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Advances in cosmopolitan mobility, hybridity, and transnationalism during the modern age contributed to new criminal identity formations and classifications of crimes. This dissertation examines modern British fiction's construction of cosmopolitan criminality at a time of increased awareness of the intensifying influences outlaws and foreigners had on English culture. Cosmopolitan criminals populated new genres of crime fiction such as Victorian slum literature, Edwardian and late-modernist thrillers, detective fiction, and anarcho-terrorist narratives. I demonstrate how this crime fiction shaped cultural, legislative, and public reactions to criminal outsiders and rendered new types of foreign and international crimes visible to an anxious British public. This study advances our understanding of how cosmopolitan criminality became an important literary subject for indicating symbolic and material threats of transnational modernization and tested legal and cultural standards of normalcy couched as Englishness. I recover the many iterations and uses of cosmopolitan criminality from the mid-Victorian to late-modernist periods in order to show that foreign crime was a central concern for modern British authors.

Chapter one examines the cosmopolitan criminal's emergence as an atavistic, foreign menace comprising a "criminal race" in Victorian slum literature, such as in Arthur Morrison's *A Child of the Jago*. I read slum literature's association of cosmopolitan features with criminality as a way English authors distinguished an honest,

English working-poor under threat from degenerate cosmopolitan criminals in the slums. Chapter two focuses on cosmopolitan crimes carried out by anarchists and terrorists in late-Victorian and Edwardian crime narratives by Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson, Joseph Conrad, and G. K. Chesterton. Against the legislative backdrop of new anti-Aliens Bills and a general suspicion of cosmopolitanism these authors satirize cosmopolitan criminals and crimes to critique anti-cosmopolitan fervor in England. Chapter three reads Graham Greene's late-modernist thrillers of the 1930s as foregrounding poetic justice as an alternate means for thinking about social justice. Subverting classic thriller tropes, Greene dramatizes the social imbalances that thwart justice for the economically disadvantaged and protect the crimes of the social and economic elite.

COSMOPOLITAN CRIMINALITY IN MODERN BRITISH LITERATURE

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, new criminological concepts shaped British political and cultural narratives about the heightened dangers of foreigners and international crime. In this study I examine the literary, cultural, and political formations that materialized around conceptions of cosmopolitan criminality. I build my argument on a broad range of sources composed between 1851 and 1945.¹ I read canonized novels, lesser-known and forgotten novels, criminological studies, essays, letters, and a variety of journalistic, scientific, and sociological studies and texts in order to offer a full account of the cultural resonance of crime in the British literature of the period.² The increasing importance of cosmopolitan crime and criminals as a literary subject builds on and transforms earlier traditions of crime narratives. The new focus on

¹ In their summary of New Modernist studies Rebecca L. Walkowitz and Douglas Mao identify three trends in Modernist criticism: temporal, vertical, and spatial expansion. They argue that temporal expansion “has certainly been important in the study of literary modernism: the purview of modernist scholarship now encompasses, sometimes tendentiously but often illuminatingly, artifacts from the middle of the nineteenth century and the years after the middle of the twentieth as well as works from the core period of about 1890 to 1945” (738). The “modernization” of the English courts occurred during the nineteenth century. The 1800s saw a formalization of the judicial hearing practices in numerous reforms and standardization of the three major kinds of sitting court: petty sessions, quarter sessions, and assizes. The indictable offenses were updated and increased with the passage of the Juvenile Offenders Acts of 1847 and 1850 and the Criminal Justices Acts of 1855 and 1879. 1851 holds as an important starting date for this study because most of the texts I consider are London-centric, and we can say that “modern” London got its start when London became a full census division in 1851, essentially establishing its modern boundaries. The first criminal statistics were also collected by the police and courts during the 1850s in London.

² I adhere to Catherine Driscoll’s approach to modernist studies that presumes that “modernism is defined by the way it understands and articulates both ‘culture’ and the subjects that perceive and manifest culture,” so its analysis must start with an understanding of modernity as both a project of representation and experience (3).

an expanding horizon of transnational criminality in this period produced new literary genres including slum literature, anarcho-terrorist narratives, and crime thrillers. I analyze the uses of cosmopolitan criminality in late-Victorian and modernist British novels such as Arthur Morrison's *A Child of the Jago*, Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Dynamiter*, Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, G. K. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday*, and Graham Greene's late-modernist thrillers including *Stamboul Train*, *A Gun For Sale*, *The Confidential Agent*, and *The Ministry of Fear*. These novels and others like them contributed to a dynamic discourse about the advantages and perils of cosmopolitan modernization in England and the accompanying fracturing of representation, justice, identity, and security.

My study attempts to contribute to our understanding of British modernism through crime's many expositions circulated around representations and experiences of cosmopolitan criminality. Crime literature not only reflects our common reactions to crime but also guides reflexive responses to a host of criminal figures and actions, and it contributes as well to definitional projects centered on the criminal, which influence legal and political institutions. A key function of these narratives has been the construction of a metrology of criminality, where dimensions of criminals' perceived threats are determined by their relative foreignness. Modern British literature represents crime at its most dangerous when the crime or criminal originates from beyond the nation or erupts as an alien presence from within its borders. Focusing on foreign criminals, I examine how cosmopolitan notions of hybridity, racial atavism, and foreign alterity contributed to

narrative constructions of alien criminal identities: slummers, anarchists, terrorists, spies, and other international criminals.

Cosmopolitan criminality as opposed to domestic or “ordinary” crime poses an existential symbolic threat as well as a threat of illegality to the state and public.

Cosmopolitan crimes and criminals carry a measure of excess that frustrates the limits and ability of a state to account for and resolve crimes within its borders. Paying attention to international crime and criminals in the literature of the modern period leads to a reconsideration of the central role they had in what Melba Cuddy-Keane calls “modernist literature’s engagement of perspectivism and pluralism as a generative site for an alternative discourse of globalization” (540). Because readers as well as states adopt the perspectives of their dominant cultural narratives when it comes to crime, a key feature of British modernity was the effect the emerging discourses of cosmopolitan criminology had on literature, law, and the social vision of foreign criminality.³

In “A Defence of Detective Stories” (1901),⁴ one of the earliest essays seriously analyzing modern detective stories, G. K. Chesterton identifies the poetic, imaginative, and civic benefits that crime fiction contributes to modern English culture. He argues that this literary genre is especially expressive of modern life: it “is the earliest and only form of popular literature in which is expressed some sense of the poetry of modern life” (119). He means that detective stories and other genres of crime fiction expose “the

³ See Stuart Hall, *et. al.* for a discussion of how the “image clusters” (149) of crime organize and identify crime within an ideological structure that necessarily takes into account “the existing fields of explanation” (166) derived from cultural, scientific, literary, and journalistic narratives.

⁴ This essay was first published as “The Value of Detective Stories” in *The Speaker*, 22 June 1901.

romantic possibilities of the modern city,” revealing the “great city . . . as something wild and obvious” (122, 119). For Chesterton, crime literature transforms commonplace urban sites and events into a tapestry of imaginative encounters and meanings; everything can be a clue, “a deliberate symbol,” “signalling the meaning of the mystery” (120). The crime story reveals the modern city to be a poetic “chaos of conscious” forces and asserts the “romance of detail in civilization” (120, 121). Thus, crime stories initiate a defamiliarization of what we take for granted about our surroundings and encounters, and reflect the precarious balance between order and disorder in modern society. Additionally, they reproduce the imaginative flights of fancy, the unknowability, and banality that the modern city inspires. Chesterton writes, “It is good that the average man should fall into the habit of looking imaginatively at ten men in the street even if it is only on the chance that the eleventh might be a notorious thief” (121). Another advantage to the “public weal” that crime stories offer, according to Chesterton, is the reminder that “we live in an armed camp, making war with a chaotic world, and that the criminals, the children of chaos, are nothing but the traitors within our gates” (122-23).

Chesterton points to the interrelated pleasure of reading crime fiction and the reifying effects the narratives have on our imaginative responses to the criminal dimensions of modern societies. This study assumes that fictional representations of crime determine our perception of crime and criminals at least as much as our actual experiences of them. Because most of us have limited knowledge of the full catalog of laws that govern society, I believe that crime narratives influence whom and what we register as criminal more than our partial understanding of legal statutes. At times, these

depictions can be illustrative, instructive, progressive, and even uplifting, but in other cases, they can be misleading, manipulative, racist, classist, and divisive. In any case, literary representations of criminality give rise to a repertoire of scenes, characters, affective responses, and policies that have real-world consequences for the ways we interact with spaces and people. Legal-cultural narratives encode within a society a set of symbolic and affective “legal fictions” that authorize certain beliefs about the functioning of the law and crime. The analysis of crime literature raises broader questions about the cultural and moral makeup of societies and how representations of crime position certain crimes and criminals in the popular imagination. Understanding a society’s legal code as well as its cultural narratives about crime reveals a great deal about how that society sees itself and what it considers valuable, essential, and sacred.

Cosmopolitan criminality is crucial for understanding modern British literature’s engagement with the modernization of English law and identity. As Chesterton indicates, a key feature of crime narratives is to depict an armed struggle between the state and criminals and between order and disorder. Criminals who upset the social order are taken to be enemies of the state, “traitors within our gates.” The association of crime with treason points to the belief that criminals betray their national loyalty and social obligation to the collective good. Developments in England in the modern period further complicated the notion of local criminality; with waves of continental and colonial immigration into England, new criminological frameworks directly linked criminality to foreigners. The cosmopolitan admixture of goods, people, and ideologies – especially prevalent in metropolitan London – was registered in the literature of the era as an affront

to traditional English society. The old complaints about foreigners failing to integrate and live up to English standards were bolstered by legal, scientific, and cultural narratives that argued that England was threatened by degenerate and malicious criminal outsiders. Cosmopolitan criminals supplanted native criminals as the primary villains of crime narratives, registering the apprehensions surrounding England's perceived decline on the global stage, the splintering of traditional English identity, and the calls for England to participate in an emergent international legal and policing system. Troublingly, criminals were no longer only native "traitors within the gates," but were also thought to have settled in England, having come from afar, or were operating from foreign locations spreading their criminal corruption and disrupting the workings of English society. As Eric Ambler writes in *A Coffin for Dimitrios* (1939), "most international criminals were beyond the reach of man-made laws" (253). The problems this raised for England involved revising legal statutes and cultural assumptions about foreigners and national security.

Though crime may be alien to ordinary experience, foreign criminals are central to our common understanding of crime. Criminal conduct shapes conceptions of foreign otherness, making outsiders more susceptible to criminal suspicion. Foreign criminals have been a standard feature of modern crime literature from its inception. For example, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), considered the first modern detective story, introduces the association of criminality with foreigners. During the rush to aid the screams heard from the house where two murders take place in the Rue Morgue, a German, a Dutchman, and a Spaniard along with several French witnesses

overhear a Frenchman and an unintelligible speaker with “a very strange voice” from the top of the house. They all suspect that a foreigner committed the crime because they do not recognize the jarring, shrill second voice. Famously, the “foreign” tongue belongs to a murderous orangutan. The assumption of foreign criminality was so immediate and powerful among the cosmopolitan group of witnesses that they mistook the squeaks and grunts of an animal to be the barbaric tongue of an alien criminal.⁵ Humorous and troubling at the same time, Poe’s story shows the impulsive judgments people make in associating crime with foreigners. Literature has very real consequences for determining the ways people hastily associate criminality with foreigners.

Crime deploys for English culture a set of categorical and symbolic images that narrate the relationship between Englishness and the “foreign.” Crime in literature forces readers to consider people as subjects of the law’s governing standards. The law requires a criminal body in order to contrast its vision of normalcy. Thus, the law works to classify and exclude certain people and behaviors because of their “foreign” and undesirable nature to the national body politic. As an object of legal and cultural adjudication, the criminal body, or the body subjected to the process of criminalization, stands as an overt object of scrutiny for identifying what constitutes the foreign and abnormal. This happens, in part, through law and its narrative articulations, which inscribe, or “write” the law, onto the body.⁶ One function of crime literature, then, is to

⁵ Of course, we can’t fault the witnesses for not guessing the fantastic circumstance of an orangutan culprit. But Poe’s lengthy presentation of each of the witnesses’ description of the foreign voice, and their corresponding conclusions about which nationality the foreign criminal must belong to, speak to common assumptions that the worst crimes are thought to be committed by foreigners.

⁶ Franz Kafka’s masterworks “In the Penal Colony” and *The Trial* best capture the tautological logic of the

remind readers of both the body of the law and the law's determining effects on the body. And because modern British crime narratives consistently paint the criminal as foreign they establish a set of corollary conditions and discourses that equate foreignness with criminality.

The conservative regulatory control that legal and literary narratives assume to exert over their audiences share a similarity in producing a dominant national character by disciplining sentiment, thought, and action when it comes to crime. The "story of the Novel," D. A. Miller posits, "is essentially the story of an active regulation," disciplining readers' notions of what is and what is not part of "normal" experience (10). He argues that crime narratives police more than their criminal characters; they are essentially conservative, depicting "a normative scenario of crime" and representing delinquency as its own "enclosed" milieu set apart from routine experience (3, 5). Crime narratives typically mark the criminal as an abnormal outsider, deserving of imprisonment, death, or expulsion from society. Thus, crime narratives tend to conclude with the criminals' removal or sequestration through some deliverance of justice, restoring them to their "natural" external position to society, and reifying conservative assessments of crime as the inverse of normalcy and the order of the state.⁷

law's symbolic function of *habeas corpus* – translated as "to have the body" or "to hold the body" – in terms of the state's reliance on imprinting its authority on the bodies of its citizens.

⁷ Four commonly theorized types of justice – distributive (fair share), procedural (neutral fair treatment), retributive (just deserts), and restorative (reparation and reform) – determine the approach to transgressions in crime literature, usually with an emphasis on procedural justice administered through the state's legal and policing institutions. I consider poetic justice as an alternate means of justice in crime literature in Chapter 3.

Stuart Hall *et. al.* discuss the ways that dominant conservative constructions of a “*sense of Englishness*, of an English ‘way of life’, of an ‘English’ viewpoint” (140)

establishes crime as its counterpoint:

Crime both touches the material conditions in which life is lived, and is appropriated in the ideological representations of that life. Given the depth and breadth of these connections, crime appears to be inserted within the very centre of this conception of ‘Englishness’ – it has a crucial dividing and defining role to play in that ideology. This complex centrality of crime gives ‘crime as a public issue’ a powerful mobilising force – support can be rallied to a campaign against it, not by presenting it as an abstract issue, but as a tangible force which threatens the complexly balanced stabilities which represent the ‘English way of life.’ Crime is summoned through this ideology – as the ‘evil’ which is the reverse of the ‘normality’ of ‘Englishness’, and an ‘evil’ which if left unchecked can rot away the stable order of normality. (150)

Crime as the abnormal opposition of English normality presents itself as a sociopolitical and ideological tool for determining English identity constructions. Thus, criminality becomes a negative reference point against which positive English identities are constructed. Crime as represented in British literature influences this conservative ideological formation of Englishness.⁸

The organic rootedness of English “normalcy” and “decency” played a major role in associating foreignness with serious crime.⁹ For example, until the mid-twentieth century it was widely held that English criminals did not engage in extreme violence or

⁸ I intentionally connect the British literary corpus to a particularly English focus. Other than the national literatures written in Scots, Celtic, and Gaelic languages, British novels, as Garrett Stewart argues, were most often written in English, not “British” (17). This makes them “Amenable to contextualizations local and global” but also means that “their prose engineers from within the shape of its own understanding” (17). In other words, the English language of these novels determines a particular English outlook and referent.

⁹ In *Being English* Julian Wolfreys asks, “What nation, more than the English, relies on its well-constructed performance of reasonableness, ordinariness, everydayness, naturalness? Such qualities are aggressively impervious to questioning, ‘rooted’ as they are in seemingly organic traditions” (177).

gun play; these crimes were thought to be exclusive to more dangerous foreign criminals. This popular belief among the English population was advanced not by an abundance of experiential evidence but rather through popular crime narratives that represented genteel English criminals, such as E. W. Hornung's gentleman thief A. J. Raffles, as more refined than their foreign counterparts.¹⁰ It was believed that the character of the crime depended on the nationality of the criminal. British crime fiction reinforced a supposition of English superiority even in matters of crime.¹¹

Susan Sage Heinzelman contends, however, that "At particular historical moments . . . the social, moral, and aesthetic standing of specific literary genres can either promote or undermine law's authority" (213). Thus, literature can pose speculative challenges to the governing functions of the law and dominant cultural narratives about crime. Whereas the law seeks to proscribe certain behaviors and subject-identities, literature speculates on our wide-ranging experiences, opening human experience to an endless process of redefinition and representation. Crime literature, though typically read as conservative in its disciplinary functions for dictating normalcy in opposition to criminality, is often overlooked for its experimental and liberal advocacy for alternative positions relative to the law.

¹⁰ Written by Conan Doyle's brother-in-law, the Raffles stories first appeared in "The Ides of March" (1898).

¹¹ Theodor Adorno observes that "Characteristic of culture's pretension to distinction, through which it exempts itself from evaluation against the material conditions of life, is that it is insatiable" (19). We see in other cultures at this time the same attempt at this "pretension to distinction" in matters of native criminality. Maurice Leblanc's Arsène Lupin novels and short stories, for example, depict the gentleman thief as an exemplar of Gallic panache and cunning in comparison with more violent, villainous foreign criminals.

“Critical” crime literature, which I discuss in this dissertation, questions the authority of governing normative and conservative reactions to crime, performing a critique of socially given crime narratives.¹² In discussing crime and criminals, we must heed E. P. Thompson’s admonishment to be mindful of the fact that there is an important “distinction between the legal code and the unwritten popular code” in explaining attitudes toward crime at any given time (60). We must recognize that the law often lags behind or opposes shifts in the court of public opinion about certain crimes and criminals. This is why Thompson calls for “more studies of the social attitudes of criminals” that pay attention to “the evidence, not with a moralizing eye . . . but with an eye for Brechtian values—the fatalism, the irony in the face of Establishment homilies, the tenacity of self-preservation” (60). Thompson argues for an analytical framework that looks at the many sides of criminality, not least of which take into account those of the criminal, and those that oppose conventional beliefs and institutions that serve the Establishment. Rather than focus on novels that uphold the normative scenarios of crime, I examine those that offer some new insight into the standard fictional treatments of crime and mobilize a social critique in opposition to conservative discourses on crime. While the detective genre has received ample attention in the critical literature, criticism of crime narratives sympathetic with their criminals or written from the criminal’s perspective has received less attention. I address this critical crime literature and draw attention to its political uses for social critique.

¹² See Paul Roberts’s “Criminal Law Theory and the Limits of Liberalism” for his analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of liberal approaches to English criminal law.

Following Thompson, I intend to avoid analyzing with a “moralizing eye” or passing judgment on the nature of the fictional crimes in the novels I discuss. Let me make clear at the outset that obviously I do not support criminal behavior, nor do I wish to offer a defense of crime as a worthwhile wholesale form of political activism. Conversely, I do not want to offer an apology for a stance that blindly puts faith in the state’s authority to secure the “justness” of its laws through a monopoly on violence and threat of retaliation.¹³ Rather, I will address the representations of crime as it performs encounters with the law, with ourselves, and with others. Based on Gilles Deleuze’s conception of the “encounter,” Alexandre Lefebvre theorizes that the encounter – “the unrecognized, or, more exactly, that which challenges the form of recognition” – lies at the heart of crime’s relationship to law (72). Ultimately, “the encounter is an interruption,” and crime performs this interruption by upsetting the recognition of our suppositions about daily life, including our simple expectation not to be victims of crime (68). Because an “encounter occurs whenever clichés, habits, categories, and propositional certitudes are no longer sufficient to account for, think, and react within a situation” crime confronts us with a disruption of our habitual actions and responses as we grapple with its resolution. In this way, crime (both real and fictional) serves to “modernize” a society by continually challenging its social tenets and public policies. Therefore, crime is essential to the projects of modernity, including literary modernism.

¹³ See Walter Benjamin’s essay “Critique of Violence” for his analysis of the modern state’s *Gewalt* – implying force, power, and domineering authority, as well as violence – in relation to law and justice.

If the law is “presented as the solution to the conflict of values and the plurality of interpretation,” as Costas Douzinas and Lynda Nead describe it, then criminality proposes complex problems of values, identity, and interpretation the law seeks to resolve (3). Literature helps us make sense of the degree to which the social order presents itself as forcefully tested or undermined in a fundamental way by crime. In critical crime literature sympathetic to or written from the criminal’s perspective, as we see in Graham Greene’s thrillers, we see the genesis and motivations for crime. We see the mindset, the situations, the events, the causes, the environments, and the accidents that give rise to new crimes and new challenges to law’s recognition and to our individual conceptions of right and wrong, just and unjust.

I acknowledge that fictional representations of crime sometimes offer us little, or erroneous, insight into actual criminal psychology or acts. Therefore, I do not make a case for what literature “teaches” us about real crime and criminals. We can appreciate the aesthetics of crime, in the vein of Thomas De Quincey or G. K. Chesterton, without supporting it.¹⁴ Crime literature allows us to engage in the debates about art’s capacity and purpose to provide moral instruction. Oscar Wilde does this brilliantly in his groundbreaking crime novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. More than just an extension of Wilde’s treatises on the *l’art pour l’art* movement, this novel dramatizes the aesthetic appreciation of crime. During Dorian’s descent into hedonism, debauchery, and eventually murder, he begins to distinguish two types of transgressions: “there were sins

¹⁴ See Thomas De Quincey’s satirical appreciation of the aesthetics of crime in “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts” and G. K. Chesterton’s satirical musings on the uses of attempted murder for reform in his short story “The Moderate Murderer.”

whose fascination was more in the memory than in the doing of them; strange triumphs that gratified the pride more than the passions, and gave to the intellect a quickened sense of joy, greater than any joy they brought, or could ever bring, to the senses” (193). The intellectual joys of the recollection of crime over the sensual pleasures that might accrue in its committal are the same thrills a reader experiences in reading about sinister artifice and artful crimes while condemning its real life occurrences. That condemnation, Dorian reflects, has its roots in the imagination: “It was the imagination that set remorse to dog the feet of sin. It was the imagination that made each crime bear its misshapen brood. In the common world of fact the wicked were not punished, nor the good rewarded” (229). Wilde demonstrates that literature’s imaginative landscape invokes our desire for justice in the face of the world’s harsh injustices at the same time it structures our understanding of justice and crime.

Cosmopolitanism in the Modern Period

“Cosmopolitan” was the preferred term of the modern era that best captured the mobile, transnational interlacing of the world that we describe as globalization today. According to Tanya Agathocleous, in the Victorian period, for example, “the label cosmopolitan was readily affixed to individuals or groups who appeared to challenge the social, economic, or political integrity of the nation” (34). Gerard Delanty’s simple explanation of cosmopolitanism will be operable in this study: “The cosmopolitan moment occurs when cultures or collective identities interact and undergo transformation as a result” (177). Foreign criminals initiate such cosmopolitan moments for English

culture through their crimes, their potential harms, and at times through their very presence. In addition to their foreign qualities, I have labelled the criminals that I examine “cosmopolitan” because they bring about transformations in perspective, law, and culture through non-local impositions. Cosmopolitan criminals differ from native, or local, criminals because they pose a symbolic and material threat at the cosmo-scale.

Cosmopolitanism in the modernist period communicated the anxiety of a rapidly changing world that tested a person’s relationship to what had been the dominating control and authority of the state. Citizens found it upsetting when criminals and criminal hazards could no longer be circumscribed by a particular national border or legal code. For many people the cosmopolitanization of the world signaled a troubling shift in the way they understood the nation’s ability to define, protect, and serve them. I recover these negative period connotations of cosmopolitanism and relate them directly to the developments of criminological thinking in British literature of the modern era.

Cosmopolitanism also concerns the political relationships, partisanship, and challenges of mobile outsiders taking root elsewhere. Jessica Berman looks at how cosmopolitanism informs a “creative opposition that leaves an instructive social legacy” in modernist fiction (3). Berman points to a methodology of cosmopolitan reading that recognizes modernist fiction’s immersion “in the politics of connection, in the performance of affiliation already on the brink of dispersal,” which “creates radically new forms of cosmopolitan communities” (27).¹⁵ While Berman focuses on the positive

¹⁵ Berman argues that “The lesson of attending to the politics of community within modernist fiction is therefore the integration of ‘private’ narrative concerns within the realm of public politics, and the

politics of cosmopolitan communities tested in modernist fiction, I examine the political uses (positive and negative) of the specific unease over the formation of cosmopolitan criminal enclaves and practices. Reading for cosmopolitan criminality in modernist British fiction highlights the unavoidable ties between fiction's portrayal of crime, foreigners, and English culture as they pertain to revolutionary and reactionary politics.

Bruce Robbins's politicization of the cosmopolitan into the "cosmopolitical" recognizes cosmopolitanism's inseparability from the "domain of contested politics," including identity-politics. For Robbins, cosmopolitics functions "on a series of scales" and addresses "an area both within and beyond the nation" (12). The cosmos, rather than always being universal or global, according to Robbins, actually comes "in different sizes and styles," operates on different scales and is formed by different habits, thoughts, feelings, collectivities, and imaginative iterations (2). The cosmos, therefore, is plural, and requires an attention to the micro-scales and perspectives of the local, just as much as to the global, echoing Roland Robertson's conception of the "glocal."¹⁶ The cosmopolitan, then, is not limited to the global scale, but can be condensed to what Ulrich Beck identifies as the "cosmopolitan place or space" where differences are "constantly moving and jostling" and "*bodily materialized engagement* with the complex realities of the 'excluded others'" occurs (31, his italics). Cosmopolitan places and spaces help us

concomitant rewriting of community as a web of narrative performances, which are local and always potentially cosmopolitan as well" (201).

¹⁶ Frederic Jameson advocates adding "a dose of negativity" to Robertson's positive conception of the "glocal," which combines the global and local in one perspective. Jameson claims that the glocal must now "insist on relations of antagonisms" and see that "what emerges world-wide are patterns of negative and positive exchanges which resemble those of class relations and struggles within the nation-state" (xii). My focus on the "glocal" in examining the representations of criminal interactions at the local and global scale addresses Jameson's call.

zero in on zones where everyday interactions occur between people of different cultures as they navigate the fluctuations of differences in their encounters in a shared space. My selection of texts focus on the great modern cosmopolis: London.

Robbins, Robertson, and Beck push us to scale down the cosmopolitan to incorporate the political, material, and local issues that determine the circulations of local identities and spaces and their transitions into global ones. I anticipate a possible critique of this study, with its particular focus on a single national literature, as not being cosmopolitan enough. As these cosmopolitan theorists argue, however, a specific locality cannot be divorced from conversations about cosmopolitan interactions. My focus on English literature provides a necessary focalization of a local lens from which to examine the assumptions and practices that construct ideological and material differences between natives and foreigners, and between local and exterior places.

Cosmopolitanism's characteristic global "mix-up" of cultures and identities resulted in revaluations of the ways metaphoric and literal distances functioned in people's lives. Modern British writers engaged in this revaluation by characterizing British modernity as animated by conflicts of antipodean territories and spaces: metropolis/colonial outpost, urban/rural, national/international, native/foreign. In "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias," Michel Foucault draws our attention to the hierarchy of social spaces and their oppositions and intersections as a determinant of our present epoch, the "epoch of space." He argues that space "appears to form the horizon of our concerns" and that space no longer means a particular "site" but rather the "relations of

proximity between points or elements”: “the site has been substituted for extension.” From its inception cosmopolitan discourse has wrestled with the political, economic, legal, and moral consequences of the hierarchical expansion of horizons Foucault describes.

Cosmopolitan thought provides a lens to examine the representations of this process of carving out spaces and for examining relations between people over multiple scales of distances.¹⁷ Cosmopolitanism has always involved negotiations between distance and proximity and initiated reflection about the ways remoteness (of people, places, and events) functions as a relational mediating factor and measurement of care and influence.¹⁸ Since New Cosmopolitan studies’ emergence in the 1990s, cosmopolitanism as a critical frame to read modern literature has reoriented our thinking about cosmopolitan style, cosmopolitan aesthetics, the cosmopolitan novel, cosmopolitan criticism, and the cosmopolitan imagination.¹⁹ I am indebted to the critics and theorists who have argued for cosmopolitan approaches to the reading of literature and culture. I

¹⁷ The city plays an important role in enhancing cosmopolitan connections and anxieties. Malcolm Bradbury identifies modernism as “an art of the city” in so far as the great urban metropolises of Europe established a “fruitful symbiosis of the cosmopolitan and the nativist” that was “a profoundly important aspect of the aesthetics” of the modernist period (175). This study focuses largely on the cosmopolitan connections, spaces, and characters of London.

¹⁸ Cosmopolitan thought and critique has developed from its Greek and Roman origins into a rights-based political discourse stemming from its recuperation in German Enlightenment and Romanticism (Kant and Goethe). The nineteenth and twentieth century formations of cosmopolitanism were used either as a derogatory descriptor of the negative effects of capitalism and transnationalism or as the philosophical and moral basis for universal human rights and international law. Olivier Thomas Kramsch offers a summary definition of this century’s “new cosmopolitanism” as “a potential opening in thought with respect to the constitution of viable political projects transcending ethnic particularisms within national politics while conceiving the foundations of a politics beyond the territorializing logics of the nation-state” (1582).

¹⁹ See Rebecca Walkowitz’s *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation*, Berthold Schoene-Harwood’s *The Cosmopolitan Novel*, Judith R. Walkowitz’s *Nights Out: Life in Cosmopolitan London*, Robert Spencer’s *Cosmopolitan Criticism and Postcolonial Literature*, and Kobena Mercer’s *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*.

contribute to the project of “critical cosmopolitanism” as a method of analyzing “the history, uses, and interests of cosmopolitanism in the past” (R. Walkowitz 4).

Cosmopolitan Criminality in Modern British Literature chronicles the intersections between criminal narratives, crime theory, and cosmopolitanism. The three chapters focus attention on the context and history of cosmopolitanism as it mediates between notions of national belonging and criminal intrusion. In each chapter I draw attention to literary genres that engage in practical and experimental formations of cosmopolitan criminality as a means of social critique. Each chapter is organized around a particular period and literary genre, beginning with late-Victorian slum literature, proceeding to Edwardian anarchist narratives, and ending with late-modernist thrillers. I show that cosmopolitan criminality is essential to understanding the genesis of these literary genres, as well as perceiving the problems and anxieties of modern English culture the literature reflects and responds to.

Chapter one, “Slumming the Metropolis: The Emergence of the Cosmopolitan Criminal in East End London,” examines the emergence of cosmopolitan criminality in Victorian slum literature. I argue that cosmopolitan criminals living in London slums were considered dangerous not only because of their small-scale crimes, but more so because of the threat of their moral and racial contagion to the general native population. Early criminologists utilizing contemporary race theory advanced a picture of criminals as constituting a foreign race with inherent criminal traits that could be passed from generation to generation. The principal harm the Victorian criminal could inflict was to

threaten the racial purity (and by virtue the national character) by breeding with English citizens, particularly of the lower class. A criminal's crimes provided evidence of their racial atavism, so that even if they were English-born, they could be considered a different race to the upstanding English citizen. Crime, then, signaled to Victorians a person's abnormal foreignness, their un-Englishness. Cosmopolitan associations with mobility, itinerancy, and racial atavism all contributed to the formation of cosmopolitan criminality.

Standard readings of Victorian crime literature acknowledge the correspondences between race, crime, and socio-economic class theories. My focus on slum literature and cosmopolitan criminals, however, contributes to an understanding of a genre of literature that works against standard critical assessments. Critics tend to equate crime with the lower classes in Victorian literature, missing the nuanced class hierarchy the Victorians believed organized their society. Attending to cosmopolitan criminality shows the separation of the lower classes from the criminal classes, both economically and racially. My reading of slum literature, therefore, shows how cosmopolitan criminals were used to distinguish between the respectable English poor and a foreign criminal class, often living side-by-side in slums. Ultimately, this literature aroused sympathy for the impoverished working-classes of England and exposed the daily perils of their close proximity to cosmopolitan criminals in the slums, as my reading of Arthur Morrison's slum novel *A Child of the Jago* (1896) shows.

Chapter two, “Anarchists, Aliens Bills, and Cosmopolitan Criminality in Edwardian Fiction,” examines literary reactions to widespread English anti-cosmopolitanism in the Edwardian period. English xenophobic paranoia surrounding the dangers of immigrant cosmopolitan criminals, anarchists, terrorists, and other undesirable aliens – typified by the passing of several Anti-Aliens Bills – led authors like E. M. Forster, Joseph Conrad, and G. K. Chesterton to critique the anti-immigrant fervor through satirical depictions of cosmopolitan criminality in their novels and short stories. Their texts undermine the popular conservative narratives instigated in the Victorian era that too easily associated foreign alterity and cosmopolitan hybridity with criminality.

In the Edwardian period, irrationality and madness characterized cosmopolitan criminality more than racial atavism. Therefore, foreign evil geniuses and continental anarchist terrorists were the archetypal villains of Edwardian crime fiction. A key function of the texts I discuss here was to reinstate representations of English villainy alongside depictions of cosmopolitan criminals to critique conservative depictions and uses of cosmopolitan crime. A central text for the chapter, Conrad’s *The Secret Agent* (1907), for example, depicts a cadre of foreign anarchists that in many texts of the period would unmistakably be the villains of the piece. Conrad’s anarchist terrorists, including the double-agent Adolf Verloc, however, are laughably ineffectual; they are far removed from Edwardian portrayals of dangerous and deadly cosmopolitan criminals. The disturbing crimes – a botched bombing and Verloc’s murder – are committed by the English brother and sister tandem, Stevie and Winnie. Conrad counters genre

expectations to challenge the literary constructions of cosmopolitan criminality that fomented a conservative backlash against foreigners like himself.

Chapter three, “Late-Modernist Crime Thrillers: Graham Greene and Poetic Justice,” observes Greene’s characteristic reworking of Edwardian classic thrillers in his novels of the 1930s. The works of a leftist thinker and writer, Greene’s thrillers participate in the liberal critique of English society with particular emphasis on class-based injustices. Pitting cosmopolitan criminal villains against minor English criminals, Greene upsets conventional thriller tropes of honest English heroes thwarting international criminal conspiracies for the sake of patriotic allegiance to England. His late-modernist thrillers employ criminal anti-heroes who resist the authority of the state at the same time they fight against cosmopolitan criminals who are typically members of the economic and social elite. Because of crime fiction’s natural affiliations with issues of justice, equality, retribution, and transgression, Greene gravitated to this genre as a way to reinstate politics into fiction. He recognized in crime fiction that the seedy underworld’s appeal lies in its furtive potential for critical inspection of the unexamined causes for social ills.

Greene’s thrillers raise concerns about the nature of justice in what he sees as a partisan and corrupt English society. I argue that he introduces an alternative framework of poetic justice to address the failures of the state to ensure fair and equal measures of justice through legal means. His thrillers garner public sympathy for the causes of social justice by overriding readers’ natural inclinations of siding against the criminal in

thrillers. Because his criminal anti-heroes are fighting against forms of injustice themselves, Greene's readers adjust their critical judgments around issues of poetic justice in the narrative's fairness in meting out "just deserts" to its cast of characters. Whereas legal judgments dictate the wholesale condemnation of criminality and criminals in crime literature, the alternate frameworks of justice that Greene brings to bear in his texts offer models for critical resistance to normative but unfair practices and narratives endorsed by the state.

I agree with Charles Taylor's assessment that we "still live in the aftermath of modernism" because "Much of what we live today consists of our reactions to it and, more, of the dissociation and prolongation of the strands it united" (482). As current debates about international crime and terrorism continue in a post-9/11 world, the beliefs and policies that first developed around foreign criminals in the modern era still direct a large part of our thinking about the roles these cosmopolitan criminals play today. This study offers a critical framework for reading the literature of a particular time and place, while at the same time it provides a contextual background for understanding one of the key issues of contemporary history.

