knowing exactly what [detectives] are about.<sup>529</sup>

### **5.3: Reporting the 1877 Crisis**

The details of the case and how it progressed through both Bow Street police court and the Central Criminal Court were closely followed by interested journalists. In fact, the ‘turf frauds’ were already attracting attention in the media even before the detectives themselves were implicated as having been involved. In January 1877, *Bell’s Life in London* wrote that Druscovich was the officer who had apprehended the criminal fraudsters who were actually bribing him.<sup>530</sup> In April 1877 (when Benson and Kurr were apprehended and convicted) the *Examiner* published a lengthy and, by today’s standards, outrageous description of the case

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<sup>529</sup> ‘The Detective System’, *Saturday Review*, 1 December 1877, p. 682.

<sup>530</sup> ‘The Alleged Frauds on a French Lady’, *Bell’s Life in London*, 20 January 1877, p. 4.

which focused attention on the failings and pitfalls of the victim, Madame de Goncourt. The article speculated as to whether she herself might not have been (at least partially) to blame for being swindled out of such a large amount of money:

It seems at first incredible that a lady of sufficient age to manage her own affairs should send cheques to the amount of 10,000*l.* to a perfect stranger upon his written assurance that he will be able to secure her an enormous profit. Women, as a rule, are supposed to be even sharper in business matters than men. [...] Greedy and credulous people like Mme. de Goncourt commit the initial mistake of fancying themselves wiser than men who have given their whole life and time to business.<sup>531</sup>

In an attempt to reduce their own sentences, Kurr and Benson testified against their detective informers soon after they themselves were indicted.<sup>532</sup> In mid-July 1877, the officers were arrested and an inquiry begun at Bow Street. Naturally, the case's reporting immediately grew in ferocity, and an example of Andrew Hobbs's process of news spreading across the entire country in provincial newspapers took shape. Hobbs suggests that:

[...] [N]on-local content – news from around the UK, from Parliament and other national institutions, foreign news and advertising for branded products such as patent medicines – was sold wholesale, to be retailed by each paper, in the same way that own-brand Corn Flakes are produced in one factory but sold under many different brand names around the country.<sup>533</sup>

This can be seen directly in action in the reporting of the detectives' arrest. Between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> July, newspapers from all over the country published short, one or two column news

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<sup>531</sup> 'Sworn Bookmakers', *Examiner*, 28 April 1877, pp. 522-523.

<sup>532</sup> Dilnot, p. 51.

<sup>533</sup> Andrew Hobbs, 'When the Provincial Press was the National Press (c. 1836-1900)', *International Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 5, 1 (2009), pp. 16-43 (p. 25).

pieces on the arrest and charge of the inspectors at Bow Street police court. These included larger newspapers, such as *Reynolds's Newspaper*, or the *Manchester Courier* but also smaller publications from rural areas outside of the large cities, such as the *York Herald*, *Sunderland Daily Echo* and the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*.

Many of these newspapers eagerly and immediately reported the crisis to be 'Serious',<sup>534</sup> 'Grave',<sup>535</sup> or in some cases even 'Extraordinary',<sup>536</sup> hinting at the media frenzy which was to follow. Some of the reports from the time of the detectives' arrest registered unbridled astonishment (as well as occasional glee). A report from *Reynolds's Newspaper* suggested incredulity or disbelief, arguing that the detectives' colleagues could hardly believe that such a charge could be true of trustworthy police detectives who had served the force for such a substantial time:

The order to arrest was given effect to at ten o'clock, when Druscovitch, Meiklejohn and Palmer came on duty. At that hour Superintendent Williamson entered the detective's room, and stated that it was with extreme regret he had to request the officers named to consider themselves in custody. Nothing could exceed the surprise with which the announcement was heard by their colleagues, whom many years' experience had taught to have entire confidence in the integrity and honour of the accused.<sup>537</sup>

The air of astonishment was echoed in the *Edinburgh Evening News*, which suggested that the accused '[...] had been known so long and so faithfully trusted [...]' that accusing them in

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<sup>534</sup> 'Serious' was a term used in several headlines between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> July 1877 – for example, 'Serious Charge Against London Detectives', *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 13 July 1877, p. 4.

<sup>535</sup> 'Grave Charge Against Detectives', *Citizen*, 13 July 1877, p. 3.

<sup>536</sup> 'Extraordinary Charge Against Detectives', *York Herald*, 13 July 1877, p. 8.

<sup>537</sup> 'Charge Against Detective Officers', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 15 July 1877, n.p.

the first place was a very ‘painful’ duty of the counsel for the prosecution to have to undertake.<sup>538</sup>

The initial surprise at the detectives’ arrest quickly gave way to detailed reporting of the inquiry at the Bow Street police court, which took place between July and September 1877, when the officers were finally committed for trial at the Old Bailey. An enormous number of newspapers from all over the country reported the progress of the inquiry, based in locations as widespread as Chelmsford, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Dundee, Leeds, Huddersfield, Manchester, Gloucester and, of course, London. The *Manchester Guardian* and its sister paper the *Observer* published an almost daily two-to-three column feature titled ‘The Charge Against Detective Officers and a Solicitor’ (or variations of this name), which followed the enquiry closely. These newspaper reports surrounding the details of the proceedings became lengthy and very closely detailed.<sup>539</sup>

As the inquiry developed, a number of publications embarked on a second, less truthful campaign against each of the accused detectives in an attempt to smear them further in the public view. For each of the detectives arrested, the media sourced at least one sensational or scandalous story about their circumstances that cast a negative or suspicious light upon them. Druscovich was a particular target for publicity-hungry publications, as there were at least two ‘scandals’ which surrounded him whilst he was in custody that were widely reported. At the end of July 1877, it was reported that he had attempted to commit suicide in his cell, which was viewed as both morally reprehensible and which was a criminal offence until 1961. The story was quickly exposed to have been fabricated, but not before the rumour had spread across a large number of newspapers. The *Standard* was suggested to have been the

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<sup>538</sup> ‘Serious Charge Against Detective Officers’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 13 July 1877, p. 4.

<sup>539</sup> For a representative example of the minute detail, see ‘The Charge Against Detective Officers’, *Manchester Courier*, 30 July 1877, p. 3.

guilty culprit for starting the rumour. On July 24<sup>th</sup>, it published a short article titled ‘Attempted Suicide of Inspector Druscovich’, which read:

It is reported that Inspector Druscovich [...] when conveyed to the House of Detention, attempted to commit suicide. A correspondent informs us that when the accused had been placed in his cell he tore up his sheet and made it into a rope. Having done this he fastened it to the bar of the window in his cell. He stood on his bed and fastened the noose round his neck. He then jumped off the bed and fell suspended within a few inches off the ground.<sup>540</sup>

Other newspapers immediately seized the story. The ‘correspondent’ from inside the prison who informed the press of this incident had apparently contacted multiple papers, as on the same day (July 24<sup>th</sup>) the *Edinburgh Evening News* also reported that Druscovich had attempted to hang himself. However some of the details were different – whilst the *Standard* reported that Druscovich had made a rope from his sheet, the *Edinburgh Evening News* reported that it had actually been his shirt.<sup>541</sup>

The reports of Druscovich’s attempted suicide caused enough disturbance for it to be directly mentioned in the inquiry’s proceedings. Druscovich himself was forced to openly refute the claims, and the *Standard* was blamed as the originator of the rumour. Three days later, on July 27<sup>th</sup>, the *Leeds Mercury* wrote:

Mr. ST. JOHN WONTNER called the attention of Sir James Ingham to a report that appeared in the *Standard* and another paper [likely the *Edinburgh Evening News*] that Druscovitch [sic] had attempted to commit suicide. It was necessary to say that it was a gross libel on Mr. Druscovitch and upon the officials of the prison, there being not the

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<sup>540</sup> ‘Attempted Suicide of Inspector Druscovich’, *Standard*, 24 July 1877, p. 5.

<sup>541</sup> ‘Attempted Suicide of Inspector Druscovitch’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 24 July 1877, p. 2.

slightest foundation for it. He was quite prepared to meet this charge, and hoped to prove his innocence.<sup>542</sup>

Druscovich's denial of the accusation forced papers to admit that the rumour was not true, though some attempted to hide their clarifications so that readers could potentially miss it. For example, on July 25<sup>th</sup>, the *Dundee Courier and Argus* published a small, easily overlooked line which merely read:

The report that Inspector Druscovitch [sic] had attempted suicide is wholly unfounded.<sup>543</sup>

This was the entirety of the clarification offered by the paper. It had no headline, no contextual content, and was buried amongst other, longer and headlined articles, which were all collectively published under a regular column titled 'Imperial Parliament' which usually reported proceedings from within the House of Commons. In some respects, this ploy worked. Even after the story had been proven false, other newspapers were still reporting that Druscovich *had* attempted to kill himself, either due to ignorance or a desire for sensationalism with little regard for the truth. The *Cheltenham Chronicle*, for example, reported the attempted suicide on July 31<sup>st</sup>, days after Druscovich had publically refuted the accusation.<sup>544</sup>

Mercifully for Druscovich, the rumour did not persist. However, the brief respite was not to last as the media quickly went searching for dirt elsewhere. In an unfortunately-timed coincidence, in August 1877 Druscovich's brother John Vincent was arrested and accused of conspiracy to defraud. Ordinarily, his arrest would either have not featured in the newspaper, or at most may have been included in a crime 'round-up' column in a short paragraph. However, as he was related to an accused detective in the 'Great Detective Case', as it was

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<sup>542</sup> 'The Charge Against Detective Officers', *Leeds Mercury*, 27 July 1877, n.p.

<sup>543</sup> 'Imperial Parliament', *Dundee Courier and Argus*, 25 July 1877, n.p.

<sup>544</sup> 'Attempted Suicide of Detective Druscovich', *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 31 July 1877, p. 3.

later dubbed, the media seized the story and used it to further smear Druscovich himself. The *Edinburgh Evening News*, for example, headlined their report ‘The Brother of Detective Druscovich Arrested’, and the paper immediately stated that the accused was the brother of the corrupt detective, even before stating the crime he was accused of:

Yesterday at the Manchester City Police Court, John Vincent Druscovich, *alias* John Vincent, aged 22 years, the brother of Nathaniel Druscovich of the metropolitan police, was brought up in custody [...] <sup>545</sup>

Other newspapers followed suit. The *Citizen*, for example, echoed the *Edinburgh Evening News* by naming Inspector Druscovich in the headline of their article reporting about John Vincent’s arrest, and titled it ‘Serious Charge Against Inspector Druscovich’s Brother’. <sup>546</sup>

The *Huddersfield Chronicle* also mentioned Inspector Druscovich in the headline, titling their report ‘Arrest of the Brother of Detective Druscovich’. <sup>547</sup>

Away from Druscovich, Meiklejohn had been the detective who had first met with Kurr and Benson in 1872, and he himself had apparently initiated their working relationship. <sup>548</sup> Consequently, the media had no sympathy for him. In November 1877, a number of newspapers began to characterise him as a career-criminal, and suggested that he was just as much a skilled thief as he had been a skilled thief-taker. To back this up, several publications cited a story depicting Meiklejohn on a trans-Atlantic voyage, betting a fellow passenger that he could steal his watch and scarf-pin without his knowledge. The *Edinburgh Evening News* told the story in great detail:

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<sup>545</sup> ‘The Brother of Detective Druscovich Arrested’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 14 August 1877, p. 3.

<sup>546</sup> ‘Serious Charge Against Inspector Druscovich’s Brother’, *Citizen*, 14 August 14 1877, p. 2.

<sup>547</sup> ‘Arrest of the Brother of Detective Druscovich’, *Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 18 August 1877, p. 3.

<sup>548</sup> Dilnot, p. 14.

Meiklejohn was not only a clever thief-taker, but he could palm money, abstract a watch, or relieve a gentleman of his scarf-pin as adroitly as the most experienced thief. [...]

Meiklejohn asked, “What would you say if your watch and pin [...] were taken from you before we reach Sandy Hook [...]?” “Certainly it would be impossible,” said the passenger. [...] Three days afterwards the watch was missing. [...] It had some to the last day of the voyage [...] “Pardon me,” [Meiklejohn] said, “I have dropped some ash on your scarf,” and he carelessly brushed it off. [...] in that movement he dexterously abstracted the diamond pin. The Jew paid his £50, and acknowledged himself beaten.<sup>549</sup>

Much like the rumour of Druscovich’s attempted suicide and the arrest of his brother, this story surrounding Meiklejohn’s prowess as a pickpocket permeated through other newspapers. The *Dundee Courier*, the *Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Chronicle*, the *York Herald*, the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* and the *Western Daily Press* ran identical stories denouncing Meiklejohn and his ability to pickpocket strangers.

On a broader scale, some newspapers began to use the case of the corrupt detectives as a springboard to further scrutinise the activities of other detectives who were not involved. In addition, they used incidents of other detectives being caught committing crimes as ammunition to further damage the reputation of those who were already on trial. In October 1877 another detective, named George Harvey, was indicted for attempting to prevent a witness from giving evidence in court, for a divorce case (*Gladstone v. Gladstone*, 1875). Despite the fact that this case had nothing whatsoever to do with the case of the ‘turf fraud’ detectives, and that George Harvey was actually a detective inspector serving in the Portsmouth police, as opposed to the Metropolitan Police, several newspapers headlined their reporting of the Harvey case as connected to them. The *Evening Telegraph*, for example,

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<sup>549</sup> ‘Meiklejohn as a Thief-Taker’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 27 November 1877, p. 4.

headlined a short article as ‘Another Detective in Trouble’,<sup>550</sup> whilst the *York Herald* opted for ‘Charge Against Another Detective’.<sup>551</sup>

As summer 1877 drew to a close, the Bow Street Court-based preliminary inquiry was becoming drawn out and the media were beginning to lose focus. In fact, it went on for so long, and was reported so widely by so many different publications, that in September 1877, the *Saturday Review* complained that proceedings were beginning to grow tedious:

At last the case of the police Detectives in its first stage is over. It has occupied twenty-eight days, spread over nine weeks, and the only result – the committal of the prisoners – is one which might [...] have been arrived at in half the time [...] All parties have apparently done their best to spin out the case as much as possible [...]<sup>552</sup>

The full criminal trial at the Old Bailey was therefore the key event for which many publications were waiting, and it served to rejuvenate media interest. As proceedings began, *John Bull* gleefully predicted, ‘[t]he trial will occupy some weeks’, implying the media would be there following its every stage.<sup>553</sup> Any remaining doubt that commentators might have had as to their guilt vanished as the case moved into its latter stages, and consequently reports became lengthier, more detailed and more fierce as evidence was given and the full extent of their collusion came to light. Newspaper commentary largely abandoned short summary pieces included in crime ‘round-up’ sections, and instead opted to write lengthy (though still sensationalised) descriptions of the case, the suspects, the victim and intimate details surrounding the crime. In November 1877, *John Bull* produced a lengthy article dedicated to the case itself, which spanned three columns, and took accounts from a wide

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<sup>550</sup> ‘Another Detective in Trouble’, *Evening Telegraph*, 29 September 1877, p. 2.

<sup>551</sup> ‘Charge Against Another Detective’, *York Herald*, 1 October 1877, p. 6.

<sup>552</sup> ‘Nine Weeks of Preliminary Enquiry’, *Saturday Review*, 29 September 1877, pp. 382-383.

<sup>553</sup> ‘Law and Police’, *John Bull*, 27 October 1877, p. 694.

variety of different media sources (such as the *Times* and the *Telegraph*) in order to recount the story of the embezzled funds, the bribes and the criminals' apprehension (see fig. 13).



Figure 13: 'The Charge Against Detectives', John Bull, 24 November 1877, p. 748. The short pieces summarising sparse details of the case have now given way to an extensive retelling of the case and, most importantly, the trial. This was not the full extent of the article; it actually continues over the page for another half-column.

This article also recognised and commented on the fact that there had been considerable media interest surrounding the corruption scandal. It argued that it was a case

which has, for nearly five months, supplied the daily papers with [...] very exciting, though at the same time very questionable reading [...]<sup>554</sup>

The detectives' trial at the Old Bailey received perhaps the most detailed and in-depth reporting of all of the different aspects of the case, as it was the space where journalists were able to hear the evidence first-hand, and therefore confirm that the detectives were indeed criminals. The article from *John Bull* contained a highly detailed description of proceedings, which it had itself quoted from a variety of other media sources. This took up at least half of the article and went into an enormous detail, as exemplified by the descriptive scene in which the jury returned to the court-room to give their verdicts:

Back came the ladies, off went the obstinate hats, silence was emphatically pronounced, and at seventeen minutes past four the jury had returned, preceded by the young foreman, who held in his hand an ominous paper. This was the verdict. He had not returned to ask any questions, as some asserted. The fate of the prisoners was in the foreman's hands. But now there was a painful interval. The prisoners were arranged in front of the dock, all terribly distressed and nervous. But the judge had not returned.<sup>555</sup>

The return of the verdict made for particularly harrowing reading due to the sheer amount of detail, including the nervousness of the foreman, anxious to ensure that protocol was properly followed. This, clearly, was designed to give readers the clearest possible picture as to the scene inside the court:

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<sup>554</sup> 'The Charge Against Detectives', *John Bull*, 24 November 1877, p. 748.

<sup>555</sup> 'The Charge Against Detectives', *John Bull*, 24 November 1877, p. 748.

At last the names of the jurymen are called over and the Clerk of the Arraignment asks the dread question in order and in deep silence. Meiklejohn? Guilty. Druscovich? Guilty. Palmer? There is an anxious hesitation, and the young foreman, who is terribly nervous, wishes to go back and recommend Druscovich to mercy. So Palmer's fate hangs in the balance, and the presentment of the jury is made commending Druscovich to clemency. Once more the questioning begins again. Palmer? Guilty. Once more there is hesitation. Clarke? No; the foreman wishes to do everything in order, and goes back instantly to Palmer. He, too, is recommended to mercy, because he was not bribed. And now comes Clarke's turn, and apparently the most anxious moment of all, for the silence deepens. Clarke? Not guilty. The words were scarcely uttered before a burst of cheering rang through the court [...]<sup>556</sup>

The 'blatantly sensationalist'<sup>557</sup> *Illustrated Police News* gleefully detailed blow-by-blow accounts of the proceedings from inside the Central Criminal Court, and happily dubbed the scandal 'The Great Detective Case', in the apparent hope that the name would catch on and become a permanent stain on the reputation of the detective department.<sup>558</sup> Printed alongside the highly-detailed account of the trial proceedings was a large engraved image of the scene inside the court-room which took up approximately a third of the entire page (see figure 14).

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<sup>556</sup> 'The Charge Against Detectives', *John Bull*, 24 November 1877, p. 748.

<sup>557</sup> Knelman, p. 37.

<sup>558</sup> 'The Great Detective Case – Trial at the Central Criminal Court', *Illustrated Police News*, 3 November 1877, p. 4. The name 'the Great Detective Case' seemingly *did* catch on, as it was reused in a number of other publications. The article from *John Bull* (November 24 1877) used this designation to end its reporting of the trial. Other magazines such as *Funny Folks* (November 3 1877) made use of the name, and a dedicated account of the detectives' trial published separately in December 1877 also used it. This was advertised in the *Illustrated Police News* as a 'full account of the Magistratorial Enquiry [and the] Trial at the Central Criminal Court', and which included '[...] interesting matter never before published' as well as illustrations of the detectives themselves.

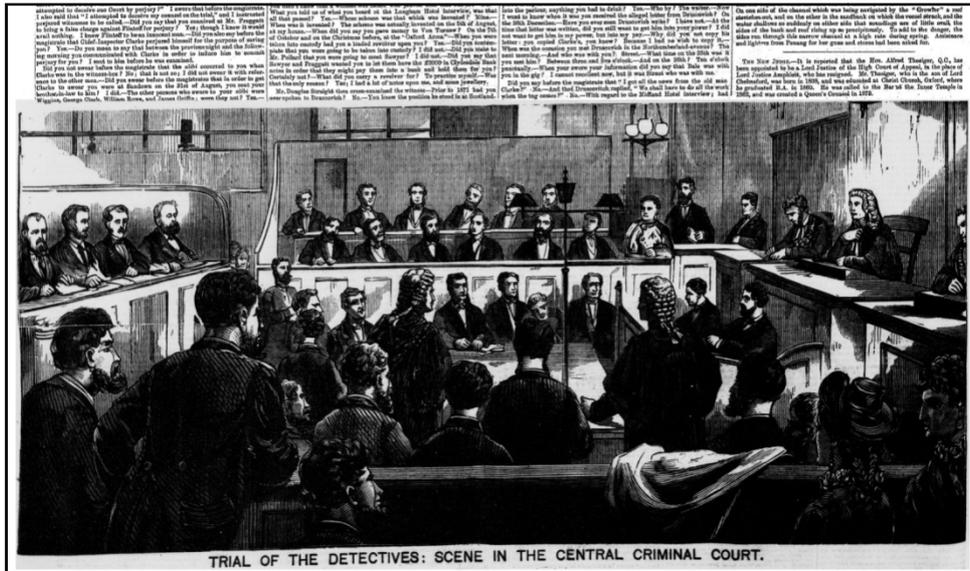


Figure 14: Illustration from 'The Great Detective Case', Illustrated Police News, 3 November 1877. The detectives are shown in the dock on the far-left of the image

At this stage, it is worth summarising the key effects of the prolific newspaper reporting of the detectives' trial. Alongside an understandable dramatic downturn in the public opinion of detectives, some secondary and perhaps indirect effects took shape. There was a substantial improvement in the hitherto inconsistent media perception of the distinction between uniformed police officers and plain-clothes detectives. In connection to this, an equally important consequence of the scandal's reporting was the sudden realisation by both journalists and the public that the detective department had, due to its secretive nature and its quiet existence, been subject to very little administrative or public scrutiny. Since its inception in 1842, the detective department of the Metropolitan Police had rarely, if ever, been held to account for its actions as a separate part of the wider police force. However, this also changed in the wake of the 1877 corruption scandal. Periodical commentators seized on the corruption scandal and began to use it as a springboard to present varying opinions on the detective department's freedom.

#### 5.4: ‘Officers of the Committee of *Criminal Investigation*’: Reflections on the Police and Detectives

It had been the newspaper press, as opposed to the periodical press, which had largely focused on reporting the progress of the scandal through Bow Street and subsequently through the Old Bailey. The relation of the case’s facts in a linear and informative fashion was a job for newspaper reporters and journalists, writing in daily papers which suited the quick-fire reporting of current events. By contrast, the weekly and monthly periodical press, suited more to broader commentary, took a much broader approach to discussion surrounding the case, and used it to explore the wider impacts of the case on the concepts of policing and the detection of crime.

Perhaps the most obvious effect of the case’s publicity was an immediate, dramatic downturn in the reputation of the police and detective forces. Once the detectives had been tried and convicted, periodical focus shifted quickly in this direction, and critics questioned the police’s overall competence and trustworthiness. This helped to fundamentally change the way that both police officers and detectives were seen by the ‘mass-reading public’ towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>559</sup> These figures that had previously been perceived as trusted protectors of middle-class values such as commerce, wealth, family and property,<sup>560</sup> increasingly began to be depicted as stupid, untrustworthy, incompetent and corrupt.

Perhaps understandably, satirical magazines seized the case in this respect. The magazine *Fun* was particularly active; in fact, its attacks on the police had predated the scandal. Public estimation in the police force was already declining prior to the scandal, and in January 1877 *Fun* detailed the story of a man arrested for attempting to assist a lost child by taking her to

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<sup>559</sup> Altick, pp. 6-7.

<sup>560</sup> See Chapter 1 for full details.

the police station. An incompetent officer, tellingly named ‘Sergeant Cuff’, is depicted as both incompetent and almost illiterate:

Police officer 09 B. U. Z. : [detailing the reasons for arresting the innocent bystander]  
“[...] his conduct vasint fatherly a bit, that is, not tsackly what I would call a fatherly kind o’ way; ‘e voz a patting ‘er werry gently on the ed, ‘e voz, then ‘e went and wiped the child’s hies with ‘is hown ‘ankerchief an’ then ‘e took ‘old of her ‘and an’ [sic] led ‘er away, ‘e did, quite kind like, as I considered the proceeding altogether werry suspicious and irreg’lar [...] hif ‘e’d a guv ‘er a good cuff o’ the ‘ead ven she voz a-cryin’, I shouldn’t a took no notice of ‘em, hi shouldn’t.”<sup>561</sup>

The officer’s peculiar, supposedly Cockney dialect suggests both idiocy and a working-class background, highlighting his inability to understand middle-class relationships such as the relationship shown between the gentleman and the lost child. The police officer’s ‘working-class background’ is a point also raised by Anthea Trodd, who quotes the *Saturday Review*<sup>562</sup> to claim that mid-Victorian commentators struggled with the concept of police officers solving ‘crime involving middle-class participants’ as constables themselves came mostly from working-class backgrounds.<sup>563</sup> Snippets attacking the police’s trustworthiness and competence in satirical magazines became extremely common in 1877-1878. In October 1877 *Fun* also published a poem criticising the operations of the police force and how they responded to the public as they performed their duties:

Such lots of burglars gets away

Scot free with all their booty,

I think it’s very wrong to say

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<sup>561</sup> ‘Unreported Police News’, *Fun*, 3 January 1877, p. 271.

<sup>562</sup> ‘Detectives in Fiction and in Real Life’, *Saturday Review*, 11 June 1864, pp. 712-713.

<sup>563</sup> Trodd, pp. 435-460 (pp. 449-450).

A man exceeds his dooty  
Because he goes and takes a chap  
Whose head is broke and bleeding –  
As if a peeler cares a rap  
For wounds and surgeon's pleading!

I says as Allingham was right,  
Although the go's a rum one.  
The public mind was in a fright,  
And so he collared someone.  
The majesty of Henglish law,  
With which he was invested,  
Demanded that the first he saw,  
At once should be arrested.<sup>564</sup>

In April 1878, *Fun* argued that Cross's restructure of the detective department was likely to be ineffective, and sarcastically suggested in its 'Unfounded Rumours' section that:

There is no foundation for the statement contained in some of our contemporaries that detectives will in future be styled, "Officers of the Committee of *Criminal Investigation*." They never catch any to investigate. Now Messrs. Meiklejohn and Co. *were* criminal investigators.

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<sup>564</sup> 'Our Detective System', *Fun*, 31 October 1877, p. 184.

The magazine did not temper its attacks as the reorganisation of the detective department took shape. In December 1878, *Fun* was still drawing readers' attention to the 'turf fraud' case, and directly named the corrupt Inspectors as examples of why detectives could no longer be taken at their word. In a rare departure from open comedy, the magazine quoted a short poem from the *London Magistrate* which stated that Inspectors or detectives could always be trustworthy, before half-mockingly, half-seriously asking whether the conviction of the three detectives did not openly prove this assertion wrong:

### **The Test of Truth**

“Who has a doubt should scout it:

Doubt here is quite absurd;

I have no 'doubt' about it

When I've an INSPECTOR's word.”

*London Magistrate.*

What about the “word” of such inspectors as Druscovitch, Meiklejohn, and Palmer?<sup>565</sup>

Other satirical magazines also engaged with the case, and further implied that the public opinion of detectives had declined as a direct result of the scandal. Whilst not mentioning any names, the magazine *Judy, or, the London Serio-Comic Journal* referenced the corruption scandal with an article titled 'The Mechanical Detective' in September 1877:

In consequence of the recent theft of antique gems from the British Museum, a system of protection for the future [...] is under the consideration of the Trustees. Its main feature is

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<sup>565</sup> 'The Test of Truth', *Fun*, 4 December 1878, p. 229.

that thieves shall detect themselves; which, considering recent disclosures, seems to suggest the only means likely to be successful.<sup>566</sup>

Whilst police officers and detectives were increasingly portrayed as idiotic in the pages of the satirical press, in other publications they were also presented as both incompetent and, crucially, corrupt. The positive assertions regarding the skills and competence of the police made by articles such as the 1857 piece ‘Police Detectives’ published in the *Leisure Hour*<sup>567</sup> were diminished and replaced by assertions that they were now untrustworthy and dishonest.

The *Saturday Review*, particularly, became one of the most virulent publications in terms of presenting criticism of the police through the lens of the ‘turf fraud’ scandal across the late 1870s and beyond. Indeed, given its robust engagement with socio-political debates which had led to its nickname ‘the *Saturday Reviler*’, this is hardly surprising.<sup>568</sup> As a result of the trial, it commented that the detective department’s lack of supervision and administrative scrutiny was to blame for its corruption, and it targeted the operational freedom that the department had enjoyed:

[...] the main questions which the Commissioners will have to decide will therefore be [...] whether its organization and discipline can be improved by more direct and minute supervision of the officers who are employed in such exceptional work. [...] The recent trial seems to show that at present the supervision over the Detectives is not sufficient.<sup>569</sup>

The corruption in the detective department which *had* been revealed also led concerned periodical commentators to speculate on that which had *not*. In the immediate aftermath of

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<sup>566</sup> ‘The Mechanical Detective’, *Judy, or, the London Serio-Comic Journal*, 5 September 1877, p. 205.

<sup>567</sup> See section 5.2 in this chapter for details on this article.

<sup>568</sup> Elizabeth Tilley, ‘*Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art (1855-1938)*’, in *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (London and Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 558.

<sup>569</sup> ‘The Detective System’, *Saturday Review*, 1 December 1877, pp. 682-683.

the trial, the *Saturday Review* also raised the concern that this case may only have been the tip of the iceberg, and that there may be much worse problems not yet revealed:

It is not the mere conviction of these prominent members of the Detective force that gives rise to uneasiness; it is the possibility thereby raised that many crimes may have hitherto remained undetected or unpunished through similar dereliction of duty.<sup>570</sup>

On the same day as this article from the *Saturday Review*, the *Examiner* also commented on the case from an almost identical perspective. It expressed that this ‘case of dishonesty’ in the detective department was unlikely to be either the first or last to be revealed, and augmented this point by suggesting that it was the nature of the detective as a profession which had made it so difficult for the detectives themselves to be discovered as criminal or corrupt:

It is hardly likely that the first case of proved dishonesty should actually be the first case of dishonesty, and the treachery of detectives is of course particularly difficult to prove.<sup>571</sup>

This concept of the dishonesty specifically of detectives was a point of anxiety for many periodical commentators. The secretive nature of the detective, coupled with the close proximity they were professionally required to have with those who were already criminals and therefore used to attempting to evade capture, made them particularly difficult to ‘detect’ themselves. The police had hitherto been trusted guardians of law and order, as well as protectors of middle-class values such as property, family and economic wealth, however now this trust had broken down. The police’s occupation of a space between respectability and criminality had hitherto been seen as an advantage for others wishing to experience it and to those who wished to keep the criminal classes isolated. Now, it had seemingly been their downfall.

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<sup>570</sup> ‘The Detectives’, *Saturday Review*, 24 November 1877, p. 650.

<sup>571</sup> ‘The End of the Detectives’, *Examiner*, 24 November 1877, p. 1484.

The downturn in perceptions of the detective department and of individual detective officers did not dissipate. In fact, their tarnished reputation looked as though it was going to last for a significant time. At the time of the trial, the *Saturday Review* prophesied that the scandal would stop the general public from ever trusting the detectives again, given the privileged position that the department had thoughtlessly squandered:

When a department has once seriously broken down people are naturally distrustful of its future working.<sup>572</sup>

A further article from the *Saturday Review*, published in December 1878, highlighted how the enormous shift in the perception of detectives had caused the mistrust felt by periodical journalists and commentators to become almost permanent:

[...] it must be said that distrust now to a great extent replaced the confidence which was once felt in this branch of the police. Of course this is in part due to the effect produced by the trial and conviction of the three men who are now undergoing punishment for aiding criminals [...] Policemen are not now habitually spoken of as “skilful” or as “active and intelligent,” and this is a sad proof of the extent to which they have fallen in popular estimation.<sup>573</sup>

Interestingly, the scandal ignited a debate surrounding the socio-political positions of criminals. This had been quite a fierce discussion throughout the mid-Victorian era in periodical commentary.<sup>574</sup> However the 1877 scandal added a new dimension to it and further emphasised the depths to which the detective had fallen in popular opinion. In August 1877, during the height of the trial, *Punch* pointed out that the court-audience’s support for the criminals as ‘lovable rogues’ stemmed not merely from the fact that they were criminals, but

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<sup>572</sup> ‘The Detectives’, *Saturday Review*, 24 November 1877, p. 650.

<sup>573</sup> ‘Detectives’, *Saturday Review*, 21 December 1878, p. 780.

<sup>574</sup> For example, see ‘Essays on Political Economy’, *Fraser’s Magazine*, April 1863, p. 442.

also from the fact that they were party to convicting detectives, who were now seen as worse due to their position of trust which they had abused. Ordinary criminals were at least honest in their criminality, but the criminal-detectives had betrayed the trust which the public had placed in them:

Mr. Kurr [one of the criminals who had bribed the Inspectors] got cheered not only as a criminal, but as an accuser of Detectives.<sup>575</sup>

Initially, some commentators were horrified at the idea that criminals were receiving support for convicting members of the hitherto-respected police force. In November 1877, *John Bull* wrote that rapt admiration for the criminals who were assisting in convicting the corrupted detectives was not limited to only those of a social class expected to react in this way, but that the middle classes of society were also just as appreciative:

We cannot, however, but trust that there is one feature of the recent trial which will not soon be repeated, and that the unhealthy admiration excited by the hardened and reckless criminals whose revelations led to the recent prosecution will not receive fresh fuel. The development of such convict-hero worship [...] is not a wholesome sign of the times [...]<sup>576</sup>

Whilst a significant number of periodicals used the scandal to criticise the police, there were a few who approached it from alternative perspectives which are worth briefly mentioning, such as Charles Dickens's *All the Year Round*. Rather than commenting on the corrupt or inept nature of detectives from the Metropolitan Police, the magazine positioned itself as a rare voice of reason. As Dickens himself had died in 1870 and had therefore not lived to see the scandal, it was left to Charles Dickens Jr. to undertake the editorship of the magazine.

Perhaps in some part due to the earlier admiration for detectives for which Dickens Sr. had

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<sup>575</sup> Percival Leigh, 'Crowds and Criminals', *Punch, or, the London Charivari*, 11 August 1877, p. 53.

<sup>576</sup> 'The Detectives and Mr. Froggatt', *John Bull*, 24 November 1877, p. 753.

been famous, *All the Year Round* remained pragmatic when discussing the falling estimation of the detective force by suggesting that critics of detectives had been rather too quick to criticise:

Nevertheless a considerable amount of injustice has been done. Many of those who have “rushed in” as critics, have evidently written without knowledge of their subject, have apparently gone upon the principle of the reviewer who did not read the books he had to notice lest he be prejudiced. That our detectives have not been particularly successful in apprehending the perpetrators of such dynamite outrages as have become accomplished facts is no doubt true; but they have probably done much more in the way of preventing purposed crimes of this kind than could be safely made known, or than their adverse critics would be prepared to give them credit for.<sup>577</sup>

It is worth saying that the argument presented here, namely that the public probably did not see the bulk of the good work being done by the police, was thin at best.

The final consequence of the scandal and its reporting was that the largely inconsistent understanding of the differences between uniformed officers and plain-clothes detectives improved in the wake of the reporting of the 1877 detective scandal, and the detective department’s distinct existence was thrown into the spotlight. Whilst the police had been a subject of interest for journalists across the early to mid-nineteenth century, the concept of a difference between police officers and plain-clothes detectives had not always been clear. However, the crisis and subsequent restructure of the Detective Department into the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and the wide media reaction surrounding these events caused the development of a greater understanding of how the police force was separated into its uniformed and detective elements, and thus understood much better in general. This, as we

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<sup>577</sup> ‘Detectives and their Work’, *All the Year Round*, 25 April 1885, p. 136.

will see in the next and final chapter of this thesis, had extensive ramifications for the development of detective-fiction as a literary genre across the late-nineteenth century.

## 5.5: ‘[...] little, if at all better’: Chapter 5 Conclusions

The 1877 ‘trial of the detectives’ was no small incident. The media attention it was given was immense, and had attracted considerable interest from all over the country. It was also not an isolated moment which was quickly allowed to be forgotten; two years later, as the detectives were released, the solicitor Froggatt was immediately rearrested and charged with conspiracy to defraud his wife of over £8,000 and sent back to prison,<sup>578</sup> which reignited these discussions in the national newspaper and periodical media.

The ‘trial of the detectives’ changed the public’s perception of both the Metropolitan Police, and of its detective department permanently, and the police suffered greatly in the public view across periodical criticism of the 1880s. The Home Secretary’s restructure of the detective department had not had the desired effect to restore faith in the police, and it was quickly followed by a series of reorganisations which were also viewed as largely ineffective. This prompted the *Saturday Review* in 1885 to suggest that the new department was ‘talkative, indolent and unintelligent’,<sup>579</sup> and in September 1878 the *Examiner* argued that:

[...] there are grave reasons for supposing that the new Criminal Investigation Department is little, if at all, better than the old and corrupt Detective Department.<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> A large number of national newspapers reported that Froggatt was rearrested almost immediately after his release in 1879. Froggatt had been a trustee of a fund set up as part of a marriage settlement, but when he was implicated in the ‘turf fraud’ scandal it caused alarm in his wife, who employed another solicitor to look into the state of the funds. The solicitor found that all of the money was gone.

<sup>579</sup> ‘The Detectives’, *Saturday Review*, 31 January 1885, p. 132.

<sup>580</sup> ‘Our Police System’, *Examiner*, 7 September 1878, p. 1133.

It did not help that the police also had their proverbial hands full with a series of other embarrassing incidents which took place across the 1880s, such as the sustained Fenian bombing campaign and the infamous Whitechapel murders of 1888. Consequently, as the nineteenth century approached its end, police officers and detectives were seen very differently than they had been in the mid-Victorian era. It is worth mentioning, however, that even at this stage the police were still a relatively new institution on a nationwide scale, and had only been in existence in its current form for 21 years by the time the 1877 scandal occurred. Despite its youth, the outraged reaction to the police's corruption reinforces how the police had entrenched itself as part of the Victorian social fabric remarkably quickly.

Finally, the scandal had an observable and corresponding impact on the use of detectives in crime and detective fiction. This project has so far identified the fact that police officers and detectives were viewed as protectors, guardians and (occasionally) interlopers in private realms of criminality in fiction, who the reader could accompany and therefore experience the thrilling sensation of criminality and detection from a place of complete safety. However, as police officers and detectives were now seen as corrupt and ineffective, this was far less sustainable. Consequently, the late-Victorian era saw the rise of the private detective, culminating in the appearance of one of the most famous private investigators of them all – Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.

## Chapter 6

### From 'Handsaw' to Sherlock Holmes: Police Officers and Detectives in Late-Victorian Journalism

#### 6.1: Introduction: Turf-Frauds, Torsos and *Tit-Bits*

Just as both the periodical press and the police had experienced fundamental changes in the mid-Victorian era (as a result of the repeal of the 'taxes on knowledge' and the 1856 County and Borough Police Act), a similar event was about to occur again as the era entered the 1880s. As the previous chapter detailed, the 1877 'turf fraud' scandal, resulting in the conviction of three of its chief inspectors, caused dramatic changes to occur within the police force. The scandal sparked a public inquiry into the police's operations and meant that the Metropolitan Police (and indeed the concept of policing in general) suffered a severe drop in public opinion. A series of subsequent and embarrassing incidents also followed, such as the prolonged Fenian bombing campaign, the infamous Whitechapel murders and the 1888 discovery of a torso at Scotland Yard (known in many newspapers as the 'Whitehall Mystery'). A combination of the fact that these events were allowed to occur and the fact that the police often failed to catch the perpetrators, meant that these events severely hampered the police's efforts to recover its reputation.

These scandals led to a poorly-received series of governmental inquiries into the state of the police, which in turn led to a variety of restructures, reorganisations and leadership replacements in 1879, 1883, 1884, 1886 and 1887. However, far from helping to improve the public's perception of the police force, they instead exacerbated frustration with the police's perceived inefficiencies. In 1884, for example, the resignation of Sir Howard Vincent (the

first Director of Criminal Investigations appointed after the ‘turf fraud’ scandal) triggered another overhaul of the force, which prompted the *Saturday Review* to exasperatedly report:

Already the effect of the latest experiment in the political uses of dynamite has become manifest. There is to be another overhauling of Scotland Yard, and once more the rude hand of reform is to be laid on the Criminal Investigation Department.<sup>581</sup>

This chapter comments on how the changes in the perceptions of policing significantly affected the way that detectives and police officers were represented in periodical fiction, leading to dramatic changes within the detective genre as a whole. The 1880s were characterised by the emergence of a literary climate where fiction focused on the exploits of private, amateur or reluctant detectives, and which were published in short, digestible story formats.

However, there were also broader changes occurring simultaneously within periodical publishing itself. Experimental publishers such as George Newnes (1851-1910) paved the way for a new kind of periodical market, which pioneered innovative styles of publication and thorough market-led testing of what Kate Jackson refers to as a ‘diverse range of journalistic prototypes’ such as penny weeklies, sixpenny illustrated magazines, evening newspapers, true-story magazines or children’s magazines.<sup>582</sup> Newnes, alongside other innovative publishers such as W. T. Stead (1849-1912), Alfred Harmsworth (1865-1922) or C. Arthur Pearson (1866-1921), cultivated a significant shift in the periodical market across the late 1880s and 1890s. This was characterised by a focus on value for money, wide reader appeal, and a strong, formal preference for short fiction over the lengthy serialised novel.<sup>583</sup>

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<sup>581</sup> ‘Scotland Yard’, *Saturday Review*, 14 June 1884, p. 776.

<sup>582</sup> Kate Jackson, *George Newnes and the New Journalism in Britain: 1880-1910* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>583</sup> Mike Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers: British Popular Fiction Magazines 1880-1950* (London: British Library Publishing, 2006), pp. 4-5.

For his part, Newnes managed to balance the growing appetite for this new kind of publishing perfectly with the appearance of his first magazine, *Tit-Bits*, in 1881 and his flagship publication the *Strand Magazine* in 1891, which Mike Ashley correctly argues was the magazine that ‘defined the era’.<sup>584</sup>

These cultural trends spectacularly collided as the Victorian era approached its end. The poor journalistic perception of the police led to the rise of private detectives in periodical detective fiction, and ultimately led to the appearance of perhaps the most famous private consulting-detective of them all: Sherlock Holmes.

## **6.2: Perceptions of the Police in 1880s Periodical Journalism**

It is firstly important to get a sense of the journalistic perception of the police in the aftermath of the 1877 ‘turf fraud’ scandal. As the previous chapter explored, the conviction of three of its detective inspectors had severely damaged the Metropolitan Police’s reputation, and the downturn in public opinion of the police was both catastrophic and immediate. However, as this opening section will highlight, it was also long-lasting; the shadow of 1877 was not allowed to dissipate as the next decade progressed. A number of magazines, especially the malevolent *Saturday Review*, were still mentioning the convicted inspectors for years after they had been released:

Since the time of the late Inspector Field there has been but one man known to fame at Scotland Yard [...] and that was the luckless Druscowitch [sic] [...]<sup>585</sup>

It did not help that throughout the 1880s the Metropolitan Police suffered a series of embarrassing scandals and mismanaged restructures. The new Director of Criminal

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<sup>584</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 1.