In *Longitudes and Attitudes* Thomas L. Friedman connects the events of 9/11 to the context of a "new international system" or what he calls "globalization," which emerged in the 1980s, replacing the Cold War system. Globalization entails "the inexorable integration of markets, transportation systems, and communication systems to a degree never witnessed before" (3) with an "overarching feature" of integration and the

power of individuals to move freely and “influence both markets and nation-states” (5). Friedman is right to attribute to the current era an unprecedented connectivity, mobility, and influence of people, goods, and ideas across the globe. But the origins of the “super-empowered angry men”²⁰ he claims globalization has produced, in fact, can be traced back to the formation of the alien criminal as a distinct criminal type in the modern era (6).²¹

The current ways we talk about, sanction, and police international terrorists, criminals, and other “angry men” who travel abroad to commit crimes, or whose crimes at least “travel,” originate from early criminological theories and popular crime stories of the late-1800s and early 1900s. These cosmopolitan criminals elicited the same fears and anxieties about an individual’s power to cast their crimes at the cosmo-scale in a “shrinking” world integrated by technology, transportation, and global markets.²² In general, cosmopolitan criminality in modern British literature shaped local (English) definitions of international crime and terrorism that are still operating culturally, ideologically, and symbolically.

²⁰ Friedman writes that “Everyone in the world is directly or indirectly affected by this new system, but not everyone benefits from it, not by a long shot, which is why the more it becomes diffused, the more it also produces a backlash by people who feel overwhelmed by it, homogenized by it, or unable to keep pace with its demands (4). Individuals who are not tied to governments, militaries, or international corporations are more empowered to affect events at a global scale, and some of these individuals (criminals and terrorists, for example) are angry enough, and smart enough, to victimize people on the global scale.

²¹ I follow David Held’s demarcation of globalization’s “modern” period as spanning the years from 1850 to 1945. Melba Cuddy-Keane makes the case that the “modernist period merits attention for its significant role in the emerging global consciousness” that terms like globalization and cosmopolitanism seek to describe (540).

²² In the *Invention of International Crime* Paul Knepper describes the ways that the “cosmopolitan criminal” (24) was thought to have been “empowered by the latest advancements in science”: “Clever professionals took advantage of the opportunities for mobility and anonymity and a vast pool of potential victims with a limited grasp of the implications of the new technologies in daily life” (18).

CHAPTER II

SLUMMING THE METROPOLIS: THE EMERGENCE OF THE COSMOPOLITAN CRIMINAL IN EAST END LONDON

This chapter introduces the rise of London's East End slums²³ in the nineteenth century as a cosmopolitan site for the habitation and creation of a new criminal type: the cosmopolitan criminal. I show how cosmopolitan qualities of mobility became tied to atavistic conceptions of racial savagery and degeneration, which in turn were used to define a new urban criminal class in East End slums. I present a historical and cultural overview of the links between Victorian criminology, race theory, and slum literature in order to analyze the cosmopolitan criminal's place within the racial and socio-economic hierarchy of English society. I show that constructions of cosmopolitan criminality depicted in slum literature separated the respectable English lower classes from the foreign criminal class. Ultimately, slum literature aroused sympathy for the impoverished working-classes of England and exposed the daily perils of their close proximity to cosmopolitan criminals in the slums.

In this chapter I build my case for reading cosmopolitan criminality through Victorian theories of the racial hierarchy of civilizations in terms of their predispositions

²³ I'll be discussing the literature concerning the London slums, though the same ideas circulate around slums in other major British cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, and Edinburgh. This is also not to say that all slums were located in London's East End. Consider, for instance, Charles Dickens writing on the criminal quarters in the heart of Westminster (in the West End) in "The Devil's Acre" (1850) "where the brightest lights cast the deepest shadows" and where can be found "the most deplorable manifestations of human wretchedness and depravity" (297). The notorious criminal rookeries of St. Giles and Seven Dials border on respectable West End Mayfair and Bloomsbury. South and East London did have the highest concentration of slums, however, and the slum literature primarily focuses on these areas.

toward savagery and mobility on one end of the scale, and civilized refinement and settlement on the other. Surveying a wide range of scientific, ethnographic, journalistic, and fictional texts that treat criminality and East End slums I attempt to tease out the ways the slums became places linked to racialized cosmopolitan criminals, at the same time they offered a place for study and commentary on the separation of the honest poor from the criminal. I close the chapter by reading Arthur Morrison's East End slum novel *A Child of the Jago* (1896) as a demonstration of what can be learned when attending to cosmopolitan criminality in Victorian slum literature. Specifically, we see Morrison's desire to separate the urban working poor from their criminal neighbors in the slums in order shape readers' sympathy with the honest English poor, to represent the criminal as cosmopolitan other, and to exacerbate anxieties of urban criminal contamination.

The cosmopolitan criminal emerged as a new racially coded type of urban subspecies within the metropolitan slums, exhibiting degeneration in both physical and moral attributes, and identified as genetically different from a "pure" English stock. Cosmopolitanism and criminality work in tandem to mark a person's relative distance from the ideal appearances and behaviors that the local identity upholds as normative. Cosmopolitan criminals represent the furthest removal from ideal conceptions of Englishness, marked by their dangerous risk for openly and actively undermining those norms. I conceive cosmopolitan foreignness not in terms of lying beyond the national borders, as "out there," but rather, lying beyond the expectations of what it means to be

English, “in here,” within the national borders.²⁴ Paradoxically, the most dangerous foreign threat for the Victorian was seen not as any international enemy or foreign empire – ultimately, the belief in the might of the empire still held – but rather, was seen as the domestic, racial criminal class concentrated in the city slums.

As theories formed around the idea of a distinct criminal race breeding in London slums, early criminologists and other writers about slums engaged with prevalent English race-origins debates that were seeking to trace and define the English race. Because the British Isles suffered from a lack of skeletal evidence of their early ancestors as compared to other European countries, British race scientists tended to focus on analyzing current racial conditions and health, rather than study their meager anthropological deep history.²⁵ This often led them to turn to other “sciences” such as ethnology, philology, anatomy, zoology, and physiology to determine the ancestral and contemporary racial makeup of England. This amalgamation of disciplines offered racial theories the credence of a scientific *and* cultural argument.

Not until the mid-1800s did the three popular strains of racial argumentation begin to merge. These were, according to Robert J. C. Young: 1) the biological definition

²⁴ James Cantile’s idea at the turn of the twentieth century that nationality can be read in one’s physical and moral condition is a product of Victorian attempts at defining the quality of English racial characteristics: “the soundness of the people physically and morally is the essence of national being” (2). The perceived soundness of one’s being, therefore, must correspond to the national norms of physical appearance and moral behavior, or is otherwise at risk of being categorized as foreign to the nation. Cantile also links the idea of environment as an expression of national character: “It may be taken as an axiom that man in his physique and national characteristics is an expression of his environment” (110). According to Cantile’s logic, the criminal residents of the slums represented a different racial type, and therefore, a different nationality.

²⁵ Robert J. C. Young makes it clear that “many of the early writers on race were medical men” but that they were “part of a company that included anthropologists, ethnologists, historians, and essayists, very few of whom were ‘scientists’ – a word which itself was only invented in 1834” (40). See also John McNabb’s discussion of this trend in *Dissent with Modification*.

of race, 2) the cultural and historical accounts of race based on location and ancestry, and 3) the historical philology approach to race which identified racial populations through language systems (42). From mid-century on, there emerged a “*discourse* of race” that “permeated the culture as it developed across a whole range of different kinds of knowledge, from the scientific to the popular” (43). To read English literature according to its “Victorian definition,” Young writes, “is to discover a world in which . . . there was a consensus that race existed, and, almost always, that there was a hierarchy of races – within the country, within Europe and across the world” (43). Ideas of national racial determinism formed around the hierarchical racial discourse at a time of increased imperial competition amongst European powers, so that the terms “nation” and “race” were often used interchangeably. Thus, in the popular English imagination, slum literature’s accounts of criminal “races” often equated criminals as belonging to “another nation” altogether, marking them as cosmopolitan additions like any other foreign immigrant to the English population.²⁶

The cosmopolitan criminal’s threat to English society was determined by his²⁷ “close-distance” to the nation-state, in that his centralized location at the heart of the

²⁶ I broadly characterize slum literature as the collected fiction and nonfiction works that directly represent and discuss slums and slummers as a primary topic. Slum fiction designates the novels and short stories that treat slums and slummers as primary characters and settings.

²⁷ The cosmopolitan criminal as I am defining it is primarily gendered male. Generally, three in four criminals in this period were male (Emsley *Crime and Society* 32). Victorian criminologists understood criminality operating along a clear separation of the class of crimes and contributing causes (including biology, environment, and social expectations) between male and female criminals. William Douglas Morrison, for example, explained that “the attributes of sex make it between five and six times more likely that a boy will become a criminal than a girl” and that the “female bent of mind is less active, less aggressive . . . and therefore less criminal” (44, 48). For more on the conception of female criminals of the era see Elizabeth Carolyn Miller’s discussion of the “New Woman Criminal” and Lucia Zedner’s *Women, Crime, and Custody in Victorian England*.

nation (and empire) in metropolitan London threatened the country with foreign degenerates living and breeding at home.²⁸ Moreover, the urban, cosmopolitan racial-criminals possessed the threat of contaminating the genetic line of the English population by virtue of their supposed wandering instincts and heightened sexual abnormality, giving rise to various calls and complaints for the expulsion, reformation, sequestering, and outright elimination of the cosmopolitan criminals and their East End tenements.²⁹ Ultimately, the cosmopolitan criminals' atavistic degeneration came to represent an anachronistic savage state of incivility within a hyper-modern industrial nation, and communicated a fear on the part of the middle and upper classes about the stagnation and degeneration of their empire, their nation, and their population.³⁰

Crucially, the cosmopolitan criminal's contaminating potential was not only a middle and upper class concern. A Victorian shift toward a more inclusive role for the poor in a broader definition of British imperial culture – evidenced by such Acts of

²⁸ Charles Darwin's "Variation under Domestication" in *The Origin of Species* (1859) was influential for ushering in the idea of race as more prospective than retrospective. Specifically, it helped shift the focus on race from looking at the formations of racial lines in the past, to considering the future of races either evolving (in a neutral sense), degenerating, or improving (Young 53). Generally, it was believed that the idea of improving a race, or at least preventing racial degeneration, depended on isolating the racial lines to prevent mixing between races and preserving racial purity.

²⁹ The Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act (1875) was passed in an effort to encourage local councils to clear slums for redevelopment. Octavia Hill was a key proponent for the renovations of slum courts at this time, writing about her own experiences as serving landlady of three houses in Marylebone. See her essays collected in *Homes of the London Poor*, especially "Four Years' Management of a London Court" and "Why the Artisans' Dwellings Bill was Wanted."

³⁰ London slums were also seen as an anachronistic setting that further identified them and their people as foreign to the more modern West End. Matthew K. McKean writes that "The East End is foreign to slum writers because it lacks, among other things, the cultural and institutional trappings of a more fully modernized city" (34). Post-Darwinian theories of civilization emphasized the temporal location of a society's advancement on a world-historical timeline of societal evolution, where those peoples who were categorized as "uncivilized" had not sufficiently kept pace with the evolutionary advancement of the more modern civilizations. Cosmopolitan criminals' inherent anachronism, therefore, marked them as less fully developed on the evolutionary scale of humanity in morality, physique, and civility.

Parliament as the Poor Law reforms and the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 – opened a space for increased attention to criminals as a distinct underclass. Common conceptions of the Victorian era too often assume a close connection between the poor and the criminal – lumping the *lumpen* together. The rise of criminology as a respected discipline alongside a growing attention to English “race” origins worked to separate the dangerous and criminal class from the poor, culminating in theories of a criminal race distinct from the English upper, middle, and lower classes.³¹ Clive Emsley notes that “as crime and criminals began to be measurable phenomenon,” as early criminology studies devoted more and more attention to gathering and categorizing data on crime and criminals, “criminal offenders were gradually separated from the poor and labeled separately as the dangerous criminal classes” (*Crime, Police* 130). He argues that it is “probable that the collection and publication of national crime statistics led to the perception of crime as a national impersonal problem,” which in turn led to a public perception of offenders “defined collectively as criminals or the criminal class” (*Crime and Society* 49).

The problems of poverty and crime, while in reality often closely related, were generally assumed to be distinct social problems.³² David Englander observes that before

³¹ There were no national crime figures before 1805. The 1830s and 1840s saw the rise of the British statistical movement, with the formation of six main types of offences formalized in 1834: 1) offences against the person, 2) offences against property not involving violence, 3) offences against property involving violence, 4) malicious offences against property, 5) offences against the currency, and 6) miscellaneous offences (Emsley *Crime and Society* 22).

³² V. A. C. Gatrell makes the case that after the “hungry” 1840s general theft and violence decreased because declining food prices and higher purchasing power of the poorer class made it easier on them through their periods of unemployment. During the second half of the nineteenth century, “the poor became less habituated to theft because they were less subject to periods of severe unemployment” (Emsley *Crime and Society* 40). The precipitous shift for dissociating the poor from the criminal class was in part due to

the Industrial Revolution poverty was understood as a natural condition of the laboring masses, and that laborers were expected to need assistance at some time in their life. But by 1832 the encompassing idea of a “labouring poor” class was divided into two separate categories: one for indigence or pauperism and the other for the self-sustaining poor. Pauperism was determined by dependency on assistance from the state directly as a result from irregular or non-employment, and the self-sustaining poor or laboring class, by non-dependency. This is not to say that the independent poor did not need or receive assistance from numerous charitable organizations in order to get by, but in the eyes of the law this overwhelming segment of the population was clearly distinguished from “paupers along with the irregularly employed and semi-criminal elements” (59). As a result of The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, poverty began to be understood as a “voluntary and therefore reversible condition,” so that those who worked regularly, even though they might only be eking out a meager existence on starvation wages, were considered honest, valued members of society (11-12). The “deserving” or “honest” laboring poor, as they came to be known, were seen to be valuable members of England’s industrial society.

The respectable classes saw the paupers somewhere on a “borderland between indigence and criminality” and were thought of as “turbulent disease-ridden desperadoes who were beyond reform and redemption” (33).³³ Poverty in the guise of vagabondism,

the fact that they no longer turned to crime for subsistence in great numbers during lean times. As Walter Besant pointed out in *East London* (1899), “Not everyone can defy the law even for a brief spell between the weary periods of ‘stretch’” (162).

³³ Paupers lost their liberty, civil rights, and dignity with the institution of the “workhouse principle” (Englander 12).

or pauperism, increasingly marked one's place on the scale of criminality as the century progressed. Engländer writes of the fear that industrial change had "created a race of vagabonds leading a nomadic existence" (63). I suggest that the cosmopolitan wandering closely aligned with vagabonds' search for shelter and work further distinguished them as criminals, or at least as a part of what John Thomson and Adolphe Smith labelled "nomadic tribes" "owing to their wandering, unsettled habits" consisting of people in a "savage state" "who would rather not be trammelled by the usages that regulate settled labour, or by the laws that bind together communities" (1). It was thought that those who wandered or suffered from "irregular" work chose to do so, except for obvious cases of infirmity or age (what was known as "indigence"), and were, therefore, part of the "dangerous classes" made up of a cosmopolitan criminal type whose wandering was a means for evading the law.

Because poverty was assumed as a normal condition of the mass working population, and therefore, deserving of assistance, crime became a key marker of difference when classifying the poorer classes. Those who committed crimes were seen not only as undeserving of assistance, but also impervious to assistance and reformation. For the Victorians, crime distinguished the undeserving residuum from the deserving poor. Race and crime theories contributed to widely held assumptions about class beliefs. If matters of class were largely "articulated as anything but contingent and performative" by adhering to "a realm of symbolic action and cultural production," as Kevin Swafford has argued, we can examine the generative cultural works that spread the ideas of class as "innate or natural distinctions" (3). I argue that slum literature was a leading influence in

popularizing the divide between the impoverished and the criminal, and motivated its readers to sympathize with the poor as well as disdain the criminal. Slum literature “naturalized” and visualized for its readers the innate criminalization of cosmopolitan slum dwellers.

Kevin Swafford understands “the popularity of late-Victorian slum narratives among the upper classes . . . as a kind of symptomatic need for an objectification of indigents and working-class people, whereby hard distinctions are made *visible* and thus concrete and knowable” (his italics, *Class* 20). He perceives slum literature as a kind of public gallery putting the “poor on *display*,” which in turn works “to solidify and *naturalize* the boundaries of class” (his italics, 20). Consequently, slum literature takes on a socio-political function for exposing the unknown slums to the ordering institutions and apparatuses of society and the state; their display requires a categorical fixity within the hierarchical framework of English society in order that the slums’ spaces and population may be legibly read and organized. Following the social and political concerns of mid-century “Condition of England” literature, slum literature excavated the slums and their inhabitants as a standard site for debating the causes of the dominant ills of the metropolis.

Suzanne Keen treats “Condition of England novels” primarily as “political” novels and argues that they “record the desires of a culture that hopes to reconcile its material needs with both its political and altruistic hopes. By attempting diagnosis, these novels distance themselves from the ‘condition’ of others they describe, even as they

expose selected targets within the economic, industrial, and political establishments” (145). For Keen, slum fiction exposes the slums to scrutiny for the purpose of classifying their class differences, and asserts that the “characteristic gesture of the Victorian political novel is to expose the shocking world” so that readers come to see that “these zones of disease, degradation, and dehumanization are not only part, but the *other half*, of England” (her emphasis, 145). The textual depictions of the East End “call attention to (if not to redress) the evils that afflict the whole nation,” so that the slums come to represent “the evils . . . for this other nation” (145).

Matthew K. McKean focuses on the slum writers of the late-Victorian period and on their use of a recognizable set of “imperial tropes” built on a “racialized discourse of savagery” (28). He argues that these tropes were used to describe “urban spaces and working class disorder” which in turn contributed to depictions of savagery of the “urban space at home and in the streets” (29). McKean states, “The pervasiveness of imperial ideology . . . produced in these otherwise socially and politically divergent writers a distaste for the poor and an inclination to sensationalize slum life in the interest . . . of displacing the poor geographically and permanently” (29). The “privileged gaze” of the slum writers, therefore, “constituted the overcrowded poor in the metropolis as an anthropological ‘race apart’” conflating the positions of the colonized outsider to the “‘undeserving poor’ at home” (34).

These critics identify a similar trend in slum literature in its categorization of the slums and their inhabitants as foreign and uncivilized. They also see at work the

classificatory power of slum literature to draw distinct boundaries around class and “others” – economic, imperial and cultural. While it is true that slum literature worked broadly to construct great divides between the respectability (and even desirability) of London’s denizens – whether in terms of class, behavior, or nationality – these and similar accounts of slum literature ignore the crucial ways that slums were also spaces carved up for analysis and classification. The critical tendency to read slum literature as a narrative that pits the poor against the middle- and upper-classes or the proper and posh West End neighborhoods against the degraded and decaying East End boroughs elides the ways that writers investigated the many social and economic stratifications within the slums themselves, especially in relation to criminality.

London’s poor, as John Garwood claimed in *The Million-Peopled City* (1853), could be slotted in to at least 20 different distinct classes (iii). The working-class and poor were not conceived of as one homogenized group of citizens. Criminals, likewise, would be sorted into various types by their crimes, their recidivism, and their physiognomies. A Register of Habitual Criminals was officially kept beginning in 1870, maintained by the Criminal Record Office in Scotland Yard after the passing of the *Habitual Criminals Act* (1869). These archives ensured that the data collected on convicted offenders would be used for meticulously tracking and classifying them. Fundamental to understanding Victorian slum literature, then, is recognizing the ways that slum populations were divided along the existing criminal (*viz.* racial) spectrum in

contradistinction to the working-classes.³⁴ More often than not, the poor and the criminal were seen as distinct populations residing in the slums. So too, Victorian slum literature should be distinguished from working-class fiction.

Peter J. Hutchings argues that depicting criminality was an “insistent quotidian shadow” haunting the Victorian era, which experienced a “massive overproduction of criminality and . . . an enormous proliferation of images and narratives of crime and punishment across a variety of media,” so that “[t]he spectre that haunted the nineteenth century was . . . the criminal” (26-27). In order to understand how and why the criminal haunts the nineteenth century we must keep the archetypal Victorian description of the criminal in mind: the criminal inhabits the position of the domestic “other” at a remove legally, spatially, and genetically from the English citizenry. Aside from their outsider status as outlaws (outside-the-law, opposed to and “othered” by the national legal standards) that criminals have always occupied, criminals of this period came to embody two further diverging forces of perceived separation and difference from the English population due to: 1) their spatial cordoning off of urban regions into thieves’ quarters, and 2) their reproduction of a racially devolved population.

Criminality, therefore, became directly related to new constructs of urban criminal spaces and racial degeneration. And because increasing numbers of criminals were perceived to be in dangerous close-distance to the national urban spaces and population, they came to be perceived as an uneasy presence threatening to disrupt the nationalized

³⁴ Peter Keating recognizes a “Cockney School” of slum literature that focuses on portraying the optimistic view of redeeming the poor working classes along with the rest of the respectable English population.

racial purity of England. The abundance of the criminal-as-spectacle, therefore, haunted England through the increase in their spectral (visible and ghastly) embodiment of an alien and internal excrescence. In other words, the volume of criminal representation and the shock produced by these descriptions of criminality positioned the criminal as a frightening central figure in Victorian England. Furthermore, the criminal's ubiquity in the literature of the era reveals the roles criminality played in determining the interdependent conceptions of space, race, and cosmopolitanism. Because constructions of place shape perspectives on criminality and vice versa, I focus on the ways the inhabitants and places of the slums of East End London became configured as urban, criminal, and cosmopolitan subjects through their textual representations.³⁵

While it is not new to assign to this period the founding of racialized criminality, my reading that cosmopolitan notions of mobility and incivility in slum literature strongly contributed to the discourse of racialized criminality adds a new context for the emergent discourse of cosmopolitan criminality. Furthermore, I hope the critical intervention I make for drawing harder boundaries between Victorian classifications of the poor and the criminal might serve to refine our readings of the abundance of texts that treat the subject of urban poverty, both working-class and criminal. Therefore, I offer a system for

³⁵ Corresponding with Naturalist narratives, such as can be found in Emile Zola's *Les Rougon-Macquart* novels, which portrayed the shaping forces of the environmental, hereditary, and social conditions on people, slum literature's strong sense of place presented readers with a picture of the slums' influence on the lives of its inhabitants. The criminality of the place helped explain the criminality of its people. See Keating's chapter on "French Naturalism and English Working-Class Fiction" for an account of the limited influence of the French naturalist school of Zola on English slum novelists. While working-class novels like George Gissing's *The Unclassed* (1884) and George Moore's *Esther Waters* (1894) show a familiarity with, if not a reliance on Zolaesque naturalism, slum novelists preferred to align themselves, when they did at all, with a particular English "realism," indebted to Dickens.

classifying the kinds and effects of slum literature and slum fiction which are distinguishable from working-class fiction.

I believe that reading criminality through its cosmopolitan racial origins in the Victorian era leads us to understand the different ways the poor and the criminal were administered through developing foundational codes of racial thinking. The “labor of race” as David Theo Goldberg puts it, is “the work for which the category and its assumptions are employed to affect and rationalize social arrangements of power and exploitation, violence and expropriation” (4). Focusing on the Victorian conceptions of a cosmopolitan criminal “race” reveals the shifts in the English public’s thinking and social institutions for integrating the working class poor, while exploiting criminological discourse for externalizing criminals. Thinking through Victorian period cosmopolitan criminality as a class *and* racial construct reintroduces the issues of national identity, personal security, urban formations, and class distinctions to criminality’s particularly important and powerful cultural sorting mechanisms of the era to literary study.

Victorian Criminology and Theories of Civilization

In the first half of the 1800s, new thinking about the nature of crime began to take shape. The central focus for thinking about crime moved from the criminal deed to the criminals and their “defects” that compelled them to a life of crime. As criminal characteristics garnered more attention and study, a general consensus developed around the idea that criminals were ill-equipped and ill-suited to conform to modern, civilized habits. Civilization at this time, according to Martin Wiener, “was coming to be seen in

terms of the new character ideal – that of *the self-distancing individual* capable of disciplining his impulses and planning his life – taking shape across the spectrum of social action and policy as a liberal solution to an apparently rising tide of passion and willfulness” (47, his emphasis). Criminals were considered those people in the population who chose not to, or could not, regulate their base desires and who actively impaired the proper workings of civilization.³⁶ John Stuart Mill’s works “The Spirit of the Age” (1831), “Civilization” (1836), and *On Liberty* (1859) were important for advancing a particular definition of (British) civilization opposed to the counter concept of barbarity. Michael Levin argues that for Mill, civilization was simply a “contrast with the barbarian condition” in four important conditions:

- 1) barbarians are considered to live in small, unsettled communities that wander, while the civilized live in fixed dwellings and in larger towns or cities
- 2) barbarians have little to do with modern commerce or trade, while the civilized engage heavily in agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing
- 3) barbarians do not engage in communal cooperation, while the civilized act together for mutual social benefit and enjoyment
- 4) barbarians have little or no legal system in place to ensure equal justice, while civilization is built on social contracts and laws that provide recourse for damages and ensure personal security (19-20).

³⁶ Michael Levin has shown the “term ‘civilization’ did not become common in English until the late eighteenth century” (9) See Levin’s brief historical construction of British and European concepts of civility of this era, particularly his chapter “Civilization,” in *J. S. Mill on Civilization and Barbarism*.

The picture of civilization that Mill, Matthew Arnold, and others paint at this time is of a complex society cooperating to advance common economic and social purposes based on certain expectations and rules. Those who do not cooperate, who break the laws, or are obstacles to the system operating smoothly, are conceived of in terms of their barbarous natures. Criminals, then, became linked with barbarity when they exhibited the characteristics listed above. In time, these conceptions of barbarity dominated the ways that criminals were defined. This led Victorian crime writers to assert the links between criminal deeds and barbarous characters. The idea set in that criminals lived together in small tribes, were nomadic by nature, shirked the responsibilities of honest work, and disregarded the laws of the land. For example, the “savage class,” according to one anonymous writer in *Wonderful London: Its Lights and Shadows of Humour and Sadness* (1878), “comprises the ‘roughs’ who infest every one of the hundreds of shady slums and blind alleys, that . . . disgrace the great city” (215-16).³⁷ The term “rough” mobilized a number of contemporary associations with “savage” qualities connoting violence, the turbulent, the unfinished, the unrefined, disorder, and even drinking rough alcohol. To “sleep rough,” for instance, was to sleep on the streets—which by law was illegal—often meaning that one lived a nomadic existence because of no fixed habitation or employment, and thus marked one’s barbarity.³⁸

³⁷ The author explains that the “rough” is too cowardly to be a “habitual criminal” but will still “shrink from individual responsibility” and commit crimes to gain what he wants the easiest way possible and without honest labor (216). Here we see a division in the classification of criminality from habitual to semi-criminal, but nonetheless, criminality is still tied to barbarity and the rough “savage state” counter to (English) civilization.

³⁸ The *East London Observer* reported on 26 May 1888, for example, that three men were found by a constable and charged with “being found sleeping in the open air. All the men were wretchedly attired and

A criminal's presumed barbarity also linked him to atavistic notions of evolutionary degeneration and savagery. In *Degeneration* (1880), Ray E. Lankester developed the idea of evolutionary degeneration based on Darwinian principles dependent on distinctions between environmental complexity. Lankester defined degeneration – this should be read not only as degeneration of the organism, but also of hereditary or racial degeneration in future offspring of the devolving organism – “as a gradual change of the structure in which the organism becomes adapted to *less* varied and *less* complex conditions of life. . . . In Degeneration there is a suppression of form, corresponding to the cessation of work” (32, his emphasis). An organism is degenerate when it is “in a lower condition, that is, fitted to a less complex action and reaction in regard to its surroundings, than was the ancestral form with which we are comparing it (either actually or in the imagination)” (32-33). The “elaboration” of an organism, on the other hand, is defined as a “new expression of form, corresponding to new perfection of work in the animal machine” resulting from more complex conditions of life. Thus, an organism either degenerates or elaborates based on the complexity of the conditions of life. Some Victorians attributed the degeneration of particular “savage races” as a condition of their less complex social organizations. Arguments about devolution caused by adaptations brought on by more simple conditions of life, and particularly less exertion in work and labor, lent themselves to easy formulas for thinking that criminals who made up their own savage race were necessarily degenerate, not only morally but

appeared to have been roughing it for a considerable time” (qtd. in Fishman 180). In an earlier account of a night spent on the London streets without a bed, George August Sala comments that he becomes jealous of a “mongrel dog” because “he can lie down on any doorstep, and take his rest, and no policeman shall say him nay,” but as for himself, he is resigned to the fact that “the New Police Act won’t let me do so” because it is against the law to sleep rough on the streets (12).

also physically. Furthermore, evolutionary scientists, both neo-Darwinists like Lankaster, and neo-Lamarckians like Herbert Spencer, argued that ontogeny (the development of an individual) plays a role in phylogeny (the development of the species). Therefore, the transmission of one's evolutionary degeneration was believed to be passed down to one's offspring, affecting the fitness and behavior of the individual and of their "race," or species.³⁹

Criminality, it was believed, was not only a *cause* of devolution because it allowed for people to disengage from the complexity of modern society's demands in the marketplace and the political and social arenas, but it was also a *product* of devolution, as those who were more and more unfit to cope with civilized life had little recourse but to turn to crime for subsistence, both as a matter of practicality and as a natural instinct. This prompted the English's great fear about the threat of racial contamination and degeneration being passed down through the inter-mixing of the criminal race with their own. William Douglas Morrison, for example, mobilized evolutionary degeneration theories to write that "bodily characteristics are handed down from parent to child" just the same as "mental inheritance" (108). Because of this, Morrison claims, "parents often hand down their moral defects in a more or less pronounced form to many of their children," so that one could "say on the grounds of heredity that a considerable proportion of juvenile offenders [criminals] come into the world with defective moral

³⁹ Race and species were often interchangeable terms. Young writes that from mid-century on, "the permanence of racial types and their inalienable differences from each other, had led to an ever greater preoccupation with the implications of racial mixture," and the question of whether or not each race made up its own species (89). Many people accepted as scientific fact that each race designated its own particular species, and the breeding between the separate races was either impossible, or destined to fail as "half breeds" would naturally degenerate and die out.

instincts . . . combined with external circumstances of a more or less unfavourable character, have the effect of making these juveniles what they are”: criminals (109). The devolution increases with every passing generation, according to Morrison, so that the problem of hereditary criminality only gets worse, not better, especially under the conditions of the urban slums they were thought to find so inviting.

For Victorian criminologists and slum writers, the “complexity,” or condition, of the environment played a large role to play in determining the physical and genetic trajectory and make-up of a person. It was only natural to them that a large number of criminals that they studied originated in the urban slums, as these places conformed to their preconceived ideas of how the uncivilized lived. Slums were seen as outposts where the savage criminal could live shielded from the hustle-and-bustle of the modern city. They allowed the criminals to live in their “natural state” of backward savagery in small tribe settlements in the midst of a great modern civilization. Slums, therefore, were seen not only as a product of poor city-planning or economic conditions, but as built environments shaped by their criminal inhabitants to suit their natural barbaric preferences.

Henry Maudsley, Professor of Medical Jurisprudence at University College, London, writing in *Responsibility in Mental Disease* (1874), synthesizes the established scientific theories on criminality of his day, discussing criminals in relation to race theory, evolutionary degeneration theory, and tying them directly to small settlements in the slums:

All persons who have made criminals their study, recognize a distinct criminal class of beings, who herd together in our large cities in a thieves' quarter . . . and [are] propagating a criminal population of degenerate beings. For it is furthermore a matter of observation that this criminal class constitutes a degenerate or morbid variety of mankind, marked by peculiar low physical and mental characteristic. (31)

Similarly, the renowned British criminologist Havelock Ellis defined criminals as belonging to a lower order of atavistic populations spread across the world, based on their shared racial and hereditary degeneration. Criminals, according to Ellis, are defined by their illegal actions and their “failure to live up to the standard recognised as binding by the community” (206). But, crucially, the criminal is also

an individual whose organisation makes it difficult or impossible for him to live in accordance with this standard, and easy to risk the penalties of acting antisocially. By some accident of development, by some defect of hereditary or birth or training, he belongs as it were to a lower and older social state than that in which he is actually living. It thus happens that our own criminals frequently resemble in physical and psychical characters the normal individuals of a lower race. This is that ‘atavism’ which has so been frequently observed in criminals and so much discussed. It is the necessarily anti-social instinct of this lowlier organised individual which constitutes the crime. . . .To admit, therefore, in the criminal, a certain psychical and even physical element belonging to a more primitive age is simple and perfectly reasonable. (206-07)

The appearance of a criminal’s legible anachronism and atavism – belonging to a primitive age and a degenerate lowlier race – trades on the ideas of cosmopolitan wandering and mobility as uncivilized and inherently criminal.⁴⁰ Maudsley and Ellis write in terms of the self-evident nature of racially degenerate criminals thriving in the

⁴⁰ Walter D. Mignolo traces the influence of Joseph-Francois Lafitau’s *Moeurs des Sauvages Americains Comparees aux Moeris des Premiers Temps* (1724) for converting “savages” into “primitives” and establishing the “denial of coevalness” and “relocating people in a chronological hierarchy rather than in geographical places” (35). G. W. F. Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* (1822) provides another famous example of locating cultures in time, rather than in space.

city, cordoned off by their own design in the “thieves’ quarters” of the London slums.⁴¹ Cosmopolitan criminality reinforced a logical connection between a criminal’s incivility, atavism, and degeneration by defining them as a member of a barbaric race that has managed to settle in a modern nation. The standard image of the Victorian criminal as a barbaric savage living out of his proper place and time would not be overturned until the start of the next century.

Victorian Urban Cosmopolitanisms and Illegibility

Victorian portrayals of London vacillate between shifts in local and global perspectives of the polis and the cosmos, the domestic imperial metropole and the world-city, or cosmopolis. Tanya Agathocleous writes that portraying “London as not only *a* world but *the* world is characteristic of Victorian city writing” (xiv, her emphasis).⁴² Deborah Epstein Nord shows that London was also used “to reproduce in miniature the world of the Empire” at this time (126). Take Thomas Nicholas’s account of London in *The Pedigree of the English People* (1878), for example:

⁴¹ Ellis also believed that the environment can excite the barbarous in a criminal: “When an original vice of organic constitution has thrown an individual into a more primitive and remote strata of society, the influence of environment will itself stimulate the effects of atavism and exaggerate its significance” (209-10). Thus, slums were not just abodes for criminals, but were also a particular threat in their influence on increasing urban crime.

⁴² As an early example, the December 31, 1836, issue of *The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* asserts in its Introduction that “London is a world in itself, and its records embrace a world’s history. . . . It contains within itself all that is gorgeous in wealth, and all that is squalid in poverty; all that is illustrious in knowledge, and all that is debased in ignorance; all that is beautiful in virtue, and all that is revolting in crime” (33). Walter Besant echoes this sentiment at the end of the century in his study *East London* (1899): “The city sprang up so rapidly, it has spread itself in all directions so unexpectedly, it has become . . . suddenly so vast there has been no opportunity for the simultaneous birth of creation of any feeling of civic patriotism, civic brotherhood, or civic pride” making East London ripe for birthing criminals (10).

Amongst the English are to be found specimens of every description of physiognomy, complexion, temperament, and cranial formation discoverable among all the European and Asiatic varieties of the race. The ethnological student, walking along one of the great thoroughfares of London – that ‘Babel’ which forms, not the point of dispersion, but the point of junction of all incongruities –with a slight effort at abstraction, forgetting the moment that all the busy myriads that hurry to and fro are veritable English people, with, of course, not a few distinctly marked visitors from foreign lands – might fancy that he had unconsciously entered some great ‘exhibition,’ where every typical human *physique*, profile, cranium, complexion under the sun, had been brought together for inspection of the curious. (452)

Nicholas sees the cosmopolitan mixing of London’s Babel visible in the city streets, which serve as meeting places for English citizens and foreigners from across the empire, and the world. One’s foreign indicators—skin color, build, physiognomy, etc.—are distinctly marked and easily read through their straightforward exhibition. Cosmopolitan London is positioned as the preeminent nineteenth-century world-city.

We should think of the “world” of London as comprised of many worlds, presenting the cosmopolitan particularities of *the* world while it stands in as *a* world amongst many. C. F. G. Masterman captures this feeling of London as a world unto itself in *From the Abyss* (1902) as his slum resident character voices the incalculable, uncategorizable totality that is London: “We had thought that a city of four millions of people were merely a collection of one hundred cities of forty thousand. We find it differing not only in degree, but in kind, producing a mammoth of gigantic and unknown possibility” (7).⁴³ Then training his attention to the slums, the same anonymous character

⁴³ Francis Place, writing to Richard Cobden in 1840, explains why the Anti-Corn Law League could not unite the metropolis: “London differs very widely from Manchester, and, indeed, from every other place on the face of the earth. It has no local or particular interest as a town, not even as to politics. Its several boroughs in this respect are like so many very populous places at a distance from one another, and the

sees London's many "little worlds" and describes the inner life of slums and their people as "A riddle whose solution is dark and obscure, and presents no obvious meaning" (26). The character registers "A disturbed glance" "directed towards our dim abodes" from those seeking to peer into the slums' dismal and inscrutable abyss, but can only dimly make out "a sudden vague disquietude as of incalculable forces, pent up, some day [*sic*] destined to burst out and ravage and destroy" (63). The vast and varied urban worlds of London produced the anxiety attendant upon urban illegibility, and this anxiety increases, according to Simon Joyce, when city-dwellers "no longer have a clear map of how the major trajectories, borders, and districts stand in relation to each other, and when their sense of the city as a whole ceases to function as a coherent and organizing frame of reference" (2).

For all the attention the slums received, they remained a persistent blind spot within the city's formal coherence. The slums could be described in brutal detail, and the causes and remedies for such places were offered easily enough, but there was always a lingering inevitability that the slums' "incalculable forces" were beyond the reach of comprehensive understanding. Ben Highmore argues that "the study of urban cultures could declare its object to be the social anxiety caused by the city's perceived illegibility," and he remarks that writing about the city "render[s] its illegibility legible . . . or make[s] legible the effects and affects of illegibility" (7). The slums tottering between

inhabitants of any one of them know nothing, or next to nothing, of the proceedings in any other, and not much indeed of their own" (qtd. in Perkin 9-10). Place's description of London typifies the particular separation of London's incommensurable greater boroughs. The growth of London's suburbs in the century only heightened the sense of dislocation of one part of the metropolis from another, especially in relation to the slum quarters.

thick description and unknowability served to heighten the anxiety associated with these spaces for the general public. This in turn brought on increased scrutiny of the slums, so much so that for a time one could not help but encounter the slums in daily newspapers, governmental reports, church sermons, and popular literature. Slum literature purports to provide a full account of the heretofore illegible urban zones and offers detailed reports on the daily lives of the anonymous slum inhabitants, peering into their bedrooms, their empty cupboards, their dirty lives. Rather than clarify the slums for the reading public, however, slum literature's consistent descriptions of the slums and their inhabitants as ultimately monstrous and foreign contributed to their heightened illegibility. One important effect of this illegibility was the disturbing and paradoxical phenomenon of the reading public's being presented with ever more information and literary accounts of the slums, but this heap of materials ensuring that the slums remained inscrutable, foreign places to be marveled at and feared.

The Industrial Revolution was in full swing during the nineteenth century. This resulted in a large-scale shift of job opportunities from the agricultural to the urban. In 1801, four out of five Britons lived in the countryside, compared to four out of five living in urban areas by 1901. The first census in London in 1801 recorded just over a million people. By 1901 that number had increased to over six million in greater London. As more and more foreigners moved to an increasingly cosmopolitan London seeking jobs, the increased population put a strain on available housing, leading to poorer families cramming into single rooms in large tenements –usually in the East End or in Southern London – that over time became the central hubs of London slums. Later efforts at

cleaning up East End slums required that the old dilapidated tenements be torn down and streets rerouted to open up space for new public parks, venues, and housing. These constant upheavals contributed to the particular anxieties surrounding the East End's topographical and racial compositional make-up.⁴⁴

In response, I believe, slum literature follows a trope of vacillation between the micro and the macro scales that register the Londoner's anxious proxemics of close-distance to the "others" of the criminalized slums, just like Masterman's peering outsider experiences above. The close-up – the micro-articulations of the slum to the outsider – is the obscure riddle that offers no solution or clear interpretation because it appears to be so foreign, so distant. Only when the distance and the difference are registered can the perspective of the whole be grasped, but still only in vague and totalizing terms. Along with a sense of dread or anxiety in not fully seeing them for what they are, the observer takes away an impression of the slums' menace and illegibility of difference. The illegibility of the slums' surface details are construed as a kind of cosmopolitan foreignness, and produce narratives that construct the interiors of their subjects in ways that reproduce the "vague disquietude" resulting in the only clear and legible defining characteristic on display: their alterity. Texts detailing the East End, therefore, configure it as one big slum to counteract its cosmopolitan interruptions within a totalizing

⁴⁴ The destruction of the slums, rather than alleviating dread, only served to heighten fears as it forced the dispersal of the slum's inhabitants to new locales of London: "By destroying a rookery you do not annihilate the rooks; you merely drive them away to form new colonies or augment old ones. . . .The objectionable ones, with their wives and families, do not remain without a lodging one single night; and of all things this is certain – that they will 'camp down' anew in a body, and in company with their own kind" (*Wonderful London* 20). The slum clearance programs forced the slum inhabitants to constantly be on the move in search of lodging, but for most observers this would have been read as evidence of their natural nomadic wandering habits, also signaling their barbarity.

narrative of London. They replace the anxiety produced by its urban illegibility with an anxiety produced by its legible criminality, enacting a process that transforms cosmopolitan otherness into a menacing criminal threat of ravaging destruction.

The use of the cosmopolitan as a negative category in the Victorian era, Agathocleous notes, “mobilized two related anxieties: (1) the fear of dispersal – of the loss of national character . . . and (2) the fear of hybridity, ‘vagrancy,’ or border-crossing,” so that “the label *cosmopolitan* was readily affixed to individuals or groups who appeared to challenge the social, economic, or political integrity of the nation” (34). Criminality and cosmopolitanism in this era were linked as two sides of the same coin: criminals who disrupted the economic, political, and legal administration of the nation became interpreted as racially foreign, cosmopolitan figures who represent the loss and degradation of the supposed homogeneous national citizenry as they infiltrated and bred a foreign, devolved criminal population within the national borders.

East End Slums and the Rise of Slum Literature and Slum Fiction

By the time of the creation of the term “East End,” around 1880,⁴⁵ the eastern region of London was already known as the primary site for the accumulation of industrialized urban ills and aliens, hosting the worst of the nation’s crime, poverty, immigration, and disease.⁴⁶ Because of its popularity as a subject of curiosity, analysis, and scorn in a variety of fields and texts, the East End became synonymous with the tales

⁴⁵ See *The Nineteenth Century* XXIV (1888): 262.

⁴⁶ Nord states that as “early as 1844 . . . the division of East and West and the veil of ignorance that presumably separated one part of London from the other were acknowledged by writers on urban poverty as social realities” (127).

of its many degraded slums, rookeries, and dilapidated tenement housing that the vice and squalor slum-dwellers were said to exhibit. Interest in the slums was so great that “slumming”⁴⁷ the East End for a certain intrepid and curious segment of the population did become, for a time, a fashionable pastime. Private companies and charitable organizations offered tours of slum workhouses, residences, courts, and streets.

The majority of the population, though, would have gotten their information about slums from the safety of literary armchair-slumming. Authors writing about the slums counted on the fact that few Londoners were willing to cross the borderland of West London into the “wilds of the East End” – for fear of exposure to disease, rampant crime, and the ills and temptations of lower class immorality and vice – in order to situate and delimit the slums’ essential characteristics and spaces according to their own individual projects and purposes. Slums became a kind of spatial and conceptual phantasmagoria, a fantastic and horrific source for displaying the threats of urban conditions and a site onto which authors projected the anxieties of the day, including the spread of disease, the scourge of a newly forming degenerate race of criminals, and the menace of diluting a racially “pure” English stock with “foreigners.” Authors relied on exaggerated rhetorical tropes not only to sell to a growing readership accustomed to literary sensationalism and Gothicism but also to peddle the idea that slums were

⁴⁷ I will use the period term “slummers” to indicate those dwelling in the slums, and use “slumming” to indicate the practices and attitudes of outsiders approaching and touring the slums, with a particular emphasis on the trope of descent. I conceive slumming as both a physical and literary exercise for exploring and depicting slums. See Seth Koven for a brief history of the terms. Also see John S. Farmer and W. E. Henley’s entry on the history and use of “slum” for a period understanding of the term and its development, most pertinently tied to acts of concealment and thievery. See also Nils Roemer for an account of slumming as “urban tourism,” particularly of Jewish ghettos.

fundamentally exotic and vastly different from their experiences of quotidian English life. Thus, slums were portrayed, for the most part, according to the narrow and sometimes skewed perceptions of the individual authors writing about them.⁴⁸ Those in the West End and across England primarily experienced the slums – living in close proximity to them, but still separated from them as if by a great spatial and social distance – through their textual descriptions, leading readers to form wildly inaccurate or misleading notions of the living conditions and characteristics of the “slummers.”

Not to be confused with working-class novels that are set in the slums and follow respectable working-class slum residents, slum literature as I conceive it emphasizes the criminality, foreignness, and degeneration of slum criminals. Thus, slum fiction differs from working-class fiction in several crucial ways. Working-class literature concentrates on the impoverished conditions and hardships of the working-poor, such as in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1855); Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley* (1849); Charles Kingsley’s *Alton Locke* (1850); Charles Dickens’s *Hard Times* (1854); George Moore’s *Esther Waters* (1894); Arthur St. John Addock’s *East End Idylls* (1897); and W. Somerset Maugham’s *Liza of Lambeth* (1898). Key scenes revolve around places of employment and the home. These texts emphasize atrocious urban working conditions (often in industrial factories), the miserable living conditions of the working poor, and their personal sufferings caused by bouts of unemployment, illness, injury, and pregnancy. They represent working-class people as oppressed and degraded by social

⁴⁸ E. P. Thompson reminds us that the “articulate minorities” of the period gave voice to the representations of the “less articulate majority” (55). The popular representations of the marginal spaces and people were more like “impressionistic estimates,” at best, and more often reveal more about the privileged class’s assumptions and prejudices than the reality of what they seek to describe (56).

conditions, and at times by their social “superiors.” Their characters are just barely holding on and making do, but they aspire to be respectable, honest, wage-earning members of society. These novels share a concern with not only making working-class life legible, but also diagnosing the social ills that lead to this way of life, while arguing for the need of reform. Overall, working-class novels present decent working-class English lives in the face of economic and social hardships.

Though sometimes categorized as a “slum novel,” Maugham’s *Liza of Lambeth* has the hallmarks of the working-class novel. Maugham reproduces the Cockney *patois* of the slums and working class in the South London district of Lambeth; dropped aitches, vulgar come-ons, and distinctive idiomatic phrases signal to the reader the distinctive language of London’s poorer classes. Though Liza lives in impoverished tenement housing in a slum section off Vere Street with an alcoholic mother, she has steady work and wages as a regular employee in a factory. Liza leads a distinctly working-class life: buying new dresses, spending time in Battersea Park with her friends on Bank Holidays, going to the theater, and taking third-class sitting rooms with her adulterous lover Jim Blakeston. “Slum life” and its representations of crime, squalor, violence, drunkenness, and illness are not main features of the plot or setting. Liza shuns criminal behavior and violence. When Jim proposes that they take a flat together and live as husband and wife, Liza protests that they can’t do this because he is already married: “it’s bigamy, an’ the cops tikes yer, an’ yer gits twelve months’ ‘ard for it” (ch. 10). The novel ends with a street fight between Liza and Mrs. Blakeston, who accosts her for sleeping with her husband. This is the closest scene we have in the book to a standard scene of slum fiction

violence, but the fight is not described in grotesque detail, such as we see in Morrison's slum fiction street brawls. Pregnant at the time of the fight, Liza suffers internal bleeding from her wounds and succumbs to them. She dies a sympathetic character, a victim of violence alien to her daily life.⁴⁹ The lack of emphasis on the slum setting and its reputed influences on criminal conduct and immorality position *Liza of Lambeth* squarely as a working-class novel. When compared with the slum fiction of the late Victorian period, Maugham's novel clearly exemplifies working-class fiction concerning working-class characters living in the slums.

Rook's *Hooligan Nights* (1897) masquerades as slum reportage – “a study in reality” (vi). It follows the misdeeds of Young Alf, a “young man who walks to and fro in your midst, ready to pick your pocket, rifle your house, and even bash you in a dark corner if it is made worth his while” (vi). This collection of fictional stories about a “Lambeth boy . . . going sideways” features slum fiction's emphasis on the indelible connection between slum life and a life of crime (vii). While both Maugham's and Rook's novels focus on young Lambeth denizens, Liza's working-class life looks nothing like Alf's life of crime. Young Alf's “philosophy of life” justifies his crimes: “if you see a fmg you want, you just go and take it wivout any ‘anging abart. . . . You got to look after yourself; and it ain't your graft to look after anyone else, nor it ain't likely that anybody else'd look after you – only the cops” (17). Alf models himself after the great criminal Patrick Hooligan, whose devotees carry on his surname with a “certain

⁴⁹ Keating notes that in the slum fiction of Kipling, Morrison, and Gissing “they could not conceive of a working-class couple possessing the sensitivity and emotional depth which, as participants in an adulterous love affair, they would require” (188). Maugham uses all “the normal trappings of a fictional middle- or upper-class love affair” in his novel, portraying Liza not “as a naturally immoral person” (188).

exuberance of lawlessness” and “an utter absence of scruple” (22). The respectable narrator recounts Alf’s many criminal exploits: knife fighting, thieving, pickpocketing, counterfeiting, house and museum burgling, dog-sneaking, “scrapping and hurricane fighting” (26). Young Alf, the narrator tells us, like others from the slums, is “equipped by nature for a life on the crooked” and “has sedulously cultivated his natural gifts” (32). The “colony” of “sturdy young villains” from the Lambeth slums, are described as products of their environment and criminal inheritance; crime comes naturally to Lambeth boys: “Regular employment, at a fixed wage, does not attract the boy who is bred within the sound of the hawkers in the [Lambeth] Walk” (29).

Slum fiction, like that of *Hooligan Nights*, focuses on the paupers, thieves, hooligans, swindlers, and criminal class that often reside side-by-side with the working poor, such as in Arthur Morrison’s *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894) and *A Child of the Jago* (1896); W. J. Dawson’s *London Idylls* (1895); Edith Ostlere’s *From Seven Dials* (1898); J. Dodsworth Brayshaw’s *Slum Silhouettes* (1898); K. Douglas King’s *The Child Who Will Never Grow Old* (1898).⁵⁰ The streets, back alleys, pubs, squalid tenements, and criminal dens dominate the settings of these novels. Crime, violence, immorality, drunkenness, and degradation are characteristic of the main characters. They do not aspire to conform to respectable middle- and upper-class standards; they rather avoid work when they can and live by a slum code where violence and crime are seen as positive means of self-expression. They are not portrayed as victims of the class system

⁵⁰ More critical recovery needs to be done in order to build a more complete view of the slum fiction corpus.

or industrialization, but rather as the victimizers of the population. They resist reformation, promote anti-social behavior, and threaten to spread genetic criminal degeneracy. The novels, short stories, and non-fiction texts that comprise slum literature render the slums and slummers as essentially antithetical to the decency and normalcy of the rest of the English population.

For example, Thomas Archer, writing in 1865 of Nichols Row⁵¹ near Shoreditch declares, “There is nothing picturesque in such misery” one encounters in the slums, “it is but one painful and monotonous round of vice, filth, and poverty, huddled in dark cellars, ruined garrets, bare and blackened rooms, teeming with disease and death, and without the means, even if there were the inclination, for the most ordinary observations of decency or cleanliness” (13). This is a typical account of the Victorian tendency to read the slums’ physical characteristics – darkness, ruination, blackness, and uncleanness – as representative of the moral and physical state of its occupants, so that slum environments were portrayed both as cause and effect of the vice, filth, poverty, and indecency of its denizens. Moreover, the monotony of misery Archer refers to implies the uniformity of these qualities across the many slums of the East End. In this way slum literature reifies a set of geographically bounded spaces that are totalized for their uniformity of undesirable otherness in contrast to the light, clean, upright, healthy spaces and citizenry of the West End and the rest of the nation. Specifically, slums offered particular urban spaces isolated by territory whose spatial and cultural displacement and degradation could be transferred to the degeneration of their criminal and cosmopolitan

⁵¹ This slum is the model for the Jago slum in Morrison’s novel that I treat later in the chapter.

populations in order to exclude them from national integration. Thereby, slummed, cosmopolitan criminals functioned as marginalized domestic subjects to define Englishness against, including the working-class of the East End.

Even though slums were seen as marginal spaces in London, these spaces, as Keith reminds us, may “occupy territories that are spatially and politically marginal but symbolically central to the psyche of the metropolis” (74). Because of the slum’s routine portrayals as hotbeds of vice, crime, and disease, the public was clearly fascinated by them. The public desired to understand and explore the slums because of their repellent otherness. Investigation into the East End slums, or social “exploration” as it was sometimes called, offered glimpses into a teeming urban setting that appeared wholly foreign and criminally dangerous from the vantage point of those observers who descended into the great “abyss” of the slums.⁵²

James Greenwood, for example, describes “children of the ‘gutter’ tribe” in *The Seven Curses of London* (1869), as living in the East End descending from the “genuine alley-bred Arab of the city,” and swarming the slums “with these dirty, ragged, disease-stricken little ones, and as plentifully as of yore they infest our highways, an eyesore and a shuddering to all decent beholders” (57-58). Later, Greenwood emphasized the slums’ dirt and squalor in *The Wilds of London* (1874): “Everywhere is stench, everywhere

⁵² Pamela K. Gilbert contextualizes the Victorian tendency to see immorality and disease connected to poor sanitation and dirt. As a result, the dirty sanitation conditions of the slums made them legible as centers of disease and immorality, fashioning them as cancerous cells within the otherwise healthy body of London. Because of this, the wealthy in London, Gilbert explains, desired to live on moral and physical higher ground, away from the dirty and immoral conditions of the slums, allowing the refuse and disease to wash down and collect at its lowest points, literally and figuratively. Therefore, travel from the West End to the slums often took on the rhetorical trope of a descent into a physical and moral abyss of sickness, degradation, vice, and crime.

uncleanliness and squalid misery” (74). In 1883 Andrew Mearns focused on the social contaminants of the slum courts, depicting them as low-lying basins where the criminal elements of society wash down and accumulate: “The low parts of London are the sink into which all the filthy and abominable from all parts of the country seem to flow. Entire courts are filled with thieves, prostitutes and liberated convicts” (10). Another commentator, writing for the *Penny Illustrated Paper* in 1888, widened the orbit for the amassing riffraff to incorporate the outcast and depraved of Europe, describing slums as cosmopolitan repositories and “hunting grounds of some of the lowest and most degraded types of humanity to be found in any capital. It is there that dregs of Continental cities deposit themselves” (qtd. in Marriott 152). And at the turn of the century, Masterman describes the conditions of the slums from the imagined perspective of one of its inhabitants, writing in *From the Abyss: Of Its Inhabitants by One of Them* (1902), “We have developed a quaint and specialized life of our own, sharply divided from the life of men who live in the sunshine” (20). He goes on to say that the established division between the East and West Ends is so great that “The respectable British citizen, with his gold chain and top hat, has never been a popular figure in the Abyss” (68-9).

This brief survey of responses to the slums demonstrates the heightened rhetoric employed by writers in portraying the foreign, visceral alterity of slums: from a place of filth and disease, to an urban criminal wilderness, to a foreign province where respectable British citizens and customs weren’t welcome. The sensational descriptions of the slums and its dwellers, the “Eastern peoples,” as altogether other, criminally savage, physically diseased, and spatially removed from the respectable neighborhoods of London fueled the

great interest in the tide of medical, ethnographic, political, scientific, journalistic, religious, and fictional slum literature of the era.

Criminals Distinguished from the Poor and Working Classes

I am not discounting the fact that slums were commonly associated with poverty as well as crime. But too often the poor are conflated with the criminal in critical discussions of slum literature of the period. Generally, the Victorian perception of poorer urban areas, and especially the slums, related with crime can be explained by the assumption that these areas lacked the “natural policing” that was expected in wealthier areas. Many social commentators believed slums were a “haven for the dangerous classes,” according to Emsley, because they lacked a “visible form of elite control and surveillance” (*Crime and Society* 135).

Matthew D. Hill, recorder (judge) of Birmingham explained it this way at mid-century:

in small towns there must be a sort of natural police, of a very wholesome kind, operating on the conduct of each individual, who lives as it were, under the police eye; but in a large town he lives, if he chooses, in absolute obscurity, and we know that large towns are sought by way of refuge, because of that obscurity, which, to a certain extent give impunity. . . . the gradual separation of classes which takes place in towns by a custom which has gradually grown up, that every person who can afford it lives out of town, and at a spot distant from his place of business. . . . The result of the old habit was, that rich and poor lived in proximity, and the superior classes exercised that species of silent but very efficient control over their neighbors. . . . They are now gone, and the consequence is, that large masses of population are gathered together without the wholesome influences which operated upon them when their congregation was more mixed; when they were divided, so to speak, by having persons of a different class of life, better educated, among them. (qtd. in Cantile 9-10)

Hill asserts that in large urban areas the gradual separation of the classes – such as we generally see in the East and West Ends, as well as in the trend of suburban flight of the higher classes⁵³ – removed the wholesome social influence the “superior classes” exercised on their lower class neighbors. As the places with the greatest concentration of the underclass, it was believed, slums afforded the obscurity and removal from elite control that the criminal population sought. This, of course, smacks of a class bias that equated money and prestige with decency and respectability.

But, as I am suggesting, because criminals were also seen as racially distinct from the upright English citizen, we can detect a tension in the slum populations, between the common English poor and their cosmopolitan criminal neighbors. The honest working-class, with little choice but to live alongside cosmopolitan criminals in low-rent housing, were under as much of a threat, if not more, than those segments of the population that could afford to purchase their distance from the concentration of criminals in the slums. The upper classes did not forget the deserving poor, as evidenced by the many movements for slum clearances and reforms, which were carried out for the benefit of the English poor, not for the criminals living there. Undoubtedly, Victorians recognized a clear separation of a social and racial hierarchy of the lower classes in the slums.

The literary expression of the spatial and racial close-distance of slums and slummers informs the ways Victorians defined their national spaces and citizens through an effort of demarcating those degenerate spaces and people deemed too criminal, and

⁵³ See Lara Baker Whelan’s study of suburban depictions of middle class culture as an escape from the dangers of the city: *Class, Culture, and Suburban Anxieties in the Victorian Era*.

therefore, foreign to be considered fully English. Clearly, one of slum literature's chief functions was to maintain the spatial and cultural split between East and West London. But it also functioned as a means for recognizing a criminal race set apart from the honest poor and working classes, which were increasingly identified as a segment of the English population and that needed the assistance and charity of the upper- and middle-classes. Daniel Pick contextualizes the late-Victorian and Edwardian theories of criminal degeneration for defining what it meant to be English: "'Englishness' had to be defined in a double movement of inclusion and exclusion, ideological assimilation and expulsion. . . . It was not a question of rejecting the whole urban class as 'rabble', nor of accepting it wholesale, but of constructing cross-class ideologies of patriotism shored up against the combined internal and external threat of degeneration" (215).⁵⁴ It did not make sense at the time of increasing national integration and enfranchisement, principally with the Second and Third Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884, to exclude vast segments of the urban population – the working-class and the poor – from consideration in national and cultural participation. The great many poor and working-class residents of the East End, therefore, were not associated with the slums' cosmopolitan criminal elements to be feared; rather, quite the opposite, they were increasingly identified as the honest, hard-working English segment of the London population that could best offer a

⁵⁴ Besant points out the East Enders' relative lack of patriotism. He writes that "the Union Jack, is never seen in East London except on the river" (14). This is a problem because the "children are not taught to reverence the flag of the country as the symbol of their liberties and their responsibilities; alone among cities of the world, East London never teaches her children the meaning of patriotism" (14). For Besant the lack of patriotic feeling marks those in the East End as removed from the common national project and "the pride and privilege of citizenship in a mighty empire," which only exacerbated one's tendency to shirk the law and honest work (14). A lack of patriotism, then, can be seen as a perceived contributing factor for the criminal degeneracy Pick shows was a primary marker for exclusion from being properly English.

contradistinctive model in virtue and appearance to their cosmopolitan criminal neighbors in the East End.

As I have argued, scientific theories espoused by a growing coterie of criminal anthropologists in the nineteenth century popularized the links between the degenerate body and mind to criminality.⁵⁵ Kylie Valentine analyzes the ways degeneration theories influenced the developing field of psychology in the nineteenth century, changing “models of etiology” for “understanding both individuals and populations” (13). According to Valentine “the deranged and delusional” were no longer the only objects of study for psychiatry”; “those that threatened the march of progress: those in slums and those from poor eugenic stock who insisted on reproducing” – criminals, in short – also caught the interest of psychiatry, paving the way for the study of criminal psychology. Pick also reminds us that in the second half of the nineteenth century “Degeneration was increasingly seen by medical and other writers not as the social condition of the poor, but as a self-reproducing force; not the effect but the cause of crime, destitution and disease” (21).

It is important to emphasize that degeneration was not associated with all of the East End populations and spaces, but rather was linked to the reproduction of a specific

⁵⁵ The impact of Cesare Lombroso’s groundbreaking theories on the connection between degeneration and criminality, most famously in *Criminal Man* (1876), generally stated that “physical and mental anomalies” marked criminals as “being apart from the race of normal mankind” (Godwin 12). Lombroso synthesized emerging theories of degeneration, atavism, savagery, and lunacy into a comprehensive system that sought to identify them as essentially embodied in the criminal subject. For the English reassessment and revision of Lombroso’s ideas of the Continental School of Criminal Anthropology, see particularly Havelock Ellis’s *The Criminal* (1890) and Charles Goring’s conclusions after conducting studies on over 3,000 English convicts in *The English Convict* (1913). Generally, Ellis and Goring critiqued Lombroso’s methods rather than his general conclusions about criminality.

criminal race within precise spaces of the slums. Charles Booth's color-coded maps of the classes of London population in his *Life and Labour of the People in London*⁵⁶, for example, show a separate category for identifying the black-colored slum courts and backstreets where the “lowest class” of the “vicious” and “semi-criminal” lived, distinguishing them not only from the upper and middle classes but also from the “poor,” and “very poor.”⁵⁷ These maps further stratify social class by drawing hard boundaries around spatial zones of London, identifying a separate criminal type outside the common notions of social status based on economic class. The criminal lies outside normal classification because he is conceived of as essentially alien to the rest of the English population, requiring a separate class of his own, despite his economic status or position.

Andrew Mearns also worked to distinguish between the class of the honest poor and the criminals residing side-by-side in the East End. He writes in *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: An Inquiry into the Condition of the Abject Poor* (1883):

One of the saddest results of this overcrowding [in the East End] is the association of honest people with criminals. . . . Often is the family of an honest working man compelled to take refuge in a thieves' kitchen; in the houses where they live their rooms are frequently side by side, and continual contact with the very worst of those who have come out of our gaols is a matter of necessity. There can be no question that numbers of habitual criminals would never have become such, had

⁵⁶ Booth's first volume in the series was published in 1889. The second, appeared in 1891, and dealt specifically with the East End. The third edition of the series published in 1902-03 extended to 17 volumes and presented the complete investigations and texts produced by Booth and his team.

⁵⁷ Booth uses the same categories in his study *Condition and Occupations of the People of Tower Hamlets, 1886-87* and defines the poor and very poor strictly by what their income is, stating, “I do not here introduce any moral question” in defining the poor and very poor in this way (10). His categorical description of the lowest class, however, does not depend on earnings but rather strictly on their unsettled wanderings and criminal acts, as this class is said to be composed of “loafers, semi-criminals . . . homeless outcasts of the streets” among other street performers, criminal fences, and “street-arabs” (10). Moreover, Booth claims, “There appears to be no doubt that it [this class] is hereditary to a very considerable extent” (14).

they not by force of circumstances been packed together in these slums with those who were hardened in crime. Who can wonder that every evil flourishes in such hotbeds of vice and disease? (9)

Criminality distinguished the two principal types of East Enders: those who were criminal, and those who were honest but poor because of circumstance, infirmity, or institutional prejudice and exploitation. The honest poor in slum literature, consequently, are to be read as sympathetic figures to be pitied and cared for, raised up out of the squalor and vice whenever possible. They require a wholly different approach from the cold-eyed state apparatuses for employing juridical and punitive measures to contain, or at least manage, the degenerate race of criminals. Thus, the cosmopolitan criminal in slum literature is chiefly responsible for the anxiety circulating around the problems associated with East End slums, not, as is commonly assumed, the general mass of the urban poor. As Mearns notes above, the damage done to the honest poor living in close-proximity to criminality is just as much cause for concern as it would be for any honest English citizen of any class. Mearns's ideas influenced the reformist slum landlady Octavia Hill to remark in the same year he published his tract, "There is perhaps no need of the poor of London which more pertinently forces itself on the notice of anyone working among them than that of space" because of the belief that overcrowded spaces of slum courts and residences posed a danger to those good, honest poor living in such tight quarters with their criminal and diseased neighbors (89).

Slum literature registers and produces the anxiety for London's (and England's) contamination by the criminal elements breaking free from their confinement in slum

territories. Because it was understood that criminals constituted their own degenerate race, the growing fear was that they would begin to breed with and taint the English genetic pool, leading to the degeneration of the nation and empire. Slum literature developed over the century first to identify a criminal race, then to note its degeneration and disease, and finally, to warn against their contaminating potential for the population.

We can see this development as slum literature developed during the Victorian era. Henry Mayhew, for example, identified the threat of a criminal race populating the slums for the Select Committee on Transportation in 1856, stating “that there is a large class, so to speak, who belong to a criminal race, living in particular districts of society; . . . these people have bred, until at last you have persons who come into the world as criminals, and go out as criminals, and they know nothing else” (qtd. in Pick 183). In *The Seven Curses of London* (1869) Greenwood worried about the “thief-born” populations of the slums acting “as so many rats” multiplying and undermining English society through their criminal activities and spreading disease along the way (90). In *Body in Mind* (1871) Henry Maudsley noted the “the consequence of evil ancestral influences” that led to individuals being born “with such a flaw or warp of nature that all the care in the world will not prevent them from being vicious or criminal” (qtd. in Emsley *Crime and Society* 75).

More drastically, Arnold White feared the criminal race contaminating England’s genetic pool in his study of London, *The Problems of a Great City* (1887). He declared that the great danger in England, and especially in London, was that “the higher

civilization is to multiply from the lower and not the higher specimens,” meaning that the English would be overrun by those “lower” classes of criminals that produce more offspring than the respectable, and for him, true members of the English population. He proclaimed that this happens because the criminal race “with low cerebral development renew their race more rapidly than those of higher nervous natures” which allows for “dynasties of criminals . . . [to] hand down from generation to generation hereditary unfitness . . . and engage themselves in warring against all forms of physical and moral order” (48-9). White maintained that the destiny of England hinges on a “struggle between moral and mental enlightenment and mental and physical deterioration,” where the common citizenry represents the former and the criminal slummers the latter (28). He was worried that the mentally and physically degenerate criminals, those with “tainted constitutions, brains charged with subtle mischief, and languishing or extinct morality,” who by virtue of their proximity to the English citizenry, would “taint once more a whole community” (28). Mayhew, Maudsley, Greenwood, and White typified the public’s anxiety over a growing criminal race threatening to destroy national cohesion from within.

Frequently, Jews were particular examples of the dangers of cosmopolitan outsiders settling in England. In *The Modern Jew* (1899), White argues that as “Continental apathy towards the Hebrew race” increases “the United Kingdom, with its traditions of freedom and the right of asylum, is marked by destiny as the sanctuary for oppressed Jews flying from political or religious persecution in other lands” (x). White sees the “present immigration of debased and impoverished Jews from the slums of the

Russian Ghetto” as “undesirable and hurtful to the English people” and warns that “the coming invasion” will lead to parting “with the realities of national life” (xi). He claims that if more isn’t done to restrict Jewish immigration into England, the English will find themselves “dominated by cosmopolitan materialist influences fatal to the existence of the English nation” (xi-xii). White sees Jews as “the only true cosmopolitan people in the world, with the exception of the Gitanos,” and lumps them in with “the ever-increasing horde of undesirable foreigners who are pouring into this country” (xvii, 5). For White and others like him worried about the menaces of cosmopolitan outsiders, Jews were well-known figures that demonstrated to the larger public “the profession and practice of an ignoble cosmopolitanism” in the form of the “destitute alien” (7).⁵⁸

Closely tied to cosmopolitan notions of atavism, degeneration, wandering, and deviance Jewish immigrants in England signified the perceived problems that arise from “cosmopolitan indifference to family and national development” (White 279). It was a common complaint that “the Hebrew race, after a century of trial, under fairly good conditions, at all events for sixty or seventy years of the time, have persistently refused to unite with other nationalities” (274). Their “cosmopolitan aloofness” differed from the problems attributed to the cosmopolitan criminal race; Jews were seen to be a problem to national cohesion because of their non-integration and their perceived control of money markets and the press while criminals were a threat to the racial and moral degeneracy of the population. Therefore, negative effects ascribed to Jewish cosmopolitanism, while

⁵⁸ White separates the Anglo-Jew into four classes: the aristocracy, the educated, the middle-class, and the destitute. He blames the “unlovable” “cosmopolites” in the bottom two classes for the ills and dangers the Jewish population poses to the nation (8).

indicative of Victorian conceptions of adverse cosmopolitanism, are a separate issue to the racial contamination of cosmopolitan criminality I discuss in this chapter.⁵⁹

The threat of a criminal contagion prompted plans for quarantining criminals from the rest of the London population both geographically and ideologically. Furthermore, the newly formed sympathy and national identification of the higher classes with the poor elements of society made it necessary to establish a new “lowest” class, or underclass, that the poor had recently vacated, so that the racial class of criminals now served as the prevailing group in England to define Englishness against. Slum literature functioned as a principal device for drawing the conceptual borders that isolated slum spaces within a fixed cartographic and socio-political position in England. Moreover, slum literature was a primary source for the public display of the investigatory processes for encoding the criminals’ threat to England in terms of their spatial and racial close-distance. The English defined what constituted Englishness through the exclusion of a criminal space and criminal race they identified as degenerate, diseased, and foreign. The rise of the slums and its concentration of criminals in determinate geographical locations offered a never-before-experienced site from which to analyze, investigate, and situate the criminal race against the English citizenry with ever increasing scrutiny.

Racial Criminality and Cosmopolitan Mobility

Eric Hobsbawm’s study of the three stages of “social banditry” shows that the rise of the nation-state’s institutional “monopoly of power over everything that goes on within

⁵⁹ See Paul Knepper, David Glover, and John Garrard for full historical accounts of Jewish criminality in England.

its borders” prompted the decline of rural-peasant banditry (14). Prior to the rise of the nation-state and its increasing institutions of legal regulation, the rural area was a primary site for criminal activities due to its extended distance from the urban seats of power and because of the limitations of the rather short arm of the state’s means for surveillance and control. Rural bandits were highly mobile across spaces outside the reach of the law; as a result, criminality became associated with mobility, so that criminals were always “on the run” from the law. With the decrease in rural crime and the great increase of rural immigrants into urban centers in England during the nineteenth century, state officials concentrated attention on the control and detection of rising urban criminal activity, most effectively with the formation of the London Metropolitan Police force in 1829. Anthropological criminology’s development in the second half of the nineteenth century and the study of urban criminals could not have become a legitimate “science,” I believe, until criminals became bodily and imaginatively fixed to a specific location for study: the slums. Thus, the emergence of the slums and its accompanying literature complicated nineteenth century associations of criminality with mobility, deriving from earlier practices of rural criminals.⁶⁰

Victorian slum literature preserves the association of crime with mobility, but transfers the freedom and concealment from the law afforded by a criminal’s individual

⁶⁰ While I focus on urban crime in this study, figures reveal that in this period spikes occurred in rural crime in winter and August. These periodical increases in crime correspond with the lack of work for agricultural labor in the winter, and the theft of crops at their most abundant in the late summer months. In the same way that mobility was linked to criminality in the city, the occupational migrations of the seasonal, rural workers and the “mobility of summertime fairs and of harvest time . . . provided opportunities for petty theft” so that, “the fear of criminality among mobile workers encouraged the possessors of property to be wary of itinerant strangers” (Emsley *Crime and Society* 40).

mobility – as in the case with the rural bandit – to the descending reversion of the urban criminals’ genetic degradation. The criminal conceived as an individual, social actor (Robin Hood travelling and plundering country roads in the tradition of the rogue highwayman, for example) gives way to categorizing the criminal as an individual typifying a downwardly mobile criminal race.⁶¹ Here, the rhetorical trope of the journeyed descent into the abyss of the slums that literary slumming commonly employs, maps the slums’ spatial declension onto the genetic body of the urban criminal race. Urban criminal mobility became a double-pronged threat: 1) the ease with which the criminal roves to commit crimes and escape detection in London’s vast urban jungle, and 2) the savage, racial degeneration counteracting and contaminating English civilization.