<sup>585</sup> ‘Detectives’, *Saturday Review*, 9 February 1884, p. 179.

Investigations, Sir (Charles Edward) Howard Vincent (1849-1908) had the already-difficult task of rebuilding the Criminal Investigations Department further complicated by a number of other embarrassing incidents, notably the Fenian dynamiting campaign.<sup>586</sup> This was a sustained operation which took place between 1881 and 1885, and included explosions at Whitehall and the London Underground in 1883, London Bridge, Scotland Yard and Trafalgar Square in 1884 and attempts on Parliament and the Tower of London in 1885, although this final bombing took place after Vincent had resigned. Other explosions also occurred outside of the capital, notably in Liverpool and Chester in 1881 and in Glasgow in 1883.

The police's failure to prevent or capture those responsible for these atrocities helped to maintain its severely damaged reputation. A number of periodicals frustratedly reported that the police had been inefficient in stopping the atrocities. In 1889, *Time* suggested that the Fenian campaign had been a constant source of trouble for the police's reputation across the decade:

During recent years many special calls have been made upon the detective police of the metropolis, more especially in connection with matters arising out of the state of Ireland, such as the dynamite outrages.<sup>587</sup>

In 1881, the *Examiner* also argued that the state of the Metropolitan Police was in desperate need of critical attention as a result, lest its inefficiency lead to casualties:

At the present time, when London is threatened with a repetition of the Fenian outrages of 1867, the lamentably inefficient condition of the Metropolitan Police is a matter of very serious moment.<sup>588</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> Clive Emsley and Reginald Lucas, 'Vincent, Sir (Charles Edward) Howard', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36660?rskey=kUWBG6&result=1>> [accessed 20 February 2018] (2004).

<sup>587</sup> 'Work and Workers, *Time*, January 1889, p. 21.

In January 1885, the *Saturday Review*, which had started its campaign against the police in the 1870s and kept it up across the 1880s, made its opinion of the police's efforts to halt the Fenian bombing campaign clear:

Dynamite outrages follow one another, and differ more or less; but there is one point they have in common. They are all carried out with fair success as far as the police are concerned. [...] They have also one pretty uniform consequence. For days after they have happened we hear of "clues" in the hands of the Criminal Investigation Department, that remarkable Government office which investigates with untiring zeal [...] but which somehow finds out so little. There is much running to and fro, or show of running to and fro, and wonderful vigilance is displayed. Then the hubbub dies down, and nobody has been caught. [...] we are only too likely to see another instance of useless police activity.<sup>589</sup>

It was not only the Fenian bombings which caused the police trouble. The situation was worsened further with the Bloody Sunday riots of 1886, and the still-unsolved Whitechapel murders of 1888. Naturally, these events were widely reported in periodicals, many of which were still leading the charge against the police and generating an endless stream of negative press coverage, which often commented on the police's lack of zeal and lack of results. The Whitechapel murders, in particular, drew ire from some periodical commentators. In September 1888 the *Saturday Review* reported directly on the murder which took place in Hanbury Street,<sup>590</sup> and complained:

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<sup>588</sup> 'The Metropolitan Police', *Examiner*, 12 February 1881, p. 151.

<sup>589</sup> 'The Detectives', *Saturday Review*, 31 January 1885, p. 132.

<sup>590</sup> Hanbury Street murder: the second killing believed to have been committed by Jack the Ripper. Annie Chapman was murdered on 8 September 1888, and her body found in a yard behind 29 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields.

The police in Whitechapel and Spitalfields [...] are notoriously undermanned. [...] Unfortunately there is another fault to be found with Scotland Yard besides its lack of numerical strength. The quality of the English detective has seriously declined. [...] in the detection of criminals they have fallen below their old standard [...]<sup>591</sup>

The constant police failings and their accompanying negative press coverage across the 1880s resulted in a lengthy series of inquiries into the state of the police force. It underwent a variety of restructures and/or leadership replacements in 1879 (as a direct result of the ‘turf fraud’ scandal), as well as in 1883, 1884, 1886 and 1887. Far from reassuring interested commentators that the matter was under control, these merely exacerbated their frustration with the police’s inefficiencies. In February 1880, for example, the venerable *Examiner* wrote that the 1879 restructure had been superficial at best, and at worst had been totally ineffective, before concluding that nothing less than complete revolution would solve the problem:

Something more than a mere departmental inquiry, such as was held in 1877 after the conviction of three of the detective for complicity in the Turf Frauds, is now required in order to allay the feeling of insecurity that the recent arbitrary conduct of the police has aroused in public mind. The Criminal Investigation Department was created in order to remedy the abuses that had crept into the Detective Department. [...] The new system, indeed, appears to be a much less efficient one than the old plan of employing the most intelligent of the ordinary constables as detectives as occasion required.<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>591</sup> ‘The Murder in Hanbury Street’, *Saturday Review*, 15 September 1888, p. 311.

<sup>592</sup> ‘Police Mistakes’ *Examiner*, 7 February 1880, p. 172.

In July 1880, the *Examiner* also wrote that the restructure of the Detective Department into the Criminal Investigations Department had been nothing less than a ‘miserable failure’,<sup>593</sup> and suggested that

the Metropolitan Police is rotten to the very core, and it is impossible not to view a continuance of the existing state of affairs at Scotland Yard for even another six or seven months without considerable misgiving.<sup>594</sup>

In 1881, the *Sentinel* made quite a sinister argument that the new Criminal Investigation Department was insufficient. The article commented on a recent spate of child-kidnappings, denouncing claims made by several other newspapers that the police were *not* at fault in rooting out the kidnapers because the parents were often complicit in the crime. Instead, the *Sentinel* suggested that it was the detectives’ own fundamental flaws which caused the investigations to stall:

“Curses, like chickens, come home to roost,” and all that is required is to give the leading spirits of the Criminal Investigation Department sufficient rope, and they will not be long before they hang themselves.<sup>595</sup>

Howard Vincent himself also came under direct public scrutiny. A number of periodicals questioned his effectiveness at creating an effective new department, including the *Nineteenth Century*, which initially seemed pragmatic when it wrote in May 1883:

There is no doubt that since Mr. Howard Vincent was appointed Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department in Scotland Yard, a great improvement has taken place in all the details of that department. The scandal of the days when Benson and his fellow swindlers

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<sup>593</sup> ‘The Metropolitan Police’, *Examiner*, 3 July 1880, p. 799.

<sup>594</sup> ‘The Metropolitan Police’, *Examiner*, 3 July 1880, p. 798.

<sup>595</sup> ‘Occasional Notes’, *Sentinel*, November 1881, p. 59.

used to make a rich harvest out of their work is now a thing of the past. But the question whether the reformers have taken the right direction still remains.<sup>596</sup>

Whilst this might seem complimentary, the same article, attributed to Malcolm Laing Meason, argued that Vincent's reforms to the detective department, despite meaning well, had been ineffectual:

[...] it is a curious fact that as regards a detective force we are very little if at all better off than our grandfathers were half a century ago [...] the detection of crime seems to be a problem which our so-called detectives have not the capacity in most cases to solve. And it is the same with the great as with smaller affairs. Is there a capital in Europe where the Hatton Garden robbery and the attempt to blow up the Government Offices in Westminster would have remained mysteries of which it seems impossible to discover the sources?<sup>597</sup>

The 'attempt to blow up Government Offices' here refers to the Fenian attempt to destroy a Government buildings in Whitehall, as well as the office of the *Times* newspaper, in March 1883.<sup>598</sup> The magazine argued that if this had taken place in any other European capital, the police would surely have quickly apprehended the culprits. However, as the crimes had taken place in London (which, it perceived, had a severely underperforming police force) there was little to no chance of the criminals' discovery.

In February 1884 the venomous *Saturday Review* also targeted Vincent, and produced a direct, hostile response to a comment he had made regarding his efforts in restructuring the department:

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<sup>596</sup> Malcolm Laing Meason, 'Detective Police', *Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, May 1883, p. 772.

<sup>597</sup> Meason, 'Detective Police', pp. 765-766.

<sup>598</sup> Bernard Porter, *The Origins of the Vigilant State: The London Metropolitan Police Special Branch before the First World War* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1991), pp. 27-28.

Mr Howard Vincent lately told us that, as regards life and property, London under his guardianship has become the “safest capital in the world.” [...] he not only forgets that it is a comparatively easy business to make it safe, our criminal classes being of a low type of intellect; but he also forgets that the precincts of the Savoy, the Thames Embankment are not even now, with all his precautions, much safer than Hounslow Heath in the days of Jonathan Wild [...] Does he not also ignore the 124 persons who disappeared in London last year, of whom all traces are lost? What allowance does he make for the number of dead bodies in the river, technically known to the Rogue Riderhood and his fellow-fishermen as “stiff uns,” [...]?<sup>599</sup>

Alongside the rhetorical questions surrounding Vincent’s ill-phrased claims, the article also turned the blame on those detectives that Vincent had appointed in place of the old detective department. It suggested that they were no better than those whom they had replaced, and that the only scenario where they were likely to catch a criminal was where the criminal’s intellect was sufficiently inferior to the detectives’ own:

The plain truth is that the business of detecting crime is very badly done in London, save when the criminal is a dull-witted brutal rough or a reckless dissipated rogue “so loose of soul” that in his cups he will talk incautiously about his affairs in the hearing of associates, especially female associates, who can betray him at will. [...] In attempting to discover a murder or a burglary committed by an intelligent person, Mr. Howard Vincent’s “staff” are pretty nearly impotent.<sup>600</sup>

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<sup>599</sup> ‘Detectives’, *Saturday Review*, 9 February 1884, pp. 177-178.

<sup>600</sup> ‘Detectives’, *Saturday Review*, 9 February 1884, p. 178.

Vincent's claim to London being the 'safest capital in the world' was also derisively quoted in *Chambers's Journal*. In May 1884, it argued that the latest criminal statistics suggested otherwise:

The number of murders that have taken place, and the very few murderers that have been brought to justice in and about London during the last few months, must go far towards contradicting the assertion to the effect that the metropolis of England is 'the safest city in the world' to live in.<sup>601</sup>

The article continued by suggesting that it was not just the number of murders which had occurred in London which contradicted Vincent's statement, but other crimes such as thefts also helped to paint a damning portrait of the state of London policing in the mid-1880s:

And if to the list of crimes against life which have not been, and never are likely to be, brought home to the perpetrators, we add the innumerable thefts, burglaries, and other offences against property which go unpunished because the criminals are never found out, it can hardly be denied that we require a new departure in the system of our Detective Police, for the simple reason that, as at present constituted, the practical results of the same are very much the reverse of satisfactory.<sup>602</sup>

Various commentators took issue with Vincent's reforms, which had centralised all of the force's detectives. Previously, the detective department had consisted of local detectives, based at local stations, and who were known by local residents. Vincent's reforms had removed this structure and instead the department was operated centrally out of the new Criminal Investigations Department. Ironically, resistance to the idea of centralising areas of policing had been prominent in the mid-nineteenth century discussion on law enforcement, when the 1856 County and Borough Police Act had forced rural communities to establish

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<sup>601</sup> 'Our Detective Police', *Chambers's Journal*, 31 May 1884, p. 337.

<sup>602</sup> 'Our Detective Police', *Chambers's Journal*, 31 May 1884, p. 337.

police forces which mirrored the Metropolitan Police. At that time, a desire to maintain the tried-and-tested system of local volunteer constables and night-watchmen had fuelled the reluctance for change. In the 1880s, this desire was echoed; as the *Saturday Review* suggested in February 1884:

The system of detective crime by means of “the policeman’s nose” was one which depended for its efficiency on its localization [sic]. At each police-court there is usually a local detective, who knows the district, as he himself will tell you, “like a book.”<sup>603</sup>

The issues with Vincent’s sweeping reforms to local detection were echoed by the ever-sceptical *Examiner*, which in February 1880 also argued that centralising detectives was an unwise innovation:

It seems probable that the centralisation has been carried too far in the case of the new Detective Department; at any rate, it is indisputable that during the last eighteen months burglars have enjoyed an immunity from capture to an extent almost unknown since the establishment of the Metropolitan Police fifty years ago.<sup>604</sup>

In July 1880, the *Examiner* added that the centralisation of the detective department into Scotland Yard was also an exercise in corruption, as it had granted new officers higher salaries. In fact, it called for the department to be totally disbanded:

The inquiry into the organisation of the detective branch of the Metropolitan Police, after the conviction of three of its chief officers, for being concerned in the Turf Fraud case, led to a much higher scale of pay being granted, and to the placing of the whole body

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<sup>603</sup> ‘Detectives’, *Saturday Review*, 9 February 1884, pp. 178-179.

<sup>604</sup> ‘Police Mistakes’ *Examiner*, 7 February 1880, p. 172.

under the control of one officer at Scotland Yard. This was undoubtedly a serious mistake. The detective department should have been disbanded altogether [...] <sup>605</sup>

Vincent resigned his post as Director of Criminal Investigations in 1884, and was replaced by James Monro. <sup>606</sup> His sweeping changes had done little to improve journalistic perceptions of the police. Even after Vincent had gone, the *Saturday Review* continued its campaign against the police, summarising its view in January 1885 by stating that '[o]ur Criminal Investigation Department [...] is talkative, indolent and unintelligent', <sup>607</sup> and in March 1886 that '[...] the police force is too weak, ill organised, ill supplied with information, and ill lodged'. <sup>608</sup>

Even those magazines which had hitherto been supportive of the force struggled to maintain this view, though some tried valiantly to do so. In February 1886, the *National Review* published an article by Robert Gregory, titled 'Is Crime Increasing or Diminishing with the Spread of Education?', which measured changes in the police force since the passage of the Education Act in 1870. It attempted to highlight the immense expense of the police as a positive change because it meant that there were more police per person. It was, however, forced to grudgingly admit that, despite the increased public spending on the police, it had not been as effective in its mandate as it should have been:

In 1870 there were 26,441 men in the various grades of the Constabulary force, and they cost the country £2,182,521; in 1884, the Police Force numbered 34,999 men, who were employed at an expense of £3,476,000. It will be seen at a glance that this preventative and detective force has grown at a much more rapid rate than the population; and whilst it

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<sup>605</sup> 'The Metropolitan Police', *Examiner*, 3 July 1880, p. 799.

<sup>606</sup> Clive Emsley and Reginald Lucas, 'Vincent, Sir (Charles Edward) Howard', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-36660?rskey=kUWBG6&result=1>> [accessed 20 February 2018] (2004).

<sup>607</sup> 'The Detectives', *Saturday Review*, 31 January 1885, p. 132.

<sup>608</sup> 'Our Hopeful Mr. Childers', *Saturday Review*, 6 March 1886, p. 319.

has probably done much in preventing crime, it is a matter for surprise that it has not been more successful in detecting greater criminals.<sup>609</sup>

In 1886 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (which had previously given the police much support) produced a lengthy article by the barrister Alexander Innes Shand, which praised the police and which referenced the stream of criticism stemming from other periodicals, particularly the *Saturday Review*:

The 'Saturday Review' [sic] does not always sin on the side of charity, where it is a question of criticising our public institutions.<sup>610</sup>

The article continued by suggesting that the police could perhaps be forgiven their shortcomings due to the fact that their continued existence was preferable to their abolition. It argued that readers should count themselves lucky to have a police force at all, as 100 years previously the state of law and order had been much less comfortable:

We are apt to take present mercies as a matter of course; while we are slow to appreciate the advances and reforms which have made life far easier and infinitely more agreeable. There are grumblers always ready to swear by "the good old times," though as Dickens showed in one of the brightest of his articles in 'Household Words,' those good old times, being phantoms of the fancy, fade into the myth before the philosophical inquirer. [...] Criminals were strung up of a Monday by batches before Newgate; and there was much pocket-picking in the crowds gathered under the gallows. But it is by looking back on that

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<sup>609</sup> Robert Gregory, 'Is Crime Increasing or Diminishing with the Spread of Education?', *National Review*, February 1886, p. 774.

<sup>610</sup> Alexander Innes Shand, 'The City of London Police', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, November 1886, p. 594.

disgraceful state of things, that we find much to be grateful to the present guardians of public safety.<sup>611</sup>

In July 1882 *Macmillan's Magazine* also published a piece by Malcolm Laing Meason, which attempted to present a supportive attitude towards London's police force but, similarly to *Blackwood's*, it struggled to find a convincing argument. The best it could manage was to suggest that any failing on the part of the force was not due to sheer incompetence, but was instead down to the fact that the jurisdiction of the force itself was difficult for them to constantly manage:

We are all far too apt not to make allowances for the police when a constable is wanted and is not to be found. But we ought to remember that however good the qualities of the force may be, it is impossible for any one of them to be in two places at the same time. The suburbs of this vast wilderness of bricks are every day increasing, and are spreading every day in a manner which it is wonderful to contemplate. [...] To keep even a partially effective supervision of the houses in these places would require an increase of at least a hundred per cent of our present police force.<sup>612</sup>

These debates had ensured that the public now understood the distinction between plain-clothes detectives and uniformed police officers much better than they had done previously. Prior to 1877, the distinction between the plain-clothes detective and the uniformed police officer had been inconsistent at best,<sup>613</sup> however this was now much better developed, at least in part due to the publicity the police had received.

A variety of periodical commentators now began to demonstrate keen awareness of the fact that the detective department (or Criminal Investigation Department after 1879) operated

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<sup>611</sup> Shand, pp. 594-596.

<sup>612</sup> Malcolm Laing Meason, 'The London Police', *Macmillan's Magazine*, July 1882, p. 194.

<sup>613</sup> See Chapter 5, section 5.2.

separately from the rest of the Metropolitan Police. This distinction was evident in criticism of the police, though it is worth pointing out that it was almost always contained within a larger article which attacked the police force's lack of efficiency. For example, in May 1883, the *Nineteenth Century* wrote that the only difference between a police officer and a detective was their attire:

It is very true that we have, both in London and the provinces, a considerable number of what are called detective officers; but except that these individuals wear plain clothes instead of uniform, they differ very little or nothing from the ordinary constable of the force.<sup>614</sup>

The article rejected the distinction between police officer and detective as illusory and went on to suggest that further, drastic reforms were needed to improve the detective department. The focus on uniform was also echoed by *Chambers's Journal*, which in May 1884 wrote:

Our English detective [...] does not wear uniform, but he might just as well do so, for his appearance and dress proclaim him to be what he is quite as plainly as if he was clad like X142 of the force.<sup>615</sup>

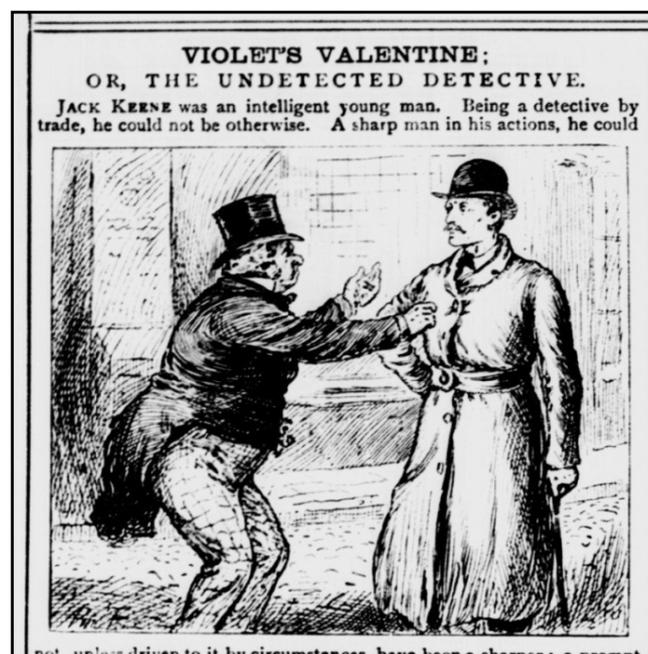
Aside from the claim that the detectives' methodologies of avoiding recognition through disguise were apparently inefficient, the assertion here that criminals recognised plain-clothes detectives from their attire is interesting. It firstly suggested that the police's uniform was a reassuring feature of the force, and that the lack of it on the part of detectives detracted from their trustworthiness. Secondly, it argued that a stereotypical image of the 'detective' was beginning to form in the public consciousness. Prior to the 1880s, and especially prior to the 'turf fraud' scandal, the concept of the plain-clothes detective had not really had a stereotyped public image attached to it. This was demonstrated by features such as the

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<sup>614</sup> Meason, 'Detective Police', p. 765.

<sup>615</sup> 'Our Detective Police', *Chambers's Journal*, 31 May 1884, p. 338.

illustration of the ‘idiot detective’ published in the satirical magazine *Fun* in January 1869. In this, the ‘detective’ was mistakenly shown as a uniformed police officer. However, this began to change in the 1880s, and a growing image of a stereotypical ‘detective’ can be observed. To demonstrate the change which had taken place, it is useful to return to *Fun*. In 1885, it published a short tale titled ‘Violet’s Valentine, or, the Undetected Detective’, which included an illustration of what the magazine took to be a stereotypical ‘detective’ (see fig. 15):



*Figure 15: the figure on the right seems to highlight the apparent stereotyped image of the detective. Taken from 'Violet's Valentine, or, the Undetected Detective', Fun, 11 February 1885, p. 60.*

In 1888, the same image of the stereotypical detective can be observed again. In October, *Fun* published another comic-strip which can highlight again how much the awareness of the distinctions between police officers and detectives had changed. Titled ‘Adventures of our Own Private Detective’, the strip demonstrates a hapless private investigator arresting a disguised policeman in error (see fig. 16):



Figure 16: Demonstration of the growing stereotyped image of the detective, both in a private capacity and also the officer operating in disguise in the final three panels. Taken from 'Adventures of our Own Private Detective', *Fun*, 24 October 1888, p. 181.