Nomadic wandering, as Mill suggested, was a clear marker of the savage outsider, the criminal. As a result, rootlessness was criticized as a criminal and social ill in itself. For example, the anonymous author of *Wonderful London*, cited above, disparages the London “hot-water houses” or “cooking shops.” These are not “lodging houses” but rather cheap day-shelters with access to crowded kitchens, where owners “do not pretend

⁶¹ In *The Seven Curses of London* Greenwood notes that among the “great thief tribe” there is an upper, middle and lower class “as corresponding grades of station are recognized amongst the honest community” (80). Moreover, the rural thief is often lauded and celebrated in ways that the urban criminal has not been: “The literature of the country is from time to time enriched by bragging autobiographies of villains No low-browed ragged little thief, who began his career by purloining a half-penny turnip from a costermonger’s barrow, is immortalized in the page of the Newgate Calendar, as finally arrived at the high distinction of wearing fashionable clothes, and ranking as the first of swell-mobsmen” (80). The distinction between the upper-class rural criminals and the lower-class slum criminals is a further distinction to bear in mind when contextualizing Victorian attitudes about cosmopolitan criminality. The belief that the rural regions of the country housed the strong, vigorous national population while the cities were inhabited by an increasing mixture of nationalities and a degenerating urban national population goes some way toward explaining how rural criminals, like Robin Hood, positively contributed to the English national mythos, while urban criminals, like Jack the Ripper, came to stand for the degeneration and dangers of the nation’s urban cosmopolitan centers.

to take in lodgers,” except when confronted by the police. In reality they were used by the urban itinerant and vagabonds “who come from all parts” (22). Notice here the cosmopolitan nature of the wandering users coming from parts unknown, drifting from place to place. These houses encouraged the “incorrigible alley-skulker” to maintain his wandering habits, meaning that he was always free to stoop to “the dismal depth” of humanity – the savage state – and, thus, would never integrate with civilization and its requirements of permanent settlement (21, 22). This leads the author to the extreme measure of advocating for making “persistent vagabondism a capital offence” (21). While vagrancy never became a capital offense, rootlessness in the second half of the nineteenth century did become criminalized in an effort to control one’s wandering, and to compel those who “naturally” rambled to settle, either through incarceration or compulsion to seek shelter in the work houses.⁶²

In his study *Juvenile Offenders* (1896), Reverend William Douglas Morrison traces criminal behavior in children back to “vagrant instincts” (60). He writes that “truancy, vagrancy, wandering habits – in short, a disposition to revert to the nomadic stage of civilization” is the first sign of a criminal youth (58). “Vagrant habits,” if left unchecked, give way to the criminal’s “tendency to revert to the nomadic and to rebel

⁶² The 1869 Habitual Criminals Act and the 1871 Prevention of Crimes Act sought to extend the control and surveillance on those who committed “lesser forms of deviance” by the state (Wiener 150). One effect of the 1869 legislation was to permit police discretionary powers to imprison persons for up to a year “without the need to prove an unlawful act” as long as they could show evidence that a vagrant – “more properly styled, rogues and vagabonds” in the words of the bill’s Parliamentary proponents – was somewhere “with an unlawful purpose” (150). Possible criminal intent became the measure for incarceration, and was largely judged based on a person’s known character. As Emsley shows, in the nineteenth century, “it is clear that the policeman on his beat had discretion in identifying some behavior as criminal or not” (*Crime and Society* 15). Vagabondism, under this law, then, in a sense did become an incarcerable offense.

against the industrial stage of civilisation [and] is joined by the tendency to rebel against the arrangements of society respecting property,” leading to thievery, which in turn, according to Morrison, leads to crime against persons, including murder (58-9). Here we see that mobility is not only indicative of savage social outcasts and marks them as cosmopolitan others, but is also the first step in the descent to crime and degeneration.

Because the slums regularly offered the types of places, like the hot-houses, where urban criminals could act according to their “savage” natures, slums were associated with the same anti-social transience as their inhabitants. Cropping up at will in the cityscape, slums produced the same anxiety about the potential for contamination that their nomadic criminal populations did. Simon Joyce observes that “Anxiety increases in city-dwellers when they no longer have a clear map of how the major trajectories, borders, and districts stand in relation to each other, and when their sense of the city as a whole ceases to function as a coherent and organizing frame of reference” (2). Slum literature provoked this anxiety by presenting an image of the slums, as I have shown, as inscrutable and foreign places. However, it also worked to counteract popular fears as their cultural representations performed what Joyce calls a “mapping function” in isolating and locating the source of those fears. One effect of slum literature outweighs the other; the mapping function of slum literature can act only as a provisional palliative as the slums and their inhabitants are shown to be constantly mobile, if not on-the-run, ultimately disrupting institutional surveillance and control. Slum literature reveals its target to be ever-shifting and moving. Thus, cosmopolitan mobility acts as a foundational principle for understanding the causes and fears of urban deviance arising in the slums.

Henry Mayhew and the Cosmopolitan Criminal

The period's foundational social investigation into the street life and living conditions of London, which pays particular attention to criminality and cosmopolitanism, further illustrates the ways urban criminality became associated with mobility. Henry Mayhew begins his study *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851) by classifying the vast population of the earth into two essential "races":

Of the thousand millions of human beings that are said to constitute the population of the entire globe, there are – socially, morally, and perhaps even physically considered – but two distinct and broadly marked races, viz., the wanderers and the settlers – the vagabond and the citizen – the nomadic and the civilized tribes. (1:3)

Those who settle down into static geographical locations are labeled civilized because, according to Mayhew and the dominant logic of the day, they form societies organized around citizenship governed by law in accordance with the rights of property, temperance, morality, and filial loyalty to the nation. The uncivilized "wandering tribes" have "a greater development of the animal than of the intellectual or moral nature of man," evidenced by their "high cheek-bones and protruding jaws," "their use of a slang language," "their general improvidence," "their love of cruelty," and "their pugnacity," among other traits (1:3).

Mayhew, however, does not construct the racial binary with strict adherence to particular geographical states, contrasting a "civilized" England with one of its "uncivilized" colonial outposts, for example. Rather, he turns his attention to isolating an uncivilized element which has been hiding in plain sight within the home borders of

English society, declaring “that each civilized or settled tribe has generally some wandering horde intermingled with, and in a measure preying upon, it” (1:1). He thinks it strange that English social investigators have not turned their attention to the wandering race within England, and finds it “curious that no one has yet applied the above facts to the explanation of certain anomalies in the present state of society among ourselves” (1:4). Mayhew’s project, at mid-century, popularized the burgeoning practice of social exploration into the East End that carried on well into the early twentieth century. He laid the groundwork for demarcating a bifurcated class system in England based on ideas of fixed locality and civilized lawfulness on the one hand, and nomadic drifting and criminality on the other.⁶³ More specifically, as I stated earlier, the London slums became the fertile grounds for attentive investigations and racial constructions of the “dangerous classes” – the criminals – that preyed upon and posed the threat of contaminating the “civilized” English population.

I have asserted that it would be a simplification to read the social explorations of the Victorian era as a simple communication of class consciousness on the part of a privileged, educated, and moneyed upper and growing middle-class. The standard ways we think of Victorian society ruled by class differences, particularly the recognizable

⁶³ John Thomson and Adolphe Smith, for example, employ Mayhew’s rhetoric for talking about the London “nomades [*sic*]” in *Street Life in London* (1877): “In his savage state, whether inhabiting the marshes of Equatorial Africa, or the mountain ranges of Formosa, man is fain to wander, seeking his sustenance in the fruits of the earth or products of the chase. On the other hand, in the most civilized communities the wanderers become distributors of food and of industrial products to those who spend their days in the ceaseless toil of city lire. Hence it is that in London there are a number of what may be termed, owing to their wandering, unsettled habits, nomadic tribes” (1).

split between the “two nations”⁶⁴ of rich and poor, are overwritten by slum literature’s efforts to offer alternative criteria for social stratification.⁶⁵ Mayhew’s study reveals, as an example of the larger body of slum literature, the Victorian interest not only in classifying people based on wealth, but more importantly, on their insistence on the preeminence of racial categorization over strictly economic class issues. Emsley explains that the “popular biological explanation of crime meant that it was no longer necessary simply to define criminality largely in class terms” (76). The cosmopolitan criminal’s racial origins discounted his classification in strictly economic terms. Therefore, Mayhew’s treatment of the wandering tribes of English society – further categorized in the subtitle of the study as “those that will work, cannot work, and will not work”⁶⁶ – creates specific racial categories used to describe and define a rigid, multilayered social hierarchy, not only of rich and poor, but also of physical appearance and fitness, genetic purity, morality, and criminal tendency. He arranges a variety of heretofore separate social categories and human characteristics for anthropological ranking through a solidification of racial types. Where class defined strictly in economic terms is flexible by

⁶⁴ Frederick Engels drew attention to the “two radically dissimilar nations” of rich and poor in his influential study *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* (124). A year later, Benjamin Disraeli famously worked the theme of two separate nations of rich and poor into his novel *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (1845).

⁶⁵ David Englander draws out this point in reference to the increasing need for institutional and political classification of the working classes and the poor for Poor Law implementation and reform as notions of economic class became increasingly layered and complex: “The working class, it was noted, was not a monolith. Indeed contemporaries more often than not spoke of the working classes. The respectable stratum . . . was increasingly welcomed as a middle class in waiting. . . . Between the respectable rate-paying householder and the paupers, casual workers and the semi-criminal elements who made up the residuum there existed an unbridgeable gulf. Upon this distinction rested middle-class fears for order and social stability” (27). The respectable and working poor constitute their own position and character in the social hierarchy apart from the criminals and wandering paupers that comprise the “residuum” of society. For more context on how the wandering paupers became associated with criminals see especially pp. 31-46.

⁶⁶ This tripartite classification borrows from Henry Fielding’s classification of the poor in *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers, &c.* (1751).

virtue of one's ability to move across class boundaries as one either gains or loses wealth, Victorian conceptions of race served as a more static foundation from which to analyze and identify groups or individuals, lending race a scientific practicality as a category of analysis that was so important for the credentialing and legibility of Victorian social studies. Consequently, people were classified by a predominant biological difference that determines their behavior and social standing. Economic class, physical appearance and fitness, religious zeal, moral righteousness, and criminal tendencies became legible as consequences of naturalized racial imperatives.

For Victorians racial types functioned as a basis from which to examine the various iterations of racial effects. Mayhew expanded his study from an assertion of a racial dialectic to an examination of the manifold ways the wandering, uncivilized, and unlawful racial element of the population typifies their race in contradistinction to the settled, civilized, and lawful English race. Moreover, this essentialized sorting of the population via racial terms allowed for a practice of identification across national boundaries, and so was legible as a cosmopolitan ordering of difference. That is, because racial types are not necessarily tied to nationality, but rather to inherent biological traits and behaviors, identification by racial type follows a certain transnational or global purview from which to draw connections and to group people. This is why many early criminological theories in England derived from European criminologists and vice versa; the cosmopolitan criminal race had spread across the globe, as they saw it, and was the same everywhere. Of course, this cosmopolitan ordering of difference, or what I am also arguing becomes an ordering of difference based on one's perceived cosmopolitan

nomadism, can be performed in an effort to flatten out differences based on prioritizing transnational affiliations over and against perceptions of local and cultural differences. This equalizing of the “world-citizen” is the common understanding of the ethical project of cosmopolitanism today. Cosmopolitanism, however, can also be utilized in a way that reifies a social hierarchy, even across national boundaries, as seen in the Victorian classification of cosmopolitan criminals.⁶⁷

In volume 4 of his study, Mayhew and his co-author Bracebridge Hemyng discuss prostitutes, beggars, swindlers, and thieves as the types of unsettled and criminal people who “will not work” productive and respectable jobs. The authors structure their commentary around comparisons of what they call the “barbarous nations,” the “semi-civilized nations,” the “mixed northern nations,” and the “civilized states.” They compare prostitution, for example, liberally defined as “putting anything to vile use,” across the full register of time and geographical location (Mayhew 4:35). This analysis of criminal prostitution in several types of nations, running the scale from barbarous to civilized, depends on the assumed similarity of the kinds of people who constitute these nations. Those who are barbarous will share common qualities across the globe and across borders, just as those who are civilized will contain similarities that transcend any national particularities of culture or location. So, in places geographically distinct from each other, such as, South America, Africa, and Australia in the case of the “barbarous nations,” their “barbarousness” determines their presumed common practice and

⁶⁷ See Pheng Cheah’s *Inhuman Condition* for a contemporary critique of “new cosmopolitanism’s” promise to provide the grounds for “the harbingers and bearers of freedom” (11).

treatment of prostitution. The global cosmopolitan perspective, in this case, erases identifiable specificity bounded by a localized socio-political geography, in the form of the nation-state or colony, and locates similarity and difference transnationally, based on social type adhering to constructions of racial categories that determine where various populations fall on the scale of civilized and uncivilized.

Mayhew relies on a cosmopolitan ordering of difference to situate racial types – the settled and the wanderers – by their settlement in a fixed location or lack thereof. He conceptualizes a racially superior and civilized segment of the English population in terms of its located affiliation with England as distinct from a racially uncivilized population who work against the nation by virtue of their criminal and detached wandering. In other words, those who are settled represent the quality of their settlement – in this case, the ideologically and politically bounded geographical state, England. Both citizens and nation are configured one through the other as the civilized and domestic come to stand in for each other. Likewise, those who are configured as unsettled like cosmopolitan criminal slummers are associated with displacement, both literally from the representative national spaces and figuratively from the racial English stock. They represent all that is uncivilized and fugitive in England. East End slummers typify their origins as foreign, racial wanderers through their acts of criminality and their physical and moral degeneration.

Mayhew's study characterizes the view common in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that nations should serve as spatial containers that delimit the range or

spread of a particular racial type over geographical space. Ideally England's borders, for the majority who subscribed to ideas of homogeneous, national-racial purity in the Victorian era, would prevent the mixing of the civilized English race with the foreign, uncivilized races. But as Mayhew concedes, because the uncivilized are an essentially globally restless and mobile racial tribe, an inevitable influx of their race has already infiltrated England's borders.⁶⁸ The criminal population in England that are "preying upon" the civilized population, to use Mayhew's terms, are further displaced from national belonging, not only because of their outlaw status positioning them against the necessary everyday workings of the national project, but more importantly because they are identified as descendants of an uncivilized race which has wandered into the English borders and collected in the diseased, foreign spaces of the East End slums.

Mayhew helped set the groundwork for thinking of criminals in terms of their cosmopolitan otherness, borrowing from emergent discourses on race, the condition of modern civilization, and criminal anthropology. Consequently, criminals were understood to be a worrying urban ill, made worse by their social standing as foreign and degenerate. Cosmopolitanism became linked to atavistic criminality and was used to justify the rhetoric of anti-cosmopolitan discourse, which warned that the nation must be protected from a new breed of criminal foreigners. If criminal, the native and the alien

⁶⁸ The belief that Irish and Jewish immigrants were a part of the "uncivilized" races preying upon the civilized English and that their criminal tendencies and immoral behaviors were a danger to English national purity is a longstanding example of this type of racial thinking. As a result the Irish and Jewish populations often are mentioned as a specifically legible racial example of the criminal type in English slum literature. Thomas Archer, for example, groups together the "London cadger," the "Irish labourer," and the various London street urchins and "young vagabonds" he calls "land rats," asserting that their "nationality is merged together in a cosmopolitan spirit of idleness" (95).

shared the same barbarous origins, lagging behind and preying on English civilization. The anxiety exhibited in slum literature concerning the rise in the degenerate, cosmopolitan criminal population within the national borders engendered a social imaginary and rhetoric of necessary containment and isolation of the slums and its inhabitants, at the same time producing calls for policies for reforming the criminal for preservation of the nation-state throughout the late-Victorian era. Popular conceptions about the East End slums adopted the emphasis and linkage of the racial, cosmopolitan, and criminal perspectives that slum and criminality studies initiated in their texts. Ultimately, the East End slums were seen as seething sites where a new degenerate cosmopolitan criminal race menaces London, England, and the empire from within, far too close for comfort and national stability.

Slum Literature at Work: Arthur Morrison's *A Tale of the Jago*

A reviewer for *The Spectator* bemoans readers' credulity for taking Arthur Morrison's depictions of East End "squalor" and "cruelty" in *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894), his first major collection of short stories, as typical of the region and its inhabitants, at the same time blaming the general public's ignorance of East End life for such a reading of the text. "We know... so little of East-End life at first-hand," the reviewer writes, "that we are apt to treat everything depicted with an East-End atmosphere as typical" (329). The reviewer then cites Charles Booth's study of the East End, *Occupations of the People of the Tower Hamlets, 1886-87*, referring readers to crime statistics that reveal only nine percent of the East End population were criminals.

The reviewer understands why readers would think what they do about the East End, conceding that Morrison, like other slum fiction writers, models his characters after “the worst characters in Mr. Booth’s Class A – the class of the semi-criminals and the morally and physically degraded – and has set them up . . . as if they were truly representative of East London” (329). The review ends by maintaining the split between the two halves of London while asserting: “The ugliness and griminess of life in the East-End is a great and terrible evil. . . . By all means let us abate the evils of London life, but do not let us delude ourselves into imagining that half London is inhabited by a race of Yahoos” (330).

I draw attention to this review in order to show that by the end of the century, even with the proliferation of texts enlightening West End readers about their neighbors, the East End and its slums still remained a source of mystery and concern. This, however, is a function of the literary exhibition of slums and slummers to maintain their extrinsic relation to English society. The reviewer’s admonishment against thinking the East End is inhabited by a race similar to Jonathan Swift’s Yahoos, demonstrates the ways that slummers were ordinarily seen by the reading public as brutish, subhuman, and degenerate as comprising an atavistic race. The review combats the public’s received opinions about the nature of the slums, but also shows the reviewer’s (and the public’s) naturalized acceptance that the East End is another “half” of London because of its griminess and contemptible evils. The reviewer does not seek to repair the spatial and cultural rift between the two halves of London, but rather warns against the common practice of conceptualizing slummers as a different race separated not only by location, but also by their peculiarly foreign racial attributes and uncivilized behaviors. The review

presents a contemporary's recognition of the exceptional role, and risks, slum literature played in determining the ways in which most of the English population conceived the slums and slummers.

The review also helps me to articulate the three basic types of slum literature that Victorian and Edwardian readers would have encountered across a variety of mediums and disciplines: 1) the sensational accounts and narratives, like Morrison's, which highlight the uncivilized and inhuman cruelty, savagery, crime, and degradation of the slums; 2) those texts, like the review above, Rudyard Kipling's "The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot" (1890), Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* (1895), and Margaret Harkness's slum novels *A City Girl: A Realistic Story* (1887), *Out of Work* (1888), and *In Darkest London* (1889), that seek to mediate and temper the vision of vice and squalor for a more even-handed approach for recognizing the evils and positives determining slum life, often with an eye toward reform; and 3) the descriptive and fact-gathering texts, like Booth's survey and Jack London's *The People of the Abyss* (1903),⁶⁹ which seek to present their findings and investigations into slum life with scientific objectivity and analysis based on rigorous methodologies and firsthand observation. These types of slum literature work in concert to position the slums as a cause for concern, not only for what happens within their boundaries, but more importantly because of what spills out contaminating the rest of the nation.

⁶⁹ London engages in an English literary tradition of ethnographic forays into slum life that continued in the twentieth century with works like George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) and *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937).

All three types of writing about the slums that I have identified include an underlying interest on the part of the writers to fix and situate, describe and define, record and narrate, the conditions of the slums and slummers in order to introduce them to the public vision. The texts shed light on the “unknown” and “foreign” East End so that it can be understood and accounted for. Masterman’s observations about slums – as “A place for concealment . . . where anything can be hidden undiscovered,” and where “Huddled out of sight in the vast multitudinous desolation are all varieties of strange, withered, distorted existence” – speak to the expectations for slum writers to lay bare the secrets of that unknown world, like exposing “a toad within a stone remaining unmoved for ages, or the quaint humped or twisted creatures with luminous eyes and transparent skins brought to the surface by dredging in deep seas” (88). Slum literature’s “dredging” brings to view not only the strange and degenerate, however, but also those caught near the bottoms of society, the common poor. Attending to cosmopolitan criminality, slum literature reshapes ordinary associations between poverty and crime by placing the two side-by-side. Specifically, we see how the Victorian urban poor – traditionally thought of as determining the squalor of the slums – are put under threat by and distinguished from urban criminals.

Morrison’s novel *A Child of the Jago* (1896) plumbs the depths of London slums and offers a bleak picture of the life of a criminal slummer family living side-by-side with the semi-criminal and the working-poor in order “to bring the conditions of this place within the apprehension of others” (Preface 5).⁷⁰ Morrison presents the foreign

⁷⁰ Crime was a common subject in Morrison’s fiction. He wrote many popular stories for the *Strand*

qualities of the slums and slummers to those “far from East London . . . who knew less of that part than of Asia Minor” (19). The novel focuses on the upbringing of Dicky Perrot in the Jago slum. He grows up learning from the examples of his deadbeat criminal father and violent neighbors. Dicky learns to fight, steal, lie, and hide from the police from an early age. While his mother and the local Reverend try and steer him to an honest life – attending classes at the church and getting an honest job – the lure of the criminal life of easy money and violence prized by his Jago neighbors proves too strong for him to resist. While several of Dicky’s younger siblings die of neglect and disease, he grows up to be one of the slum’s best young thieves, pawning his stolen goods to a local fence, Mr. Weech. When his father finds out that Weech thwarted his son’s only real shot at honest work, and perhaps escaping Jago life, he murders Weech. His father is hanged in the prison yard, and soon after Dicky is stabbed to death in one of the many recurring street brawls in the Jago. Morrison’s novel presents late-Victorian outlooks on the ways hereditary and environment influenced criminal behavior by presenting Dicky’s criminality as inevitable.

Morrison grew up and worked in the East End, and he said that he used his personal experience to provide an accurate picture of life in the East End slums in his fiction.⁷¹ The Jago slum is modeled after his experience spending eighteen months

magazine chronicling the detective Martin Hewitt, and collected in *Martin Hewitt, Investigator* (1895), *The Adventures of Martin Hewitt* (1896), and *Chronicles of Martin Hewitt* (1896). In *The Dorrington Deed Box* (1897) James Rigby recounts the criminal deeds of Horace Dorrington. In a clever twist to the detective genre, Dorrington masquerades as a private detective in order to commit crimes.

⁷¹ The limited biographical details we have about Morrison’s life reveal that he was born in the East End district of Poplar in 1863. He worked for a short time as secretary for the Beaumont Trust responsible for the administration of Walter Besant’s People’s Palace, a cultural center in the East End designed to uplift

working with the slum minister Reverend Arthur Osborne Jay – to whom the novel is dedicated – in the “Old Nichol” slum in Bethnal Green off the Shoreditch High Street in East London.⁷² Morrison describes the Jago as “the blackest pit in London,” and at its center lies the Jago Court, “the blackest hole in all that pit” (11). The foulest slum in all of London (holding a similar reputation to the Old Nichol), the Jago collects the worst of the worst from the other slum rookeries: “What was too vile for Kate Street, Seven Dials, and Ratcliff Highway in its worst day, what was too useless, incapable and corrupt – all that teemed in the Old Jago” (11).

Morrison continually draws attention to the infernal blackness and filth in the “perilous depths” of the Jago “with its “suffering and its brutishness” (20).⁷³ The physical conditions of the environment are symbolic extensions of the slummers’ savage degeneration. Iron beds are weak, “thin-railed . . . bent and staggering” (14). A candle is deformed into little heaps of “guttering grease” that strain to give off “irregular light”

East Enders through education and cultural exposure, satirized in *A Child of the Jago* as the East End Elevation Mission and Pansophical Institute. He also worked as sub-editor of the *Palace Journal* – the publication associated with the People’s Palace – and contributed various sketches of the East End to local newspapers including the *Globe* and *Macmillan’s Magazine* before becoming a successful novelist and short story writer. Simon Joyce notes that Morrison’s authority as a slum writer was “based on a carefully produced autobiography” that allowed him to present himself as an “external observer of East End life” at the same time morally “criticizing ‘outsiders’ for their own distance” from the East End (219). By the time he was writing *Jago*, he had moved to the West End and had undergone what Roger Henkle describes as “embourgeoisement,” putting him firmly in touch with more middle class values (302). Henkle notes, however, that despite his adoption of middle class values and habits, Morrison’s portrayal of the slummers’ “gratuitous violence” and “enervating degeneration” “offers up no meaning to the middle class reader” because “it cannot be integrated into the systems of value, psychology, or material relations of the middle class” (302). Thus, Morrison maintains slum fiction’s rhetorical trope of making slums and slummers wholly inscrutable simply by laying bare the “facts” of slum life.

⁷² See Sarah Wise’s socio-historical study for a detailed account of this slum at the time Morrison sets his novel.

⁷³ One slummer equates the Jago to hell as he lay in the street watching the criminal activity around him: “Hell? And how far’s that? You’re in it! . . . God, there can be no hell after this!” (12). Not only does this signal the slummer’s recognition of his plight and the evil surrounding him in the Jago, but also his damnation residing in the slum with little or no hope of escape. However, this particular slummer, has no desire to escape, as living in this “hell” allows him the freedom to indulge in the iniquity he relishes.

from a “drooping wick” (14). Even candles cannot lighten the darkest corners of the slums. It is as if the Jago’s very atmosphere degrades all it touches. More than a picture of mere poverty, then, the Jago is shown to corrupt absolutely, imprinting its contaminating deterioration on all within its reach, from the people to beds to the smallest of trifles.

The Jago is populated by teeming thousands in a confined neighborhood square of tenement housing spanning less than two hundred and fifty yards. Morrison consistently likens those living in the Jago to swarming rats, scattering through the streets and hovels, only to gather together to participate in the frequent street brawls between two warring families that control the slum, the Learys and the Ranns.⁷⁴ Normally, the police steer clear of the Jago for fear of bodily harm, so that an anarchical chaos rules the slum. The police make their way into the Jago only if there is a reported homicide. In language reminiscent of the cosmopolitan criminals’ threat of contagion, filth, and disease, Morrison writes that these “Jago rats bred and bred their kind unhindered, multiplying apace and infecting the world” (77). In another passage a surgeon asks as he is tending the sick in the Jago: “Is there a child in all this place that wouldn’t be better dead –still better unborn? . . . Here lies the Jago, a nest of rats, breeding, breeding as only rats can” (133).

⁷⁴ In actuality, the Learys are supported “whether by kin or custom” by the Gullens, Fishers, Spicers, and the Walshes, while the Learys had the allegiance of the Dawsons, Greens, and Harnwells (27). These families had long established themselves in the Jago. The rise of gangs in the East End did occur in the 1890s, according to Donald Thomas, particularly with the Bessebarians clashing with the Odessians for turf and power.

In his Preface to the novel, Morrison describes his experience in the slum, noting its fatalistic influence on the people who live there:

It was my fate to encounter a place in Shoreditch, where children were born and reared in circumstances which gave them no reasonable chance of living decent lives: where they were born fore-damned to a criminal or semi-criminal career. It was my experience to learn the ways of this place, to know its inhabitants, to talk with them, eat, drink, and work with them. For the existence of this place, and the evils it engendered, the community was, and is, responsible in his degree. (5)

Here, we see Morrison emphasizing the role the slum played in birthing the “evils” of generational criminality. Morrison does not wish to establish blame for the existence of the slums, but rather he spreads the blame to “the community” at large, wanting each person to consider their own responsibility to the slummers. Evident in his epigraph to the novel from the book of Ezekiel, Morrison does chide those “foolish prophets” who have turned their backs on the slums, refusing to see them for what they are, those who “follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing” (9). He believes that the slums, such as the Jago, determine the fate of their inhabitants, encouraging extreme violence and crime.

Similar to the controversy surrounding the publication of *Tales of Mean Streets*, Victorian reviewers of *A Child of the Jago* accused Morrison of extreme exaggeration, especially in his portrayals of the crime and violence of slums.⁷⁵ Morrison’s use of

⁷⁵ H. D. Traill was prominent among Morrison’s detractors, though Morrison also had his defenders, including Harold Boulton and his friend Reverend Jay. See Henkle, Keating, and Swafford (“Translating”) for brief accounts of the debate. Morrison, for his part, also writes in a letter to the Reverend W. Priest that he has tempered some of the more striking events he encountered in the slums: “the chief characters are actual persons under new names and many of the more striking incidents are actual matters of fact, though there are matters which I have considerably toned down” (168). Counter to claims of exaggerating the violence and crime, he tells his readers in his Preface that “it was none of my design to write of extreme circumstances: typical facts were all I wanted” (7). For Morrison’s response to those attacking him as a failed “realist,” see his Preface to the third edition of *A Child of the Jago* (1897).

criminal argot, frank accounts of brutality and crime, and bleak descriptions of slum courts and dens made the novel a minor sensation in its day.

More recently, critics focus their attention on the ways Morrison's depictions articulate period concerns surrounding imperialism, degeneracy, poverty, and urban crime in slums and the working classes. John Greenfield sees Morrison's use of "pessimism peculiar to naturalism" in portraying the stark realities of the Jago as having the "effect of reifying the ideology of the Jago dwellers" and positioning them as part of a "static system" without escape (96, 89, 95). Morrison must straddle the line, Greenfield argues, between overly optimistic and damning discourses in order to avoid "sentimentalizing the poor or seeming to condone their objectionable behavior" and "to keep them both literarily viable and sociologically realistic" (92).⁷⁶ Richard Benvenuto reads the novel through a marked tension between two perspectives from which to interpret the tragic events of the novel: the criminal Jagos and the "values of the larger community," the respectable citizens' (156). He points out that the Jagos don't value life, property, work, and crime in the same ways the rest of us do, so that evaluations from the Jago perspective are in direct opposition to any "traditional moral" ones held by Morrison's middle-class readers (160). The death of a child (and there are several in the novel) while tragic and pathetic to a typical reader, for example, is taken as commonplace, or even as a bit of fortune to a Jago resident, especially if insurance money is remitted (157).

⁷⁶ Though he was troubled by the term "realist" that pigeon-holed fiction writers, Morrison preferred realism over sentimentality, voicing this preference for "the frank rogue before the calculating snivelmonger," with Father Sturt being the character most illustrative of his personal views (76).

Roger Henkle, likewise, notes the “parodic Jago-vision” of the slum dweller’s skewed understanding of how the world outside of the slums functions because they are caught up in their own “ignorance and self-violence” (307). This results in a sequestration between the “two spheres” of the “urban slums” and the “social world above” (307). Swafford’s reading of the novel traces the “sociocultural anxieties” produced by the portrayal of the slum’s “sociocultural displacement” from ideas of middle-class respectability (“Translating” 50, 51). For him, “the subject of the novel is the nature and culture of deviancy, crime, and the grotesque” and their “threat to respectable society” (51). He identifies the “pressing narrative objective” to be “marking and clarifying distinctions between the two realms of London through the spectacle of deviancy” (53). Swafford argues that Morrison “seeks to establish the absolute difference between the subject of the narrative (the Jago) and the reality of the readers with whom Morrison identifies” whose “ideological aim is the displacement of the economic and cultural relationship between middle-class (West End) prosperity and working-class (East End) poverty” (58-9).

Common to these critics’ approaches is the attempt to determine Morrison’s relational dichotomies: sentimental vs. realistic, Jago perspective vs. traditional morality, slum (East End) vs. the rest of the city (West End), deviant vs. respectable. Generally, what is taken to be normal or desirable for English society is read as inverted in the Jago. For example, counter to standard notions of work, in the Jago the bigger the robbery a person can pull off, the more successful he is. Rather than taken as a personal horror, the more violence a person engages in, the greater entertainment he enjoys. Outcasts to the

Jagos are those who try to live according to “normal” standards of cleanliness, legality, hard work, privacy, and social decorum. “Normal,” according to critics (here and in most readings of Victorian slum literature), is often put in terms of “middle-class,” “ruling class,” or “respectable class” ideologies and practices read against the representatives of the “working classes” and their general degeneration, immorality, slothfulness, and savagery. Typically, critics present the oppositional perspectives in the novel between two camps in terms of the slummers – comprised of the poor working class *and* criminals – and the “respectable” middle- and upper-classes.

Instead, I argue the novel separates the criminal underclass from the poor in the slums. A chief function of slum literature’s cultural work, I have contended, was to raise the public’s sympathy and concern for the “deserving poor” and the vast majority of the urban, honest working classes, so that they might be more fully integrated into the acceptable subject-position of the common English citizen and protected from the dangers of their close proximity to the criminal race and their contaminating potential. Peter Keating is correct to assert that it is a mistake to assume that Morrison is “writing about the ‘working classes’ as a whole,” because he is in fact focusing on “Charles Booth’s 1.2 per cent of the East End population” that were classified as the degraded semi-criminal and criminal (178). While the focus is on the criminal, Morrison’s criminal characters are put in relief by their comparison not with their West End economic superiors, but with their working-class neighbors. Morrison’s Jagos, therefore, are not all alike, and they are certainly not all “working class” or “criminal.” Morrison affirms as much, saying in his Preface that he knows “the East-End in all his degrees,” and “there

are more social degrees in the East End than ever in the West” (7). Morrison draws attention to this fact for the purpose of establishing the cosmopolitan criminals’ dangerous anteriority to the decent English citizen, whether they be upper-, middle-, or working-class poor.⁷⁷

A Child of the Jago centers on the life of Dicky Perrot, the titular child growing up in the Jago, where cosh-carrying is the “major industry” (13).⁷⁸ Dicky, a “slight child” who looks like he is around five years old, is actually about eight or nine at the start of the novel, the “age when most boys were thieving for themselves” (39-40). He is the son of Josh Perrot, an “out-of-work” plasterer turned thief married to Hannah, a boilermaker’s daughter. Dicky’s parents embody two of the competing classes and tendencies of the East End slummer. Morrison makes it clear that Josh is a member of the criminal race.⁷⁹ He is a natural criminal, who had only for a very short time worked as a plasterer, or “so described himself at police-courts” (24).⁸⁰ He liked to boast that he was

⁷⁷ Whereas Simon Joyce sees Morrison describing people who are “in every way by national identity, ‘savages,’” I argue that Morrison utilizes the period’s understanding of criminals to be both “savage” and racially foreign, so that they are marked as cosmopolitan criminals, comprising their own criminal “nation,” set apart from the English citizens (226).

⁷⁸ The cosh “was a foot length of iron” or other bludgeoning tool, “with a knob at one end, and a hook or ring at the other” (13). The “craftsman” wielding it would wait for his “wife (married or not)” to bring in “a well drunken stranger” to a back alley or discreet location and then “cosh” him “with a sudden blow behind the head” in order to rob him of all his valuables and escape without much exertion as the victim lay injured or unconscious (13). Cosh-carrying depended on the undercover mobility slums offered their residents, concealing the crime unseen and unheard from the police on their beats.

⁷⁹ Josh’s repeated offenses would have classified him as a “professional” criminal in Mayhew’s classification, or as a “habitual criminal” in the courts. As Emsley points out, “habitual criminals were rarely perceived as being brought to crime by poverty” (*Crime* 73). To Morrison’s Victorian readers, Josh would have been clearly distinguishable from the common poor by virtue of his repeated criminal activities.

⁸⁰ William D. Morrison observed in 1896 that “a considerable number of offenders who class themselves as labourers are in reality thieves, vagabonds, tramps, and outcasts,” which results in making “the general labourer appear in worse light in the records of crime” (169). Reporting himself as a working class plasterer to the police (who were required to keep records of the occupations of those they arrested), Josh tries to

“the only member of his family who had ever learned a trade, and worked at it” (24). Rather than signal Josh’s latent respectability, however, this indicates to the reader that he comes from a family of criminals who lived by hook or by crook, so that it is only natural that Josh’s chosen “profession” after a brief spell of honest work is to thieve in the Jago.

Hannah, on the other hand, married Josh during the time he was working an honest trade, believing he would continue to do so. She comes from an honest working-class family. She is the character for whom we are supposed to have the most sympathy, as we see her struggle against the code of the slums and her husband’s criminal nature. She is not liked in the Jago because she is an “alien who had never entirely fallen into Jago ways” (32). Though she had “soon grown sluttish and dirty” during her time in the Jago, she “was never drunk, she never quarreled, she did not gossip freely,” and had put on such “superiorities” as to be married in church and was rarely beaten by her husband, and when she was, not “with a chair nor a poker” (32). In a gruesome scene, Hannah, holding her infant, is attacked on the street during one of the regular outbreaks of violence in the Jago between the Ranns and Learys. Not being Rann nor Leary, Hannah is free game. She is attacked by Sally Green, who has a reputation as a barbaric brawler who sets upon her victims with her teeth. Sally savagely pounces on Hannah and bites her, “the sharp teeth . . . meeting in the shoulder flesh” (33). Hannah is saved by Sally’s regular combatant, Norah Walsh, who “seized Sally Green by the hair and stabbed her

hide his habitual criminality behind the appearance of being a member of the respectable working-class. Morrison makes it clear that though Josh had at one time worked an honest trade, he naturally tends toward crime, as we never see him earn an honest wage during the course of the novel.

about the face with the jagged points” of a broken bottle (33). The savagery of Norah and Sally’s attacks coupled with Hannah’s inability to fight back, plainly separates her from the uncivilized Jago women. Sally’s trademark fighting style indicates her barbaric atavism; we are to gasp at the clear degeneration of this character who resorts to her baser animal behaviors. Hannah’s respectable (“alien”) behavior is emphasized by the contrast with the barbarism of others in the slum. Hannah is not alone, however; “Pigeony Poll, harlot and outcast,” is also despised by the savage Jago women because she “neither fought nor kept a cosh-carrier . . . slunk and trembled in corners and yards, and wept at the sight of bleeding heads” (31). Morrison depicts the daily dangers for upright and aspiring members of the impoverished class, like Hannah and Pigeony Poll, who are more like their fellow honest English citizens than the barbaric criminal races living in the slums.

Hannah tries to raise Dicky the honest way, teaching him to prosper through hard work, and tells him of her disgust at living in the Jago: “It’s bad enough livin’ ‘ere at all, an’ me being used to different things once, an’ all” (15). She tries to convince Dicky that they are not criminal by nature, like most of their neighbors: “We ain’t that sort o’ people, Dicky, you ought to know. I was alwis’ kep’ respectable an’ straight all my life . . . An’ you must always be respectable an’ straight” (15-16). Of course, Dicky knows better. From an early age he knows his father “ain’t ‘ad a job in munse and munse” and steals to provide for his family (16). As is the case with most men in the Jago, Dicky’s father is a drunk and resorts to stealing and pawning off his “clicks,” as the stolen goods are known, to get what money he can to support his family, but mostly to support his

drinking. Dicky thinks that “Straight people’s fools” and aspires to one day join the “grandees of rascality” known as the High Mob – a group of wealthy criminals who live in the West End and control vast criminal operations across London (16, 128). Dicky has inherited his father’s criminal tendencies, despite his mother’s best attempts at reforming his nature. He is clearly one of the many “young Arabs of London streets, whose destiny is to become artful thieves” and whose “nationality is merged into a cosmopolitan spirit of idleness” (Archer 97, 95).

As Dicky grows up in the Jago, he begins stealing and brawling, taking pride in the little money he makes from selling his “clicks” to the local fence, Aaron Weech. Dicky is almost saved from a life of crime by the resolute Father Sturt, who gets him a job as an errand boy at a shop.⁸¹ He loses this job when Weech falsely accuses him of planning to steal from the shopkeeper. Without knowing the reasons he has been dismissed, Dicky resolves never again to try to “break away from the Jago habit and strain after another nature”, that of the cosmopolitan criminal (103). He takes to heart the criminal lessons he has learned growing up in the slum, believing that “he was a Jago and

⁸¹ Josh, too, has a chance to go straight as Father Sturt attempts to convince him to raise himself “above the pitiable expedients of the poor untradesmanlike about him” by renewing his trade as a plasterer, or leave the Jago altogether and “start afresh in a new place” as a “reputable mechanic” (142-3). Josh promises to think over Sturt’s advice, “which meant nothing, as the parson well knew,” and goes out drinking, thinking of the entertainment the brawl scheduled for the following week will bring. These “chance at redemption” scenes are important for two reasons: they show the cosmopolitan criminal “choosing,” or perhaps more accurately, “defaulting” to, a life of crime when a way out is presented to them. This in turn distinguishes them from their slummer neighbors who desire to escape the squalor and vice of criminal slum life at all costs, as is the case with the Roper family, and Kiddo Cook. Like Hannah and Pigeony Poll, the Ropers are from the working class – Mr. Roper works as a cabinet maker – and are seen as “pestilent outsiders” to the Jagos (47). They are unliked because of their “neatly-kept clothes,” “exceeding use of soap and water,” and the fact that “Roper did not drink, nor brawl, nor beat his wife” (42). All of this countered “Jago custom and precedent” and was considered worse than Hannah’s superior airs: “Mrs. Perrot was bad enough, but such people as these!” (43).

the world's enemy," "a Jago rat," and pursues a life of crime with new vigor, determined to "Spare nobody, stop at nothing, do his devilmost" (162, 103).

There might be a question as to whether or not Dicky would have succeeded in turning honest, overcoming his criminal nature and slum environment, if Weech had not intervened. Several years after the publication of the novel Morrison provided an answer to this question in an interview with the *Daily News*, saying Dicky "could not escape from his environment," and was destined to be "as bad as his surroundings" (172).

Espousing a common theory of naturalism, Morrison says "Heredity and environment . . . are the greatest enemies" of those living in the slums (171). Morrison refutes the idea espoused by some that "Jago people are racially indistinguishable from the people who send their children to Oxford," citing well-documented measurements of criminals in comparison to the common Englishman: "you never see a tall man amongst them, all the criminal classes are stunted" (172).⁸² Indeed, by the time Dicky turns seventeen (the average age of death in the poorer areas of London), he is a mere five-feet, two inches tall, marking his racial and criminal degeneration (136). Clearly Morrison believed that as a member of the criminal race, Dicky (and those like him) were destined to a life of crime because of their environment and their inherent criminal nature. The ever-watchful slummer old Mr. Beveridge voices Morrison's thoughts about the likes of Dicky

⁸² James Cantile notes that in the upper classes "the average physique is of a high standard," while "men of good physique exist in great numbers" even in the working class (6). Criminals, however, were, as we have seen, thought to be both physically and mentally weak, due to their racial degeneration and atavism. This helps explain the reasoning for a minimum police height of 5'9" with proportionate chest measurements and weight in London: the police on the beat needed to reflect the physical standards of English respectability. The police body served, then, as physical propaganda, communicating the superiority of the upstanding English citizen when compared to the racial degeneration of the cosmopolitan criminal class.

advancing out of the slums, remarking that there are only three ways out of the slums for his kind: “Gaol, the gallows and the High Mob” (103).

By the age of seventeen Dicky has become expert at thieving, prideful of the “wonderment” and achievement of not being caught by the police since his father’s capture and imprisonment four years earlier for attacking a victim during a botched house robbery.⁸³ Unsurprisingly, with Josh gone to “the country” for a stint, Hannah relies on her working class values to provide for her family. Rather than turn to crime, she makes and sells match books to provide for her family’s needs. The slum has not overturned her “natural” working-class instincts for hard, honest work. She is an exemplar of the decent English folk surrounded by vice and crime in the slums, who resolutely carry on English civilization even in the midst of the uncivilized. Dicky, however, determined by his “nature,” continues in his father’s footsteps down the criminal path.

Dicky’s criminal activities often carry him outside of the Jago to prey on London’s unsuspecting populace, practicing “that petty larceny which is possible in every street in London” (80). His cosmopolitan wandering reveals that the urban criminal race he represents pays no heed to the topographical boundaries of London respectability. Morrison shows that crime is not relegated to the slums. The criminals of the slums fan out to all corners of the city, broadly casting their criminal contagion. More than just a

⁸³ Offenses against the person – assault – only accounted for around 15% of the total indictments in the second half of the nineteenth century (Emsley *Crime and Society* 44). Josh’s assault, then, distinguishes him as a particularly violent and rare criminal for this time. When he has the chance for revenge on Weech, who “narked” on him, resulting in his long prison sentence, he relishes the opportunity, and premeditates his attack with “a tigerish snarl”: “‘e better not show ‘isself w’ile I’m abaat! ‘E wouldn’t git auf with a punch on the chin” (145). Josh murders Weech during another botched burglary attempt at Weech’s, is caught once again, and sentenced to be “Hanged by the Neck till you be Dead” (158).

criminal threat to property or public safety, Dicky's cosmopolitan savagery also poses a threat of biological contamination for the wider populace. Dicky is not married, partly because he is affected with an "odd feeling of repulsion" toward the "squalid drabs" that were the "Jago girls" (137). Not to be read as some hopeful commentary on Dicky's intuitive realization of the unfitness of the degenerate populace that surrounds him, his revulsion from Jago women stems from their failing to measure up to "the clean, remote shop-girls who were visible through the broad windows in the outer streets" (137). Thus, Dicky's attraction to the girls who live outside the Jago poses a threat of contamination for the "clean" and upright English citizenry, particularly of the working-class. Dicky's desire to mate with these women, rather than those he knows in the slum, is reminiscent of Hannah's unfortunate marriage to Josh – the daughter of a working-class father brought low by her coupling with a criminal slummer. Their offspring – Dicky – carries forward the same taint of criminal heredity to be spread anew.

In Dicky's case, "the Jago had got him, and held him fast" (162). He couldn't shake off the "unendurable stupor that clung about him like a net" (163). Thus, at the end of the novel, Dicky expresses his full criminal inheritance, finding a release, like his father, "in doing something violent" (163). During a brawl with the neighboring Dove Lane slummers, Dicky is described in the same terms as his father when he murdered Weech: "Thin, wasted and shaken, Dicky fought like a tiger" (164). We recognize Dicky's cosmopolitan criminal inheritance in his physical and moral degeneration, and his animal savagery and violence. During the street fight, however, his longtime nemesis, Bob Roper stabs him in the lung . As he lies dying, Dicky tells Father Sturt to tell Mr.

Beveridge that there is another, “better” way out of the Jago – not jail or the gallows or joining the High Mob, but a reprobate’s sweet escape from a miserable slum-life through death in the street (165).

Morrison portrays slums as inhabited by common, decent English folk, not just cosmopolitan criminals. He also shows his readers the dangerous corruption and contagion cosmopolitan criminals wield over the wider population, especially the English poor living side-by-side with the hereditary criminals in London’s East End slums. Furthermore, Morrison’s characterizations of the honest poor, and especially Hannah Perrot, aim to arouse the sympathy of his middle- and upper-class readers, and shed light on their plight in the slums. This sympathy for the honest poor yields a common cultural recognition of their shared English identity and eased their national integration as visible players in wider political and social concerns. The honest working poor, therefore, are as much a subject in slum literature as the menace of cosmopolitan criminal slummers.

The amount of attention late-Victorians paid to cosmopolitan criminals in their collective volumes of crime and slum literature contributed to a construction of reality – even when built on fictions, fantasies, and half-baked ideas – about the significant roles racialized criminals played in their society, even as these criminals were ideologically distanced from the dominant behaviors and characteristics befitting Victorian society. Attending to cosmopolitan criminality in nineteenth-century slum literature leads to the recognition that as crime garnered more attention as a measurable and classifiable racial phenomenon, slum literature became a principal tool for transmitting the prevailing

criminological theories and fears surrounding cosmopolitan criminals. As the groundwork for later literary, sociological, and scientific texts that advanced the cosmopolitan criminal figure forward into the Edwardian and Modernist periods, the Victorians' de-linking of the strong bonds between criminals and the common poor established many of our modern notions about the foreign quality of certain cosmopolitan crimes and characters.

The Decline of Slum Literature

The dreaded Victorian bogey of the urban residuum, despite reformists' best efforts, had grown to levels that many thought could not be turned back or recuperated without extreme measures.⁸⁴ Masterman comments that people had grown tired of the intractable problems of the urban poor and slums, reacting with increasing fatigue and diminishing social will through the various "Victorian ages" he identified as the Age of Socialism, the Age of Slumming, the Age of Settlements, and the Age of Philanthropy (5). As a result, slum literature's popularity quickly abated. E. M. Forster's Edwardian narrator of *Howards End* (1910), for example, announces to the reader: "We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet" (35). Statistical reports on poverty continued to be published – including B. Seebohm Rowntree's *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (1901), Charles Booth's

⁸⁴ While Britain never passed eugenics legislation, Havelock Ellis's, Francis Galton's, and Karl Pearson's scientific claims about the need and positivity of eugenics programs convinced such authors as G. B. Shaw, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, W. B. Yeats, H. G. Wells, and Virginia Woolf to advocate for eugenics policies. G. K. Chesterton was staunchly opposed to such measures of biological control. A cultural, as well as scientific debate carried on through the modernist period and helped influence policy bills, such as the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 and the failed Sterilization Bill of 1931. See Donald J. Childs's *Modernism and Eugenics* for a history of the debate on "eugenical biology" and the ways modernist authors employed eugenics discourse and theory in their works.

seventeen-volume *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1902-03), and L. Chiozza Money's *Riches and Poverty* (1905) – but for the most part novelists lost interest in the banal realities of secluded urban poverty in slums. Instead, fiction writers turned to more stirring cosmopolitan criminal characters and narratives shaped by new criminological models and influenced by popular cultural anxieties.

Victorian equivalencies between racial criminality and atavistic savagery were overturned in the twentieth century. In the Edwardian period, criminality began to be understood as a product of environment, socio-economic circumstance, and psychology, rather than as a function of savage racial imperatives. As a result, primitive peoples no longer signified degenerative criminality. Primitive lifestyles were promoted by some as positive models for an alternative way of living that stripped away the detrimental habits of modern life. Worries about savage slummers abated as their social dangers became muted in a larger discourse that recast the Romantic ideals of primitive ways of life. Thus, to the Britons of the early twentieth-century the depictions of the exotic savagery of primitive peoples – including cosmopolitan criminal slummers – seemed like relics of a bygone era.

In D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* (1920), for example, Gerald Crich reflects on his encounters with “savages” in South Africa (during the Boer War) and the Amazon jungle. He tells the naïve bohemian Pussum that “savages” are not the blood-thirsty barbarians English society has made them out to be. She asks him, lisping, “Were you ever vewy much afwaid of the savages?” (66). He answers, coolly, “No—never very

much afraid. On the whole they're harmless—they're not born yet, you can't feel really afraid of them. You know you can manage them" (66). Pussum, disbelieving, questions him: "Aren't they very fierce?" Crich replies, "Not very. There aren't many fierce things, as a matter of fact. There aren't many things, neither people nor animals, that have it in them to be really dangerous" (66). Noticeably enculturated to believe in the unmanageable violence of primitive peoples, Pussum says that she always "thought savages were all so dangerous, they'd have your life before you could look round" (66). Laughing, Crich responds that "They are over-rated, savages. They're too much like other people, not exciting, after the first acquaintance" (66). His firsthand experiences allow him to overturn the domestic cultural narratives about the exotically fierce dangers of savages at home and abroad. He sees through the fantastic narratives propagating savage violence, crime, and brutality. Therefore, Crich believes "savages" should no longer cause alarm because they are too ordinarily boring like most people. However, they remain classed as "savage" not because of their criminality and violence but because they are still seen as primitive: not yet "born" into modern consciousness.

A primitivism devoid of crime and violence held a certain allure for Lawrence and others who believed that the trappings of modernity were corrupting society. They suggested that a return to primitive models could overturn the social rot they believed was a byproduct of industrial urban modernity. The primitive, like the modernist artist, acts as a subversive figure that can offer alternative means for thinking about and living in the modern world. Valuing social subversion over social conformity lays a foundation

for re-thinking the appeal of cosmopolitan outsiders and perspectives for many modernists.

In *Women in Love*, Lawrence presents a cosmopolitan slummer with a criminal background as a foil to the English industrialist Crich. Loerke, a homosexual, suspected Jew, and cosmopolitan artist with studios in Dresden, is likened to a “street arab” referring to a common English term used to describe slummers (422). Loerke references his impoverished childhood in Austrian Poland living in slum tenement conditions: “in a room with three other families” (425). His father, “a man who did not like to work,” resembles the prevalent portrait of reckless fathers in the slums, as seen in slum fiction like *A Child of the Jago*, who “would fight with any man in town” and turn to crime rather than perform an honest day’s work (425). Loerke’s statement to Gudrun that his father “wouldn’t work for anybody – set his heart against it, and wouldn’t” suggests that his father committed crimes to support his family. Loerke, too, admits that growing up he “used to steal from the market-place,” perhaps following his father’s example (426).

In a late-Victorian context Loerke would have been read as another dangerous cosmopolitan criminal from the slums who inherited his father’s criminal traits. But in Lawrence’s text Loerke’s past in the slums of Galacia appeals to Gudrun and Ursula: “To Gudrun, there was in Loerke the rock-bottom of all life. . . . It was curious too how his poverty, the degradation of his earlier life attracted her. . . . A certain violent sympathy, however, came up in her for this mud-child. He seemed to be the very stuff of the underworld of life” (427). Birkin tells Crich that “existing almost like a criminal” is what

the sisters find most appealing in him. Crich cannot understand this and exhibits the “arrogant, English contempt for a foreigner” in his dealings with Loerke (449). His cosmopolitan otherness, his artistic sensibility, and his criminal past all stand in opposition to Crich’s conservative Englishness. Eventually, Loerke causes the dissolution of Crich’s and Gudrun’s relationship. Crich’s last act before his death – his assault of Loerke and his aborted strangulation of Gudrun – upsets the English readership’s expectations; they would have expected the cosmopolitan criminal slummer to engage in such crimes instead of the English gentleman. Thus, Lawrence transforms a Victorian object of contempt – the cosmopolitan criminal from the slums – into a cosmopolitan artist with great appeal to someone like Gudrun who is weary of English ways of life.⁸⁵ The cosmopolitan criminal/artist models an alternative possibility to reject the standards of a stifling English respectability, “their own special brand of Englishness” (395). Modernists overturned Victorian conceptions of cosmopolitanism as a negative marker of degraded criminality and situated cosmopolitan otherness as a positive subversion of stale English identity, which contributed to the decline of criminal slum fiction in the modernist period.

Attacks on the questionable identity politics of slum novels also contributed to their decline in the Edwardian period. G. K. Chesterton, for example, tied the success of slum fiction to its sensationalism, particularly in the fantastic depictions of those living in the slums. Writing in “Slum Novelists and the Slums” (1905), he observes “the modern

⁸⁵ Loerke, like Gudrun, is interested in primitive art: “he liked the West African wooden figures, the Aztec art, Mexican and Central American” (448).

novels about the slums, such as novels of Mr. Arthur Morrison . . . are intended to be sensational. . . . A sensation, a shock to the imagination, like the contact with cold water, is always a good and exhilarating thing; and, undoubtedly, men will always seek this sensation (among other forms) in the form of the study of strange antics of remote or alien peoples” (126). Though, for Chesterton, “artistic slumming” in this kind of novel revealed itself to be a glorified form of journalism that unnecessarily exoticizes slum dwellers, inflating them into monsters of the abyss. These sensational accounts took the place of old myths of inhabitants of foreign lands, turning the poor and criminal in the slums into modern-day myths of the foreign amidst the domestic. Since all the old “monsters have faded from the popular mythology, it is necessary to have in our fiction the image of the horrible and hairy East-ender, merely to keep in us a fearful and childlike wonder at external peculiarities” (126). Chesterton concedes the aesthetic merit of the shock-value of slum novels, but he asserts that they confuse the sensational with the real; rather than present an accurate picture of slum life, slum novels serve as records of the distorted view the upper-classes have toward the urban poor and the “psychology of wealth and culture when brought in contact with poverty” (127). Chesterton’s critique of the slum novel highlights what he and others saw as the unfashionable and disgraceful exploitation of writing grotesques of the slums. By the time Chesterton made his claims about the need for the slummed East-ender to stand in for fear and wonder at “external peculiarities,” slum literature had already largely been counted as a relic of a bygone age.

However, Chesterton’s observations about the need for a popular strain of literature to shock and surprise with what is fearful and foreign help explain the

continuation of crime literature's sensationalism in the Edwardian period. Rather than isolate criminal deeds and doers in the slums, novelists set their crimes and criminals in the varied landscapes of the modern city. Slum literature opened the modern city as a key character in crime fiction. Edwardian authors would show the modern city saturated with cause for shock and anxiety that stemmed from the constant variety of cosmopolitan criminals the city presented its inhabitants.

CHAPTER III
ANARCHISTS, ALIENS, AND COSMOPOLITAN CRIMINALITY IN EDWARDIAN
FICTION

With the death of Queen Victoria on January 22, 1901, the Edwardian age began, bringing with it the anticipations and anxieties of a new modern age.⁸⁶ In this chapter I survey Edwardian literary constructions of cosmopolitan criminality. While Victorian slum literature situated their origins within England's slum-archipelagos, the cosmopolitan criminals' mobile threats of itinerancy and contamination dispersed their putative criminal and racial hazards beyond the confines of the slum courts. By the start of the twentieth century, criminality was seen to have burst beyond the criminal barracks of the slums, infecting rural and urban environments alike. For the Edwardians, crime, it seemed, lurked everywhere, posing a threat to everyone. Furthermore, Victorian beliefs in the racial cosmopolitan criminal were updated and overturned in the new century, expanding the possibilities for defining the criminal subject. According to new theories

⁸⁶ As with any effort to offer periodization of history and culture, clear dates and events starting and ending the period are often tenuous. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the term "Edwardian" was first used in 1908. The Edwardian age has been alternately said to start with the Second Boer War (1899-1902) and Oscar Wilde's trial (1895), in addition to Queen Victoria's death and Edward VII's coronation. The ending point has variably been assigned to Edward's death on May 6, 1910, the outbreak of World War I (1914), and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles (1919). Jefferson Hunter offers H. G. Wells's thoughts in *Anticipations* (1901) as an apt "epigraph for the period." Wells wrote: "we live in a period of tightening and extending social organisation, we live also in a period of adventurous and insurgent thought, in an intellectual spring unprecedented in the world's history. There is an enormous criticism going on of the faiths upon which men's lives and associations are based, and of every standard and rule of conduct" (qtd. in Hunter 5). Characteristic of the period, then, is the overwhelming recognition of a break with and a questioning of the old rules, customs, and beliefs of the previous century, though towards what end was still unknown. As a designation for a literary period, Samuel Hynes argues, "it was concerned with the state of society, and acknowledged the urgency and force of social change, but it was *not* concerned to effect a *literary* revolution," so that as an "adjective identifying a literary tone, that tone must be one of social awareness and anxious concern" (5, 8).

about the causes and influences of crime, criminals were no longer thought to be born to crime. Criminality was presented (for what it always was) dispersed across class, gender, and region. Edwardian criminologists, sociologists, and fiction writers, therefore, continued to study and present criminals in their texts, only now with a broader brush, but still tying criminality to negative cosmopolitan associations, such as itinerancy, excess, doubling, adaptability, urbanity, and disguise. Ultimately, depictions of these criminals produced resilient anxieties about foreign criminals operating within the domestic sphere of the nation.

Specifically, I argue, cosmopolitan criminality in the Edwardian period traded on fears of the criminal alien. Contributing to the general attitude of English anti-cosmopolitanism, authors produced evidence of exaggerated foreign criminality, concentrating on anarchists and terrorist activities in London. The complex legal and cultural debates centering on restricting immigration (exemplified by various Anti-Aliens Bills of the period) prompted authors such as Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, and G. K. Chesterton to critique English culture's anti-cosmopolitan stance in their works. Upending generic conventions and tropes in popular literary genres, they satirize the English cultural and legal perspectives that underwrite the dominant narratives representing foreigners with xenophobic paranoia. They use humor to parody the laughably ineffectual exploits of anarchist criminals in England, undercutting conservative crime narratives which argued that foreign anarchists were a major cosmopolitan threat to the nation's security. Ultimately, the authors I discuss expose the fictional aspects of those narratives that had served as evidence for restrictionist

immigration legislation and as the bases for open hostilities to outsiders. Their fiction presents a picture of Edwardian attitudes and legal frameworks that too easily associated cosmopolitan hybridity and alterity with criminality.

The Edwardian Turn: Cosmopolitan Urbanization and the Pastoral Tradition

As I showed in the last chapter, nineteenth-century representations of industrial urban living were distinctly divided along racial, spatial, and class demarcations, with the slums being crucial sites of an emerging cosmopolitan criminality. Victorian slum literature broadcasted scientific, political, and cultural views of a growing segment of racialized criminals breeding social and moral contamination into the genetic stock of England, particularly in London. As the Edwardian age approached modernity's cosmopolitan urbanity changed beliefs about the racial degeneration of crime and criminals. As criminological theories advanced beyond the prescriptive belief in a distinct criminal race, degeneration discourse was more widely adapted to describe the populations of modern cities.⁸⁷ More than just a problem for criminal races, physical and moral deterioration was thought to be encroaching on all but the hardiest city-dwellers, or those urbanites wealthy enough to find reprieve in country manors.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ James Cantile's *Physical Efficiency* (1906) characteristically laments the physical and psychological tolls of urban living on the British population. He argues that "a general suspicion and belief on the part of the people of Britain" exists "that we are not as a nation maintaining the standard of physical development which naturally or racially belongs to us" (4). He attributes the city's bad air, unlevelled pavement, and inferior imported goods and food as contributing factors for the degeneration of the "town-bred" (80).

⁸⁸ Jefferson Hunter argues that Edwardian authors were heavily "invested in landed property" and the manor houses of England, suggesting that after the vogue for late-Victorian imperial romances abroad, writers believed that "the most interesting things were going on in England, not abroad" (189, 190). I believe that the manor house, for a certain class, became the retreat from which to ponder the manor's relative senilities against the backdrop of England's modernization, such as in John Galsworthy's *The Country House* (1907).

In fact, the same process of racialization that Victorians applied to criminals, was applied to city-dwellers—and Londoners in particular—as Edwardian politicians, scientists, and social observers turned their attentions to a “new city race.”⁸⁹ Edwardians believed the rapid growth of cities and their dreary conurbations directly contributed to the moral, aesthetic, and social decline of English culture perpetrated by this new city-type. F. W. Lawrence, for example, coined the abstract problem of “towniness” to describe the “moral, aesthetic, [and] physical loss” suffered in English culture due to city dwellers’ removal from nature and traditional village life (*Heart of the Empire* 71). C. F. G. Masterman, the Liberal politician and commentator, edited a collection titled *The Heart of the Empire* (1901) assessing Queen Victoria’s century and the problems facing England in the new century. The volume’s subtitle, *A Discussion of Problems of Modern City Life in England*, announced that for the twentieth-century, the city (and especially London) would more than ever be the crucible where the ills and gains of society would be fought and established. To many, like Masterman, “Crime, blank ignorance, foul conditions of existence, a life purely animal, forsaken of God and Man” existed “in greater quantity than ever” in London at the turn of the century (10). “Merrie England,” therefore, could only be identified with the pastoral settings of English “villages and small towns, with open spaces and the perpetual presence of the natural world,” far away from the new breed of urbanites who were “packed for their lives in the labyrinths of drab streets that make up the greater part of London” (27). Carried over from the Victorians,

⁸⁹ Masterman identified the “new city race” (xi) in London as the key to understanding “the lines of progress and the change from the old conditions to the new” (9), as it was destined to be “this New Town type” that would determine “the future progress of the Anglo-Saxon Race, and for the next half-century at least the policy of the British Empire in the world” (*Heart of Empire* 7).

fears of degeneration caused by overcrowded cities ensured that, “Nature had all but become for the English a patriotic emotion, a national longing. England was Nature and Nature was England, and to love the one was to love the other” (Paterson 21).

Pastoral England was conflated with the “real” England – that which should be protected, desired, saved – and the stout, rustic yeoman and the country squire still served as archetypal Englishmen. The massive loss of fertile fields in England in the late-Victorian era, however, caused rural populations to dwindle as the exodus to the cities grew apace.⁹⁰ The disturbance of long-held agricultural traditions saw the loss of rural perspectives and customs, replaced by urban configurations, as happened to the Brangwens living on Marsh Farm in the Midlands of D. H. Lawrence’s *The Rainbow* (1915). These men with full communion –“blood-intimacy”—with nature, “native to the earth, lacking outwardness and range of motion” had neither curiosity nor time to contemplate the onrush of “activity of man in the world at large” (10, 11). Though Edwardians still prized their country folk as signifiers of an unbroken line of English identity, and openly bemoaned their declining numbers in the wake of the Boer War, the truth of the matter was that the “new race” of the city-type was replacing them as paragons of the modern Englishman, not only by sheer number, but outlook as well.⁹¹

⁹⁰ David Daiches informs us, that “Over a million and a half acres of British wheat-fields went out of cultivation between 1870 and 1900. Farmers were ruined; farm labourers flocked to the cities looking for jobs that were often unavailable; the traditional patterns of rural life crumbled so that to physical dereliction was added demoralization and bewilderment” (77).

⁹¹ Rider Haggard blamed the loss of the Boer War on the city-bred in *Rural England* (1902), and was one of many who attributed the deleterious effects of modern urban dwelling to the alarming rate of recruits the army had to turn away for the war. The fitness of the English population was under such scrutiny after the war that the government assembled the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration (1904) to report on the perceived physical deterioration of the English population, focusing their attention on the problems of the city. Despite reassurances from the committee on the good health of the population, beliefs

Whereas rural and village life lent itself to long days of toil, following cyclical rhythms of nature, the artificial lamps of the city stood as beacons of the fracturing of English life as it was traditionally lived. The rootedness of the Brangwen rural-type—their lack of motion and outwardness—no longer could be maintained in a modern England, where economic, political, and cultural concerns were determined as much by what was happening abroad as at home. Yet, the nostalgia for the stability of the country, as Raymond Williams has shown, lasted well beyond the practical plausibility of the country to determine what a customary English life might look like for the millions more living in cities.⁹²

This homesickness for pastoral insularity competed with modernity's insistent cosmopolitanization of the cityscape.⁹³ Georg Simmel's well-known claims about modern city living (using London as his example) in "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903) pointed to the psychological shocks and resulting defensive mental barriers of the blasé attitude for the "metropolitan type." The modern city was creating a "type" of inhabitant in "deep contrast" with "small town and rural existence" (12). Whereas small communities still operated on "subjective" and close emotional ties and surveillance of its

in the degeneration of the city-type persisted.

⁹² Williams writes in *The Country and the City*: "English attitudes to the country, and to the ideas of rural life, persisted with extraordinary power, so that even after the society was predominantly urban its literature, for a generation, was still predominantly rural; and even in the twentieth century, in an urban and industrial land, forms of the older ideas and experiences still remarkably persist" (2).

⁹³ Similarly, Georg Lukac's theory of "transcendental homelessness" argued in *Theory of the Novel*, posits that the form of the novel relies on a basic foundation of alienation, where the novelist constructs an artform that betrays a longing for shelter from a world abandoned by God. I see metropolitan fiction, with its apogee occurring in the first-half of the twentieth century, encoding a general sense of the loss of a homespace – nation, village, home. Homesickness, then, both denotes a sickness at "home," generally understood to be the result of corrupting outside influences, and a nostalgic yearning for the purity of an irrevocably lost (idea of) home.

members, the metropolis's size necessitated "objective" and impersonal calculated habits, which in turn allowed for the greater need, expression, and freedom of individuality. Crucially, for Simmel, the metropolis "becomes the seat of cosmopolitanism" as it prepares and demonstrates the expansion of the "individual's horizon" extended "over a broader national or international area" (17).⁹⁴ Specifically, London's bustling cosmopolitanism forced a blasé dulling of the individual's senses that fundamentally changed the mental makeup of its inhabitants to something previously unseen in human existence. In his essay "London," Henry James recognizes London's place in changing human nature and terms this process "Londonization" (12).⁹⁵ Thus, the practices required in the day-to-day functioning of the modern metropolis "naturalize" the cosmopolitan condition that had previously encoded the slummed cosmopolitan criminal as socially dangerous, foreign, and regressive. In other words, inhabitants of modern cities more readily recognized their given relationships with the foreign, especially in terms of economic, imperial, and cultural ties, as well as a set of new risks, making them appear altogether different in mentality from their rural counterparts.

As James Cantile put it in 1906, "the London-reared dweller" derives his food "from far-afield sources," so that "there is little British in his composition in a physical sense" (110-11). His mental "efforts are mainly directed to the newspapers, and the

⁹⁴ Ulrich Beck similarly argues that the "cosmopolitan gaze opens wide" ("Cosmopolitan" 61).

⁹⁵ James asserts that even the "most alien of the cockneyfied" who would resist and "bristle" at the notion "that England has set its stamp upon him," recognizes with "conscious pride" London's influence on him, and that "he has submitted to Londonization" (11-12). Londonization, as a process, James declares, is consonant with the sense that London is the "home of the human race" (11). In other words, he sees London's cosmopolitanism in housing all that is possible in humanity from across the globe as an inescapable force for influencing those that live there. He puts Londonization in terms of a cosmopolitan widening of vision, of experiencing the global *mélange* in a single city.

pabulum for his consumption is mostly concerned with foreign politics and the doings and opinions of every country under the sun” making the “town-dweller . . . who interests himself acutely in world-wide questions . . . frequently at a loss if he is suddenly asked to state in which parish he lives, or the name of his representative in Parliament” (111). For Cantile, appeals to a Londoner’s “patriotism have another basis in times gone by when the Briton was the product of British pastures” (111). The “town-dweller,” according to Cantile, “will and must degenerate unless fresh blood is supplied from the country” because the “town-bred youngster is a sorry substitute for the yeoman of England” (80, 214). Consequently, “cosmopolitan” – for Simmel, those products, practices, and processes that contribute to the expansion of an urbanite’s horizon beyond the local and national – became a watchword for the era, signaling the numerous degenerating factors bound up with urbanization and imported disruptions of English health, customs, and identity.

Of course, the cosmopolitan intrusion of the foreign in the city did not always produce the blasé habit Simmel describes. Rather, because city-dwellers were more likely to be in close contact with the foreign, and perhaps more importantly foreigners, they developed a heightened sense of suspicion when it came to monitoring and regulating the unfamiliar. We see in Edwardian literature, then, a push-pull dynamic of the wonders and hazards of cosmopolitan city-life, and the quiet repose of the English countryside: the London townhouse of the Schlegel sisters and the Wilcoxes’ country manor *Howards End*, for example. In E. M. Forster’s *Howards End* (1910) London is described in the novel as being in “continual flux,” inexplicable, lying “beyond everything,” a “monster”

(79-80). The city's "sense of flux" transfers its sensibility to its inhabitants. London is predicted to be a "foretaste of this *nomadic* civilization which is altering human nature so profoundly" (186, my emphasis). The countryside will only be a reminder of things dead and gone in an age of cosmopolitan urbanism: "Under cosmopolitanism, if it comes, we shall receive no help from the earth. Trees and meadows and mountains will only be a spectacle" (186). *Howards End*, therefore, stands as a diminishing counterpoint to London, surrounded by the simple comforts of rural life in Hertfordshire.⁹⁶ "An elder race, to which we look back with disquietude" lives in the small village cottages that dot the landscape there (191). The men who live there "are England's hope," as they are not yet tainted by the genetic and mental corruptions city-life forces upon people; the rustic "can still throw back to a nobler stock, and breed yeomen" (229). They do not suffer the fracturing of relationships, of consciousness, and of identity experienced in the city. In their "English farms, if anywhere, one might see life steadily and see it whole" (191). The rustic, bucolic spaces, like the agricultural lands surrounding *Howards End*, offer two things the city cannot. First, they offer a direct line to the uncorrupted "elder race" of English yeomen rooted to English tradition. Second, they provide a way of life easily understood because natural, familiar, and righteous. Seeing life whole directly counters the tendencies of urban cosmopolitanization to rupture vision, distending life's relations beyond comprehensibility.