The storyline of this comic-strip bears remarkable similarity to that of *Fun*'s 1869 piece 'The Idiot Detective' which showed a police officer arresting several innocent bystanders, including another policeman. However, the key difference is that the distinction between uniformed officers and plain-clothes detectives is much clearer and more sophisticated.

Dress and appearance remained a key point for periodicals concerned with the distinctions between officers and detectives. As we have seen, the lack of uniform worn by plain-clothes detectives was not enough for some to accept that detectives were distinct from police officers. However, others went slightly further than this; in 1880 the *Examiner* went as

far as to suggest that employing permanent detectives *at all* was the problem, as they were recognisable by intelligent criminals no matter what they did or did not wear:

The employment of the same men day after day as detectives tells very much against the detection of crime, since there is probably not a detective officer in any division with whose appearance the criminal classes are not intimately acquainted.<sup>616</sup>

Overall, we can see that alongside the drastic changes being experienced by the periodical press across the 1880s, the police and detective systems were undergoing a sustained assault in periodical criticism. The 1877 ‘turf fraud’ scandal, bombings and widely publicised unsolved murders caused the public to question the police’s efficiency and meant that it was not until well into the twentieth century that they were able to begin to recover and regain their former status as guardians and protectors of social values and property. Subsequent waves of new kinds of periodical detective fiction would reflect these shifts in values.

### **6.3: The Bumbling Bobby and the Private Detective: 1880s Periodical Detective Fiction**

According to Clare Clarke, the term ‘detective fiction’ first appeared (at least in a periodical setting) in December 1886 in the *Saturday Review*.<sup>617</sup> She argues that this was the moment where the genre became entrenched, self-aware and solidified in its recognisable form:

‘These were the years in which detective fiction established itself as a genre and sealed its popularity with the reading public’.<sup>618</sup> Whilst there is certainly a significant element of truth

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<sup>616</sup> ‘The Metropolitan Police’, *Examiner*, 3 July 1880, p. 799.

<sup>617</sup> Clare Clarke, *Late Victorian Crime Fiction in the Shadows of Sherlock* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 1.

<sup>618</sup> Clarke, p. 1.

to this, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the genre was undergoing a fundamental transformation away from its mid-Victorian incarnations.

As this thesis has argued at length, mid-Victorian conceptions of detective fiction had been centred on the idea that its purpose was to relate the supposed ‘true experiences’ of police officers and detectives. It utilised the figure of the police officer as a trustworthy guide for readers to experience criminality in a variety of locations often inaccessible to them in reality. This historic purpose was actually recognised by some contemporary critics. In May 1883, for example, the *Saturday Review* suggested that up to the beginning of the 1880s the retelling of the real experiences of police officers had been the primary purpose of ‘detective literature’:

For a long time past fictitious detectives and their achievements have more or less interested the readers of novels; and it is not superfluous to note that some of the later descriptions which have appeared have not been altogether imaginary, but, though mingled with much that was extravagant, have been to some extent based on fact. Thirty years ago Charles Dickens gratified the public taste in this respect, and endeavoured to describe the doings of a policeman of extraordinary acuteness [...] After Inspector Bucket had made his appearance, and gained what was at best a *succès d’estime*, other writers of less note than Dickens tried to invent detectives for the benefit of their readers [...]<sup>619</sup>

This excerpt provides a useful, contemporaneous summary of the narrative that this thesis has endeavoured to reveal. Charles Dickens’s experience with detectives, which he recounted to readers in *Household Words* in 1850 and 1851, had inspired the creation of the infamous Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House*. The article suggests that Bucket’s character directly inspired ‘other writers of less note than Dickens’ to come up with their own detective

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<sup>619</sup> ‘Detectives’, *Saturday Review*, 5 May 1883, p. 558.

characters ‘for the benefit of their readers’; authors such as William Russell. Detective fiction published in the mid-Victorian era was therefore characterised by the presence of a detective designed to reveal that which readers could not usually access, and to act as their literary guide and protector.

However, the loss of trust in the police made the position of the police officer as trustworthy guardian for readers and characters untenable. Two main changes therefore took place in periodical-based detective fiction in the 1880s. Firstly, official police officers and detectives were now often represented as stupid, untrustworthy, inefficient and occasionally corrupt. Indeed, this was to become a stereotype within the genre, as evidenced by *Punch*, which in June 1897 wrote in its ‘Literary Recipes’ section:

*The Detective Story.* – Take one part of GABORIAU and fifty parts of water. Add a lady of title, a comic official from Scotland Yard, and a diamond bracelet.<sup>620</sup>

Secondly, there was a corresponding increase in the use of private or amateur detectives as the protagonist of detective stories, as opposed to official police officers.

The perceived idiocy of official police officers is observable in a large amount of periodical crime fiction published throughout the 1880s, and was particularly clear in satirical magazines. In March 1881, for example, *Judy* published ‘Handsaw, the Detective’, a short one-page story about a member of the police (‘Handsaw’) who demonstrated considerable ineptitude. The magazine depicted him as both incompetent in his methodology, and questionable in his morals:

[...] as I was shaving, I saw the man by whose talents we expected to recover our lost silver, in a suit of rusty black, a white tie round his neck, and a tall hat upon his

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<sup>620</sup> ‘Literary Recipes’, *Punch, or, the London Charivari*, 12 June 1897, p. 277.

distinguished head, leaning, in what in any other person I should have called a drunken attitude, against an opposite lamp-post.<sup>621</sup>

When questioned as to what he was doing leaning drunkenly on a lamp-post, instead of working to recover the narrator's stolen property, Handsaw's response suggested the attitude that all detectives work as inefficiently as he does himself:

As I left the road he crossed to meet me, his finger to his lips. [...] "In this disguise," hissed he, "you fail to recognise – HANDSAW, the detective?" [...] I hadn't the heart to tell him the contrary. [...] "Bless me!" I cried, endeavouring to simulate surprise. "And what are you doing here?" [...] "Detecting," he answered, and went back to lean against his lamp-post.<sup>622</sup>

In 1888 the magazine *Fun* published a story titled 'Mr. Clumper', in which a plain-clothes detective was shown to not possess the knack for secrecy which was required of a successful detective:

We were engaged at that time in seeking a specimen of the London detective, and casually asked a constable at a street corner if he could introduce us to one. [...] "Detective?" he repeated; and at the sound of his voice three loafers a quarter of a mile away started, and the echoes rolled along both sides of the street; then, sinking his voice to a mysterious whisper which shook the pavement, he continued – "Follow me! Hush! Secrecy is everything in our department." [...] We followed him round to the secluded side of a lamp-post; then, placing his mouth to our ear, he whispered, "I'm a detective. I'm Detective Clumper [...]"<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> 'Handsaw, The Detective', *Judy, or, the London Serio-Comic Journal*, 30 March 1881, p. 153.

<sup>622</sup> 'Handsaw, The Detective', *Judy, or, the London Serio-Comic Journal*, 30 March 1881, p. 153.

<sup>623</sup> 'Mr. Clumper, D.D.', *Fun*, 5 December 1888, p. 242.

Clumper's failure at remaining hidden, despite the fact that it was the purpose of a detective to operate in secret, once again evidences how the negative tropes caused by the downturn of public opinion of the police were replicated in fiction. Interestingly, Clumper's 'disguise' as a detective seemed to be the uniform of a regular police officer, and so the question surrounding the usefulness of plain-clothes detectives was again raised. The narrative continues after the narrator later meets Clumper, no longer dressed as a constable, and subsequently questions whether he thought himself likely to be recognised:

"[...] we suppose you are never *recognised* [original italics] [...] as a member of the force – by the criminal classes?" [...] "Eh? No fear of that!" replied Mr. Clumper, in his awe-inspiring whisper. "I'm in plain clothes, don't you see? Why, that alone's enough to put 'em off the scent [...]"<sup>624</sup>

The concept of plain-clothes detectives operating separately from the uniformed police was therefore under attack again, as the idea that the non-uniformed disguise of the detective was seen as a flawed concept in of itself. Criminals, the story argues, would recognise the detective no matter what clothes they were wearing. The most damning part of this story, however, came at its end, where it questions the overall competence of detectives. The narrator, still curious about law enforcement, questions Clumper with respect to the 'criminal classes', and Clumper responds most unsatisfactorily:

"Now, tell me candidly," we said, "as a member of the Detective Department, what are your opinions, in a general way, with respect to the criminal classes?" [...] Mr. Clumper scratched his nose reflectively, then he said decidedly, "Well, I don't believe there *are* any criminal classes. *I've* never come across 'em yet."<sup>625</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> 'Mr. Clumper, D.D.', *Fun*, 5 December 1888, p. 242.

<sup>625</sup> 'Mr. Clumper, D.D.', *Fun*, 5 December 1888, p. 242.

The narrator, reassured by Clumper's confidence that there was no such thing as a 'criminal class', walks home with a new-found sense of confidence, only to be pickpocketed of a watch and chain, and 'casually garrotted, and the gold stopping abstracted from our teeth'.<sup>626</sup> Upon reaching home, the narrator proclaims:

[...] on reaching our villa we discovered seven burglars in the act of removing the last load of our furniture and plate in a van.<sup>627</sup>

Away from satire, other periodical titles began to publish fiction which demonstrated the changed perception of police detectives. These attacks were often subtler than in satire – though their underlying message of scepticism remained clear. In 1879, the magazine *Every Week* published a story titled 'The Defeated Detective', which depicted a Scotland Yard officer tricked into being committed into an asylum under suspicion of mental instability, before an attempt on his life is made and he is rescued by his colleagues at the last minute.<sup>628</sup>

In other cases, these pieces of short fiction showed detectives failing to solve cases, or confidently performing their duties, assured of their success, only for the outcomes of their efforts to fall short of their expectations. Another story published in *Every Week* in March 1881 portrayed two officers confident that they had quickly and successfully apprehended a criminal, only for them to discover that she had immediately escaped:

"Still, we are lucky in finding out the truth so early in the game." [...] As the inspector made this remark he procured the necessary keys, and the two men proceeded below stairs, carefully locking themselves into the corridor [...] It seldom happens that

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<sup>626</sup> 'Mr. Clumper, D.D.', *Fun*, 5 December 1888, p. 242.

<sup>627</sup> 'Mr. Clumper, D.D.', *Fun*, 5 December 1888, p. 242.

<sup>628</sup> 'The Defeated Detective', *Every Week*, 9 April 1879, pp. 226-228.

policemen are taken by surprise, but the discovery which followed startled the perspiration on even the veteran detective's face. [...] The woman had escaped.<sup>629</sup>

Interestingly the prisoner, a woman who tricked the detectives into thinking she was insane, is not recaptured. It transpires that she escaped not through her own prowess as a criminal, but instead due to the police officer's incompetence as he failed to properly lock her in a cell:

[...] when the officer supposed he had locked up the cell, he had only secured the padlock to the staple, and in order to escape it was necessary for the woman simply to lift the bar as though it were a latch, and push open the door.<sup>630</sup>

Another example of a piece of periodical fiction which demonstrated an inept police officer emerged in 1880. In this year, *Chambers's Journal* published 'Recollections of an Equestrian Manager', which included an eager yet incompetent detective being tricked by a group of local residents into believing he had found something of consequence to a case at the bottom of a river, whilst it was actually just a box of detritus:

An old box was obtained, and filled with brick-ends and other rubbish; the lid was securely fastened down [...] [T]he box was thrown over the parapet, falling with a loud splash into the water below. The passers-by who witnessed the affair [...] at once communicated the mysterious occurrence to Detective Blank, knowing full well he would spare no pains to ferret the matter out.<sup>631</sup>

Blank retrieves the box from the river, and a group of curious local residents (all in on the joke) gather around to witness his reaction upon finding nothing of consequence inside:

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<sup>629</sup> 'Every Trade has its Tricks', *Every Week*, 3 March 1881, p. 157.

<sup>630</sup> 'Every Trade has its Tricks', *Every Week*, 3 March 1881, p. 157.

<sup>631</sup> C. W. Montague, 'Recollections of an Equestrian Manager', *Chambers's Journal*, 24 April 1880, p. 263.

At last the lid is free, and Blank hurriedly lifts it from the box, exposing the contents to view. The reader can imagine the scene which followed much better than I can describe it. Indeed, I should only weaken the effect in the reader's mind by attempting to depict the blank speechless consternation of all present, the utter confusion that fell upon poor Blank!<sup>632</sup>

Blank's enthusiasm for crime-solving and his eagerness to find something of consequence to investigate does not elevate him to a position of respect among local residents. In fact, his passion for crime-fighting actually becomes a source of humour in this story.

As the official police and detectives were falling in public estimation and had become the butt of jokes in periodical fiction, authors perhaps naturally turned to private or amateur sleuths to take their place as serious protagonists. As this project argued at the beginning of Chapter 5, popular opinion of the police was actually already in decline by the early 1870s, even prior to the revelations of the 'turf fraud' scandal. Some authors had already picked up on this, and had begun to use it in their writing. A story titled 'From a Detective's Note-Book' published in the *Argosy* in 1872 argued that private detectives were useful specifically because of their disassociation with Scotland Yard, which allowed them to perform tasks that official police officers could not:

It was not the first time that I, a private detective, had been summoned by the authorities at Scotland Yard to inquire into matters they had not themselves succeeded in unravelling. An appeal to me was always a last resource with them. They did not like doing it; it was a confession of weakness [...]<sup>633</sup>

In some cases, the shift away from recounting the activities of official police and towards the exploits of private detectives was performed quite subtly. Sometimes, stories quietly rejected

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<sup>632</sup> Montague, p. 263.

<sup>633</sup> 'From a Detective's Note-Book', *Argosy*, February 1872, p. 116.

the police force, or simply removed any assertion that the main detective protagonist was an official police detective working for Scotland Yard at all. In November 1881, for example, *Chambers's Journal* published a short tale titled 'My Last Detective Case', in which the detective-protagonist asserted that he had been 'thinking of getting out' of the police force for a long time.<sup>634</sup> In September 1882, *Every Week* published 'A Detective's Story', which related a detective's campaign to capture a well-known burglar who had disappeared into the western part of England. The narrator-detective states that the case had 'defied the utmost skill of the [official] police to apprehend him', and thus the case had been referred to him in his private capacity.<sup>635</sup>

As the public opinion of the police deteriorated further, the rejection of official detectives and the corresponding use of private ones became increasingly overt. Private detectives were seen as figures that could be called in to solve crimes where the official police force had already failed. An example which illustrates this appeared in *Chambers's Journal* in 1886, titled 'The Great Jewel Robbery'. This suggested that the private investigator was called in when official channels had failed to solve the mystery, and also argued that official police detectives were hampered by the fact that they were obliged to take on so many different cases simultaneously. The author suggested that, as a private detective, he was free from the kind of administrative and complex external influences from other cases that the police themselves had to cope with:

These robberies defied [official police] detection. A clue in one case was upset by the facts in another. When my aid as private detective was called in, I resolved to confine m

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<sup>634</sup> 'My Last Detective Case', *Chambers's Journal*, 5 November 1881, p. 712.

<sup>635</sup> 'A Detective's Story', *Every Week*, 20 September 1882, p. 180.

attention to three distinct cases, though, of course, if useful information came in my way concerning other matters, I should know how to take advantage of it.<sup>636</sup>

The private detective figure in fiction was seen to be a figure in possession of more professional freedom to operate than officers under the bureaucratic umbrella of Scotland Yard, which had a professional obligation to attempt to solve *all* crimes. Private detectives, by contrast, could pick and choose the cases which they wished to work on, and could opt to accept only those which they felt confident enough to be able to successfully solve.

This more flexible way of working also meant that private sleuths could opt to be more independent and discreet in terms of the discovery and subsequent punishment of offenders. Whilst official police detectives had an obligation to prosecute those that they apprehended, a private detective allowed much more creative freedom in this respect. This is a point which John Greenfield makes succinctly regarding late-Victorian crime fiction:

[...] sometimes these resolutions vary from standard “Scotland Yard” solutions in which the perpetrator is caught and punished. Such resolutions, which are most likely to occur in cases of justified revenge, place the detective in a position of being a dispenser of justice that seems right to readers, even though it is not strictly legal.<sup>637</sup>

Greenfield is here specifically referring to the ‘Martin Hewitt’ stories by Arthur Morrison, a series published in the *Strand* after Sherlock Holmes’s ‘death’ and which were apparently intended to replace Holmes. However, the idea that private detectives were freer to dispense their own form of justice is evidenced in earlier fiction. A story attributed to F. G. Walters titled ‘A Private Detective’s Story’ published in *Belgravia* in September 1886 gives an example of this tactful freedom of the private sleuth. In this, an investigator is called in to

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<sup>636</sup> ‘The Great Jewel Robbery’, *Chambers’s Journal*, 20 March 1886, p. 188.

<sup>637</sup> John Greenfield, ‘Arthur Morrison’s Sherlock Clone: Martin Hewitt, Victorian Values and London Magazine Culture, 1894-1903’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 35, 1 (2002), 18-36 (p. 19).

solve the mystery of the theft of bank notes from a bank's safe at night. The thief ultimately proves to be the bank-manager's wife, who stole the notes in order to fund her long-lost brother's hidden gambling habit. However, far from reporting her to the police, the private detective chooses to let the case go:

[...] the kneeling, shivering, sobbing, miserable woman told all. She had robbed the safe, and no one else knew of it. The notes were sent to her only brother – a thorough scamp – supposed to be dead, recently turned up, but idolised by his sister, and a mere gambler [...]. I left husband and wife together. [...] No one knew the secret but myself, and I didn't need his entreaties, when he gave me my handsome fee, to respect it. And he and she sailed for Australia [...]<sup>638</sup>

Across the 1880s, then, the relationship between the police, the periodical press and the detective fiction had fundamentally transformed from that which had characterised the mid-Victorian period. Gone were the days of the trustworthy fictional police officer, who retold their experiences directly to the reader and who allowed the reader to accompany them as they went about their duties apprehending criminal rogues and solving mysteries. Instead, the police officer was now often a character designed to provide comic relief in periodical fiction, and authors subsequently turned to the amateur or private detective to replace the police officer as central protagonist in detective narratives.

However, there was another change occurring simultaneously within the nature of periodical publishing itself, which was to have one final dramatic effect on the relationship between periodicals and detective fiction. The emergence of George Newnes's publication the *Strand Magazine* in 1891 was to drastically alter both the landscape of the periodicals

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<sup>638</sup> F. G. Walters, 'A Private Detective's Story', *Belgravia*, September 1886, pp. 353-354.

market and its connection with detective fiction, and this marks the point at which this project ends its exploration into this relationship.

#### **6.4: From *Tit-Bits* to the *Strand Magazine*: George Newnes, Periodical Publishing and the Short Story**

Alongside the drastic overhauls of journalistic perceptions of policing and detection in both periodical criticism and detective fiction, the 1880s witnessed major shifts in the landscape of periodical publishing itself. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, a variety of new styles of magazine, designed to cater for a rapidly expanding lower-middle class readership permanently altered the face of the popular periodical press. Kate Jackson suggests that these fundamental transformations were also a result of technological innovation, specifically the ‘introduction of the telegraph, telephone, typewriter, high speed rotary press and the half-tone photographic block’.<sup>639</sup> Thus began an age which Mike Ashley dubs ‘peculiarly modern’, characterised by mass production of storytelling in the sole form of the printed word, and which existed before the invention of mass-consumed film, television and radio.<sup>640</sup>

George Newnes was one of the best-remembered late nineteenth century publishers whose contributions to the development of periodical publishing exemplify the shift in the landscape of the popular press in this era. Enormously ambitious and wildly inventive, across the 1880s and 1890s Newnes established a publishing empire which was to last in various forms until the mid-twentieth century. Newnes was driven by the desire for innovation and to reach as many ‘everyday’ readers as possible, and this is what makes him such a prominent figure in the history of late-Victorian publishing. In fact, Kate Jackson quotes Newnes himself answering a question as to the reason for his success:

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<sup>639</sup> Jackson, p. 43.

<sup>640</sup> Ashley, M, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 3.

Most people have no idea of doing anything beyond what they may have seen done before, and what they are told to do. They are frightened by originality, lest it might be dangerous. I supposed I have been inclined to do things differently from, rather than the same way as, other people, and I have always struck while the iron was hot. That, I think, to put it briefly, is the cause of any success which has attended my efforts.<sup>641</sup>

Newnes's metaphor of 'striking while the *iron was hot*' was particularly apt. A new wave of industrialisation took place in the late nineteenth century which began around 1870, and this had sped up mechanised production and had changed the way ordinary people were living and working. The 1880s and 90s saw a dramatic rise in commuter culture, mass-transit travel and living standards. The 1870 Education Act was also beginning to show its effects, as the first generation to benefit from it were beginning to mature as the end of the nineteenth century approached, and public literacy therefore increased. This was the backdrop against which Newnes's journalism was set. As Jackson eloquently puts it:

The 'growing millions' were members of the expanding lower middle class: a commuting, educated, urban, increasingly enfranchised and consumerist public, with access to leisure time. To George Newnes, with the advantage of commercial training and a knowledge of the tastes of the lower middle classes, they represented a vast pool of potential periodical readers.<sup>642</sup>

Newnes recognised that both the production of, and the appetites for, magazines and reading material were changing. Over the 1880s and 90s he experimented with 'diverse journalistic prototypes' in attempts to both cater for this new and increasingly large readership and to improve the quality of material which these readers were absorbing.<sup>643</sup> Christopher Pittard

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<sup>641</sup> Jackson, p. 1.

<sup>642</sup> Jackson, p. 41.