⁹⁶ The country locations of the novel – "Howards End, Oniton, the Purbeck Downs, the Oderberge" – are under threat by London's yearly expansion; "London's creeping" as Helen Schlegel puts it (240). Not fitting into the contemporary moment, these rural spaces, the Schlegels hope, will survive for "the future as well as the past" (240).

In particular, in *Howards End* cosmopolitan mixing and mobility are portrayed as menaces to traditional English life. Helen identifies life in London as a precursor to “something else. . . . Life’s going to be melted down, all over the world” (240). Her fear takes the form of a melting-pot metaphor for the dilution of life. For her, melting down life reduces everything to a universal blandness, extending the city’s creeping dullness brick-by-brick, person-by-person. Margaret hopes that this won’t always be the case; she is aware that “This craze for motion has only set in during the last hundred years” (240). Margaret’s response to Helen’s fear of the watering down of culture via cultural mixing highlights the association of mobility with cosmopolitan hybridity. The Schlegels worry that modern England is becoming a transient civilization ruled by Imperialists, “ever in motion,” preparing “the way for cosmopolitanism” (229). Forster’s characters do not idealize cosmopolitanism, as Simmel does. Instead, they recognize it as a negative animating force of the age, compelling mixing and motion leading to a loss of purity. Thus, Forster reveals that from an English point of view cosmopolitanism was to be rejected where possible in order to safeguard a sense of a unitary national and individual English identity.

The dissolutions of the city govern the problems of its populace. The novel, therefore, draws attention to English misgivings of cosmopolitan identity as much as the cosmopolitanization of London. Helen and Margaret Schlegel are described as being half-English, “half-German”: “not English to the backbone” (35, 22).⁹⁷ Raised in London by

⁹⁷ Margaret self-identifies as “half German” and tells a group of her English friends that her “blood boils . . . when I listen to the tasteful contempt of the average islander for things Teutonic” (57).

their mother “Poor Emily (or Die Engländerin)” and their father, a German intellectual, in a household with constant talk of the merits of both the German and British empires, they are also described as being “scarcely English” and “would never be German to the backbone” (23). Though their English aunt, Mrs. Munt, is wary of their spending too much time with their “German cousins (one knows what foreigners are),” the Schlegel sisters grow up as comfortable cosmopolitans, one foot set firmly in English identity, and the other in their German heritage (13). This causes the English characters to be apprehensive of their manners and motives. Rather than present a picture of positive cosmopolitanism, which makes them at home everywhere, the Schlegels find themselves unplaced, estranged from partial homes (England and Germany), because of their fractional identities. Forster makes it clear that the Schlegel sisters find life difficult because of their cosmopolitanism.

The widower Henry Wilcox excuses Margaret’s *faux pas* of sending chrysanthemums to Ruth Wilcox’s funeral, for example, as possibly a German custom. Evie and Dolly Wilcox are reassured by this, remembering that “she isn’t really English” (75). Charles Wilcox adds: “She’s a cosmopolitan. . . . I’m rather down on cosmopolitans. . . . I cannot stand them, and a German cosmopolitan is the limit” (75).⁹⁸ His statement comes immediately after his father has told them that their late mother had asked for Howards End to be left to Margaret, whom she had only met a few times.⁹⁹ Minor annoyance at the Schlegel sisters’ funerary peccadillos quickly turns into criminal

⁹⁸ At a time of escalating pre-war tensions with Germany (“England and Germany are bound to fight”) the Schlegels’ German heritage would have contributed to their disreputable status in England (47).

⁹⁹ Charles has the skill to “see through foreigners” (53).

suspicion of their underhanded manipulation to get Howards End from a dying woman. As the Wilcox children's comments confirm, their prejudices against the Schlegels' cosmopolitanism lay at the root of their worries about possible criminal activity. Their easy leap in logic, from cosmopolitan to criminal, might seem unexpected or forced, if not for the criminal associations cosmopolitanism carried with it in the Edwardian era. Charles typifies the English viewpoint: the whole country was suspicious of cosmopolitans at this time.

Helen and Margaret learn they must resolve their in-born cosmopolitanism to fit into English society. Thus, *Howards End* charts the de-cosmopolitanization of the Schlegel sisters, as they shed their divided selves to settle down into a singularly English identity evinced by Margaret's marriage to Henry, Helen's desire to raise her son as an English yeoman, and their shared proclamations of their displeasure at the cosmopolitanization of England. Accordingly, Henry affirms their place in English society, naming them inheritors of Howards End. In order to be accepted, the Schlegels become *wholly* English by abandoning both cosmopolitan London *and* their German roots. Adopting pastoral life at Howards End confers upon them their identification with the ideal England and England's ideal. The Schlegels succeed in leaving behind their father's genetic and national legacy – by the end of the novel they are no longer described as being half-German – attesting to the appeal, if not necessity, of shirking cosmopolitan hybridity. Assuming a traditional English identity proves crucial for fighting against modernity's corrupting cosmopolitanism. A picture of settled family life at Howards End contrasts with that of the Schlegels' earlier hopscotching to and fro, between England and

Germany, London and the countryside. The fact that one can choose between an English or German heritage and culture also reveals that cosmopolitan identity is elective (even when born into it), and the novel posits should be electively discarded. The Schlegels' choice of England over Germany would appear only natural to an English readership.

Howards End typifies the Edwardian novel, not only for its anti-cosmopolitanism but also because it takes as its dramatic impetus the difficulties in coming to terms with the urbanization and cosmopolitanization of modern England from the perspectives of natives and outsiders. That it does so in terms of the English pastoral tradition's competition with modernity's emerging metropolitan fiction reveals the loss felt at the turn of the twentieth century as a receding view of a uniquely insular (and superior) English life was overcome by a melding together of identities and practices altogether different from core English values. Forster's narrator tells us that pining for a lost pastoral England is antiquated, even if it is still ultimately desirable: "To speak against London is no longer fashionable. The Earth as an artistic cult has had its day, and the literature of the near future will probably ignore the country and seek inspiration from the town. . . . Of Pan and the elemental forces, the public has heard a little too much – they seem Victorian, while London is Georgian" (79). Forster captures the sense that Victorian ideals cannot survive in the modern era and the belief that the city will serve as the muse for the new era. Yet the novel depicts the choice the Schlegel sisters had to make to live comfortably in modern England: to abandon cosmopolitan London and their own cosmopolitan identities (half-this, half-that). Forster's major novels demonstrate the difficulty in carrying out the directive to "only connect" (his famous epigraph for

Howards End) when people's differences – cultural, national, ideological, religious, political, class-based, etc. – get in the way.¹⁰⁰ The Schlegel sisters' most lasting connection, it seems, will be to an English manor house, standing in for an England receding from relevance.

My reading of *Howards End* establishes several lines of inquiry I want to follow through in the rest of the chapter. Written near the end of the Edwardian period, the novel manifests English misgivings about modernity, urbanism, cosmopolitanism, and continental aliens. The cosmopolitan criminal figure helps to tie these threads together. Important cultural debates about the nature of alien identities and the foreigner's place in English society taking place at this time were frequently filtered through a presumption of the foreigner's criminal threat. Edwardians enlisted ideas about cosmopolitan criminality first articulated in the Victorian period – degenerate mobility and foreign mixing – to argue for an innate delinquency essential in foreigners. Thus, cosmopolitanism became a kind of shorthand for indicating latent criminal potential. Cosmopolitan criminality's hazard, in this period, I suggest, depended on its powers to confuse and to deceive. As we saw with the doubling of the Schlegels' partitioned identities and affiliations (half German, half English), their cosmopolitanism enacted problems of excess – an inexpedient surplus housed in one body.¹⁰¹ Cosmopolitan excess

¹⁰⁰ Forster's major novels, *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910) and *A Passage to India* (1924), all illustrate people's failures at making true connections across cosmopolitan European and colonial settings.

¹⁰¹ David Simpson argues that cosmopolitanism "is neither local/national nor international, but both at once" (56).

paired with criminal mobility and mixing contributed to the formation of a new Edwardian cosmopolitan criminal figure.

Edwardian Criminology Theory

At the outset of the twentieth century, criminologists in Europe began to replace nineteenth-century notions of racialized, cosmopolitan criminality with more relevant observations about individual, social, and environmental factors that led to criminal activities and the production of criminals. The study of *homo criminalis* no longer depended on a racialized discourse of cosmopolitan atavism and barbarism that considered criminals to be of the same genetic stock.¹⁰² Instead, three competing views on criminality emerged. The closest to nineteenth-century thinking argued that criminals were degenerate, both mentally and physically, but no longer comprised their own race.¹⁰³ Vice, crime, madness, infirmity and other “stigmata” of degeneration might be found in any member of the population, differing only in degree. According to this line of thinking, crime was the result of degenerate abnormalities, often attributed to some state of physical or mental “disease.” The second theory linked crime to environmental and social factors, recognizing the external factors that might lead a person to engage in criminal activity. The natural inborn, endogenous instincts toward crime, under this model, were substituted for any combinatory number of external contributory causes for

¹⁰² Piers Beirne points out that even for Cesare Lombroso—the greatest proponent of the “born criminal” theory in the nineteenth century—in 1899 while putting forward his “last major statement on the causes of crime and on the priority of atavism within them, the notion of born criminality barely survives amid ‘environmental’ influences” (212).

¹⁰³ Max Nordau, for instance, argued that Lombroso’s “born criminals” were really nothing more than “a subdivision of degenerates” to be found in modern societies (17). The criminal was but one of a modern degenerate type to be found thriving in modernity’s social milieus, especially the city.

crime, such as climate, alcoholism, education levels, economic need, urban living, and the harrowing pressures of modern or urban living. Committing crime, therefore, was not “natural,” or instinctive, to the criminal but was explained as a choice informed and determined by a complex set of conditions. The third theory assumed that crime was “normal” both for civilization and for humankind. Moving beyond the idea of an anthropological criminal type, and starting with the presupposition that all peoples are more-or-less “equal,” the criminal was classified as one whose criminal acts located him or her on a scale of normal, albeit rare, anti-social behavior common to all civilizations.¹⁰⁴

These theories on the etiology of crime, of course, have a certain amount of crossover, and Edwardian criminologists and commentators often added or subtracted from these general theories to posit their particular positions. Charles Goring, a pioneer of second-wave English criminology, summed up the developments in criminological study for the Edwardian era in *The English Convict* (1913), arguing that the dominant theories for thinking about criminals could be categorized as: 1) a criminal is an “atavistic anomaly” evidenced by his “conspicuous, physical anomalies, or stigmata,” 2) a criminal is “morally insane,” 3) a criminal is “not strictly atavistic nor strictly insane,” but rather, “a healthy-minded savage who, having wandered into a strange environment, becomes relatively insane,” 4) a criminal conforms to “other varieties of decadent stock,” and thus

¹⁰⁴ In *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) Emile Durkheim argued, somewhat controversially, for crime’s “functionality,” or usefulness, to societies, particularly in relation to the formation of their “solidarity” and “social cohesion.” He extended his argument in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895) to assert the “normality” of crime as a naturally existing component of any healthy society.

is “of the generally degenerate” (13).¹⁰⁵ Goring recognized that these ideas had permeated the public’s understanding of crime, and sought to correct the general confusion stemming from the “science of criminology,” which as he saw it had become “warped by its subjection to all kinds of superstitions and conventional dogmas” (11). Chief among these outmoded ideas was the nineteenth-century “conviction that the inward disposition of man is reflected and revealed by the configuration of his body,” supported by the “‘sciences’ of phrenology, chiromancy and physiognomy” (11). “One thing the criminologists will not let him [the criminal] be,” Goring writes, is “a perfectly normal human being, responsible for his own actions” (13). The danger is that “the idea that a man is technically designated ‘criminal’ because he has committed an offence against the law, has got allied with the idea that all offenders against the law are specifically criminal in constitution,” so that the crime serves as “proof of some *special* quality of iniquity in him, unshared in any degree by the whole of law-abiding humanity” (21, emphasis in original).

Rejecting the nineteenth-century’s “anatamico-pathological” thesis, which served to advance the existence of a criminal race set apart from others (the cosmopolitan criminals of the slum whom I discussed in chapter 1), Goring argues that in order to understand the criminal he must be considered “both as he is himself, and as he becomes through an influence of environment” (18, 12). He employs the “statistical method of inquiry,” common to early criminological study, beginning with the somewhat controversial presupposition (at the time) that the “criminal is a normal human being; that

¹⁰⁵ See Piers Beirne’s *Inventing Criminology* for an account of Goring’s methodology and influences.

the criminal thing, whatever its nature may ultimately be shown to be, is not a pathological product, but is a physiological condition of the human mind; that whatever difference there may be underlying the acts of law-breaker and those of the law-abiding person, the difference is one of degree only, and not of kind” (21). The “confusion as to the nature of crime” arises because of a rhetorical “misuse of and ambiguous interpretation of the words ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’” when describing criminals (22). Thus, Goring believed that an outdated dichotomy between presentations of “normal” and “abnormal” social behavior directed too much thinking about criminal behavior.

The problem is that committing a crime wholly determines someone’s identity thereafter; convicted felons are never allowed to rid themselves of their designation as criminal, and in fact are seen evermore as always being (and always having been) criminal, and therefore, abnormal. Essentially, this supports the idea of racial criminality. The criminal label, while allowing for rehabilitation and reform, does not allow for one to recuperate his identity in the eyes of the law and society as a “normal” person. Once a criminal, always a criminal. Additionally, with the Edwardians’ insistence on identifying “some kind of weakness within the criminal,” writes Clive Emsley, “[t]he new emphasis on the mental make-up of the individual offender explained why, at a glance, it could be difficult to tell some criminals from respectable, well-behaved citizens. It also helped to explain why some offenders committed crimes that were not only bestial but also, to the ‘normal’ person’s eye, quite irrational” (*Crime, Police* 194). The putative irrationality of crime, explained in part by a criminal’s mental pathologies, guaranteed that criminals would continue to be seen as “abnormal” both mentally and socially. Consequently, this

underlying irrationality in criminal endeavor became an important addition to notions of cosmopolitan criminality in the period.

Newspapers and novels were the primary ways the reading public encountered “abnormal,” pathological criminals. Marie Belloc Lowndes’s novel *The Lodger* (1913), for example, focuses on the sexual psychopathology behind Mr. Sleuth’s Jack-the-Ripper style murders.¹⁰⁶ Rather than seeing the criminal as abnormal – defined as “essentially morbid” and implying “a condition of things against nature” – Goring’s findings revealed, in short, that the criminal “is not an abnormal man” and should no longer be identified by his/her physiologies (22, 24). Law-breaking, Goring believed, should be understood like any other anti-social act, and perceived to be committed by men and women, of any class or race, who are conscious of their decision to carry out a crime. Thus, the first step in reducing crime, according to Edward Harold Begbie writing in *Twice Born Men* (1909), was for the State and its citizens to recognize that “criminals are human beings extremely like ourselves” (111). The popular literary portrayals of criminality, however, lagged behind scientific criminological consensus.

Despite the efforts of Edwardian criminologists like Goring to reorient the public’s views on criminals and bring them more in line with modern criminological theory, the British public sustained their belief in “criminal man.” Criminals continued to be understood and represented, in large part, as social contaminants and outsiders. Goring’s remarks indicate that crime still marked the criminal’s foreignness in relation to

¹⁰⁶ Mr. Sleuth’s itinerancy as a temporary lodger played on the fears of criminal mobility in London. Any lodger, with a pseudonym and false identity, might be a criminal.

rigid cultural frameworks for determining perceptions of normalcy. The criminal, therefore, carried the taint of the abnormally foreign, so that cosmopolitan otherness and mobility continued to be linked to criminality. Moreover, the perceived abnormality of the cosmopolitan criminal produced an expectation of absurdity, or an illogical aspect, in their crimes as a result of their presumed mental pathologies. The irrationality of anarchist crimes – random bombings of buildings, for example – helped single them out as emblematic of the cosmopolitan criminal in this period. In fact, special attention was paid to immigrant and foreign criminal populations in the Edwardian era, as aliens and anarchists became central figures for cosmopolitan criminality.

Aliens, Anarchists, and Cosmopolitan Criminality

Edwardian literature seized upon the anarchist, the foreign conspirator, the continental revolutionary transplant, and the countervailing English agents, to cash in on the *frisson* such pairings of the fearsome and familiar characters elicited for the English public. Following the successes of Imperial Romance and Adventure stories with exotic settings and characters in the 1880s and 1890s, Edwardian authors turned their attention homeward, transferring their exotics to more familiar British settings, creating the British thriller genre. The centripetal forces that turned literary attention back home had to do with England's cosmopolitanization. As I have already suggested, the Edwardians confronted their cosmopolitan condition more directly as a result of their alertness to imminent dangers from foreigners living in England. The everyday Londoner assumed, for example, that there was a small possibility that he or she could be swept up in a global

conspiratorial plot, as does Richard Hannay in John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915).¹⁰⁷ After spending a few years in Rhodesia, Hannay finds himself embroiled in the adventures of a German spy plot only after he returns to England and rents a flat in London. More than fictional escapism, the thriller immersed readers in a submerged British landscape generally out-of-view, an international underworld sensed but rarely seen. The flood of thrillers in this period had the effect of expanding the scope of possible criminal consequences in Britain for the everyday citizen; the thriller encouraged the public to see and to fear cosmopolitan criminals in their midst.

Thus, the thriller was not merely a commercial option for authors looking for a proven bestseller format. Generally, the British (Hannay is Scottish) heroes of the thriller genre save the nation from a foreign threat on British soil. The innocent everyman caught up in international criminal plots exhibits the patriotic sentiment which secures the nation over any interests of personal safety. Focusing on the hero, the Edwardian thriller embeds an ethical directive of self-sacrifice for one's nation. Forced into being a compulsory national agent, the hero shapes the perspective of a homeland besieged by foreign criminal operatives. Ulrich Beck argues that "the freeing of threats from boundaries does not annul national borders but instead presupposes and exploits them" (*World Risk* 168). This in turn forces "us to confront the apparently excluded other," and recognize that the "expelled other becomes the internal other" (15). Cosmopolitan criminals, as we saw with

¹⁰⁷ Buchan classified this novel as being the first of his "shockers," which he defines in his Dedication to the novel as "the romance where the incidents defy the probabilities, and march just inside the borders of the possible" (5). Mr. Stanley, in Edward Fawcett's *Hartmann the Anarchist* (1892), follows a similar path to Hannay: having recently returned to London from Africa he is swept up in a foreign anarchist plot.

the Victorians, suited Edwardian views on criminal alterity, making them paradigmatic figures for representing “internal otherness.”

By eschewing national borders as legal and spatial containers of criminals, the thriller focalizes cosmopolitan criminals’ presence, revealing that they have already sneaked in, are already carrying out their criminal schemes. The cosmopolitan criminal’s essential foreignness, abnormality, and irrationality established a precedent for charting their characteristic “unEnglishness.” As Nicholas Daly argues, the “modern thriller is rooted not just in the political tensions that led to the First World War, but also in the more general attempt to define the boundaries of Britishness in these years which saw the flourishing of the anti-immigration movement” (234). By turning cosmopolitans into villains, the Edwardian thriller transforms foreign criminals operating in England into proxies for the perils of foreign immigration and crime. This heightened an already existing xenophobia and anti-cosmopolitan sentiment, making it a commonplace reaction to be criminally suspicious of foreigners living in England.

State-ratified English xenophobia in this period culminated with the eventual passing of the Aliens Act (1905). The tangled history of the conditions and attitudes that led to this Act reveals the entrenched cultural anxieties produced by what was perceived to be a large number of aliens immigrating to England.¹⁰⁸ According to David Glover, the

¹⁰⁸ An Alien at Common Law was defined simply as “a subject of a foreign state who has not been born within the allegiance of the King of England” (Henriques 62). Alien classification was further divided into “alien friends” and “alien enemies,” determined by whether their sovereign or state was at peace or war with the Crown of England. An enemy alien was only allowed stay in the country by the monarch’s favor, and could be easily labeled an alien enemy and expelled. But according to the barrister Henry Henriques in *The Law of Aliens and Naturalization* (1906) “our Government has long ago ceased to enforce the ancient law in all its rigour, and since the commencement of the Seven Years’ War in 1756, it has been the custom

Act was “the first recognisably modern law that sought permanently to restrict immigration into Britain according to systematic bureaucratic criteria that were initially administered and interpreted by a new kind of public functionary: the immigration officer” (1). Overseen by the Immigration Board, which reported directly to the Home Secretary, these immigration officers were granted powers under the law to refuse migrants entry to the country, as well as to expel them from English shores. The renowned Oxford jurist A. V. Dicey said of the Act: “No more of less immediate importance but of more significance as a sign of the times, has ever been passed by the Imperial Parliament. It is the outward manifestation of a new spirit” (qtd. in Gainer 150). No less than Winston Churchill recognized that the bill “bristled with questions of police, the liberty of the subject, race, and religion” (qtd. in Gainer 152). Thus, the Aliens Bill and the political and cultural debates that centered on the issues it raised signaled the “new spirit” of the Edwardian age to be one of state-sanctioned suspicion, fear, and open hostility to foreigners.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps, more crucially, the protracted output of public debate,

of our Government to allow the subjects of a state with which we may be at war, who are within the realm at the commencement of hostilities to reside there, so long as they demean themselves dutifully, and such persons are in effect alien friends” (76). The Aliens Act of 1905 defined four types of aliens under the category of “undesirable alien.” Undesirable aliens were refused entry into the country if they could not prove they were capable of supporting themselves and their families; exhibited traits of lunacy, disease, or infirmity which would burden the state; had been convicted of a nonpolitical crime in which there was an extradition treaty; and if for any legal reason an expulsion order had been made for them (149-53). See Jill Pellew’s “The Home Office and the Aliens Act, 1905” for the history of the administration of the act, which fell to the Labour Party upon their takeover from the Conservatives, and who had been against the bill all along.

¹⁰⁹ A strong, but ultimately ineffective, countermovement comprised of Fabians, Socialists, Liberals, and various Jewish organizations did advocate for the benefits of pro-alien policies, and sought to temper and call out the restrictionists’ scare-mongering and anti-immigrant sentiments. William Cunningham’s thoughts on the issue, however, were more typical of the day. He notes in *Alien Immigrants to England* (1897) that by the time of the Alien Bill of 1824 “English sympathy for fugitive strangers had come to be deeply rooted and widely spread,” yet by the end of the nineteenth century “it is at least arguable that we [the English] have already received most of the boons which alien influence has been able to confer upon us” (260, 266). His reflection signals a historical division between the old usefulness of skilled immigrant

governmental reports, cultural commentaries, and literary works depicting foreigners as criminal, degenerate, and hostile to English prosperity helped overturn long-held assumptions about the “right of asylum” for immigrants.¹¹⁰ This began long-term discriminatory practices and attitudes toward migrants in the early twentieth century.

Since the 1880s, waves of immigrants and Eastern European refugees, a large proportion of whom were Jews, made their way to England because the country was known for its free admission of political refugees and relatively lax immigration policies.¹¹¹ For the most part, these immigrants settled in the cities, adding to overcrowding in the slums and an already competitive labor pool. Alien immigrants were expediently blamed for a host of problems contributing to burdens on the working classes including, bringing down working wages, stealing jobs, crowding out and displacing the impoverished, and contributing to the disease and poverty of city slum districts with sub-standard living practices.¹¹² They were also routinely accused of contaminating the genetic stock of England (as they were often seen as racially inferior), being unwilling to

labor in England and the new problem of unskilled, destitute, and criminal immigrants.

¹¹⁰ Glover notes that the “anti-alien rhetoric that informed this turn-of-the-century debate” drew on “cultural resources . . . forging links between popular writing and serious journalism, between legal theory and racial science” (“Aliens” 24).

¹¹¹ Relative to America and other major Western European nations, the number of immigrants landing on the shores of England was small. This did not stop the perception, and manipulation by some, of the importance of the “immigrant problem” at this time. One way the anti-alien restrictionists drummed up support for their cause was to present immigrants as cosmopolitan criminal invaders, thus calling into question the long-held English tradition of “right to asylum” for foreign refugees. Dicey judged before the bill’s ratification that “No one can deny that arguments worth attention may be produced in favour of the Aliens Bill. . . . However this may be, the Bill assuredly betrays a marked reaction against England’s traditional policy of favouring or inviting immigration of foreigners” (297).

¹¹² See John A. Garrard’s *The English and Immigration 1880-1910*, for a detailed account of pro-alienist and anti-alienist views of the era.

assimilate and observe English customs, bringing down public morals, and generally escalating the degeneration of the nation.¹¹³

Cosmopolitan criminals who wanted to enter the country illegally experienced few difficulties. First, under the Aliens Act immigration agents were authorized to check only “immigrant ships,” classified as carrying more than twenty alien passengers. This meant that small ships could easily carry foreign individuals from the continent without being checked. At a time when few people held passports, skill at disguising identity or passing as a British subject could also gain one easy entry. The doublings of disguised identity, and the illegal travel it afforded them, reinforced the links between cosmopolitan doubling, or excess of identity, cosmopolitan mobility, and foreign criminal activity. For example, in his *Mysteries of Police and Crime: A General Survey of Wrongdoing and its Pursuit* (1899), Arthur Griffiths uses the term “cosmopolitan criminal” to describe a murderer who for a time evaded a resolute police pursuit across Europe using various aliases and disguised until he was caught and executed.¹¹⁴ Pranzini, the cosmopolitan criminal, is of a certain type which is “not uncommon on the Continent of Europe” (67). Griffiths quotes the French journalist Aurelien Scholl, who describes this kind of “cosmopolitan man of prey” as one who “speaks three or four languages, possibly five or six” (67). Griffiths continues the description of these cosmopolitan “rogues,” writing that

¹¹³ Arnold White, the founder of the Society for the Suppression of the Immigration of Destitute Aliens, perhaps is the most well-known and influential figure to put forward these attacks in such works as *The Modern Jew* (1899), *Efficiency and Empire* (1901), and his edited collection *The Destitute Alien in Great Britain* (1892, reissued in 1905).

¹¹⁴ In his entry on “crime” for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1910), Griffiths, a prison administrator, uses the term to show that “modern crime” has “one peculiar feature”: “the extensive scale on which it is carried out . . . worked by wide associations of cosmopolitan criminals” (448). Israel Zangwill linked cosmopolitanism with criminality in *The Big Bow Mystery* (1891), writing: “In these electric times the criminal achieves a cosmopolitan reputation” (147).

this type of criminal “generally meets with one of his fraternity equally ready to pick up anything going—a cutlet, a bank-note, or a weak woman,” and is “ever on the watch for prey; all is fish that comes to their net” (67-68). Besides their facility with language, their vast international criminal connections, and their nonchalant criminal opportunism, the cosmopolitan criminal displays a knack for disguise: “They are to be seen on the boulevards, at the café doors, faultlessly got up, button-hole, waxed moustachios, fashionable too. . . . [with] a few shirts, some handkerchiefs with different initials, one or two ancient flannel jerseys” (68).¹¹⁵ They “swarm at hotels abroad” and are “lightly equipped,” always ready to move on to the next place, where the next criminal opportunity awaits them.

To the Edwardians the cosmopolitan criminal was altogether different from the enfeebled and impoverished cosmopolitan criminal of the Victorian slums. In this new form, the cosmopolitan criminal still retained the dangerous criminal threat of itinerancy and mobility, specifically because of his inclination to travel from one country to the next and evade detection with an advanced use of disguise – in dress, speech, manner. These qualities made them especially hard to detect and trace. They seemingly appeared from nowhere and escaped into the shadows of the wider world. These criminals, therefore, were more dangerous than the primitive slummers of the previous century because they exhibited an apparent sophistication and willful cleverness to deceive. No longer understood as a product of racial imperatives, a cosmopolitan criminal’s once readily

¹¹⁵ The criminal in G. K. Chesterton’s first story in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1922) is an “undesirable alien” (27) who, likewise, ingeniously disguises himself in the hope of eluding capture for a murder, and is thus described as being “a dexterous little cosmopolitan guttersnipe” (28). Chesterton relies on the term cosmopolitan here to quickly relay the character’s foreignness *and* criminality, both masked by disguise.

apparent cultural and physical features were now exchanged for a lack of origins, a dearth of surface visibility. The once reliable catalogue of criminal physiognomies was replaced with a surplus of character traits, features, mannerisms, and origins.¹¹⁶ Cosmopolitan excess marked the cosmopolitan criminals' duplicitous acts, which entailed subverting national legal boundaries through illegal travel and transnational criminal endeavors.

As a result, limiting the flow of migrants, and particularly of foreign criminals, provided clear incentives for a restrictionist anti-aliens bill. An unsuccessful criminal aliens bill was floated in 1903 that would have, in the words of H. B. Simpson (head of the criminal department of the Home Office), "afforded means of getting rid of aliens of evil character, but not destitute—pickpockets, souteners, burglars, and blackmailers who mostly, it is believed come from the nearer parts of the Continent" (qtd. in Pellew 372). Simpson and others advocated a bill that would strike a balance between the English tradition of asylum for economic and political refugees and the flat-out rejection of entry for foreign criminals. This shows that at the highest levels of government, the cosmopolitan criminal was the object of political concern, and set the conditions for who and what would be allowed in England. In other words, the cosmopolitan criminal had become a definitional legal category for the foreign-type the nation saw as unassimilable, that is, essentially un-English. Despite the failure of this bill, the public's anxiety over the

¹¹⁶ This explains why police forces moved to institute scientific ways of tracking criminals, such as Scotland Yard's fingerprint directories first used in 1901. See Tom Gunning's "Tracing the Individual Body" for a brief history of police methods for tracking criminals in the period.

extent of alien criminals in England, helped drive the passing of the Aliens Act of 1905.¹¹⁷

The Aliens Bill staked its claims on the state's providential power to protect itself from criminal outsiders, or more precisely, outsiders it made criminal.¹¹⁸ Effectively, it served as a legal ban, closing off the country from foreign undesirables. As Giorgio Agamben has argued about those who could be banned: "He who has been banned is not, in fact, simply set outside the law and made indifferent to it but rather *abandoned* by it, that is exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable. It is literally not possible to say whether the one who has been banned is outside or inside the juridical order" (28-29, his emphasis). The bill, then, positioned the cosmopolitan criminal, the criminal alien, in a legal no-man's land: subject to the laws of a state he had no access to or legal protections in. This blank-space in an emergent international law system meant that cosmopolitan criminals found themselves manifesting political tensions between states centered on competing legal definitions for what was criminally threatening modern civil societies. Of course, bans only served to restrict movement by throwing up so many obstacles that cosmopolitan criminals either paid them no mind, or worked to subvert. Abandoned by the law, cosmopolitan criminals

¹¹⁷ See Susan Kingsley Kent's *Aftershocks: Politics and Trauma in Britain, 1918-1931* for a history of further restrictions on immigration, including the Aliens' Restriction Acts of 1914 and 1919, the Aliens Order of 1920, and the Coloured Alien Seamen Order of 1925. These acts gave increasing power to the government to deport and refuse entry of aliens and undesirable British subjects. See also David Glover's "Still Closing the Gates: The Legacy of the 1905 Aliens Act" for how the 1905 Act drew on fears of "uncontrolled open-door immigration" and laid the groundwork for subsequent restrictionist policy and sentiment (26).

¹¹⁸ Aliens could be refused entry to the country if they were suspected of turning criminal at some future date. This meant that aliens' criminality could be read (and expected) ahead of any actual criminal indictment, strengthening the belief in the inherent criminality of foreigners.

discovered an illicit freedom in their transnational mobility at a time of amplified suspicions between European nations.¹¹⁹ As perpetual outsiders, they transcended national sovereignty questions in their metaphorical and literal overstepping of national borders as they travelled from country to country, exploiting and highlighting the fault lines in an inchoate European legal and policing system.¹²⁰

As they had been in the previous century, Jewish immigrants were linked to criminal activity and were considered a genuine threat to the cohesion of the English nation. Paul Knepper argues that Jewish criminality “had been built up in the British imagination for several decades” prior to the Edwardian era (“Invisible Hand” 296). Tens of thousands of Eastern European Jews settled in Great Britain between 1880 and 1914. The large influx of Jews in this period added to the growing concern about the need for immigration restrictions in England. To make their case restrictionists advanced the idea of a particular violent Jewish criminality, including presuming the “Jack the Ripper” murders were perpetrated by an unknown Jew from the East End. As with other cosmopolitan criminals in the era, it was purported that Jewish criminals committed crimes that no Englishman could because of their racial and cultural differences. As the

¹¹⁹ Frederic Jameson makes the point in “Modernism and Imperialism” that the overriding “consciousness of imperialism” from the late 1800s to World War I was “essentially a relationship between First World powers or the holders of Empire” and not “the relationship of domination between First and Third World,” or colonizer and colony (155). In this way, Europeans “tended to repress the more basic axis of otherness” in favor of competition and suspicion between themselves, electing to focus on the “otherness” of their direct antagonists (155). This ideological framing of “otherness” contributed to the importance of figures like continental cosmopolitan criminals, who were doubly “othered” because of their foreign *and* criminal backgrounds, yet remained relevant in dominant power structures as Europeans.

¹²⁰ The International Criminal Police Commission (what is now INTERPOL), originally conceived in 1918, was founded in 1923 after the concern of post-war crime rose across Europe due to “a new class of international criminal taking advantage of modern mobility and the disruption of war to cross boundaries” (Emsley *Crime, Police* 264).

political and social worries about immigrants and alien criminals gained more traction in the public imagination in the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods, Jews were frequently blamed for the “raised threat of novel and excessive criminality” perpetrated by cosmopolitan criminals (297). It was only natural, then, that Jews were also indicted in Edwardian accounts of anarchist activities in England. According to Knepper, “the image of anarchists in Britain before the First World War was shaped by a racialized conception linking anarchism with Jewishness and criminality” (296).¹²¹ Anti-Semitic exaggerations of Jewish criminality and anarchism contributed to the fear-mongering that surrounded the debates about the dangers of cosmopolitan criminality in England at this time.

The public fear of immigrants can be attributed, in large part, to the amassing of anarchists in East London since the late 1800s.¹²² Because England had less restrictive immigration laws and less repressive laws against political crimes than their continental counterparts, continental revolutionaries found safe harbor in England, with cosmopolitan London being their preferred destination. According to Walter Besant’s study *East London* (1899), “Anarchists make little clubs where murders are hatched, especially murders to foreign sovereigns. . . . There are Orleanists, Bonapartists, Carlists, and I know not what, who carry on their little intrigues and their correspondence with partizans in France and Spain and elsewhere, with a great show of zeal and much promise of

¹²¹ In “British Jews and the Racialisation of Crime in the Age of Empire” Knepper points out that “the racialization of crime did not originate with reference to Jews; Britain already possessed equations of stranger, crime, and race in which to factor the [Jewish] immigrants who began to arrive in the 1880s” (62). My first chapter discusses the development of identifying cosmopolitan outsiders as criminals.

¹²² Glover argues that “taking the figure of the anarchist as its key symbol of social and political disorder, the anti-alien movement” initiated “a counter-discourse” that showed the dangers of anarchism, English liberalism’s “more disreputable twin” (24). See also, A. Michael Matin’s “‘We Aren’t German Slaves Here, Thank God’: Conrad’s Transposed Nationalism and British Literature of Espionage and Invasion” for a discussion of pervasive panic resulting from invasion-plot narratives in the era.

results” (206). Richard Deacon makes the case that during this period, “London became the sanctuary for all kinds of frightened and hunted Continentals, from anarchists and Radicals to terrorists and criminals” (126). Even though the anarchist presence – and their impending threat to British stability – was often overstated, anarchists came to embody the dangers inherent in foreign criminals living in England.¹²³

Anarchism as a movement was not singular in credo or praxis. Various associated with Communism, socialism, Fabianism, Fenianism, nihilism, and other revolutionary movements, anarchism was commonly misunderstood, debated, and confused, even by its supporters. Carrard Auban, an anarchist in John Henry MacKay’s novel *The Anarchists* (1891), bears this out when at a small meeting of anarchists from France, America, Germany, Sweden, and Russia, he begins a debate on the philosophical grounds for anarchism because he believes “there is but a very small number of individuals who have thoroughly mastered the idea of Anarchism” (125). Anarchism was a diffuse enough category to be used and manipulated by people for their own means. It became a generic catch-all for various radical movements and activities across Europe. According to Barbara Arnett Melchiori, “the dynamite novelists of the 1880s and 1890s for the most part were inclined to attribute their fictional attempts to rather vaguely defined anarchists or, occasionally, Nihilists and socialists” (8). The British press “overlooked no item from however far afield that might meet the demand for dynamite

¹²³ Anarchist assaults on British soil were comparatively fewer than those in other European countries. Fenians were responsible for the majority of terrorist instances in the 1880s, instigating five bombings of national landmarks. See Michael J. Schaack’s *Anarchy and Anarchists* (1889) for a full treatment of anarchist bombings, assassinations, and disturbances in Europe and America in the 1880s. See Amy E. Martin *Alter-Nations* for an account that focuses on Fenian dynamite outrages and “dynamitards.”

sensation,” leading them to attribute all sorts of criminal acts to “anarchists” (37). Thus, anarchists were depicted in the literature of the era at their best as erudite, harmless, and well-intentioned agents for social change, and at their worst as merciless harbingers of social chaos, destruction, and murder. Their weapons of choice, then, were alternately their treatises, newspapers, and public rallies on the one hand, or their dynamite, bombs, and bullets on the other: anarchic bombast or anarchic bomb blasts.¹²⁴ More often than not, however, anarchists and anarchic crimes were sensationalized and made threatening because they aligned with the public’s perception, and provided easy fodder for selling stories to a public titillated by illustrations of anarchic excess and depravity. Accordingly, the stereotypical depiction of the anarchist as the foreign, wild-haired, mad bomber took shape. This ensured that anarchism “was perceived as a threat far out of proportion to its power and characterized as a far more alien doctrine than it actually was” revealing “the symbolic role that the anarchist movement and individual anarchists played in the cultural dialogue” (Phillips 14).¹²⁵

Across Europe, legal definitions of anarchism were equally muddled. In England, anarchism was understood to be a “crime of passion” with no salient political affiliations, so that anarchists “were largely dismissed,” according to Alex Houen, “because they

¹²⁴ We see under the entry “Anarchism” in Sir Howard Vincent’s *Police Code* (1912) for the Metropolitan Police (used throughout the Edwardian period), that the police understood the anarchist to be either “harmless in himself” – as a propagandist – or “militant” – the bomb-throwing and assassinating kind. The police manual points out that most of the time assassination attempts, or bombing outrages, are carried out by “some youth of a disordered imagination . . . who had been infected by opinions learnt from others.”

¹²⁵ Phillips shows how late-Victorian accounts of anarchism in the press and in literature emptied anarchic discourse of the anarchists’ real economic and political concerns, so that what remained was “a portrayal of bombing not as a symbol of protest, but as an ‘outrage’” (76). Divorced from anarchist aims at reform, then, bombing was “placed within a discourse of conspiracy, degeneracy and criminality, a sign of madness and the sickness of modern civilization” (77).

were interpreted as inherently apolitical” free agents, without state backing (“Secret Agent” 996). This meant that anarchists were largely ignored in England, even though they were considered (political) criminals in other European nations.¹²⁶ Because the Extradition Act of 1870 recognized “the phenomenon of political crime only as one which took place elsewhere,” anarchists who had committed crimes of a political nature in other European countries (such as an assassination attempt) were not subject to extradition (996).¹²⁷ Anarchists from across Europe were free to enter England, whereas elsewhere they would likely be refused entry or detained. Effectively, England became the default asylum for European anarchists and radical continental criminals. Brazenly extending asylum rights to these cosmopolitan criminals, England rankled their European counterparts.¹²⁸

England’s policies had two direct consequences for the ways the English thought about anarchism: 1) all anarchists were foreigners, and 2) all anarchist plots originated

¹²⁶ While politicians and the criminal system largely ignored anarchists until the Edwardian age, writers and the public did not ignore the threat of anarchism in England. George Bernard Shaw contributed to the debate, criticizing the press’s tendency to associate socialism with anarchism in *The Impossibilities of Anarchism* (1893). Robert Buchanan’s *The Coming Terror: A Dialogue Between Alienatus, a Provincial, and Urbanus, a Cockney* (1891) also conflated socialism with anarchism in a fictional debate between the rural man arguing for individual freedom over the anarchy of the city-dweller’s authoritarian collectivism.

¹²⁷ There is often a political offense exception in modern extradition treaty law: “The majority of States enter into a treaty reservation which entitles them to refuse extradition of political offenders. . . . The main difficulty concerns the definition, of the term ‘political offence’ since virtually all the extradition treaties never define it” (Elagab 731). Houen points out that “the granting of asylum to foreign fugitives was largely indicative of the suspicion with which other governments were viewed” from the English standpoint (996). In essence, the English used the ambiguities of treaty law and political crime exceptions to play politics on an international scale. England’s refusal to conform to recognizing political criminals became an important political issue among European nations during this time.

¹²⁸ Though most likely false, it was popularly believed in Europe that there was a “tacit agreement English authorities allowed anarchists to move freely in England, provided they restricted their activities to the Continent” (Gainer 101).

abroad.¹²⁹ Essentially, the idea of domestic anarchism was nonexistent. Anarchists were understood to be foreign imports and foreign problems. Any attacks in England were to be treated under common criminal statutes.¹³⁰ In his history of anarchism, *Anarchy and Anarchists* (1889), Michael J. Schaack characterizes the issue in England at the time in this way: “In England . . . nobody seems to believe that there can be such a thing as servile revolt – that might occur among the French or the Germans or the Russians, but never in John Bull’s island, – and the conspirators, safely covered by the fancied security of the people, are permitted to undermine at their will the fabric of English society” (688). Fears of a homegrown revolt fomented by imported revolutionaries never took hold, but as the Edwardian age began, public and political alarm spread about the hazards of criminal aliens in England. This put pressure on legislators to revoke asylum rights for anarchists and other cosmopolitan criminals. Ultimately, policy caught up with public perception, and in the process ratified its fears.

¹²⁹ Havelock Ellis provides an illustrative example that can be used to explain why the English might have chosen to ignore anarchism as a domestic or home-grown problem. He writes about England’s relative lack of legal control of prostitutes as compared to other continental countries, stemming from a strong tradition of individual freedom and religion. Ultimately, he argues that “the freedom of the prostitute in England” is guaranteed because “active interference with prostitutes involves regulation of prostitution, and that implies a national recognition of prostitution which to a very large section of English people would be altogether repellant [sic]” (*Social Hygiene* 271). By letting prostitutes alone, the English were exempt from recognizing prostitution as a problem. By the same token, ignoring anarchism, or displacing it to foreign shores, afforded the English the same privilege of not having to recognize it as a domestic problem, and thus avoided recognizing the scourge of other nations in England.

¹³⁰ In the 1907 *Police Code* entry for “Anarchism” a note explains that Home Secretary Sir William Harcourt established the tone in 1881, asserting that anarchist plots and assassinations should be understood as “ordinary murders, or attempts to murder” (10). Harcourt refused to “be a dupe of the mischievous fallacy that assassination plots and secret societies were venial crimes to be tolerated or extenuated as political offences” (Vincent 10). Police policy, therefore, instructed the constabulary to discount anarchy as a result of “some disordered minds,” but also to be watchful against the “abuse of that hospitality” which Great Britain extends to foreigners who “are expelled from the continent, or guilty of offences there” (10). Home Secretary Herbert Gladstone echoed Harcourt’s sentiments in 1906, saying “participation in outrages involving human life cannot be accepted as constituting a claim to the hospitality of Great Britain” (10). It bears emphasizing that the irrationality of anarchists’ “disordered minds” in the eyes of the state classifies the anarchists in Edwardian terms of the mental deficiencies of criminals, rather than as conscientious and calculated political actors.

The Literary Formation of Anarchist and Terrorist Narratives in British Fiction

Public perception about the imminent dangers of anarchic terrorism and crime were directed by the growing popularity of anarchism as a subject of popular literature and journalism in Britain.¹³¹ Late-Victorian literary treatments of anarchism set the sensational tone and established the generic conventions, tropes, and stock characters found in these texts. As a rule, in these texts the anarchists are foreigners and cosmopolitans who are criminalized via their terrorist schemes inflicted on an innocent European or British public. They generally conspire with other anarchists as a part of an international criminal organization that threaten not only private property and human life, but also the very foundations of the peaceful social and political order of Western nations. Above all, the anarchist is shown to demonstrate the symptoms of the criminally insane: their absurdity, their irrationality, and their criminal megalomania fall outside conceptions of “normal” criminality.¹³² Therefore, they embody the anarchism they wish to inject into the system, acting as foreign parasites invading the host body of the nation.¹³³ These tropes clearly marked the anarchist as cosmopolitan criminals.

¹³¹ For a detailed account of the press’s reaction to anarchism and their role in criminalizing foreigners through their conflation of anarchism with socialism and other radical movements, see Barbara Arnett Melchiori’s *Terrorism in the Late Victorian Novel*. See David Kadlec’s *Mosaic Modernism: Anarchism, Pragmatism, Culture* for an analysis on how anarchist radicalism provided a model for modernist literature’s “inquiries into the measure of modern identity . . . contingent on the formal literary innovations that attended them” (5).

¹³² See *The Literary Digest*’s report on “The Battle of Stepney” (1911), which details the maniacal efforts of “two Reds, members of a band of twenty-eight anarchist desperadoes, who kept at bay a vast number of policemen, defied the picked marksmen of the Scots Guards and the shots of a Maxim gun, and finally preferred suicide to capture” (146). *The Standard*’s response to the incident is taken as indicative of popular sentiment about criminal aliens in England: “With or without the Aliens Act, there is at present, we admit, no available means of keeping out some of the more dangerous individuals in the *cosmopolitan criminal community* which menaces the peace of every European nation” (my emphasis, 146).

¹³³ Richard Henry Savage writes in his preface to *The Anarchist: A Story of To-Day* (1894) “The octopus

Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima* (1886) emphasizes the criminal and foreign origins of the radicalized cosmopolitan Hyacinth Robinson (his father, Lord Frederick, is an English nobleman, his mother, Amanda Pysnent, is a French seamstress who murders Lord Frederick and eventually dies in prison). Robinson gets caught up in revolutionary working-class movements in London and attends meetings of an international anarchist circle that meets in the backrooms of the "Sun and Moon" in cosmopolitan Soho. After befriending the revolutionary-minded Princess Christina Casamassima – the half-Italian, half-American estranged wife of an Italian Prince – and spending time in her opulent homes and travelling around Europe, Robinson's revolutionary ideas change. He is no longer convinced of the need for social revolution and economic levelling and regrets his earlier vow to the revolutionary leader Diedrich Hoffendhal, a German, that he would carry out the violent work "in the name of Revolution" (372). Despite his change of heart, Robinson feels trapped by his vow to help the cause, "the party of action" (372).¹³⁴ Even more troubling, he fears his criminal inheritance from his mother will lead him to a "*repetition*" of "her own forgotten, redeemed pollution" by carrying out a murder. He worries he won't be able to resist the violent job he is to carry out because of his racial criminal legacy, and so he fears "the

feelers of an *insane* revolt against all law which guards Private Right are stealing to-day through every avenue of human life" (4, my emphasis). Savage emphasizes the insanity of the anarchist movement that had spread internationally and "crossed racial and national dividing lines" (3). The cure for the "mad chaos" of anarchy – the "answer of the civilized world to the dark creed of Destruction" – according to Savage, is "Organized cosmopolitan repression" (4). That is, from Savage's perspective, a reorientation from the loose cultural mixing of cultures in the cosmopolitan tradition, back to a reinvigorated system of patriotic sentiment that ensures a man's country "has a claim on his manhood" – unlike the "cosmopolitan club men" (220).

¹³⁴ David Trotter argues that people who joined secret anarchic organizations "*became* a secret" themselves, so that the secrecy of the "[i]nitiation into the secret societies of terror" generally prohibited one's escape because "[o]nce inside the mystery, you could never get out, as Robinson discovers" (34, original emphasis).

horror of the public reappearance, in his person, of the imbrued hands of his mother” (372). Eventually, he is tasked with shooting a Duke at one of “two grand parties” to be held in “a certain big house” in London (369). After losing favor with Princess Casamassima, who still believes in the cause, and having become disillusioned with revolutionary ideals and the effectiveness of anarchic violent action, he locks himself in his bedroom and kills himself with the pistol supplied by the revolutionary group, instead of carrying out the assassination.

James’s novel explores the stimuli for making anarchists and revolutionaries out of people from all classes of society. Deaglan O Donghaile argues that James “used anarchism as a vehicle for an extended discussion of the need for culture, as opposed to chaos,” treating “the revolutionary as a political by-product of the inherent chaos of London” (27, 28). Chaos here might be read as another term for cosmopolitan excess: the preponderance of imported cultural beliefs and alternative political systems antagonistic to those which were traditionally English. English culture, had lost its controlling powers of limitation, and was under attack from outside influences, represented in the novel in the form of cosmopolitan anarchist revolutionaries. As O Donghaile puts it, “James’s bottom line on anarchism . . . is that it threatens culture and cannot cope with its complexity, and functions in the end, as an ‘aggressive, vindictive, destructive social faith’” (40). The chaos resulting from the complexity of cosmopolitan London leads to the conditions for foreign revolutionaries to gather there, and therefore, further encourages the anarchists’ cosmopolitanization of London.

Eileen Sypher reads James's novel as operating as an "oedipal conflict overlaid with an argument from hereditary reminiscent of Zola" where "Hyacinth's conflict is whether to identify with his mother or father" (37). Early on, he embraces the position closest to his criminal mother, "aligning himself with anti-state anarchists," and is therefore in a position to "avenge the political wrong done her by the state" (37). His sympathies change over the course of the novel, and he cultivates "the aristocratic sensibility of his father" abandoning revolutionary politics, eventually sacrificing himself to preserve the European aristocracy (37). While the conflict of character based on parental origins is a common plot device that plays out in much Victorian literature, James makes it clear that Robinson's crisis of conviction has its roots in his cosmopolitan origins. Like the Schlegel sisters, he must choose between two national identities: between his noble English half and his criminal French half. On the brink of carrying out the assassination, Robinson's suicide would appear to be redemptive, if not for the associations with criminality and insanity such an act carried with it in this period. His suicide goes some way to confirm his fears that he could not overcome his mother's hereditary gift of criminality. Robinson thus conforms to the racial, cosmopolitan criminality I discuss in chapter one, demonstrating the late-Victorian's fear of criminal contamination and transmission through inherited traits.¹³⁵ That his criminal traits are

¹³⁵ Not surprisingly, Cesare Lombroso identified specific degenerative physiognomic traits that aligned anarchists with other political criminals, influencing Continental beliefs in anarchism as just another criminal category, and anarchists subject to the same hereditary and racial forces that reared criminality. Havelock Ellis's assertion that political criminals were like criminals because they were "anti-social," yet could not be classified as criminals because they were often victims of an equally "anti-social" political system aligned more closely with the British viewpoint of the absence of a political criminal category: "From any scientific point of view the use of the word crime, to express a difference of national feeling or of political opinion, is an abuse of language" (*Criminal* 1-2).

inherited from his foreign mother and leads him down the path of anarchy, conforms to the English belief in anarchism originating elsewhere, transported (in this case by birth and boat) from abroad to English shores.

Trading on similar tropes of anxieties surrounding the anarchists' foreign incursions into England, the popular "invasion-scare" novel coincided with the advent of late-Victorian and Edwardian anarchism and terrorism literature.¹³⁶ Invasion-scare literature employed the same tropes of foreign agents threatening the social stability and peace of England; however, the invasion-scare novels focused on military forces rather than individuals tied to revolutionary politics and radical social movements.¹³⁷ First made popular by George Chesney's *Battle of Dorking* (1871), the genre was carried on in popular iterations, such as in William Le Queux's *The Great War in England* (1897), H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* (1897), Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), and William Le Queux's *The Invasion of 1910* (1906). While the identity of the "enemy" is never the same across the invasion-scare genre (the corresponding enemies of the novels just mentioned are French, space aliens, German, and German again) these novels shared the preoccupation with foreign threats to the stability of English civilization that novels treating anarchism did.

¹³⁶ Michael Matin aligns Conrad's *The Secret Agent* with the generic tradition of the "pre-Great War invasion narrative," arguing that this enabled Conrad to "pursue his ambition of writing a best-seller and to play out, in a displaced way, his own nationalistic preoccupations" (253).

¹³⁷ Conrad and Ford's first collaboration, *The Inheritors* (1901), is an example of a hybrid political-military-invasion novel about invaders from the fourth dimension with designs to infiltrate the British government as a means for world domination.

A crossover between conventions of invasion-scare novels' large-scale invading forces and the irrational crimes of the archetypal mad revolutionary terrorists of anarchy novels merged to form a subgenre of anarchy-invasion-scare novels.¹³⁸ For example, George Griffith's *The Angel of Revolution: A Tale of Coming Terror* (1893) portrays the aerial attacks of "the Brotherhood of Freedom" – an international network of anarchists, socialists, and nihilists led by Natas, a Russian Jew – seeking to remake the world's political order using their "war-balloons" and dynamite on an unprecedented global scale. Set in the near-future of 1904, the Brotherhood achieves its plan and initially starts a war between Britain, Germany, and Austria on one side, and France, Russia, and Italy on the other. As the war spreads, the fight becomes one between East and West, as the final battle sees the Western powers defeat a Muslim army attacking from beyond Europe's borders. Griffith's sequel, *Olga Romanoff, or The Syren of the Skies* (1894) continues the fantastic aerial war between the resistance and the anarchists, now under the control of Olga Romanoff from her hideaway in Mount Terror.¹³⁹ The fighting is interrupted by an apocalyptic explosion when a comet collides with earth. A few resistance fighters survive the comet's destruction and emerge to a world wiped clean: "the world was waiting to

¹³⁸ Sarah Cole notes the confluence of various literary genres around anarchism and dynamite plots: "popular novels that invoked the specter of anarchist violence flourished in this period, in a subgenre – the dynamite novel – that freely employed elements common to such nineteenth-century conventions as the detective novel, the industrial novel, (proto)science fiction, fantasy novels of invasion or world war, and melodrama" (85).

¹³⁹ T. Mullet Ellis's *Zalma* (1893) also follows a female leader of a global anarchist movement who plots a revolution by spreading anthrax in European capitals with a fleet of balloons. Richard Sites argues that because revolutionaries often fought for the equality of women as a part of their revolutionary belief systems, women participated on equal footing with male revolutionary agents. Women leaders or accomplices in revolutionary schemes and terrorist attacks, then, as these novels portray, would have been understood to be further evidence of the revolutionaries' desire to overturn the existing social order based on traditional gender roles defined by entrenched patriarchal systems.

begin its life anew” (373).¹⁴⁰ They fly to Mount Terror to see if Olga has survived the calamity, and discover her injured and crazed and witness her death, paving the way for them to rebuild the world without the madness of the anarchists.

In Edward Douglas Fawcett’s *Hartmann the Anarchist; or, The Doom of the Great City* (1893) airships are once again used by militarized anarchists to spread chaos and destruction in the hope of complete social reformation. Set in the future of the early twentieth century, the moderate socialist Mr. Stanley recounts his dealings with Rudolf Hartmann, the German anarchist who tried to destroy Europe’s great cities with “tempests of bombs” from his “aëronef,” the *Atilla* (84).¹⁴¹ Stanley brands Hartmann’s anarchism as “maniacal” (31), as “fanaticism, or rather madness,” and a symptom of a “*disease bred by an effete form of civilization,*” (27, original emphasis). In the body of Hartmann, we see the common characteristics of the anarchist: foreign, violent, mad. Hartmann succeeds for a night in wreaking havoc on London through a series of aerial incendiary bombings and a coordinated ground attack. But once word reaches Hartmann aboard the *Atilla* that he has killed his own mother by bombing her house, grief-stricken, he sabotages his own ship, blowing it up. The ground revolt is subdued by the police force and “order was once more completely re-established . . . the Empire recovered from the shock” (213).

¹⁴⁰ The destruction of the earth by comet was a popular motif in apocalyptic science fiction of the era. See William Minto’s *The Crack of Doom* (1886) and H. G. Wells’s short story “The Star” (1897), collected in *The Door in the Wall and Other Stories* (1911).

¹⁴¹ The *Atilla*’s cosmopolitan crew of die-hard anarchists consists of eight Germans, six Englishmen, four French, two Russians, one Italian, and one Swiss (73). Flying above cities, they planned to attack “in three ways – by shell firing and machine-gun fire, by dynamite and forcite bombs, and by streams of burning petroleum” (140).

E. Lynn Linton's *The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland* (1885) and Grant Allen's *For Maimie's Sake: A Tale of Love and Dynamite* (1886) are two late-Victorian novels that portray foreign characters that are criminally active with dynamite conspiracies. In Allen's novel, the Polish Stanislas Benyowski, the assistant to the British amateur chemist Sydney Chevinex, is experimenting with making silent dynamite and what he sees as the perfect detonation material.¹⁴² Chevinex and Benyowski argue about the practical applications of silent dynamite. Chevinex makes the case for using it in civil engineering and as a weapon for war, while Benyowski claims that it would be useful for assassinations of political figures in Europe, particularly the Czarist regime in Russia and "emperors and bureaucrats and such-like vermin" (qtd. in Melchiori 229). He anticipates the silent bomb's revolutionary potential for dynamite attacks, allowing the terrorist to escape without notice. Benyowski's pretension to use silent dynamite as a political deed and as a tool of revolutionary reform ironically robs any explosion of its shock and capacity to enthrall and terrify a crowd. He does not realize that an unnoticed terrorist event is a contradiction in terms. Melchiori reads the novel's conscious irony on this point as contributing to the comic figure of the exaggerated "Pole as a stage villain," "so that his dynamite explosion is seen in terms of comic effect" (230).

The thrills of the hybrid anarchism-invasion-scare novels of the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods depend on the pervasive fears generated by the tendency for anarchist revolutionaries to engage in social protest through acts of terrorism and violence.¹⁴³ As

¹⁴² Richard Ruppel suggests that Chevineux was "a likely model for the Professor in *The Secret Agent*" (86).

¹⁴³ Aris Mou identifies "technoscience and empire" as being "two major areas that the apocalyptic

the *fin-de-siècle* waned, the vogue for presenting the *fin-du-monde* continued in the Edwardian period. In the process, however, some authors seized upon the opportunity to counteract the public's fears of foreigners and anarchists. They began to portray the anarchist neither as deadly nor innocuous, but as a comic figure, as we saw with Benyowski. Perhaps one of the first treatments of comic anarchism is in Robert Louis Stevenson's *More Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885).¹⁴⁴ Zero Pumpernickel Jones, whose name suggests both a negation and a loaf of German bread, is the head of a group of pro-Irish anarchists.¹⁴⁵ He is a pathetic figure, depressed at his many failed attempts to carry off a successful dynamite attack. He is also a foreigner, pronouncing "bomb" as "boom."¹⁴⁶ He befriends his landlord, an amateur detective Paul Somerset, who despite his disgust for Zero's activities finds him amusing for being "an incomparable ass" (226). After his latest bomb attempt fails to ignite, Zero determines that his batch of dynamite is defective – "no more dangerous than toffee" – and decides to destroy it by lighting his stockpile in his rooms and then leave the country (223). Somerset drags him out of the house just before the dynamite explodes. Buoyed by the successful explosion, Zero vows

imagination" dealt with in the *fin-de-siècle* periods of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (4).

¹⁴⁴ Stevenson purposefully chose the term "dynamiter" for his title, as he hoped to replace the more common "dynamitard" in the period. He commented: "Any writard who writes dynamitard shall find in me a never-resting fightard" (qtd. In Melchiori 64).

¹⁴⁵ Stevenson might have been playing with the comedic etymology of "pumpnickel," which translates to "devil's fart," similar to Thomas Carlyle's German philosopher Herr Teufelsdröckh (which translates to "Mr. Devil-Shit") in *Sartor Resartus* (1836). The *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests the name came from the early modern German "pumper," meaning to fart, and Nickel, as a diminutive form of the name Nikolaus, possibly referring to the devil, as in the colloquial "Old Nick". According to the *OED* "This type of bread was probably so called either on account of its being difficult to digest and causing flatulence or in a more general allusion to its hardness and poor quality," but in any case was "clearly depreciative". The name makes sense for highlighting Stevenson's character's bombs that generally produce only a "prolonged and strident hissing" and "an offensive stench," filling rooms "with dense and choking fumes," rather than mass destruction and death (219). O Donghaile argues that Zero is a "pun on Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's [a Fenian leader] operational nom de plume, 'Number One' (35).

¹⁴⁶ Though his national origins are unclear, it is clear that Zero is working for the Fenians.

to carry on with more attacks. Somerset is horrified to discover that Zero has a small batch of dynamite left in his possession and gives him the ultimatum to either leave the country or be turned over to the police. Zero decides to leave the country with Somerset escorting him to the nearest train station. Upon seeing a newspaper reporting the recent explosion of his rooms, Zero gets excited and accidentally bumps his case full of dynamite on the newsstand, instantly blowing himself up. Ironically, Zero's only victim of his first fatal attack is himself.

Zero's characterization as a comic character at a time of growing apprehension over anarchism in Great Britain shows the degree to which the anarchist became a useful literary figure for critiquing the dominant narratives of the anarchists' criminal menace. Transforming the anarchist into a pathetic and comic figure elicited sympathetic laughter at their ridiculousness. If restrictionists used criminological theories to portray anarchists in terms of their criminal mental deficiencies in order to promote them as representative of the burdens of alien criminality flourishing in England, then advocates for immigrant toleration could emphasize the anarchist's mental deficits for making them a non-threat. While Stevenson's admitted desire for the novel was to show the nobility and sacrifice of the police detective's occupation, the effect of Zero's comic absurdity, the "touching confusion of [his] mind" in "that head of wood," reduces any threat he may pose to the level of accident (228). He does not have the mental wherewithal to plan, organize and carry off a bomb attack of any significance. The happy accident of his own death resolves the anarchist problem through his own incompetence. The novel suggests that the

disorder of the anarchist mind will be his downfall. In short, anarchists will negate themselves, will “zero” themselves out, in due time.

From the 1880s to the end of the Edwardian era, the anarchist figure directed the political and cultural arguments over the criminal dangers of foreigners in England. For restrictionists and anti-alien campaigners, the anarchist proved that immigrants imported criminal chaos and criminal actors into England enabled by protections of an outdated immigration policy and a misdirected extension of the English tradition of the “right to asylum.” As essentially criminal and foreign, the anarchist exemplified changes in the nature of cosmopolitan crime, revealing its paradoxical irrationality and sophistication, which only heightened its confounding threat to the law. Because the anarchist inhabited a legal gap in Europe’s emerging international legal system, he embodied national legal disputes about the nature of cosmopolitan crime itself against the backdrop of a more antagonistic and interconnected pre-war European setting. As a literary character, the anarchist was presented alternatively as a mad terrorist, such as the German anarchist Rudolph Hartmann, or as a comic and pathetic figure, such as Zero, representative of the confusion of a modern world at odds with itself, overstocked with ideas and overburdened with the cosmopolitanization of modern city life. These conflicting representations, rather than reassuring the public, contributed to the confusion as to the exact nature of anarchism. Taken as a problematic figure of the era, then, the anarchist represented the unresolved complexity of the place of the immigrant, the criminalized foreigner, in England.

Homo Duplex: Joseph Conrad, Doublings, and *The Secret Agent*

Perhaps this is why Joseph Conrad turned to the anarchist as a central character so many times in his fiction of the Edwardian era. After writing *Nostromo* (1904), a novel of sweeping revolutionary intrigue involving a shipment of stolen silver, Conrad turned his attention to an essay condemning the onset of conditions for a European war, “Autocracy and War” (1905); collecting a series of previously published memoirs and sea-sketches in *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906); writing *The Secret Agent* (1907); finishing the stories that would comprise *A Set of Six* (1908), including “An Anarchist” and “The Informer”; and producing a hasty collaboration with Ford Madox Ford, *The Nature of a Crime* (1909).¹⁴⁷

“An Anarchist: A Desperate Tale” concerns an accidental French anarchist, Paul, who falls into being criminally charged for anarchism after he drunkenly shouts “Vive l’anarchie” (10). In an effort to create a revolutionary martyr an exuberant socialist lawyer gets the maximum sentence for Paul. After serving his sentence, Paul must turn to anarchists for support as he is continually refused regular employment because he is known as an ex-convict and anarchist. He is double-crossed in a bank robbery and sent to the prison island fortress of St. Joseph’s. He escapes with a few of his old colleagues during a prison escape and then shoots them for their parts in getting him arrested a second time. Paul finds his way to a cattle estate in South America, where the manager enslaves him. In a paragraph found only in the original publication in *Harper’s* magazine,

¹⁴⁷ Conrad wrote “The Informer” and “The Anarchist” within a few months between November 1905 and January 1906) immediately before he started work on *The Secret Agent*. At the time he began work on *The Secret Agent*, he had also planned on writing “a short thing (about a bomb in a hotel)” that went uncompleted and unpublished (*Letters* 326). He did follow up *The Secret Agent* with *Under Western Eyes* (1911), a novel that begins with a dynamite assassination plot in Russia.

Conrad's narrator comments on the tale: "What makes [the story] interesting is its imbecility. In that it is not singular. The whole of the public and private records of humanity, history and story alike, are made interesting precisely by that priceless defect, under which we all labor" (qtd. in Graver 139).

"The Informer: An Ironic Tale" utilizes a group of anarchists for its ironic caricature of absurdist criminality. Mr. X – "a kind of rare monster" with an "underground life" in Brussels – tells his English dinner companion that England harbors people who have "actively assisted" "revolutionary activities" out of sheer infatuation with anarchists (23, 25). His companion's disbelief that any English subject would "play with fire to that extent," prompts Mr. X to prove his point (25). He relates the tale of the daughter of an English government official, "our young Lady Amateur of anarchism," who houses continental anarchists in her private home on Hermione Street in London, going so far as to help edit revolutionary tracts "beyond all bounds of reason and decency" from the anarchist press run from her cellar (29, 33). What she does not realize is that the group is smuggling explosives out of the house, made by a fanatic known as the Professor, a precursor to "the Professor" of *The Secret Agent*. She ultimately falls in love with a foreign anarchist named Comrade Sevrin who is operating out of the house. After several of the anarchists' plans fail, Mr. X is brought over to investigate the probability of a police informant having infiltrated the group. In a fake police raid of the house, organized by Mr. X to catch out the informant, Sevrin confesses to being a spy in order to save his lover, the lady of the house. She rejects him for being a traitor to the cause, and eventually enters a convent. Mr. X's companion, upon hearing the tale, admits

he thinks that “anarchists in general were simply inconceivable . . . mentally, morally, logically, sentimentally, and even physically” (38).

Conrad repeatedly depicts anarchy as inconceivable, imbecilic, and absurd. He departs from standard period portrayals of anarchic activity as menacing, terror-inducing, and murderous. Roger Tenant suggests the biographical motivations for Conrad’s fixation on anarchy, referring to his parents’ revolutionary activities: “meditating on the themes of anarchy and revolution, which were just outside his personal experience but very much a part of his background,” Conrad brought to them “an intellectual analysis that seems so much in conflict with buried emotions that the results are often deep and disturbing” (170). Conrad’s father, Apollo Korzeniowski, was arrested for revolutionary activities as a chief organizer of anti-Russian demonstrations. He was sentenced to exile with his young family in Vologda and later in Chernigov. While in exile Conrad’s mother, Ewelina died, and when Apollo’s health began to fail, he was allowed to leave Russia and settled with Conrad in Krakow, where he died, leaving Conrad in the care of his uncle and with a deep pride in Polish revolutionary politics.

David Glover reads *The Secret Agent* as “a symptom of a crisis in English legality, or rather an historical crisis that necessarily took a legal form” (“Aliens” 22). He sees the novel’s historical contexts as ranging from the anarchist bombing of the late 1880s, the European Anti-Anarchist policy debates that occurred in the 1890s, and the legal and political reforms in England during the Edwardian period. While Glover focuses on the contextual resonances of anti-anarchist legislation and anti-alien rhetoric

in the period, I want to address the criminal contexts of the novel in relation to anarchism, cosmopolitanism, and literary genre. Surveying Conrad's fiction of the period, I suggest he utilized an established literary crime genre dealing specifically with anarchists, bombs, spies, and political crimes in order to work against its dominating tropes and narratives. Rather than rely on a literary tradition that sought to foment public fear and outrage at foreigners and anarchist outsiders, Conrad fostered a comic vision of anarchy's absurdity. Conrad turned to irony, satire, and humor in carving out a space for the cosmopolite in the cultural imagination, revealing the cosmopolitan criminal to be ridiculous, imbecilic, and altogether human. This allowed him to work against English stereotypes and cultural narratives that increasingly criminalized foreigners.

As a member of the Polish diaspora and the son of an exiled criminal, he would have been interested in, if not wholly critical of the ways that the British political establishment was fomenting xenophobic responses to foreign criminals to advance anti-immigration policies. A Polish immigrant from the Russian empire by way of France, Conrad arrived in England cognizant of the need to assimilate to get along, but hesitant about losing touch with his proud Polish heritage.¹⁴⁸ Conrad wrote of his own out-of-place doubleness in a letter addressed to Kazimierz Waliszewski, dated 12/5/1903: "Both at sea and on land my point of view is English, from which the conclusion should not be drawn that I have become an Englishman. That is not the case. *Homo duplex* has in my

¹⁴⁸ Conrad became a naturalized British subject in 1886 and was formally released from Russian citizenship in 1889. Ian Watt makes the case that Conrad chose England because of circumstance more than commitment. Britain had no conscripted service, the largest merchant fleet, and "virtually no formalities were required for signing on alien seamen" (15). In addition, Watt points out, Conrad had familiarity with English literature in translation through his father, and respected Britain's long-standing "tradition of freedom for political exiles" (15).

case more than one meaning” (89).¹⁴⁹ Written at a time when Conrad was transitioning from writing the Eastern “sea tales” he was known for to more grounded tales in the machinations and intrigues of Western communities, he reassured his Polish compatriot that he had not converted wholly to being English. He makes it clear that he has preserved his Polish roots and that they can coexist alongside his adopted English viewpoint. In this way, he follows the characteristic cosmopolitan doubling of identity we saw with the Schlegel sisters. Unsurprisingly then, his cosmopolitan biography and his self-conscious effort not to take on the identity of an Englishman, meant that for the English public he would always be cast as a cosmopolitan other.¹⁵⁰ His doubled allegiances, half-English and half-Polish, did not sit well with an Edwardian public suspicious of those not singularly identifiable as English. Likewise, for Conrad, the British public’s rejection of him as an outsider irritated him and ensured that the complications of liminal identity would be a constant hindrance in his personal life and a subject in his writing.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ See Amar Acheraïou’s *Joseph Conrad and the Reader* for Polish and English contexts and reception of Conrad’s “dual loyalty to England and Poland” and his construction of “a compound cultural self” (25, 26).

¹⁵⁰ Laurence Davies draws attention to Conrad’s experimentation as a result of his cosmopolitan experiences: “While Conrad’s writings reflect a diverse experience of living in the Russian, Austrian, French, and British Empires (not to mention trading in the Dutch), and while they also echo a tumult of philosophical and political controversies, his life as *homo multiplex* converged with an experimental bent more characteristic of the next generation of authors” (230).