<sup>643</sup> Jackson, p. 1.

argues that Newnes was ‘aware of the potential for his publications to improve his readers’ cultural health’,<sup>644</sup> and A. J. A. Morris also suggests that Newnes sought not only to cater for the ‘literary diet of the masses’, but also to improve it.<sup>645</sup>

Newnes’s first magazine, *Tit-Bits*, appeared in October 1881 and was a journal designed to be entirely made up of ‘entertaining and interesting anecdotes, and was a ‘carefully calculated play for the periodical market’.<sup>646</sup> According to Newnes’s biographer, Hulda Friederichs, *Tit-Bits* was designed to cater for the rising lower-middle classes, after he became sceptical about the quantity and quality of material available to this steadily growing readership.<sup>647</sup> Newnes recognised the effects of the 1870 Education Act, and sought to cater for maturing, literate young people in a publication which avoided that which Newnes thought to be either salacious, mawkish or simply too expensive.<sup>648</sup>

Despite being unable to achieve financial backing for the magazine after several attempts, Newnes managed to produce the first issue using the profits from a vegetarian restaurant he opened in Manchester.<sup>649</sup> Within two hours of the first issue going on sale, also in Manchester, it had apparently sold 5,000 copies.<sup>650</sup> *Tit-Bits* encapsulated the changing face of Victorian journalism, and became wildly successful, though it attracted fierce criticism from

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<sup>644</sup> Pittard, ‘Cheap, Healthful Literature’, pp.1-23 (p. 2).

<sup>645</sup> A. J. A. Morris, ‘Newnes, Sir George, first baronet’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35218?rskey=CNmNik&result=2>> [accessed 22 February 2018] (2004).

<sup>646</sup> Jackson, p. 48.

<sup>647</sup> Hulda Friederichs, *The Life of Sir George Newnes* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), pp. 50-51.

<sup>648</sup> Friederichs, p. 53.

<sup>649</sup> Friederichs, pp. 61-66.

<sup>650</sup> A. J. A. Morris, ‘Newnes, Sir George, first baronet’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35218?rskey=CNmNik&result=2>> [accessed 22 February 2018] (2004).

contemporaries such as George Gissing for being too light hearted and frivolous.<sup>651</sup> It achieved its aim of catering for the rapidly expanding lower-middle classes, with uncanny perception of reader's interests and tastes. By 1891 it provided Newnes with an annual income of £30,000, and had reached a circulation of 900,000 copies per week, superseded only by Alfred Harmsworth's the *Daily Mail*.<sup>652</sup> His financial success left Newnes free to experiment with other journalistic endeavours, some of which have become slightly obscured by the *Strand Magazine*. These included *The Million* (1892), the *Westminster Gazette* (1893), the *New World Magazine* (1898) and *The Captain* (1899).<sup>653</sup>

In 1890, Newnes formed a partnership with his school friend W. T. Stead, and together they founded the *Review of Reviews* (originally to be titled the *Sixpenny Monthly*), which was designed to provide a collection of reviews and comments. The magazine was immediately successful, but the partnership between Stead and Newnes was short lived as profound disagreements sprang up between them almost immediately. Newnes became uncomfortable with Stead's overzealous enthusiasm for publishing politically inflammatory material, and famously argued that Stead's idea of journalism was far different to his own. Friederichs provides the famous passage which summarises the differences between Stead and Newnes:

Mr. Newnes [...] preaches a short homily on the subject of two kinds of journalism as observed by the practical man of affairs. "There is one kind of journalism," he said, "which directs the affairs of nations; it makes and unmakes Cabinets; it upsets governments, builds up Navies and does many other great things. It is magnificent. This

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<sup>651</sup> Winnie Chan, *The Economy of the Short Story in British Periodicals of the 1890s* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 10.

<sup>652</sup> Ann K. McClellan, 'Tit-Bits, New Journalism and Early Sherlock Holmes Fandom', in *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 23, 1 (2017), n.p.

<sup>653</sup> A. J. A. Morris, 'Newnes, Sir George, first baronet', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35218?rskey=CNmNik&result=2>> [accessed 22 February 2018] (2004).

is your journalism. There is another kind of journalism which has no such great ambitions. It is content to plod on, year after year, giving wholesome and harmless entertainment to crowds of hard-working people, craving for a little fun and amusement. It is quite humble and unpretentious. That is my journalism.”<sup>654</sup>

Due to these fundamental differences of opinion regarding the purpose of journalism, the arrangement between Stead and Newnes was dissolved after three months. Stead bought out Newnes’s share of the business for, according to Jackson, £10,000,<sup>655</sup> and left Newnes ‘high and dry’ with a complete staff but nothing for them to work on.<sup>656</sup> Newnes’s concern for his staff, coupled with his wealth from the success of *Tit-Bits* and *The Million*, led him to immediately begin to pursue a ‘‘long cherished’ project to start a sixpenny monthly which combined popular illustration with popular literary matter’.<sup>657</sup> The first issue of the *Strand Magazine* thus appeared in January 1891 and which has been argued was magazine which came to both ‘define the era’,<sup>658</sup> and to ‘single-handedly changed the landscape of British fiction’.<sup>659</sup> It was an immediate success – the first issue’s entire print run of 300,000 copies sold out, and monthly sales quickly began to exceed 500,000.<sup>660</sup> The emergence of Arthur

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<sup>654</sup> Friederichs, pp. 116-117.

<sup>655</sup> This figure is taken from Jackson, p. 49. However, others have disputed the amount paid to Newnes by Stead in order to dissolve the partnership. David Reed, for example, suggests that Stead paid Newnes £3,000 to extricate his share of the business, before transposing the *Review of Reviews* across to a new publisher.

<sup>656</sup> David Reed, ‘Rise and Shine!: The Birth of the Glossy Magazine’, in *The British Library Journal*, 24, 2 (1998), 256-268 (p. 260).

<sup>657</sup> Friederichs, pp. 117.

<sup>658</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 1.

<sup>659</sup> Chan, p. 10.

<sup>660</sup> A. J. A. Morris, ‘Newnes, Sir George, first baronet’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35218?rskey=CNmNik&result=2>> [accessed 22 February 2018] (2004).

Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories served to make this already-successful publication almost unstoppable.<sup>661</sup> As Friederichs puts it:

The *Strand* had leapt into popularity with its first number; with the arrival of Sherlock Holmes it entered upon the period when it had to be sent to press a month before the date of publication, keeping the machines working till the day it was put in the bookstalls.<sup>662</sup>

Aside from Holmes, the *Strand's* popularity also stemmed from the fact that it highlighted a popular sense of 'newness' across the 1890s. It manifested a motion away from high Victorianism and captured a sense of progression towards the new century. As Jackson points out, 'Victorianism, traditionally associated with social and economic stability, was [...] in retreat' as society changed, and therefore late-Victorian cultural developments (of which the *Strand* was a major part) were often 'habitually nominated 'new''.<sup>663</sup> These developments included New Drama, New Criticism, New Journalism, New Hedonism, New Paganism and the New Woman.<sup>664</sup> As a result, the *Strand's* popularity stemmed from the fact that it occupied a highly charged and popular space between declining Victorianism and rising Modernism, leading the charge into the twentieth century.<sup>665</sup> It captured the attention of what Winnie Chan labels the 'increasingly heterogeneous reading public',<sup>666</sup> and echoed the purpose of Newnes's earlier publication, *Tit-Bits*, in providing entertaining reading material for the developing middle-classes. In short, it offered 'something for everyone'.<sup>667</sup>

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<sup>661</sup> Clarke, p. 2.

<sup>662</sup> Friederichs, p. 122.

<sup>663</sup> Jackson, pp. 89-90.

<sup>664</sup> Jackson, pp. 89-90.

<sup>665</sup> Jackson, pp. 90.

<sup>666</sup> Chan, p. 13.

<sup>667</sup> Chan, p. 13.

That said, the *Strand* played its hand cleverly with respect to its progressive tendencies. Whilst it effectively marketed itself as ‘new’, it also remained sufficiently familiar to those who were used to reading older, venerable publications such as *Blackwoods*, the *Cornhill* or the *Edinburgh Review*. Indeed, Chan suggests that other publications perhaps jealous of the *Strand*’s success, such as the *Yellow Book* or the *Savoy* published hard-covered, book-like publications and made a mockery of the light-blue paper cover of the *Strand*, which physically linked it to older periodicals such as *Household Words*.<sup>668</sup> However, this did not detract from the *Strand*’s success, and if anything is an apt metaphor for how the magazine was designed to occupy a niche between ‘old’ and ‘new’. As Chan also suggests, the magazine was eventually emulated widely by other publications, and its success meant that it became a publication where writers strove to publish their work.<sup>669</sup>

Crucially, the *Strand* managed to cater for a fundamental shift in readers’ tastes in periodical fiction. Ashley offers a succinct evolutionary narrative which can help explain this, where he suggests that interest in fiction throughout the late nineteenth century was characterised by the decline of the high-Victorian ‘triple decker’ and by the consequent rise of the more quickly produced and consumed short-story.<sup>670</sup> Ashley argues that this interest in shorter fiction helped to iron out solid generic distinctions, suggesting that they played a significant role in ‘developing popular writers establishing the popular categories of fiction’.<sup>671</sup> Naturally, one of these new ‘popular categories of fiction’ was the recognisable form of ‘detective fiction’ which we know today. In fact, the term ‘detective fiction’ (as

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<sup>668</sup> Chan, p. 2.

<sup>669</sup> Chan, p. 10.

<sup>670</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 4.

<sup>671</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 1.

opposed to ‘detective literature’ in the sense meant by William Russell) first appeared in 1886 in the *Saturday Review*.<sup>672</sup>

Ashley suggests that Robert Louis Stevenson’s success with short stories such as *New Arabian Nights* (1882) and *Treasure Island* (1883), coupled with the ‘large impact [Stevenson] had on other writers’, sparked this shift towards short fiction.<sup>673</sup> Stevenson’s success with short fiction inspired new publishers to market what Ashley terms ‘crowd-pleasing’ fiction.<sup>674</sup> Bristol-based publisher Arrowsmith enjoyed marked success with its ‘shilling-shockers’ – sensational short stories priced at a shilling each (a bargain when compared to the three-guinea (63 shillings) price tag of a traditional triple-decker).<sup>675</sup> One of the most successful of these shockers was Fergus Hume’s infamous *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, published in 1886 in Australia and then the following year in Britain. Clare Clarke quotes Fergus Hume himself in suggesting that *Hansom Cab* was written to provide a ‘description of low life’, which connects it to earlier kinds of crime fiction designed to perform the same task.<sup>676</sup> *Hansom Cab*’s wild success inspired a number of other authors to write their own short stories, including a young author named Arthur Conan Doyle, who submitted a short novel titled *A Study in Scarlet* to Arrowsmith in May 1886, though it was rejected.<sup>677</sup> Two months later, the story was accepted by Ward, Lock and Co., who published it as part of their 1887 *Beeton’s Christmas Annual*.

The period after 1880 was therefore marked by an increasing volume of short, sensational and cheaply-produced short stories in the style of *A Study in Scarlet*, *Strange*

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<sup>672</sup> ‘Detective Fiction’, *Saturday Review*, 4 December 1886, p. 749.

<sup>673</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 5.

<sup>674</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 5.

<sup>675</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 5.

<sup>676</sup> Clarke, p. 44. See earlier chapters in this thesis for examples of fiction which perform the task of ‘revealing the low-haunts’ of criminality.

<sup>677</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 6.

*Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) or *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*.<sup>678</sup> It was not just cultural interests which made the short-story an appealing form of publication for magazines. As Chan argues, short-story publishing was convenient, excellent for filling tight spaces in magazines and, above all, lucrative.<sup>679</sup> Crucially, the growth in interest in producing short fiction was a simultaneous development alongside the changes in reader interests for which Newnes sought to cater, and it is perhaps therefore natural that it Newnes's the *Strand Magazine* became 'the central periodical of the Age of the Storytellers'.<sup>680</sup> The *Strand* perfectly blended affordability with appeal to the changing cultural interests of readers, and as Winnie Chan puts it, 'the *Strand* shaped the short story as a mass-cultural form'.<sup>681</sup> Ashley argues that the *Strand* was a magazine which was perhaps most effectively tuned-in to this growing cultural interest in the short story, and argues that this literary form was the most common form of publication in the magazine: '[a]bove all, there are short stories, and plenty of them [in the *Strand*].'<sup>682</sup>

The *Strand Magazine* therefore keenly adopted the increasingly popular short-story format, which helps further characterise it as the epitome of late-Victorian periodical publishing. It was the magazine which most effectively blended the greatest number of cultural changes which took place in the periodicals market after 1880, yet which also retained a curious and cursory reminiscence of older periodicals which in turn made it simultaneously both 'new' and 'familiar' to readers looking for entertaining and affordable reading material. Perhaps naturally, then, the *Strand* was the magazine where the intertwined and complex relationship between periodical publishing, journalistic perceptions of police

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<sup>678</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 7.

<sup>679</sup> Chan, p. 2.

<sup>680</sup> Ashley, p. 10.

<sup>681</sup> Chan, p. 2.

<sup>682</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 11.

officers and detectives and the evolution of the fictional detective story were to finally reach their zenith.

### **6.5: Perceptions of the Police in the *Strand Magazine*, 1891-1900**

True to the idea of occupying a literary space between ‘old’ and ‘new’, as well as providing entertainment (as opposed to producing the kind of journalism which ‘upsets governments’),<sup>683</sup> the police received complex treatment in the *Strand* in comparison to some of its periodical counterparts such as the militant *Saturday Review* or the *Examiner*. The magazine did its best to present a more politically-flattened view of the police than some of its contemporaries, but it must be noted that it ultimately could not escape the force’s poor public reputation which had been proliferated by a huge number of articles and commentary from other periodicals throughout the 1880s.

The *Strand*’s attitude towards the police as a social institution is eloquently summarised by Jonathan Cranfield. The magazine frequently published portraits of different kinds of social institutions which ‘displayed a naive faith in the ability of institutions to provide and maintain the conditions under which the safe, unchallenging world of the magazine’s fiction was possible’.<sup>684</sup> In other words, the *Strand* attempted to present a non-threatening portrait of society to readers, in order to provide a satisfactory and ‘safe’ backdrop against which to set equally non-threatening fiction. These institutions included the fire-brigade, the hospitals and even central government itself through the long-running series of popular articles titled ‘From Behind the Speaker’s Chair’, authored by Henry Lucy.

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<sup>683</sup> Friederichs, pp. 116-117.

<sup>684</sup> Jonathan Cranfield., *Twentieth-Century Victorian: Arthur Conan Doyle and the Strand Magazine, 1891-1930* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 36.

However, the *Strand* could not escape the poor public perception of the police, and the desire to present this ‘safe’ social backdrop did not mesh with the police’s damaged reputation. Consequently, and with the exception of solitary articles such as one featuring the small Thames Police force, the police force could not easily receive the same comfortable treatment as other social institutions in the *Strand*. A number of articles therefore opted for a subtler approach, and presented much more gentle representations of policing across the 1890s designed to either bypass the police’s poor reputation, or to entice readers back towards a sense of trust in the force. As Pittard suggests, Newnes was cautious of engaging with law enforcement as he ‘did not want to fuel crime scares’, but the *Strand* was also meant to represent the everyday, and to connect with those readers Newnes himself identified as the ‘crowds of hard-working people’.<sup>685</sup> This ‘everyday’ was naturally required to include discussion on crime and law enforcement, as the magazine was designed to be a ‘sampling of the tide of life Newnes perceived in the geographical Strand, [and] its journalistic counterpart could therefore not afford to ignore criminality’.<sup>686</sup>

The *Strand* therefore presented a rather variable view of the police. Some articles, such as ‘A Night with the Thames Police’ from July 1891 were sympathetic and occasionally positive. This article interestingly hearkened to earlier forms of police-journalism from the mid-Victorian era, recalling the kind of article in which a journalist accompanied a police officer on their nightly duties:

It is a quarter to six o’clock. At six we are to start for our journey up the river as far as Waterloo and back again to Greenwich; but there is time to take a hasty survey of the

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<sup>685</sup> Pittard, ‘Cheap, Healthful Literature’, pp. 1-23 (p. 4).

<sup>686</sup> Pittard, ‘Cheap, Healthful Literature’, pp. 1-23 (p. 4).

interior of the station, where accommodation is provided for sixteen single men, with a library, reading-room, and billiard-room at their disposal.<sup>687</sup>

This scene is strikingly reminiscent of the opening lines of Dickens's article 'On Duty with Inspector Field', published in *Household Words* in 1850. Additionally, as Cranfield suggests, the river historically afforded the possibility of unauthorised entrances and exits, and thus the Thames Police offer a 'suture to cover the whole network of anxieties that attend to the role of the river'.<sup>688</sup> Building on this idea, the article becomes another demonstration of how the police occupied a transitional or threshold space, similarly to mid-Victorian periodical representations of the police where they existed between criminality and respectability. The river is in of itself a liminal space; quite literally cutting through the centre of the city yet belonging really to nobody in particular, and the police here are seen to physically occupy and in some ways 'own' it to prevent it from becoming lawless:

[...] a sudden "Yo-ho" from the inspector breaks the quietude. [...] "Yo-ho!" replies the man in charge of the other boat. [...] These river police know every man who has any business on the water at night. If the occupant of a boat was questioned, and his "Yo-ho" did not sound familiar, he would be "towed" to the station.<sup>689</sup>

'A Night with the Thames Police' was written carefully, 'collated with gloved hands and put before the readers with a genteel regard for their susceptibilities', and was sympathetic to the difficulties the police faced.<sup>690</sup> It praised their efficiency at preventing crimes such as

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<sup>687</sup> 'A Night with the Thames Police', *Strand Magazine*, January 1891, p. 125.

<sup>688</sup> Cranfield, *Twentieth-Century Victorian*, p. 37.

<sup>689</sup> 'A Night with the Thames Police', *Strand Magazine*, January 1891, p. 125.

<sup>690</sup> Pittard, 'Cheap, Healthful Literature', pp. 1-23 (pp. 4-5).

smuggling, and as Cranfield also suggests, highlighted the police as a solidified and ‘purified’ community of men, working together efficiently as a bonded unit.<sup>691</sup>

Other articles were less overtly supportive, but any criticism the police received still remained moderate. The ninth issue of the rather silly series ‘Animal Actualities’, titled ‘Sauce for the Goose, Sauce for the Gander’ can help to demonstrate this attitude. It was illustrated by James Affleck Shepherd, the caricaturist who had also drawn for *Judy, or, the London Serio-Comic Journal*. This instalment tells the story of a bumbling police officer, who mistakenly feeds a group of geese some biscuits whilst out on patrol. The officer quickly regrets this generous act:

[...] a policeman whose notions of official dignity did not prevent him munching a biscuit as he went. There were a few loose crumbs and pieces in his hand, and in an evil moment he caught sight of the birds. Little suspecting what would be the terrible consequences to the Force, that unlucky policeman bestowed the broken pieces on the gander and his consorts, and went placidly on his beat, unconscious of ill. [...] on the following day that policeman passed again [...] and the geese knew him, and rushed at him without outstretched necks, flapping wings, and wild screeches. And not at this policeman alone, but at every other policeman who ventured to perform his duty in New Road, Mile End.<sup>692</sup>

The piece was accompanied by several caricatured illustrations, depicting the unfortunate police officer beset by the geese (see fig. 17):

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<sup>691</sup> Cranfield, *Twentieth-Century Victorian*, p. 37.

<sup>692</sup> ‘Animal Actualities, IX: Sauce for the Goose, Sauce for the Gander’, *Strand Magazine*, March 1899, pp. 302-303.



Figure 17: The unhappy police officer, surrounded by geese waiting to be fed. Taken from 'Animal Actualities, IX: Sauce for a Goose, Sauce for a Gander', Strand Magazine, March 1899, p. 304.

The police officer does not manage to extricate himself from this situation; in fact, it deteriorates until the sound of angry geese becomes an amusing signal to the local residents that a police officer is on his way through the area:

[...] every policeman who ventured into New Road in uniform was an equal sufferer.

People in the interiors of their houses heard a burst of quacks and flaps, and said to one another, "Here comes a policeman."<sup>693</sup>

The police officer is presented as foolish and bumbling, in a fashion not dissimilar to a number of satirical magazines such as *Fun* or indeed *Judy* – though it was more gentle than in the more overtly satirical magazines. The officer only escapes from the geese after the local population club together and usher them back into the local dairy-yard, 'rescuing' the police and leaving them free to go about their duties. This scene is also illustrated in the article,

<sup>693</sup> 'Animal Actualities, IX: Sauce for the Goose, Sauce for the Gander', *Strand Magazine*, March 1899, p. 304.

where the local people have surrounded the unfortunate police officer, and who are clearly enjoying the episode (see fig. 18):



Figure 18: The police officer rescued from the indignant geese. Taken from 'Animal Actualities, IX: Sauce for a Goose, Sauce for a Gander', Strand Magazine, March 1899, p. 304.

Other articles which specifically focused on the police were remarkably few and far between in the *Strand*, with non-fictional explorations of this world preferring to focus on crime as opposed to law enforcement. Harry How's series 'Crime and Criminals', published in January 1894, highlighted four unique perspectives on criminality – dynamite and dynamiters, burglars and burgling, coiners and coining, and forgers and begging-letter writers. None of these articles focused on the ways in which the police managed crime, but rather they do present a politically-flattened view the police by suggesting that they had an excellent record of engaging with criminal activity, evidenced by the amount of material contained within Scotland Yard's archive:

At New Scotland Yard a large apartment is devoted to the exhibit of ten thousand and one records of crime, in the shape of the actual weapons, and what not, associated with particularly notorious, and, in some instances, almost historic, deeds.<sup>694</sup>

How consistently returns to this point across the series:

New Scotland Yard has every reason to be proud of its counterfeit collection – it certainly has real and original samples of everything associated with this glittering profession [...]<sup>695</sup>

The few articles which *did* focus on the police often deliberately presented disconnected or individualised perspectives, rather than opting to focus on the force as a whole. In doing this, the *Strand* highlighted particular areas of police efficiency or ingenuity, whilst simultaneously avoiding the wider perceptions of the police as wholly ineffective which proliferated in other magazines. For example, an article published in January 1894 focused on the different styles of handcuffs, which drew the reader's attention away from a discussion regarding the police's overall effectiveness. Instead, it focused on a small, localised perspective which gently encouraged the reader to appreciate the police's ingenuity and enormous responsibility, and was even designed to instil sympathy for the difficulties police officers faced:

Even when handcuffed, we present to a clever and muscular ruffian one of the most formidable weapons he could possibly possess, as he can, and frequently does, inflict the deadliest blows upon his captor. Another great drawback is the fact that these handcuffs do not fit all wrists, and often the officer is nonplussed by having a pair of handcuffs which are too small or too large; and when the latter is the case, and the prisoner gets the

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<sup>694</sup> Harry How, 'Crime and Criminals, I: Dynamite and Dynamiters', *Strand Magazine*, January 1894, p. 119.

<sup>695</sup> Harry How, 'Crime and Criminals, III: Coiners and Coining', *Strand Magazine*, January 1894, pp. 416-417.

“bracelets” in his hands instead of on his wrists, he is then in possession of a knuckle-duster from which the bravest would not care to receive a blow.<sup>696</sup>

Focusing on small aspects of the police force was a clever move on the magazine’s part. Articles such as this avoided the need to engage with wider criticism on the police force, as that was not their subject.

In some cases, articles on the police force in the *Strand* drew the reader’s attention away from the UK’s force. C. S. Pelham-Clinton, in 1897, wrote an article titled ‘Policemen of the World’, which naturally draws attention away from the ‘policemen of the UK’. The opening paragraph of this piece perhaps best exemplifies the *Strand*’s attitude towards the police as a social institution as mildly pragmatic towards its existence and generally accepting that it should continue to work. It also denotes a mild push towards the restoration of the police as a necessary social institution required, as Cranfield puts it, to maintain safe and unchallenging social conditions:<sup>697</sup>

*Policemen are a necessary evil, and the world is full of them* [my italics]. Every civilized, educated, and dignified nation is compelled to feed a large number in order to hunt rascals down and to help the women across the street; and in every country where law is a thing unknown, every man in his own policeman, and takes care of the above-named things for himself.<sup>698</sup>

The article goes on to explore different nations’ police forces in turn, though it does not pay attention to the force at home. The subtext here seems to suggest that, whilst the police had experienced their fair share of difficulty, they should be socially re-accepted despite their poor public perception in other printed media.

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<sup>696</sup> Moser Maurice, ‘Handcuffs’, *Strand Magazine*, January 1894, p. 96.

<sup>697</sup> Cranfield, *Twentieth-Century Victorian*, p. 36.

<sup>698</sup> C. S. Pelham-Clinton, ‘Policemen of the World’, *Strand Magazine*, February 1897, p. 214.

As a result, the *Strand* proceeded carefully with its depictions of the police. It could not escape the poor public perception of the police force, but it attempted to present a light-hearted social background against which to publish its fiction without concerning itself with engaging with pressing social or political issues. The tension between these two perspectives was manifested in the Sherlock Holmes short stories in the *Strand* and, as the final section of this thesis concludes, the Sherlock Holmes stories represent the pinnacle of the relationship between periodical and detective fiction which had developed across the entire nineteenth century.

### **6.6: ‘I am not retained by the police to supply their deficiencies’: The *Strand Magazine* and Sherlock Holmes, c. 1891-1900**

The poor perception of the police in periodical journalism had created a literary atmosphere where ‘detective fiction’ had become focused on effective private detectives set alongside somewhat incompetent official police officers. This, I suggest, was exemplified by the relationship between the almost superhuman private investigator, Sherlock Holmes, and the bumbling police officer, Inspector Lestrade. Additionally, the new kind of journalism favoured by George Newnes, which focused on presenting comfortable views of social institutions alongside entertaining short fiction, is exemplified by a number of factors contained within the stories themselves. These include the ways in which the Holmes and Lestrade interact, the fact that Lestrade himself consistently seeks approval from the press as he performs his duties and also the very form of the Holmes stories’ publication as a serial-short story, easy to read very quickly and not predicated on continuity between issues.

The relationship between Holmes and Lestrade, and also between George Newnes and Arthur Conan Doyle himself, therefore represents the final literary moment which this project explores in this final section. The Sherlock Holmes stories come to represent the epitome of

the intertwined relationship between periodical journalism and the development of detective fiction which, as this thesis has shown, developed steadily across the entire nineteenth century.

The first of the Sherlock Holmes short stories appeared in the *Strand* in July 1891, and their publication format as a serial short story in the pages of a popular magazine was certainly a significant factor in their enormous success. Mike Ashley argues that Doyle essentially invented this publication method;<sup>699</sup> however this is not necessarily the case. Instead, we might view the Holmes stories as connected to older examples of periodical-based ‘detective literature’, which helps to cement the Holmes stories as the final milestone in the development of this kind of writing which had evolved across the mid-Victorian era. The ‘Waters’ detective stories, for example, written by William Russell and published in a number of periodicals throughout the mid-nineteenth century had also followed this serial short story publication method. Like the Holmes stories, the ‘Waters’ stories were self-contained, individual tales which almost always returned to the status quo at their end. Yet they were loosely connected together, occasionally referencing events which had taken place in previous stories and utilising a number of recurring characters. Additionally, it is important to note that the fact that publishing the Sherlock Holmes stories serially in a magazine which was also consciously designed to cater for a steadily-growing readership contributed to their success. Just as the *Strand Magazine* itself had successfully managed to blend the ‘old’ with the ‘new’ to make itself popular, the Sherlock Holmes stories successfully fused ‘the short story with the serial’ to achieve the same goal.<sup>700</sup> As Winnie Chan argues:

The appeal of Doyle’s famous series of short stories lay in its continuity without cumulative effect. The result, a set of connected stories, forged a community of readers

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<sup>699</sup> Ashley, *The Age of the Storytellers*, p. 11.

<sup>700</sup> Chan, p. 5.

without necessitating a cohesive, loyal readership – which, paradoxically, the *Strand* attracted anyhow.<sup>701</sup>

It is also worth noting that there was a marked difference in commercial success between Arthur Conan Doyle's original Sherlock Holmes novellas and the serial short stories published in the *Strand*. The original novellas were *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and *The Sign of the Four* (1890), both published as novellas in less-successful periodicals and, as is common knowledge, neither novel brought Doyle significant commercial success. *A Study in Scarlet* had appeared in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* in 1887, and publishing the story in what was normally a once-a-year purchase was not likely to inspire significant sales for the rest of the year. *The Sign of the Four* was published first in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, which was based overseas in the USA, in Philadelphia. It was the stories' serial short-story format, coupled with the accessibility and monumental success of the *Strand* itself, which helped make Sherlock Holmes successful.<sup>702</sup>

However, there are a number of reasons other than the success of the *Strand* and the use of the serial short story as to why the Holmes stories came to manifest the epitome of the intertwined connection between periodical journalism and the development of detective fiction. In connection to that which this chapter (and indeed, the entire thesis) has discussed, the Holmes stories also perfectly encapsulated the growth in interest in the amateur or private detective that which had been evolving in cheap, periodical-based crime fiction across the 1880s in the wake of the changed attitudes towards the police and detective forces.

Firstly, the Sherlock Holmes stories present a character that manifests the lack of confidence in the official police, in the same way as Holmes himself represents public trust in the private investigator. Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard is presented as slightly foolish,

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<sup>701</sup> Chan, p. 5.

<sup>702</sup> Cranfield, *Twentieth-Century Victorian*, p. 23.

incompetent and occasionally helpless police detective, who often consults Holmes when he himself is in need of assistance in solving cases. Holmes himself suggests in *A Study in Scarlet* that Lestrade, along with his colleague Tobias Gregson are the ‘pick of a bad lot’, which seems again to intimate that Scotland Yard itself was entirely rotten.<sup>703</sup> In ‘The Boscombe Valley Mystery’ (1891), Holmes remarks:

“[...] Lestrade, whom you may remember in connection with the Study in Scarlet, [has been retained] to work out the case in his interest. Lestrade, being rather puzzled, has referred the case to me, and hence it is that two middle aged gentlemen are flying westward at fifty mile an hour [...]”<sup>704</sup>

Lestrade’s requests for help from Holmes tellingly echo the ‘call for help’ from the police to other private investigators, notably the story published in the *Argosy* in 1872 titled ‘From a Detective’s Note-Book’ which suggested that the official police grudgingly utilised private detectives to help solve mysteries which they themselves could not figure out. Lestrade comes to represent the police as a whole, still struggling to recover from the damage to its reputation that it had suffered in the wake of the 1877 ‘turf fraud’ scandal and the series of other public ‘outrages’ that had so severely diminished it in the public eye. Crucially, Lestrade also often seeks acceptance and praise from the press, which Holmes himself is often happy to provide. Holmes presents an indirectly sanctimonious attitude towards the perceived public reputation of Lestrade and his fellow officers by allowing him to take public credit for some of his own successes, catering for Lestrade’s desire for redemption in the public view. In ‘The Adventure of the Cardboard Box’ (1893), Holmes declares that Lestrade

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<sup>703</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘A Study in Scarlet’, in *Beeton’s Christmas Annual* (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1887; repr. in *The Complete Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* (London: CRW Publishing, 2009), p. 17.

<sup>704</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Boscombe Valley Mystery’, *Strand Magazine*, October 1891 (repr. in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Chancellor Press, 1985)), p. 62.

should be able to take credit for making the arrest of the criminal himself, as he considers the solution to be beneath his own abilities:

Holmes scribbled a few words upon the back of one of his visiting cards and threw it over to Lestrade. [...] “That is it,” he said; “you cannot effect an arrest until to-morrow night at the earliest. I should prefer that you would not mention my name at all in connection with the case, as I choose to be associated only with those crimes which present some difficulty in their solution [...]”<sup>705</sup>

This was echoed in both ‘The Adventure of the Empty House’, (1903) when Holmes quite sarcastically declares:

“To you, and you only, belongs the credit of the remarkable arrest which you have effected. Yes, Lestrade, I congratulate you! With your usual happy mixture of cunning and audacity you have got him!”<sup>706</sup>

Holmes’s slightly cruel reference to Lestrade’s ‘audacity and cunning’ (neither of which he seemingly believes Lestrade actually possesses) indirectly emphasises his own, rather superior, abilities. The clearest example of this appeared in ‘The Adventure of the Norwood Builder’ (1903), when Holmes explicitly states that the credit for solving the case should go to Lestrade because he needs it more urgently:

“Instead of being ruined, my good sir, you will find that your reputation has been enormously enhanced. Just make a few alterations in that report which you were writing,

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<sup>705</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Cardboard Box’, *Strand Magazine*, January 1893 (repr. in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Chancellor Press, 1985)), p. 260.

<sup>706</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Empty House’, *Strand Magazine*, September 1903 (repr. in *The Complete Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* (London: CRW Publishing, 2009)), p. 517.

and they will all understand how hard it is to throw dust in the eyes of Inspector Lestrade.”<sup>707</sup>

By contrast, Sherlock Holmes himself manifests the absolute epitome of the private investigator juxtaposed with the perceived incompetence of official police detectives. The first is in terms of Holmes’s overall effectiveness as a detective. In ‘The Adventure of the Empty House’, it is telling that Dr. John Watson believes that he is able to pick out a ‘plain-clothes detective’ from a crowd of people, whilst maintaining a state of complete obliviousness to Holmes’s presence in the crowd:

A group of loafers upon the pavements [...] directed me to the house which I had come to see. A tall, thin man with coloured glasses, whom I strongly suspected of being a plain-clothes detective, was pointing out some theory of his own [...] I struck against an elderly deformed man, who had been behind me, and I knocked down several books which he was carrying. [...] I retracted my steps to Kensington. I had not been in my study five minutes when the maid entered to say that a person desired to see me. To my astonishment it was none other than my strange old book collector [...] I moved my head to look at the cabinet behind me. When I turned again Sherlock Holmes was standing smiling at me across my study table.<sup>708</sup>

This juxtaposition of Holmes in disguise next to an apparent official police detective in disguise is certainly suggestive of the contemporary relationship between official and private sleuths in both reality and in fiction.

Secondly, Holmes is able to pick and chooses the cases he can take on, much in the same way as the detective from the ‘Great Jewel Robbery’. For example, in ‘The Adventure of the

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<sup>707</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Norwood Builder’, *Strand Magazine*, November 1903 (repr. in *The Complete Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* (London: CRW Publishing, 2009)), p. 530.

<sup>708</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Empty House’, *Strand Magazine*, September 1903 (repr. in *The Complete Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* (London: CRW Publishing, 2009)), pp. 510-511.

Noble Bachelor', Holmes is initially reluctant to look at a letter which he perceives to contain no case of interest to him, although he quickly changes his mind:

“[...] my correspondence has certainly the charm of variety,’ he answered, smiling, ‘and the humbler are usually the more interesting. This looks like one of those unwelcome social summonses which call upon a man either to be bored or to lie.’ [...] He broke the seal, and glanced over the contents. [...] Oh, come, it may prove to be something of interest after all.’<sup>709</sup>

As Holmes operates outside of official police constraints, he has the ability to show sympathy or understanding for the perpetrators of some crimes, much in the same way as the unnamed detective protagonist in ‘A Private Detective’s Story’ from *Belgravia*, published in September 1886. In ‘The Man with the Twisted Lip’ (1891), for example, Holmes (along with the official police) agrees to keep Neville St. Clair’s double-identity as a beggar named Hugh Boone a secret. Boone was accused of murdering St. Clair, but Holmes reveals that they are in fact one and the same person. St. Clair/Boone was willing to face the gallows rather than be exposed to his family, and consequently the authorities agree to suppress the details:

“It must stop here, however,” said Bradstreet. “If the police are to hush this thing up, there must be no more of Hugh Boone.” [...] [Boone] “I have sworn it by the most solemn oaths which a man can take.” [...] [Bradstreet] “In that case I think that it is probable that no further steps may be taken. But if you are found again, then all must come out. I am

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<sup>709</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor’, *Strand Magazine*, April 1892 (repr. in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Chancellor Press, 1985)), p. 168.

sure, Mr Holmes, that we are very much indebted to you for having cleared the matter up [...]”<sup>710</sup>

Holmes also opts to neglect to report a guilty criminal to the police in ‘The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle’ (1892), where he (albeit sternly) allows James Ryder to escape justice, despite having been responsible for the theft of the Blue Carbuncle itself:

[Ryder] burst into convulsive sobbing, with his face buried in his hands. There was a long silence, broken only by his heavy breathing, and by the measured tapping of Sherlock Holmes’ fingers-tips upon the edge of the table. Then my friend rose, and threw open the door. [...] “Get out!” said he.<sup>711</sup>

Holmes himself details the reasons for his generous move to not report the young offender to the police, by sagely arguing:

[Holmes] “I am not retained by the police to supply their deficiencies [...] I suppose that I am committing a felony, but it is just possible that I am saving a soul. This young fellow will not go wrong again. He is too terribly frightened. Send him to gaol now, and you make him a gaolbird for life. Besides, it is the season of forgiveness [...]”<sup>712</sup>

Holmes reveals several perspectives here. Firstly, he reiterates he is not retained by the police, citing them as ‘deficient’, which reinforces the suggestion that Holmes manifests a deliberate disassociation from the police force. Secondly, he again demonstrates the flexibility of the private investigator to pick and choose which offenders to prosecute, and which to empathise with (or release).

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<sup>710</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Man with the Twisted Lip’, *Strand Magazine*, December 1891 (repr. in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Chancellor Press, 1985)), p. 112.

<sup>711</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle’, *Strand Magazine*, January 1892 (repr. in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, London: Chancellor Press, 1985)), p. 129.

<sup>712</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle’, *Strand Magazine*, January 1892 (repr. in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Chancellor Press, 1985)), p. 130.

In an indirect connection to Holmes's discretion, Cranfield suggests that he diverges from his predecessors in that he becomes invested in the 'emotional and psychological well-being of his clients and their worldview'.<sup>713</sup> This helps to reveal another connection between Holmes and previous private investigators, as the relationship between Holmes and that which Cranfield terms the 'client-characters' is predicated on a certain level of trust. This was, in turn, further sanctified by the bonds of a financial transaction which would otherwise have not existed between a member of the public and an official police officer. A client literally pays Holmes for his services, which causes their relationship to move beyond a simple public/police to one of employer/employee. The rise of the private detective (and their emotional investment in their clients' cases coupled with the fact that they are paid by them) signifies the corresponding decrease of trust in the official police force and detective systems. The 'client-characters' often seek out Holmes's assistance as they cannot (or will not) approach the official authorities due to a lack of trust – or in some cases, the official police authorities have already failed the client, directly sending them to Holmes. In 'The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet', Alexander Holder states this fact quite plainly to Holmes and Watson when relating his story:

"I feel that time is of value," said [Holder], "that is why I hastened here when the police inspector suggested that I should secure your co-operation."<sup>714</sup>

The Sherlock Holmes stories had another connection to earlier periodical crime fiction in terms of format. In some ways they indirectly reflected some of the interests of the mid-Victorian police-memoir. Clearly, the stories are recounted in the past tense, by someone who has direct access to the details of the case and who can reveal them for the reader – Dr. John

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<sup>713</sup> Jonathan Cranfield, 'Sherlock Holmes, Fan Culture and Fan Letters' in *Fan Phenomena: Sherlock Holmes*, ed. by Jonathan Cranfield and Tom Ue (Bristol: Intellect, 2014), pp. 66-79 (p. 73).

<sup>714</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet', *Strand Magazine*, May 1892 (repr. in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Chancellor Press, 1985)), p. 187.

Watson. However, the stories themselves also blur the lines between fiction and reality. Mid-Victorian crime fiction published in periodicals, especially police memoir fiction, was characterised by the desire to at least attempt to represent the real exploits of police officers, detectives and criminals. Much of the fiction published between 1850 and 1875 was marketed in this fashion, and this appetite for realism could still be seen in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Holmes himself famously received innumerable letters requesting advice or assistance on cases, and as Cranfield suggests this phenomenon continued well into the twentieth century.<sup>715</sup> Even today, letters are still written to the famous ‘221b Baker Street’ address, highlighting that the Holmes stories have always occupied (and continue to occupy) a blurred line between fact and fiction, in much the same way as mid-Victorian police memoirs designed to convince the reader that the tales they were reading were the actual experiences of real detectives and police officers.<sup>716</sup>

## **6.7: Looking Ahead to the ‘Golden Age’: Chapter 6 Conclusions**

The success and the enduring popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories was therefore due to a perfect storm of fortuitous coincidences, circumstances and intelligent decisions made by both author and publisher. George Newnes’s desire was largely to create a new style of magazine disassociated from political discussion, filled with short fiction, illustrations, and priced at a reasonable amount to appeal to (and entertain) the quickly-expanding lower middle classes and commuters living in the suburbs but working in the city. Detective fiction, as John Greenfield suggests, was a way to help the magazine actually perform this task more effectively, as it helped to ‘provide a stop-gap against threats from within and without’ and

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<sup>715</sup> Cranfield, ‘Sherlock Holmes, Fan Culture and Fan Letters’ in *Fan Phenomena: Sherlock Holmes*, ed. by Cranfield and Ue, pp. 66-79 (pp. 70-71).

<sup>716</sup> Cranfield, ‘Sherlock Holmes, Fan Culture and Fan Letters’ in *Fan Phenomena: Sherlock Holmes*, ed. by Cranfield and Ue, pp. 66-79 (p. 69).

embodied the ideological assumptions of the intended readership – the middle class.<sup>717</sup> The *Strand Magazine* also sat at a crossroads of periodical publishing in that it successfully managed to blend together the ‘old’ and the ‘new’, and began a new era of periodical production which looked both back to the mid-Victorian era in terms of the magazine’s physicality and also ahead to the twentieth century.<sup>718</sup>

For Arthur Conan Doyle, the desire was to create a loosely-connected series of short stories which reflected both the growing interest in private detectives and investigators (and specifically their scientific methods) in the wake of the changed perception of the police by the public as a result of their widely-broadcast failings.<sup>719</sup> The corresponding lack of trust and poor perception of the official police force, which was still struggling to recover its reputation, helped Sherlock Holmes as a character to become the manifestation of the ultimate private consulting-detective, and to achieve and maintain widespread popularity. The serial short-story format of the Sherlock Holmes stories also borrowed their publication style from older forms of periodical-based detective fiction, such as the ‘Waters’ stories authored by William Russell in the 1850s and 1860s. Additionally, the relationship between Sherlock Holmes and Inspector Lestrade characterises the contemporary tension between official police officers and detectives, and manifests the rise of the private detective. Like the *Strand Magazine* itself, the Sherlock Holmes stories themselves also sit at a crossroads between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’, with new scientific techniques in detection being developed in the stories as well as a growth in the use of technology like telegraphy and photography and even forensic science.

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<sup>717</sup> Greenfield, pp. 18-36 (pp. 19-20).

<sup>718</sup> Chan, p. 2.

<sup>719</sup> ‘Sir Arthur Conan Doyle 1927 Interview’, *YouTube*, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Pf3tw2TfNo>> [accessed 11 May 2018] (uploaded 29 October 2014) (1927).

These two perspectives therefore manifest the epitome of the relationship between the periodical press and the development of detective fiction across the entire Victorian era. The publication style of the *Strand* and its politically-flattened ideologies surrounding law enforcement were a perfect arena for Arthur Conan Doyle to publish his innovative serial-short story form of detective fiction, which utilised the motif of the successful private detective offset against the bungling official police officer. These ideas of the private vs. the public detective had also been brought about by journalistic commentary, cementing the relationship between genre and periodical publishing even further.

This symbiotic relationship was to have long-lasting effects which continued well into the new century. Even after Holmes's apparent 'death' in 'The Adventure of the Final Problem', his successor detective characters continued the trend. In the *Strand* itself, Holmes's supposed replacement detective character (Martin Hewitt) operated in a similar fashion to Holmes.<sup>720</sup> John Greenfield, when discussing the 'Martin Hewitt' stories suggests that Hewitt manifested a closer representation of the *Strand*'s intended audience than Holmes, and that the relationship between Hewitt and the official police is perhaps more representative of the magazine's opinion on law enforcement epitomised by its delicate treatment of the police in articles such as 'A Night with the Thames Police':

[...] even if one concedes that Holmes's disdain for Lestrade in particular and Scotland Yard in general [...] may lend some credence to this point of view, the same could not be said for Hewitt, who works as a professional for hire, often works cooperatively with Scotland Yard [...] and he is not critical of Brett or other bourgeois figures.<sup>721</sup>

Whilst this may be true, and that Hewitt's relationship with Scotland Yard is perhaps more genial than Holmes's, there is no ignoring the fact that Hewitt is *not* a police officer but is

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<sup>720</sup> Greenfield, pp. 18-36 (p. 18).

<sup>721</sup> Greenfield, pp. 18-36 (p. 20).

instead a private investigator. Hewitt owed his existence to Holmes as he was designed as Holmes's replacement, and consequently private investigators had thus become the standard figure of the 'classical detective story', even in those which did not reject police officers. The popularity of the literary private detective, which Holmes so successfully manifested, continued well into the next century. Many detectives from the supposed 'Golden Age of Detective Fiction', famously such as Hercule Poirot, Lord Peter Wimsey, Albert Campion, Father Brown, Roger Sheringham, Dr. John Thorndyke, Miles Bredon, Philip Marlowe, Richard Hannay, or Gervase Fen, operated privately and often engaged with largely incompetent official police officers. These characters, I argue, owed this formulaic construction to the continued legacy of the intertwined and observable connection which existed between the nineteenth century periodical press and the generic construction of detective fiction.

## Conclusion

This thesis is merely a first, tentative step in a wider study of the connections between Victorian popular journalism and the growth of detective fiction. Broadly, it has argued that the mid-to-late nineteenth century periodical and newspaper presses, and their engagement with the concept of policing and detection, had a hitherto undisclosed impact on the development of detective fiction. This relationship was initially based on public trust in the police, leading to the police officers holding a privileged position as literary guide and protector for journalists, authors and readers to explore criminality from a position of literary safety in a number of different literary genres, such as police memoirs and sensation fiction. As the nineteenth century progressed, this trust was steadily broken down by various cataclysmic events in the history of the police, and corresponding journalistic reactions to them. This led to the rise of the literary private or amateur detective and (correspondingly) the image of the bumbling, ineffective police officer.

However, the project has presented only one of the many potential narrative strands which connect the evolution of the detective genre with the depictions of police officers, detectives, criminals and the authorities of criminal justice in nineteenth-century periodicals and newspapers. It has only scratched the surface of available periodical material, and has only revealed one of many potential narratives which could be explored if the approach to the material was to change ever so slightly in any direction. The addition of new periodical titles, articles, authors, primary texts and individual perspectives (potentially, for example, a more 'regional' or 'provincial' press focus, or a greater focus on the ways in which only single periodical titles engaged with the concept of law enforcement) could all be employed to change, extend or augment the narrative presented by this project. Any number of small changes to the project's approach to its field of study could all serve to more

comprehensively highlight how the periodical press is closely linked to the development of detective fiction as a distinct, formulaic literary genre.

This project is also a mere first step from a methodological perspective, as well. The use of periodical and newspaper material to study the development of crime fiction means that not only are ‘periodicals’ and other journalistic content under study as an object in of themselves, but they are also being used to study wider textual developments and the impacts that journalism had on other cultural productions. This has the effect of blurring several critical fields together (such as genre history, periodical studies, the history of policing, the history of journalism and the development of detective fiction) and of further augmenting our reading and understanding of a huge amount of primary texts.

However, perhaps the most important next step for any further project than this one, however, is the extension of this project’s new historicist-based methodological explorations of the connections between nineteenth-century journalism and *other* fictional genres. For this initial study into the relationship between periodical journalism and the rise of genre fiction, ‘detective fiction’ was particularly fertile ground for exploration as it was connected with another nineteenth-century British innovation – the inception of a nationwide form of standardised uniformed law-enforcement. However, as Paul Fyfe argues, the mid-nineteenth century experienced an enormous boom in the production of *other* genres of popular fiction, all seemingly benefiting from the abolition of the punitive ‘taxes on knowledge’:

Confronted with the spectacle of popular literature, a cohort of Victorian commentators set out to explore its byways. Their curiosity about its mushroom-like profusion and spontaneity manifests in their very approach to this material: each takes random samples to investigate and *classify* [my italics]. They grab handfuls of ballads or pick any new

miscellany to read through, reporting their findings in essays that adopt the classificatory rhetoric of natural history.<sup>722</sup>

Consequently, a natural next step for any further project would be to perform an exploration of the development of *other* literary genres which formed part of this mid-century explosion of material, and their connection with the growth of popular mid-to-late Victorian journalism. These other genres could potentially include science fiction, horror fiction, gothic fiction, romance fiction, or even (post)colonial writing, given the role of the expansive British Empire in this era and the corresponding growth of journalism which concerned Britain's imperial entanglements. In fact, a further project could potential perform an exploration of the connection between periodical journalism and the rise of 'genre' fiction as a wider concept, as this was certainly a 'nineteenth century', again particularly after the repeal of the 'taxes on knowledge'. One thing is certain; the nineteenth-century periodical press had a hitherto, enormous yet underexplored link with the development of almost all mid-to-late Victorian popular fiction, and this is a connection which certainly warrants further extensive study in the future.

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<sup>722</sup> Fyfe, pp. 1-23 (p. 3).

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## **Appendix A: Published Article: ‘To Pry Unnecessarily into Other Men’s Secrets’: Crime Writing, Private Spaces and the Mid-Victorian Police Memoir**

The following peer-reviewed journal article appeared in the SOLON open-access journal *Law, Crime and History* in February 2018, and consists of research included as part of this PhD thesis. The issue of the journal was a special issue arising out of the successful ‘Lives, Trials and Executions’ conference which took place at Liverpool John Moores University in May 2017. As per the thesis-submission regulations stipulated by LJMU, the article is included here in its entirety as an appendix. The article’s original formatting has been retained.

### **‘TO PRY UNNECESSARILY INTO OTHER MEN’S SECRETS’: CRIME WRITING, PRIVATE SPACES AND THE MID-VICTORIAN POLICE MEMOIR *Samuel Saunders*<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Abstract**

This article explores connections between eighteenth/early nineteenth-century forms of crime-writing and police memoir-fiction – a genre that deserves greater recognition for its contribution to the development of the detective genre. It does this through examining how eighteenth/early nineteenth century crime-writing and mid-Victorian police memoirs were connected through their interest in examining private spaces associated with criminality and rendering them public, yet which remained distinct from each other through their different representations of police officers and detectives.

**Keywords:** crime, police, detective, memoir, Victorian, eighteenth century, journalism, fiction, detective fiction, genre development.

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Saunders is a final-year PhD student at Liverpool John Moores University, researching the role of the mid-to-late Victorian periodical press on the construction, reception and evolution of the detective fiction literary genre. He recently co-organised the ‘Lives, Trials and Executions conference at Liverpool John Moores University, and is currently co-editing a collection of works on sidekicks in crime fiction, for publication in 2018/19. He has also written for the *Wilkie Collins Journal*, the British Association for Victorian Studies and the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals, and is currently the web-curator for the International Crime Fiction Association.

## Introduction

This article explores various connections between eighteenth and early nineteenth century crime writing and mid-Victorian police memoir-fiction. It performs this analysis for two reasons: firstly, to highlight how it came to be considered to be a legitimate form of 'detective fiction' in the mid-nineteenth century through the contemporary label of the genre as 'detective literature'. Secondly, it cements how the police-memoir became firmly entrenched into the generic development of crime-fiction overall. It does this through examining a major theme within eighteenth and nineteenth century crime-writing – that of publicising private criminal spaces such as the moment of execution, or the scenes inside court-rooms, prison-cells or the domestic spaces of the criminals. It then explores the rise of the memoir genre throughout the early nineteenth century, before shifting focus onto how the memoir genre became concerned with law-enforcement, as it was able to perform a similar task to crime-journalism – that of revealing private criminal spaces. However, whilst crime-writing was interested in revealing private *criminal* spaces, police-memoirs were concerned with private spaces associated with *policing*.

### 1 Rationale

The memoir-genre needs further study within academic scholarship on the development of detective fiction. The years between c.1845 to 1870 saw a huge increase in the popularity of police-memoirs, which were published both in popular (and affordable) periodicals and also as standalone novels. Sadly, this influx of cheap fiction is today often overlooked. Scholars working on chronologies of crime-fiction often cursorily glance towards mid-Victorian police-memoirs, but scholarly attention tends to progress away from it quickly. Indeed, Ian Ousby dismisses it as merely part of a wider influx of cheap mid-Victorian literature,<sup>2</sup> Charles Rzepka briefly acknowledges the police-memoir, however prefers to focus on the work of

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<sup>2</sup> Ian Ousby, *The Crime and Mystery Book: A Readers Companion*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), p. 34

Emile Gaboriau,<sup>3</sup> and Stephen Knight mentions several memoir authors but instead examines the development of detection as a literary technique.<sup>4</sup>

However, there is some recognition that police memoir-fiction had an impact on the development of the detective genre. Martin Kayman provides one of the very few standalone chronologies of the memoir genre, and argues that a 'flood' of memoirs emerged in the mid-Victorian era, building on the success of one of the genre's most popular authors – William Russell.<sup>5</sup> Heather Worthington argues that the police-memoir is the first genre where the police-officer or detective takes centre stage,<sup>6</sup> and Haia Shpayer-Makov concurs:

An important exception to the delineation of detective figures in various literary modes was the pseudo-memoirs of detectives. ... This narrative strategy not only expanded the presence of the official detective figure in literature significantly, but also accorded him a central role in the plot.<sup>7</sup>

Consequently, this article seeks to readdress the memoir-genre's presence within the development of the detective novel by situating it alongside other forms of crime writing, and thematically connecting it through the revelation of private criminal spaces.

## 2 Crime Writing and Private Space

Throughout the eighteenth century, various forms of 'crime-writing' became extremely popular. These included various different genres, such as execution broadsides, the *Accounts of the Ordinaries of Newgate*, various criminal biographies and the *Newgate Calendars*, which all directly influenced nineteenth-century periodical and newspaper 'crime-reporting' and which all focused on the criminal, and their life, and their crimes.<sup>8</sup> Cheaply-produced execution broadsides were some of the earliest popular forms of 'crime writing',

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Rzepka, *Detective Fiction*, (Polity, 2005), pp. 90-92

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 30-33

<sup>5</sup> Martin Kayman, *From Bow Street to Baker Street: Mystery, Detection and Narrative*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 122

<sup>6</sup> Heather Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth Century Popular Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 4

<sup>7</sup> Haia Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective: Police Sleuths in Victorian and Edwardian England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 232-233

<sup>8</sup> Heather Worthington, *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. xi

and boomed in popularity throughout the mid-eighteenth century and on into the nineteenth.<sup>9</sup> Sold by peddlers in the crowd at executions, these were single-sheet, sensationalised accounts of criminals and crimes, which contained descriptions of executions, usually accompanied by a crude woodcut-image. They demonstrated 'sovereign or state power ... encapsulated in pictures and prose and [consequently] the spectacle of execution reached a wider audience than would have been possible in reality'.<sup>10</sup> They also provided entertainment and pseudo-moral/religious instruction.<sup>11</sup> However, execution broadsides also contextualised proceedings, and revealed valuable (if sensationalised) information on the criminal through description and 'penitent' verse. Worthington also suggests that public executions were a 'pornographic invasion of the integrity of the body', and helped publicise a usually-private moment – the precise moment of death.<sup>12</sup> Broadsides thus allowed readers to 'vicariously participate' in both crime and execution, and were therefore windows into various criminal spaces.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps in response to broadsides' popularity,<sup>14</sup> the Ordinaries of Newgate began to publish records of their experiences. These were titled the *Accounts of the Ordinaries of Newgate* and were less sensationalised and more expensive. In 1770 a copy cost 6d, whereas broadsides were sold for as little as 2d to 2½d for a dozen copies.<sup>15</sup> In a similar fashion to broadsides, the *Accounts* publicised private spaces of the criminal world through contextualisation. They had an edge, however, as the Ordinary had direct access to the condemned and could obtain insider-information about which street-sellers could only speculate.<sup>16</sup> The private moments rendered public by the *Accounts* therefore often

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<sup>9</sup> Vic Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 157

<sup>10</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 7

<sup>11</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, pp. 6-8

<sup>12</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 20

<sup>13</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 7

<sup>14</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 7

<sup>15</sup> Vic Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, p. 159

<sup>16</sup> Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, p. 7

surrounded heartfelt scenes of confession, penitence and farewell from inside the prison, for example this scene from the execution of Elizabeth Brownrigg in 1767:

She seemed quite composed and resigned, and continued in prayer with her husband and son upwards of two hours, when she took leave of them, which exhibited a scene too affecting for words to describe, and which drew tears from all present.<sup>17</sup>

The *Newgate Calendar(s)*, collections of tales that had previously appeared as both broadsides and *Accounts* is perhaps the best known and an extremely popular form of crime-writing of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> The first issue under this name emerged in 1773,<sup>19</sup> and subsequent editions remained clearly connected with earlier crime writing. The same farewell-scene in the Brownrigg case was described in the *Calendar* of 1825, almost replicated almost verbatim and which also mentions the presence of the Ordinary himself:

The parting between her and her husband and son, on the morning of her execution, was affecting beyond description. The son falling on his knees, she bent herself over him and embraced him; while the husband was kneeling on the other side. ... Before her exit, she joined in prayer with the Ordinary of Newgate, whom she desired to declare to the multitude that she confessed her guilt, and acknowledged the justice of her sentence.<sup>20</sup>

*Newgate Calendars* allowed readers to feel that which Charles Rzepka dubs, 'smug condemnation of ... despicable villains'<sup>21</sup> and, naturally building on earlier voyeuristic interests, depicted various private spaces and moments. However there was reduced focus on punishment and more interest in the criminals' lives and crimes. Consequently, *Newgate Calendars* often depicted domestic scenes and the moments of crimes, rather than prison or gallows scenes:

On a particular night Hallam came home very much in liquor, and went to bed, desiring his wife to undress herself, and come to bed likewise. She sat, partly undressed, on the side of the bed, as if afraid to go in; while he became quite enraged at her paying no regard to what he said. At length she ran down stairs, and

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<sup>17</sup> *Ordinary's Account (Elizabeth Brownrigg)*, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1767, Old Bailey Online, online resource available at <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=OA17670914>, [accessed 2 February 2017], (1767)

<sup>18</sup> Worthington, *Key Concepts in Crime Fiction*, p. 9

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, (Macmillan, 1980), p. 9

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Knapp (ed.), 'Elizabeth Brownrigg: Executed for Torturing her Female Apprentices to Death', in *The Newgate Calendar*, 5 Vols. (J. Robins and Co, 1825), 2: 369-374

<sup>21</sup> Charles Rzepka, *Detective Fiction*, p. 52

he followed her, and locked the street-door to prevent her going out. On this she ran up into the dining-room, whither he likewise followed her, and struck her several times. He then went into another room for his cane, and she locked him in. [...] Enraged at this, he broke open the door, and, seizing her in his arms, threw her out of the window, with her head foremost, and her back to the ground, so that, on her falling, her back was broken, her skull fractured, and she instantly expired.<sup>22</sup>

It is important to note that crime-writing became formulaic as these crime-narratives had evolved. They recounted the lives of criminals and the moment of the crime, before retelling their capture, imprisonment, trial and punishment. As the cheap-press expanded across the early-nineteenth century, various publications began including formulaically-similar crime 'round up' features, including *John Bull*, the *Sixpenny Magazine*, *Bell's Life in London*, the *Lady's Magazine*, the *Leader*, the *London Review*, *Once a Week*, the *Examiner* and the *Spectator*.

As the 'life, trial and execution' formula was transposed from early crime-writing into these periodicals, the desire to publicise private criminal spaces was too. Periodical crime-narratives also publicised details surrounding the murder, and also 'revealed' a multitude of private spaces by depicting intimate, domestic relationships between people. An example of this is taken from the *Leader*, in 1858:

At daybreak, his brother, who slept in the same room, observed blood on his shirt, and asked the cause. Atkinson replied that he had murdered Mary Jane Scaife on the previous night; on which the brother roused the family, and told them the dismal news. ... On Wednesday, Atkinson was examined before the county magistrates at Knaresborough, and he then made a verbal confession of his guilt. The girl had refused to marry him ... He then threatened to murder her ... [he] soon pulled out a knife, and showed it her. "She cried out, 'let's go home, Jim – let's go home, Jim!' Then I seized her and cut her throat..."<sup>23</sup>

In periodicals, the use of a character that was 'close' to the crime became a common trope used to publicise private spaces. In the above example, the murderer himself provided testimony, which naturally legitimised the details. In another example from 1858, the *Leader* recounted a murder which occurred in Manchester:

On Thursday morning early a young woman went to her sister's house in Little-Lever-street. She knew that her sister and her husband had not been living comfortably

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<sup>22</sup> Knapp, *The Newgate Calendar*, 2: 311-312

<sup>23</sup> 'Criminal Record', *Leader*, 7 August 1858, p. 767

together, and was taking her some bread and butter. She looked through the kitchen window before opening the door, and saw her sister lying with her head on the floor...<sup>24</sup>

The fact that a relative of the victim discovered the body legitimised the information as both true and confidential, and the circumstances which led to the murder followed using a neighbour's testimony:

At the inquest a neighbour said that the deceased and her husband were drinking and fighting every night. About three o'clock that morning witness was awoken by a great noise in the prisoner's house. She heard three successive heavy falls down the stairs, and then a female cried out.<sup>25</sup>

In 1866 the *London Review* published 'The Cannon Street Murder', which used the testimony of a neighbouring housekeeper to produce 'insider information'. However, this time the magazine expressed disappointment with the testimony, as her relationship to the crime was clearly not close enough:

The testimony of Mrs. Robbins, the housekeeper at a neighbouring warehouse in Cannon-street, was most unsatisfactory. She said that on the night of the murder she heard Messrs. Bevington's door shut violently at about ten minutes past ten, and saw a man come from the door whom she subsequently recognised at the station-house in the person of the prisoner ... But it appears that on the previous day [the prisoner] was taken past the house by the police, and that Mrs. Robbins, though told beforehand what was going to be done, could not recognise the man.<sup>26</sup>

### **3 Early Nineteenth Century Police-Memoirs**

As I have suggested, 'crime-writing' was largely interested in providing readers with insights into private criminal spaces, including prison cells, executions, court-rooms, domestic spaces, and the moment of the crime. As the police slowly emerged as a nationwide system of law-enforcement across the early-to-mid nineteenth century, some authors also became interested in also depicting their private spaces and operations in much the same way. However the police remained absent from newspaper/periodical crime writing. The only mention of police officers or detectives in mid-century narratives of crime was usually one line at most, mentioning an unnamed police officer or detective who was present only to validate the criminal's identity and make the arrest. For example, the magazine *John Bull*

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<sup>24</sup> 'Criminal Record', *Leader*, 2 October 1858, pp. 1021-1022

<sup>25</sup> 'Criminal Record', *Leader*, 2 October 1858, p. 1022

<sup>26</sup> 'The Cannon Street Murder', *London Review*, 16 June 1866, p. 669

wrote in 1862 that, 'holding told this to the Blackburn police on Saturday, and on Sunday the men were apprehended'.<sup>27</sup> In this, the police were shown to have worked outside the scope of the article's description, as it was not in its remit to publicise the world of the police. The 'life, trial and execution' formula, well established by earlier forms of crime-writing, had little need for a police-detective, as the criminal's guilt was established prior to the narrative's printing, and was in most cases the *reason* for its printing.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, a different genre was used to publicise the private world of policing: memoir-fiction. This became popular at mid-century, but was not a Victorian invention and did not emerge as the result of a specific desire to publicise the police. A list of titles highlights an eclectic mixture of subjects that the memoir-genre was used to explore, including 'Memoirs of a Missionary' published in *The Satirist* (1810), 'Memoirs of a Recluse' in *The European Magazine* (1816), 'Recollections of a Metropolitan Curate' in *The European Magazine* (1819), 'Memoirs of a Misanthrope' in *The London Magazine* (1822), 'The Memoir of a Hypochondriac' in *The London Magazine* (1822), 'Real Scene in the Life of an Actress' in *The Weekly Entertainer* (1823), 'The Recollections of a Student' in *The New Monthly Magazine* (1823), and 'Recollections of a Tour in France' in *The Weekly Entertainer* (1824).

However, memoir-fiction both brought the author's experiences closer to readers and, as Worthington suggests, it made 'public what had been private'.<sup>29</sup> This connected the memoir genre with crime-writing thematically, and was ideal to publicise the world of law-enforcement. The memoir-genre became earnestly concerned with policing around the mid-nineteenth century, however there were some isolated proto-examples. These included 'Diary of a Barrister during the Last Wexford Assizes', published in the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1826 and which told the story of the rotating courts of assize as if it was constructed from the recollections of a barrister's private, unpublished notebook.

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<sup>27</sup> 'Law and Police', *John Bull*, 6 December 1862, p. 781

<sup>28</sup> Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, p. 12

<sup>29</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 7

Additionally, *Richmond, or, Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Runner* (1827) also publicised the world of law-enforcement, by relating first-hand the experiences of a Bow Street Runner, and worked hard to 'reveal' the worlds of criminal and under-classes such as gypsies and circus performers. It also publicised the physical operations and methodologies of the Runners, and bridged a gap between crime writing interested in publicising private spaces of criminality and later police memoir-fiction interested in publicising private spaces of law enforcement. Today, *Richmond* remains largely forgotten, though it is known among more specialised academic circles. Heather Worthington provides a rare detailed analysis, where she suggests that *Richmond* was 'teenage', between the 'infancy of policing' and its 'coming of age as the New Metropolitan Police',<sup>30</sup> and she also suggests that it is isolated from earlier crime-genres as it does not contain the 'spectacle of sovereign power'.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, the satirical *Life of a Policeman by an Ex-Constable* appeared in the *Penny Satirist* in 1843, and is another proto-example of police memoir-fiction. It was apparently genuinely authored by a police constable employed by the Liverpool Constabulary in the late 1830s, and provided readers with a satirical, half-fictional, half-truthful<sup>32</sup> view into the 'daily drudgery of the lowly police-constable on the beat'.<sup>33</sup> Its position as a satire of the police, coupled with its description of constables sneaking off to drink or avoiding the inspectors, who attempted to ensure that the constables were constantly working constantly,<sup>34</sup> separates it from later examples of police memoir-fiction, which often presented the police as incorruptible, professionalised members of a structured system.

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<sup>30</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 105

<sup>31</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective*, p. 105

<sup>32</sup> Nick Foggo, 'The Life of a Liverpool Policeman, or, Fact and Fictionalisation in the Early Years of the Liverpool Constabulary Force', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, TBC (2018), p. 3 (*This article is in a draft stage and has been accepted but not yet been published by the journal. However, I am grateful to Dr. Foggo for providing me with a draft copy.*)

<sup>33</sup> Foggo, 'The Life of a Liverpool Policeman', p. 1

<sup>34</sup> Foggo, 'The Life of a Liverpool Policeman', p. 6

Finally, Charles Dickens's famous exploits alongside Inspectors Field and Whicher appeared in *Household Words* in 1850-51, and Field famously became the inspiration for Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House* (1853).<sup>35</sup> Dickens published accounts of his experiences in *Household Words*, including, 'A Detective Police Party' (1850), 'Three Detective Anecdotes' (1850) and 'On Duty with Inspector Field' (1851).<sup>36</sup> 'These provided an 'internal' view into the world of the police, as Dickens was a direct observer and privy to sensitive information. Dickens narrated conversations between the police officers as if he was not there, and also provided descriptions of inside the police-station:

Anything doing here to-night? Not much. We are very quiet. A lost boy, extremely calm and small, sitting by the fire, whom we now confide to a constable to take home, for the child says that if you show him Newgate Street, he can show you where he lives – a raving drunk woman in the cells, who has screeched her voice away, and has hardly power enough left to declare, even with the passionate help of her feet and arms, that she is the daughter of a British officer, and, strike her blind and dead, but she'll write a letter to the Queen! but who is soothed with a drink of water – in another cell, a quiet woman with a child at her breast, for begging – in another, her husband in a smock-frock, with a basket of watercresses – in another, a meek tremulous old pauper man who has been out for a holiday "and has took but a little drop, but it has overcome him arter [sic] so many months in the house" – and that's all, as yet.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4 Mid-to-Late Victorian Police Memoir-Fiction

However, Dickens's presence precludes his nightly exploits from being labelled as police memoir-fiction proper. These were not a police-officer's memoirs, nor were they entirely fictional. The most common form of 'police-memoir fiction' emerged during the mid-nineteenth century. Many examples of fictional 'memoirs' marketed as the true accounts of police officers were published between c.1850 and c.1880.<sup>38</sup> William Russell was perhaps the most prolific author of police-memoirs of the 1850s and 1860s. Born in Southampton in around 1805, by the late 1840s Russell was a writer living in London. He was an unsettled figure, having had nine addresses between 1845 and 1856, centred on Stoke-Newington. However, on the 1851 census his occupation is listed as 'Author Writer for Chief Periodicals',

<sup>35</sup> Rzepka, *Detective Fiction*, p. 90

<sup>36</sup> Worthington, *The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth Century Popular Fiction*, p. 164

<sup>37</sup> 'On Duty with Inspector Field', *Household Words*, 14 June 1851, p. 64

<sup>38</sup> 'Victorian Detective Fiction: An Introduction', <http://crimeculture.com/Contents/VictorianCrime.html>, [Accessed 9 September 2016]

implying that his income was substantial enough for him to make a living from writing alone.<sup>39</sup> Today, within scholarship, Russell is often perceived as either a hack,<sup>40</sup> or a small moment in the generic development only. His anonymous identity, coupled with the cheap nature of the writing, has led to scholarly 'glossing' by critics such as Charles Rzepka and Stephen Knight, who briefly mention Russell's success but only in relation to *other* literary advances in the detective genre.<sup>41</sup> However, despite this, Russell was part of a significant mid-century literary movement. It is premature to suggest that these are of little historic or academic value, as Russell made use of an 'innovative and popular form'.<sup>42</sup> The genre was designed to take the private spaces, operations and methodologies of the police force, and publicise them for the reader, and Russell himself explained that his memoir writing was designed to present an inside view into policing for readers. In 1856 Russell argued:

I, therefore, offer no apology, for placing these rough sketches of the police experience before the reader. They describe incidents more or less interesting and instructive of the domestic warfare constantly waging between the agents and the breakers of the law...<sup>43</sup>

It is also interesting that Russell had an awareness of detective fiction as an emerging literary genre, and connected it to his police memoirs. In 1862 Russell wrote:

"Detective" literature ... appears to have acquired a wide popularity, chiefly, I suppose, because the stories are believed to be, in the main, faithfully-told, truthful narratives. I have read them all, and need hardly say have discovered mistakes that proved to me that the best, most popular of them were the handiwork of a literary man, not the records of an actual experience. I have frequently made remarks in this sense to my friends, several of whom thereupon suggested that I should publish my own real experiences.<sup>44</sup>

Russell directly suggested that 'detective literature' was the 'police-memoir'. This pointed to the fact that the fundamental idea of 'detective literature' was to relate the experiences of police-officers, and that it was this which characterised the genre. For all intents and

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<sup>39</sup> 1851 UK Census, Ecclesiastical District of: West Hackney, Borough of: Tower Hamlets, entry 255: 9 Southgate Place. Resource accessed through <http://www.ancestry.co.uk> [Accessed 24 November 2016].

<sup>40</sup> Ousby, *The Crime and Mystery Book*, p. 34

<sup>41</sup> Rzepka, *Detective Fiction*, pp. 90-92

<sup>42</sup> Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective*, p. 234

<sup>43</sup> William Russell, *Recollections of a Detective Police-Officer*, (J&C Brown and Co., 1856), p. vi

<sup>44</sup> 'Experiences of a Real Detective', *Sixpenny Magazine*, March 1862, p. 325

purposes therefore, in the 1860s 'detective fiction' was 'police-memoir fiction'. An article from the *Dublin Review* published in May 1861 agreed:

Just now books of narratives of detectives and ex-detectives are all the fashion. Diaries, note-books, and confessions issue from the press in shoals, and one would naturally expect to find amongst them a complete disclosure of an ingenious and successful system.<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, other authors also picked up on this point. In 1864 'An Australian Detective's Story' appeared in *Once a Week*, which also commented on the contemporary popularity of police-memoirs:

On the occasion of a recent sojourn at H., I heard the story I am about to tell; it has never yet been given to the public, and yet it well deserves a place among those detective notabilia which of late years have furnished such curious illustrations of the science of crime-discovery. I give it in the words of my informant, at least so far as substantial verity is concerned:-

"I am a detective in the Victoria police, and have been one for some years; I was formerly one in Paris, and I was employed as such in the Hyde Park Exhibition of 1851..."<sup>46</sup>

The suggestion here was that 'detective literature' was designed to illustrate both the closed world of the police and the 'science of crime discovery', or in other words, 'detection'. The police-memoir was, again, considered to be a concrete form of 'detective fiction'.

Russell's police-memoirs included 'Experiences of a Barrister' (1849) and 'Recollections of a Police Officer' (1849), both published in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*. 'Recollections of a Police Officer' was novelised in 1856, retitled *Recollections of a Detective Police Officer*, and a 'second series' of stories from *Recollections* appeared in 1859.<sup>47</sup> The popularity of *Recollections of a Detective Police Officer* directly spawned *Leaves from the Diary of a Law Clerk* (1857), marketed as a new set of stories from the same author.<sup>48</sup> This was followed up by *The Experiences of a French Detective Officer* (1861) and 'Experiences of a Real

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<sup>45</sup> 'Recollections of a Detective Police Officer, by "Waters"' (Review), *The Dublin Review*, May 1861, p. 153

<sup>46</sup> 'An Australian Detective's Story', *Once a Week*, 24 December 1864, p. 25

<sup>47</sup> 'Recollections of a Detective Police Officer, by "Waters"' (Review), *The Dublin Review*, May 1861, p. 150

<sup>48</sup> William Russell, *Leaves from the Diary of a Law Clerk*, (J & C Brown and Co., 1857), p. 3

Detective (1862), published in the *Sixpenny Magazine*. Finally, *Autobiography of an English Detective* was published in two volumes in 1863.

*Recollections of a Police Officer* was serialised between 1849 and 1853. Each issue contained a short story, which followed the career of an officer named 'Waters', and which publicised the private spaces of the police, including both physical spaces and also their detective-methodologies and relationships between officers. For example, a story titled 'Mary Kingsford' (1851) depicted Waters being forced off of a train and into a waiting room alongside other passengers. Immediately, the reader was provided with a demonstration of Waters's skill at 'reading' people:

Two persons had travelled in the same compartment with me from Birmingham, whose exterior, as disclosed by the dim light of the railway carriage, created some surprise that such finely-attired, fashionable gentlemen should stoop to journey by the plebeian, penny-a-mile train. I could now observe them in a clearer light, and surprise at their apparent condescension vanished at once. To an eye less experienced than mine in the artifices and expedients familiar to a certain class of 'swells,' they might have passed muster for what they assumed to be ... but their copper finery could not for a moment impose upon me. The watch-chains were, I saw, mosaic; the watches, so frequently displayed, gilt; eye-glasses the same; the coats, fur-collared and cuffed, were ill-fitting and second hand; ditto of the varnished boots and renovated velvet waist-coats; while the luxuriant moustaches and whiskers, and flowing wigs, were unmistakably *pieces d'occasion* – assumed and diversified at pleasure.<sup>49</sup>

Russell also publicised the wider police force's physical operations and structures. Several tales, including 'Mary Kingsford' and 'The Widow' from 1850, and 'Flint Jackson' from 1851, begin with Waters describing how he was 'despatched' or 'ordered' by his superiors to a town or area to investigate crime, often far from London, including Liverpool and Guernsey. Waters interacted with officers working on the same case, who often inform him of specific and important details. For example, in 'The Twins' (1850), Waters is summoned and provided with the details of a potentially useful source of information:

My services, the superintendent late one afternoon informed me, were required in a perplexed and entangled affair, which would probably occupy me for some time ... 'There,' he added, 'is a Mr. Repton, a highly-respectable country solicitor's card. He is from Lancashire and staying at the Webb's Hotel, Piccadilly. You are to see him at once, he will put you in possession of all the facts ... and you will then use all

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<sup>49</sup> 'Recollections of a Police-Officer', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 3 May 1851, p. 274

possible diligence to ascertain first if the alleged crime has been really committed, and if so, of course to bring the criminal or criminals to justice.<sup>50</sup>

These connections with the wider police provided insights into how the organisation was structured and directed, and highlighted organisational relationships between officers, and were often marketed as 'sensitive information'.

This kind of police-memoir became common, as many authors sought to capitalise on their popularity. Some really were truthful recollections, such as *Autobiography of a French Detective* (1862) by Monsieur Louis Canler, however these were rare. As the genre grew, some writers gave their work unique twists that distinguished their work. Charles Martel's *Diary of an Ex-Detective* (1860) followed a loquacious detective-character (known as 'F-') in his campaigns, and the protagonist received orders only via letter which suggested that he operated more secretly than 'Waters', as he had a specific identity as a 'detective' rather than a fluid identity that fluctuated between 'police-officer' and 'detective'.<sup>51</sup> 'F-' also worked on a long-term basis by embedding himself among different groups, in disguise. This helped to reveal both a multitude of private, inaccessible physical spaces and also detectives' methodologies:

"I was in the habit of visiting a certain public-house in Lower Thames Street, where I was in the hopes of meeting as sea-captain, who was 'wanted' for trying to sink his ship and defraud the underwriters. I made-up as a working-man, and used to spend the evening in blowing a cloud....<sup>52</sup>

The fluid nature of *detectives'* identities thus allowed them to infiltrate closed, private spaces and publicise them for readers more efficiently than a uniformed police officer, and this also helped to cement the idea that anyone could actually be a detective in disguise.

Some authors opted for alternative locations to distinguish their work and to create new spaces to publicise. *Recollections of a New York Detective*, published in *Twice a Week* in 1862, set itself in the United States, and publicised a different environment through the

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<sup>50</sup> 'Recollections of a Police-Officer', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 22 June 1850, p. 387

<sup>51</sup> Charles Martel (ed.), *Diary of an Ex-Detective*, (Ward, Lock and Tyler 1860), pp. 1-3

<sup>52</sup> Martel (ed.), *Diary of an Ex-Detective*, p. 158

policeman. It suggested that rural areas of America were isolated, lawless and dangerous, yet the presence of a detective allowed readers to explore them:

...rumours reached New York that a small town in the extreme western portion of the State was the theatre of crimes. Several atrocious murders and robberies had been committed there, and not the slightest clue had been found as to the perpetrators of these deeds. There was no telegraphy or railroad to the town in question, therefore the reports that reached the metropolis were, in the first instance, vague and contradictory...<sup>53</sup>

Additionally, this also publicised the relationships between officers, suggesting that there was a fraternal bond between them, and that there was a system of professional support in place.<sup>54</sup>

Two further police-memoirs, Andrew Forrester's *The Female Detective* and William Stephen's Hayward's *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, appeared in 1864 and were 'unique' in that they used female detective protagonists, and scholarly attention has focused on the fact that the detectives are women. Kestner argues that they diversified a male-dominated literary genre, but they were threats to male power-centres and thus crushed,<sup>55</sup> and Kathleen Klein suggests that both were merely 'anomalies'.<sup>56</sup>

However, they were not 'anomalies', as Klein puts it, as they can instead be historicised alongside other *police-memoirs* (of which there were many), rather than other female detectives. Within this context, I suggest that they were written with the purpose of distinguishing them from their contemporaries by using female detectives as a literary technique. Both authors argued that ladies were perfect for undercover detection. They aroused less suspicion than their male counterparts and were able to infiltrate and reveal private spaces for the reader effectively. In *The Female Detective*, the protagonist Mrs. Gladden argued that 'the woman detective has far greater opportunities than a man of

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<sup>53</sup> 'Recollections of a New York Detective', *Twice a Week*, September 1862, p. 307

<sup>54</sup> 'Recollections of a New York Detective', *Twice a Week*, September 1862, p. 307

<sup>55</sup> Joseph Kestner, *Sherlock's Sisters: The British Female Detective 1864 – 1913*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), p. 229-230

<sup>56</sup> Kathleen Klein, *The Woman Detective: Gender and Genre*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 29

intimate watching and of keeping her eyes upon matters near'.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, in *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, the detective Ms. Paschal argued a similar point, suggesting that the practice of employing women as detectives was more widespread than was known, suggesting that they hid in plain sight:

Fouché, the great Frenchman, was constantly in the habit of employing women to assist him in discovering the various political intrigues which disturbed the peace of the first empire. His petticoated police were as successful as the most sanguine innovator could wish...<sup>58</sup>

Both *The Female Detective* and *Revelations of a Lady Detective* gave unique qualities to other police-memoirs and created additional private spaces, relationships and organisational structures for readers to witness and experience. The fact that these characters were women allowed them to enter (and thus render public) private spaces that even male detectives would be excluded from. This is perhaps most prominently exemplified in the case of 'The Nun, the Will and the Abbess', where Mrs. Paschal's is required to infiltrate a convent, due to it being 'just the case for a Lady Detective', as this was clearly a place where a male detective would have struggled to penetrate.<sup>59</sup>

Eventually, some authors abandoned the pretence that the pieces were written by real detectives, in order to portray how detectives were perceived to the public. In 1886, *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* published 'My Detective Experiences', which was distinct in that it viewed the police through the eyes of an external party:

On a certain evening, I found, to my dismay, that the entrance-hall of my house had been practically cleared of its contents ... I gave information at the nearest police station, and was informed that a police-officer would wait upon me. On the following day, the servant announced that a man wanted to speak to me at the street-door. I found an herculean individual in the garb of a navvy, with large sandy whiskers and red hair, who informed me that he was a detective. [...] At this moment I was again summoned to the door, where I beheld a somewhat diminutive individual attired as a clergyman. He was an elderly gentleman, with silver hair ... His 'get-up' to the smallest detail was faultless, even to the gold-rimmed double eyeglass. 'You have a detective here?'  
'Yes.'

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<sup>57</sup> Andrew Forrester, *The Female Detective* (London: Ward, Lock and Tyler, 1864), p. 4

<sup>58</sup> William Stephens Hayward, *Revelations of a Lady Detective*: (London: George Vickers, 1864), p.

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<sup>59</sup> Hayward, *Revelations of a Lady Detective*, p. 143

'I am a sergeant of the E division; can I speak to him?'<sup>60</sup>

However this also hearkened to other police-memoirs by depicting the detective as 'revealing' his methodologies and experiences, as well as the relationships and organisational structures of the police force:

In a few minutes, the 'clergyman' left the house, expressing a hope that I should obtain some tidings of my lost property. The 'navvy' remained for about half an hour, relating some of his experiences. 'You see, sir, we have different tools for different jobs. If there is to be any rough-and-tumble business, any work requiring physical strength and muscle, anything dangerous, they employ a man like me.' The speaker stretched his powerful limbs as he spoke with some natural pride. 'Our sergeant would be of no use at all in such work. He does the delicate work, the organising part of the affair – same as a general.'<sup>61</sup>

The late Victorian era saw the relationship between public and police begin to destabilise, and this change in public attitude was reflected in police memoir-fiction. In 1872 the *Argosy* published 'From a Detective's Note-Book', which related the experiences of a private detective. The unstable relationship between official police detectives and private detectives is discussed immediately, as the anonymous detective in this story receives a request from Scotland Yard for his assistance:

It was not the first time that I, a private detective, had been summoned by the authorities at Scotland Yard to inquire into matters they had not themselves succeeded in unravelling. An appeal to me was always a last resource with them. They did not like doing it; it was a confession of weakness that galled and irritated them.<sup>62</sup>

The fact that this text's protagonist worked privately is significant. As a result of the scandal that engulfed the detective department of the Metropolitan Police in 1877 (which was widely reported in the mass-media<sup>63</sup> and led to its very public restructure into CID),<sup>64</sup> the public began to lose confidence in the police and detective system, and began to better understand the distinctions between police officer and detective. Consequently, fictional detectives began to be depicted as working privately, rather than officially. Distrust of detectives became a much more common theme in later examples of the now-diversifying 'detective'

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<sup>60</sup> 'My Detective Experiences', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 3 April 1886, p. 221

<sup>61</sup> 'My Detective Experiences', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 3 April 1886, p. 221

<sup>62</sup> 'From a Detective's Note-Book', *The Argosy*, February 1872, p. 116

<sup>63</sup> For an example of a lengthy media reports on this case, see 'The Charge Against Detectives', *John Bull*, Nov 24 1877. This was merely one of many reports in periodicals and magazines of this case.

<sup>64</sup> 'The Detective System', *Saturday Review*, December 1 1877, p. 681

genre. A final, scathing example of a police-memoir is taken from *Judy* in 1881 demonstrates this attitude of the 'incompetent detective':

*'Little Puddleton, Slopshire, principle hotel – sign of 'Goat and Gaiters.'*  
*Monday morning, about 9a.m. – Just awake. Refreshed by slumber. ... Came down to breakfast in another disguise ... Mem. – Waiter who brought in grilled kidneys and washing-basket of telegrams has suspicious look. Mem. Again – arrest him after breakfast. ... Later on .... Wonderful energy of British detective when following up clue. Waiter has murderous look, especially when cleaning knives ... Mem. not to arrest him until he has put them away!*<sup>65</sup>

## 5 Conclusions

The influx of police memoir-fiction, so strongly influenced by the voyeuristic interests of earlier crime writing like the cheap execution broadsides, *Ordinary of Newgate's Accounts* and *Newgate Calendars*, has been overlooked in the development of the 'detective genre'. Whilst some cursorily glance towards the genre when performing an analysis of the chronology of the genre, there has been no in-depth or comprehensive exploration of the police memoir as a legitimate moment in the evolution of Victorian detective fiction. Yet this is problematic, as contemporary commentators and authors labelled the genre as 'detective literature', and the popularity of the crime-genre, coupled with the rise of the police force across the mid-nineteenth century, caused authors and readers to become interested in how the police operated. However, there was no way that the police could be inserted into the formulaic 'narrative of crime', which led to their insertion in the pages of cheap police-memoirs, which effectively allowed authors to explore the internal world of the police just as effectively as the crime-narrative could explore the internal world of the prison and the execution. The presence of a genre designed to open up the closed world of the police force throughout the mid-century suggests a strong, underlying and hitherto unexplored public interest in the methodologies and activities of the police and detectives, and the structure and style of the narratives suggests that the genre had a strong influence on later forms of detective-fiction.

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<sup>65</sup> 'Scraps from the Diary of a Detective', *Judy, or, the London Serio-Comic Journal*, 13 Jul 1881, p. 3