¹⁵¹ While the formation of the Polish state (to be achieved in 1918) was a political interest for Conrad, his self-identification as Polish without a corresponding state contributed to his out-of-place, cosmopolitan identity. Conrad could only claim allegiance to a Polish cultural tradition, without a corresponding Polish state. In England he was identified as Eastern, or Oriental, displaced from a national tradition, and representing a different view of Europe from its other end (an identity he exploits as an authority for expressing the Russian point of view in *Under Western Eyes*). His time in France further contributed to the public’s regard for his cosmopolitan mixed-up-ness. Contemporary critical responses to Conrad’s fiction, often attack him on the grounds of his being foreign, of either displaying a French, Slavic, or abstract “Eastern” style jarring to English readers. See Norman Sherry’s collection of reviews in *Conrad, The Critical Heritage*. See also Voitkovska and Vorontsova’s “Textualizing Liminality in *The Secret Agent*” for

For Conrad, outsider identity, doubled and fractured, was more than a personal aggravation; it was also a spark to literary creation. Time and again in his fiction he creates disconsolate outsiders caught adrift in insular communities. Informed by what Christopher Gillie terms a “cosmopolitan awareness,” Conrad’s characters seem to find themselves betwixt and between, displaced between a sense of home and homelessness (39).¹⁵² George Levine argues that Conrad’s subject “is not a knowable community but an alien world he tries to assimilate to a community he does not quite know” (49). Consider Kurtz’s dislocation from benevolent constructions of European civilization not only in location, but also in psychology and deed in *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Marlow views Kurtz’s Congolese Inner Station through a European lens, and in doing so complicates the propounded rules of Western civilization and primitive society. The two merge together in ways that make them indistinguishable at their core. The African jungle colony actually provides a confounding view of utter anarchy, not in the absence of Western standards or the checks-and-balances of a civilizing presence, but in the preponderance of cultural cues and customs. French, Belgians, Russians, English, tribal Africans, all directed by various imperial, economic, and “civilizing” projects come together, so that any common ground is erased. Any and all directives that can establish the rules of proper conduct are jumbled in the excess of social codes. With each new encounter Marlow’s sense of belonging “still to a world of straightforward facts” is eroded because “[s]omething would turn up to scare it away”: a French warship blindly

a discussion of Conrad’s contemplation of “liminality as an existential condition” (83).

¹⁵² Gillie sees the “contrast between the fact of loneliness and the need for community” as Conrad’s “dominant preoccupation” in his work (38).

shelling the jungle, the company accountant's jungle attire of white starched collars and linen suits, the inhumanity of the charitable Eldorado Exploring Expedition, the "farical law" that bound the natives to their colonizers, cannibals, heads on poles, and finally Kurtz himself (14, 40).

Conrad "took great care to give Kurtz a cosmopolitan origin," as he put it in a letter to Waliszeski (94). Kurtz's cosmopolitan origins – "his mother was half-English, his father was half-French" – meant that "all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz" (49). He, therefore, embodies the cosmopolitan problematics of the jungle, personifying in an "unlawful soul" anarchic abundance and excess (65). His time spent in a highly intensified cosmopolitan setting hastens his mix-up of social constraints: western law and custom with the law of the jungle.¹⁵³ Kurtz's report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, for example, starts out in a measured manner, explaining Western munificence and altruism, but deviates after Kurtz's extended stay in the jungle, terminating in the report's "postscriptum" : "Exterminate all the brutes!" (50). The document's logic is disrupted by the incompatibility of its beginning and its end. Its side-by-side expression of two incongruent messages – half-civil, half-savage – renders it useless for both jungle and Europe. Marlow discards the document, relegating it to the "dustbin" with the rest of "the dead cats of civilisation" (50). The report, nonetheless, unmistakably attests to the illegitimacy of mixed messages and identities under a reigning logic of mistrusting cosmopolitan mixing as neither here-nor-there, neither this-nor-that.

¹⁵³ Marlow observes how policemen and "the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums" all act as a kind of institutional safeguard for keeping "powers of darkness" at bay when left to our own devices (48-49).

Marlow, exceptional among seamen because he is a “wanderer,” emerges from his experience a changed man.¹⁵⁴ He understands that the societies we live in and we think we know turn out to be lost somewhere between our picture of them and their reality, between our experience of them and the language we employ to describe them, between our memory of them and what we repress to preserve them. Unable to make sense of Kurtz because he has become too many things, Marlow turns Kurtz’s “impenetrable darkness” into a singular sign for understanding everything, including “the monstrous town” of London (5). Observing that London had also been “one of the dark places of the earth” for the Romans, he begins his tale at a primal scene of cultures coming together, meeting in a conflict zone on the historical outposts of known Roman civilization. Marlow’s doubling of London as both barbaric outpost and modern civilized garrison again signals cosmopolitan division and an estrangement from home. Marlow emerges with the troubling insight that the jungle doubles for London, that home is no longer home. His tale can be read as a reflection on cosmopolitan London and the imminent march of cultures coming together, clashing, and mixing, ultimately corrupting their knowability and England’s social policing functions.

Removed from society in literal and metaphoric outposts, Conrad’s characters are less like Homeric heroes moving toward homecoming, and more like ships caught adrift

¹⁵⁴ Marlow’s wandering is contrasted to the typical “sedentary life” of sailors, always at home on their ship and in their country, the sea (5). Sailors are not bothered by the immutable parade of “foreign shores, foreign faces” they encounter on their travels (5). Marlow’s wandering, however, signals that, unlike other sailors, he journeys beyond the surface of things, beyond “a casual spree on shore” (5). He travels inward, and inland, and it is implied, is affected by his wanderings. Marlow’s motility signals his cosmopolitan nature.

at sea, floundering for a guiding wind that will not come.¹⁵⁵ The shipwrecked emigrant in “Amy Foster,” for example, washes ashore outside a typical English hamlet town, “like a man transplanted into another planet” (201).¹⁵⁶ He does not have the resources to return home or travel to America, his original destination. Despite the many obstacles he faces he does what he can to adjust to England. Yet, he cannot fully assimilate: “His foreignness had a peculiar and indelible stamp” (201). Yanko Goorall’s “swarthy complexion,” his foreign manner of dress, of walking, of speaking, “all these peculiarities were . . . so many causes of scorn and offence to the inhabitants of the village” (201). His efforts to teach the villagers customs from his home country – including songs and dances – are met with curses and physical violence. Resisting a traditional resolution via exogamy, Yanko’s marriage to the local farm-girl, Amy Forster, does not ingratiate him to the local community. Rather, it makes it clear just how “odious” he is “to all the countryside” (203).

“Domestic differences” quickly surface in the marriage, and his strangeness drives a wedge between him and his new wife (205). Yanko’s strangeness, which had initially attracted Amy to him, becomes a cause for her “unreasonable terror” concerning his intentions for her and their newborn child (207). Her fear gets the best of her one night when, watching over her sickly husband, he asks for a drink of water to reduce his fever. Though he thinks he is speaking English, he has lapsed back into his native tongue,

¹⁵⁵ I am thinking here of Nietzsche’s metaphor of the drifting ship in *The Gay Science*: “We have forsaken the land and gone to sea! We have destroyed the bridge behind us – more so, we have demolished the land behind us! Now little ship, look out! . . . Woe, when homesickness for the land overcomes you, as if there had been more *freedom* there – and there is no more ‘land!’” (119).

¹⁵⁶ “Amy Forster” was first published in *Tales of Unrest* (1898).

so that she only sees and hears him as a foreigner and a threat, and flees with their infant in terror. Here, we see another example of the transformative power of the fear of the foreigner: Amy's "unaccountable fear" is precisely accounted for if we understand that in England at this time, foreignness was taken to be an expected precondition of criminality (207).¹⁵⁷ Yanko dies the next day – the doctor diagnoses heart-failure – and the village soon forgets about the strange castaway. Amy coldly erases any trace of his memory, never discussing or recalling her past with him. Yanko, the doctor judges, perished "in the supreme disaster of loneliness and despair" (209).

Conrad's novel *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale* (1907), in similar terms, treats "telling Winnie Verloc's story to its anarchistic end of utter desolation, madness, and despair" (8). In an inversion of Yanko's circumstances, however, the English housewife Winnie finds herself surrounded by foreign criminal anarchists. Loosely based on the failed bombing attempt in Greenwich Park in 1894, the novel far exceeds the simplicity its subtitle suggests.¹⁵⁸ The story revolves around a small group of revolutionary anarchists and state policing authorities in London. Adolf Verloc, another of Conrad's cosmopolitan cast of characters (half-English, half-French), works as a secret agent for an

¹⁵⁷ Amy believes that Yanko is "shamming" his sickness as a ploy for some underhanded deed (206). She clearly mistrusts her husband's sickness as a ruse and fears for her safety and that of her child. Recall that in this period facility with disguise goes hand-in-hand with conceptions of cosmopolitan criminality.

¹⁵⁸ For the historical context of the actual events and people that served as likely models for Conrad's novel see Ian Watt's "The Political and Social Background of *The Secret Agent*". See also Norman Sherry's *Conrad's Western World* for an extensive commentary on the historical models for Conrad's anarchist subjects, pp. 205-334. Ford Madox Ford recounts the failed bombing in *Memories and Impressions* (1911) this way: "The unfortunate idiot was talked by these *agents provocateurs* into taking a bomb to Greenwich Park, where the bomb exploded in his pocket and blew him into many small fragments. The idea of the government in question was that this would force the hand of the British Government so that they would arrest wholesale every anarchist in Great Britain. Of course, the British Government did nothing of the sort" (136).

unnamed foreign embassy, though he claims, somewhat dubiously, to be “a natural born British subject” (23).¹⁵⁹ Tasked with infiltrating anarchist circles in England, he provides reports to his embassy chief Mr. Vladimir about the anarchists’ whereabouts and plans. However, the International Red Committee Verloc has infiltrated is largely ineffectual, content to publish a few anarchist tracts as their act of social revolution. Karl Yundt “the Terrorist,” Comrade Alexander Ossipon “the Doctor,” and Michaelis “the ticket-of-leave apostle” are mostly concerned with their own livelihood, indolent comforts, and crackpot ideas, and meet with Verloc at his Soho pornography shop he uses as cover.¹⁶⁰ Verloc’s lodgings at the back of the shop also house his English wife Winnie (who also had “traces of the French descent”), her mother, and her mentally handicapped brother Stevie who is easily excitable to violent outbursts when his passions concerning injustice are inflamed (11).

In an effort to increase public demand for the expulsion of anarchists and foreign criminals living in England, Vladimir orders Verloc to carry out a bombing on the Greenwich Observatory or lose his job. Verloc acquires a bomb from “The Professor,” a loner anarchist who, obsessed with inventing the perfect detonator, specializes in bomb-making. Verloc devises a plan for Stevie to leave a bomb outside the Observatory and

¹⁵⁹ Verloc’s anarchist and terrorist associates – Michaelis, the Professor, Karl Yundt, and First Secretary Vladimir – contribute to the hodgepodge of nationalities conspiring against the social order, tucked away in Soho. This cosmopolitan group highlights the internationalism of criminal organizations in London.

¹⁶⁰ According to Judith R. Walkowitz, Soho’s “cosmopolitan reputation” was well known as a “multiethnic, polyglot settlement of many European diasporas” (3). From 1890 to 1945, Soho was seen as a “plague spot of foreign crime, disease, and vice” and “represented the epitome of bad or dangerous cosmopolitanism,” or what I’m calling criminal cosmopolitanism (6). Conrad’s choice of a Soho setting trades on its criminal reputation linked with foreign cosmopolitans to signal “a debased condition of transgression, displacement, and degeneration” (6). See Nicholas Hiley’s “Decoding German Spies: British Spy Fiction 1908-1918” for his observation that “the imagery of spy fiction and pornography were interchangeable” (65), as “elements of the spy story appear in Edwardian pornography” and vice versa (66).

sneak away, but Stevie trips outside the Observatory and blows himself up. The Assistant Commissioner “in charge of the Special Crimes branch,” once a detective “in a tropical colony,” directs the investigation into the bombing, communicating his findings to Sir Ethelred, the Secretary of State Chief (93, 79).¹⁶¹ Inspector Heat of the Special Crimes Department, Scotland Yard’s “principal expert in anarchist procedure,” assists with the investigation (69). He discovers the crucial clue in an otherwise unsolvable crime: a bit of cloth sewn into the Stevie’s coat with Verloc’s home address on it, put there by Winnie in case he got lost in London and had to be returned home by the constabulary. Heat recognizes the address as he has been using Verloc as a secret police informant in exchange for not tampering with Verloc’s pornography shipments from the continent.

Spying at a keyhole, Winnie hears Verloc confess to Heat that he involved Stevie in the bombing. Winnie realizes that she is a “free woman” no longer beholden to Verloc; she only married him for financial security for her family, though he believed it was for love (189). Before Verloc can carry out his plan of testifying to all the secrets he knows in his imminent trial, Winnie exacts immediate murderous revenge for killing her beloved brother, stabbing him to death as he reposes on a couch. Haunted by the image of her own death by hanging, Winnie sets herself to committing suicide in the Thames. Upon encountering Ossipon, who has always shown a lurid interest in Winnie, he convinces her to run away with him to the continent, misunderstanding the situation, thinking that Verloc was killed in the blast. When Ossipon discovers Verloc’s body in the parlor, he

¹⁶¹ Full-time divisional detectives worked in London from 1869 onwards, following Fenian attacks in 1867 and the regular constabulary’s ineffectiveness in preventing and resolving those crimes. The Criminal Investigation Department was formed in 1876, centralizing the detectives under one coherent police division (Emsley, *Crime and Society* 242).

medically diagnoses Winnie as a “degenerate . . . of a murdering type,” and ditches her on the train platform bound for a cross-channel ferry (217). On the ferry, Winnie jumps overboard, committing suicide. Her “act of madness and despair” is reported in the newspapers as “an impenetrable mystery” (228).

The Secret Agent is Conrad’s first novel set primarily in England. He describes his choice of setting in his “Author’s Note”: “the vision of an enormous town presented itself, of a monstrous town more populous than some continents. . . . Irresistibly the town became the background for the ensuing period of deep and tentative meditations. Endless vistas opened before me in various directions” (6). We recognize London as the ultimate cosmopolis, as a continuation of the Victorian tradition of perceiving the size and immensity of London as standing in for the world. The monstrosity of the city, suggested by Conrad, originates in the darkness and mystery produced by its sheer enormity, its large mass of people, its openness to possibility, and ultimately its inability to be contained and limited: “There was room enough there to place any story, depth enough for any passion, variety enough there for any setting, darkness enough to bury five millions of lives” (41). Conrad conceives the city not only as a place – a background setting where the action of a story can take place – but as a cultural shaper of lives. He approaches London with the period’s understanding of its cosmopolitan effects to transform city-types and highlight ever-shifting assemblages and identities.

To render the city’s apparent cosmopolitanism, Conrad reveals the permeability of its boundaries. As we saw with Forster, Conrad employs what Rebecca L. Walkowitz

calls “critical cosmopolitanism” and its emphasis on “adverse or quotidian experiences of transnational contact” (15). Focusing on a collection of intercontinental anarchists, secret agents, Metropolitan Police detectives, and high-ranking politicians with their hands in international affairs, the novel exposes the imbrications of cosmopolitan criminality with statecraft, often secreted from the public’s gaze. Conrad’s cosmopolitan London conceals the duplicity he puts on show. London itself functions as a double-agent that both disguises and disrupts the fictionality of England’s national narratives – those we saw that glorify the “real,” homogeneous England in the pastoral tradition – that surreptitiously articulate a monolithic national identity by covering up or suppressing the alien in the domestic.

Paul Giles argues that “national narratives effected imaginary relations between national peoples and the states that secured them to their apparatuses” (40). Consequently, the nation must be able to define a common threat and to secure itself against it to form a collective aggregate of citizens with a common risk.¹⁶² Giles identifies the tendency for narratives of paranoia to crop up that act to locate the foreign as threatening “through the abjection of state aliens” (42). These narratives concretize citizenship through a construction “of abjectable and internal aliens,” which exhibit the nation’s sense of itself by what it purports to exclude and fear (42). In the Edwardian era, cosmopolitan criminals, in the form of anarchists and continental revolutionaries, served as the catalysts for these paranoid national narratives. *The Secret Agent* provides a

¹⁶² See Anthony Giddens’s *The Consequences of Modernity* for a discussion of the rise of modernity’s “risk society.”

critique of the mystification of the national narrative's totalizing effect, by way of undercutting narratives that enact an overproduction of risk and threat, while exposing the nation's reliance on fictions of paranoia to bolster a sense of national belonging. Conrad also exposes the degree to which the policing and judicial systems secretly rely on criminal cooperation. The very systems which for the public work in tandem to identify, sequester, and expel alien threats are shown to be in collusion with the criminal elements at the highest levels in government. Thus, Conrad shows that the national narratives that pit aliens and criminals together against domestic order and legality are shown to be mere fictions. As the seat of government, the heart of empire, and the crucible of modern cosmopolitan criminality, London stages the collapsing of the foreign and domestic, and the duplicitous state agents who work to preserve their differences through paranoid effects.¹⁶³

If London functions like a double-agent in the novel, it also acts as a doubling agent. Several sites exhibit cosmopolitan doublings that we typically encounter in Edwardian metropolitan literature. The Verloc home doubles for his shady wares business, which doubles as a front for his profession as an embassy spy. The foreign embassy from which Vladimir hatches the bomb plot stands on both sides of the curious line that positions consulates between the foreign and domestic. Technically a part of a foreign country, there is no escaping the fact that the embassy also stands on London soil: "Theoretically only, on foreign territory; abroad only by a fiction," as the Assistant

¹⁶³ See David Trotter's *Paranoid Modernism* for the development of paranoia as a pathology and its incorporation in paranoid narratives.

Commissioner says (172). The Italian restaurant the Assistant Commissioner visits in Soho before confronting Verloc with the crime communicates illicit cosmopolitan freedom, a main theme of the novel. The Italian restaurant, as a “peculiarly British institution,” doubles the nationality, which paradoxically “denationalised” the restaurant and the patrons (115). The “fraudulent cookery” served there is counterfeit, neither altogether British nor Italian. The excess of identity serves to “unplace” and “inauthenticate” it. The Assistant Commissioner “seemed to lose some more of his identity” in the restaurant. He feels “unplaced,” and believes himself to be indistinguishable, like the patrons, “professionally, socially, or racially” (155). The detachment from local and national identity serves his purposes for disguising himself, as he prepares to sneak past the police dragnet that surrounds the Verloc house. Before leaving, he notices his “foreign appearance” in the restaurant’s many mirrors, doubling his reflected image back to him, giving him “a sense of loneliness, of evil freedom” (115). He takes pleasure in the restaurant’s “immoral atmosphere” (115), and slinks along Brett Street outside the Verloc home with a “joyousness” as if he “were a member of the criminal classes” (116).

The narrator slips in a brief insight into the Assistant Commissioner’s “joyousness and dispersion of thought” in taking on the “evil freedom” of a denationalized and unplaced cosmopolitan criminal: it “seems to prove that this world of ours is not such a very serious affair after all” (116). The Assistant Commissioner approaches Verloc on a personal errand, treating his official concerns as secondary. Judging by the detectives’ actions in the case, the discovery of the anarchist at the center of the bomb plot (when of

course there is none) appears to be no serious matter at all. The reader's attention is diverted away from the discovery of the plot, as it has already been revealed to be an accident, to the pleasure of sliding out of a stable, state(d) identity. While the Assistant Commissioner is "not constitutionally inclined to levity," and the "policeman on the beat" has a "somber" form, the narrator shapes the reading of the scene to align with the Assistant Commissioner's "pleasurable feeling of independence" brought on by his criminal disguise (116). As his identity withdraws among the "shadows of nondescript things," we are to see it as a happy liberation, underhanded though it might be (117). The cosmopolitan institutions of the city (Soho's restaurants and streets, Verloc's pornography shop) teach the "adventurous head of the Special Crimes Department" the necessity of mutable identities unmoored from stable origins and national attachments. According to Walkowitz, Conrad employs "bohemian Soho and its cast of immigrants, foreigners, and other indeterminate residents" to present "the skillful manipulation of social details and local manners as a norm of cosmopolitan London" (*Style* 38).¹⁶⁴ The Assistant Commissioner discovers in the role of playing secret (police) agent, under the guise of a cosmopolitan criminal, the secret agency to perform identity and the illicit freedom it affords. After all, he is visiting Verloc, not to arrest him, but to subvert standard policing and judicial operations.

Both Inspector Heat and the Assistant Commissioner have personal reasons beyond their status as state functionaries for determining who is responsible for the

¹⁶⁴ Walkowitz also argues that Conrad "equates his own strategies with the strategies of assimilation deployed by London criminals and detectives of indeterminate origin" (44). Therefore, the novel "makes readers see national belonging as a performance of requisite effects" and "strategic display" (44, 45).

Greenwich bombing. Though “[b]efore the public he would have liked to vindicate the efficiency of his department,” Heat is interested in keeping his personal informant, Verloc, hidden so as to give him a free hand in future cases, ensuring the security of his career and probable future promotions (72). He does not want to be reprimanded for allowing one of his own men to have carried out such a crime under his nose. Heat even conspires to frame Michaelis for the bombing in order to protect his own “reputation,” “his comfort,” and “the efficient performance of his duties” (95). The Assistant Commissioner, likewise, has his own private reasons for blocking any arrest of Michaelis, which are “extremely unbecoming his official positions” (89). The “lady patroness of Michaelis” is friends with his wife, and he reasons that he must protect Michaelis in order to remain in her good graces, especially since she has had a positive influence on his own position and marriage. Heat reminds the Assistant Commissioner of a deceitful chief from his colonial policing days, precisely because it appears to him that Heat had “many dangerous reservations in his fidelity, caused by a due regard for his own advantage, comfort, and safety” (93). Heat’s duplicity evoked in a tribal chieftain recalls Kurtz’s cosmopolitan excess, and the doubling back of the absurdity of the jungle into London. The police agents, who appear to be serving justice and the state, are secretly serving their private needs. They are the same as Verloc, only concerned with their personal domestic affairs and comforts.

In an inversion of the detective plot, the detection of the criminal and his motives are less important than the private incentives for detection. The detectives are not concerned with bringing criminals to justice. No one is arrested or charged with a crime

in the novel; the police “managed to smother” the Verloc affair, secreting their investigations from an already incurious public (230). Rather than serve as the impetus for clarifying and “solving” a mystery, the crime motivates conspirators and police alike to obfuscate facts and motives. The crime catalyzes clear obstructions of justice, so that the novel might be best understood as an anti-detective novel, using the usual suspects and cast of characters and narrative twist and turns employed in the genre, but ultimately subverting any sense of clear ending and resolution. Of course, the reader knows the “solution” to the mysteries of Stevie’s death, Verloc’s murder, and Winnie’s suicide, but on looking back at the events that lead to their demise, we are faced with a curious tangle of events and motives that still don’t seem to add up. The tragic end of Winnie results not from a crime of conviction, as we might assume when anarchists are involved, but rather from crimes of convenience committed by nearly everyone involved.

The personal misdemeanors add up to an anarchic “domestic drama,” as the Assistant Commissioner describes it to Home Secretary Ethelred (168). Typical of the English viewpoint for the era, the anarchist threat is displaced, defanged, and swept under the carpet. Dismissed as another “ordinary” crime, the police authorities transform it publicly into an unsolved “mystery,” on the same order as Winnie’s suicide. The bombing attempt, and the subsequent murder-suicide should not be mistaken for a geopolitical event, with wide-reaching international effects. Instead, the domestic crimes originating in the Verloc household should be read as fully imbricated with transnational forces that extend their influence in unanticipated ways. “Conrad thus sketches,” according to Hoeun, “a landscape of critique in showing that the creation of zones of

ambiguity and double-agency bolsters the functioning of the system,” and in doing so “denies the possibility of a political space existing that is not haunted by an infinitude of events and ideas” (*Terrorism* 52). More than exclusively in the political sphere, though, the novel continues Conrad’s exposure of an already existing cosmopolitanization of London – London’s unbounded, monstrous excess – and the atmosphere of fear and blame that displaces domestic crime to the realm of paranoiac cosmopolitan criminality.

The novel resists the common reading of other British thrillers of the era, which pit the positive forces of the everyday British hero against the evil forces of cosmopolitan spies and criminals. The reader must read past the common genre expectations for the criminal always to be the foreigner, or otherwise be blinded to the fact that the two deaths are English-made through and through. In the nature of a spy, Conrad pulls off an effective literary bait-and-switch: under the guise of a British thriller with foreign anarchists and cosmopolitan criminals around every corner, they remain ultimately irrelevant to the criminal plot at hand. They are closer to the position of a red herring, rather than menacing members of the “Red Scare.”

Conrad’s anarchists are more comic, or at least pathetic, in their characterizations than menacing. Karl Yundt, “the terrorist,” is toothless. He is “old and bald” feeble, with gouty hands, and a “quivering” head that imparts a “comical vibration to the wisp of his goatee” when he talks (38). Despite his murderous rhetoric, he “had never raised personally as much as his little finger against the social edifice” (42). Ossipon, a failed medical student, adheres to Lombroso’s theories of criminal physiognomy and social

hygiene, without realizing his very facial features – “a flattened nose and prominent mouth cast in the rough mould of the negro type” – mark him as much of a degenerate as he diagnoses Stevie and Winnie to be (39). Michaelis is extremely fat, “his elbow presenting no appearance of a joint, but more like a bend in a dummy’s limb” (37). Because of his weight he has trouble talking and walking. As a result of his 15-year prison sentence in personal isolation his thoughts are jumbled, demonstrating an extreme “poverty of reasoning” (225). His grand revolutionary ideas boil down to planning society like “an immense and nice hospital,” hardly the rhetoric of anarchic death and destruction (225). No wonder that to Verloc, the anarchists “appeared hopelessly futile” (44).

The only genuine revolutionary anarchists are “the Professors” in *The Secret Agent* and “The Informer.” Their disregard for their own lives – their willingness to blow themselves up –conveys their strength of anarchic conviction for toppling the social order by any means necessary. The Professor tells Ossipon that revolutionaries and the police are trapped by the same social conventions: “The terrorist and the policeman come from the same basket. Revolution, legality – counter moves in the same game; forms of idleness at bottom identical” (59). In order to break free from such conventional restraints, the true anarchist will defy reason, will disregard all life, including his own, when the time is right. The Professor sees the “great edifice of legal conceptions” as the main problem with modern society (66). He ultimately wants to “destroy public faith in legality” in order to advance anarchy. The Professor’s one great fear, however, is that the public, comprising “an immense multitude,” would continue to be “blind and orderly and

absorbed, impervious to sentiment, to logic, to terror too perhaps” (67). For him, the great worry is that an illogical suicide-bombing of an anarchist, or the bombing of a building, cannot shake the public’s disregard of fear, bolstered by their blind faith in a legal social order that theoretically protects them. For the reader versed in the comic tradition of the anarchist character in literature, however, the Professor’s willingness to kill himself to advance the cause recalls the anarchists’ inclination toward self-negation, as I demonstrated with Stevenson’s *Zero*. Moreover, the Professor’s blindness to the ineffectual results of the bombing carried out by Stevie to change anything, even to arouse the public’s sympathy, reveals the self-deluded belief that his self-destruction would have a different effect. Though he is earnest, he is no less absurd.

The fraudulent anarchists in Conrad’s fiction, Paul, Verloc, and Comrade Sevrin are not anarchists at all; they are shams with no real anarchist convictions. Verloc isn’t a very good secret agent either, as his interview with his employer at the embassy reveals. Verloc tells Mr. Vladimir he is masquerading as an anarchist, not “a desperate socialist,” a remark humorous in Verloc’s pride in his choice between socially reprehensible identities (22). Vladimir retorts that he would have been more useful if he had been “a Marshall of France and a Member of Parliament in England,” prompting a “faint smile” from Verloc, who dimly sees the humor in the “flight of fancy” (23). Vladimir has a “drawing room reputation as an agreeable and entertaining man,” likable for his quick wit, his “funny demonstrations,” and his characteristic way of pulling faces to punctuate his humorous observations (20-21). In his exchange with Verloc we see Vladimir’s “delicate witticisms” outpace Verloc’s ability to keep up with the verbal sparring. Verloc,

at one point, answers Vladimir by blowing “his nose loudly” (26). Vladimir conducts the conversation in a number of accents and languages: he begins the interview in French, then “changed the language, and began to speak idiomatic English without the slightest trace of a foreign accent,” then back to French, then English again, then Latin, then “an amazingly guttural intonation not only utterly un-English, but absolutely un-European, and startling to Mr Verloc’s experience of cosmopolitan slums”(24-25), then back to “plain English,” then French in the next sentence, then back to English, then “guttural Central Asian tones” (32), and finally back to English. Vladimir’s fluid interchange of languages and voices marks him as a true cosmopolitan, a slippery character who effortlessly puts on any number of identities, obscuring his true origins.¹⁶⁵ His verbal acrobatics also punctuate his verbal dexterity in contrast to Verloc’s gift of a booming voice, which he demonstrates in the practical joke of making a policeman jump on the street below as Verloc yells at him from the window. As a student of comic styles – Vladimir takes “occasional excursions into the field of American humour” – his trick of changing languages is an additional way of playing with Verloc (26). Verloc senses he is the butt of the joke, without really understanding the comedy, prompting him to call out Vladimir on the dangers of calling him to the office: “There is just a chance of being seen. And that would be no joke for me” (27).

¹⁶⁵ Peter Van der Veer argues, “The cosmopolitan person is not only a translator, but also a spy who commands more languages than the people he spies upon, as well as the ability to translate their languages into the language of the rulers” (168). Vladimir’s facility with language grants him access to exclusive English drawing rooms and clubs, at the same time he is able to make language the tool of his concealment, providing a screen for his spy ring.

When Vladimir proposes an attack on science, “of having a go at astronomy,” Verloc understands the whole conversation to be “an elaborate joke” (31). Of course, for Vladimir, in this instance he is deadly serious because he wants the ridiculous nature of the attack to be readily apparent, so that the British public will be shaken by “the most alarming display of ferocious imbecility” (31). The effect of “blowing up of the first meridian,” he hopes, will “raise a howl of execration” from political exiles and cosmopolitan criminals living in England (32). In order to ensure that the public doesn’t get the bombing confused for a “religious manifestation,” an act of “social revenge,” or a sign of “class hate,” it must be legible as a pure “act of ferocity so absurd as to be incomprehensible, inexplicable, almost unthinkable; in fact, mad” (29-30). Imbecilic, absurd, mad, all tokens of a cruel joke on the public, when these are revealed to be the desired readings of a calculated event based on Vladimir’s “philosophy of bomb throwing” (30). Like a bad gag, the joke backfires on Vladimir and the Verloc family. Vladimir is found out, jeopardizing his status in English society, and by implication his position in the embassy. The bombing happens, not as Verloc expected, setting off a chain of events that will result in three deaths. As for the uproar the bombing was supposed to deliver, it only gets a brief mention in the press, and the British government is not roused to action as Vladimir expects.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Still harboring ill-feelings towards the Russians, it makes sense that the genuine dangerous outsider in the novel is a member of the Russian government. Though his country is never explicitly stated in the novel, Conrad admitted in a letter to Cunninghame Graham that he based him on General Seliverskov, a former Russian Minister of Police (491).

Conrad's anarchists are outlandishly absurd.¹⁶⁷ They represent, not so much Conrad's critique of the anarchist movement, but rather a conscious attempt at relaxing their menace through humorous caricature and ironic satire. Having a decidedly marked self-interest in the growing English hostilities towards foreigners in the Edwardian era, Conrad turns the anarchist – one of the anti-alienist's paradigmatic characters for the criminal dangers of immigrants living in England – into a comic character type either too imbecilic or too indolent to be of any threat. At the same time, he exposes the manipulation of domestic and foreign state agents in the overproduction of an exaggerated foreign anarchist and criminal threat. The duplicity generally reserved for cosmopolitan criminals and spies spills over to the state's public deceit. Conrad raises the question as to what degree the state fashions a fictional foreign criminal threat through the same methods it claims are exclusive to the criminal. Juxtaposing the anarchists' incompetencies with the ruthless hypocrisies of the state, he offers a stark picture of English society's carefully crafted fictions, and their generative power to authorize the public's negative reactions to foreigners. In this way, he draws attention to the production of "insular British xenophobia of the sort Conrad believed himself to be an object" (Matin 261). In *The Secret Agent*, Conrad turns away from the standard tropes of cosmopolitan crimes in British thriller and anarchist fiction, to the crimes of the state as an indictment of the culture's anti-cosmopolitanism.

¹⁶⁷ Ford Madox Ford recalled in *Portraits from Life* (1937) that he supplied Conrad with material on revolutionaries and anarchists: "*The Secret Agent* represents the anarchist-communists of London as being a pretty measly set of imbeciles" (qtd. in Watts 119). In a letter to H. Davray, Conrad writes that more than just the anarchists, the majority of his major characters are also ludicrous: "half a dozen anarchists, two women, and an idiot" are "all imbeciles" (370).

Conrad's repeated reliance on criminal plots gave him space to ruminate on the nature of crime, courts, and the law, despite his claims in his "Author's Note" to *Nostramo* (1904) that he had "no particular interest in crime *qua* crime" (407).¹⁶⁸ He often turned to crime to expose the isolation of his characters, their psychological and social foibles, and their opaque relation to modern society's irredeemable legalities. Conrad's crime stories do not concern what D. A. Miller calls a "normative scenario of crime," where police and criminal are consolidated in the same delinquent milieu, both staging and containing crime "in a world radically divorced from our own" (34). Rather, he utilizes crime to set in motion allegories of the intractable corruptions of society and man's culpability in that corruption. Like the criminal confessor in Conrad and Ford's *The Nature of a Crime* (1909), the criminal stands in for "humanity no longer in its youth," left to "deal ingeniously" with the world's sufferings (23).¹⁶⁹ Hardened by a modern world, the criminal is forced out of youthful optimism to face the world head-on by any means necessary. That the criminal is also an exilic figure, surely, had symbolic resonance for an author whose own exile, "his birthright" in Watt's terms, had "set the course of Conrad's thought" (*Conrad* 32). Watt argues that Conrad's exile gave him a different view of the positive bonds of individual freedom and alienation shared by many of his contemporaries (Lawrence, Joyce, Pound). For them, choosing alienation was a

¹⁶⁸ Conrad discusses the nature of crime in his personal letters as well. For example, he asks John Galsworthy, a regular commentator on Edwardian crime himself: "Query: Which is really more criminal?—the Bomb of Madrid or the Meat of Chicago" (*Letters* 333).

¹⁶⁹ Jon Thompson argues for crime fiction's affinity with the problems of modernity: "Fictions of crime offer myths of the experience of modernity, of what it is like to live in a world dominated by the contradictory forces of renewal and disintegration, progress and destruction, possibility and impossibility" (2). The criminal, then, can be read as a paradigmatic figure of modern literature's preoccupation with the individual's plight, exiled and cast off in a world experiencing cataclysmic upheavals of tradition and order.

precursor to transcendental freedom for living life more freely, more honestly. Conrad's ideas on alienation and exile were "much less sanguine," however, directing him to focus on "a panorama of chaos and futility, of cruelty, folly, vulgarity, and waste" (32). Thus, the criminal is more than a criminal for Conrad; he can be read as a figural cipher for the individual's complicated exile from the state, from others, from himself, and from his time. And because Conrad's criminals are so often foreigners, or find themselves in foreign locales, their cosmopolitanism doubles their exilic status. Both criminal and foreign, Conrad's cosmopolitan criminals initiate a certain line of questioning and philosophical introspection about the nature of exilic identity: who is exiled, who deserves to be, and what social functionaries and institutions determine the nature of exile.

Because Conrad took a dim view of the law's rationality, and mistrusted the police and criminals equally, his fiction proposes alternatives for regulating and determining proper moral and social behavior that lie outside a strictly legalist framework.¹⁷⁰ "The disjuncture between behavior and motive" that Daniel R. Schwarz reads as central to Conrad's fiction, often plays out against a set of judgments whose legal legitimacy is questioned by more salient human and moral responses (4). In *Heart*

¹⁷⁰ Conrad's son, John, recalls his father's "very strong aversion to policemen in uniform" in his memoir. He reasons that he "had every cause to distrust officers of the law in those unhappy days when my grandparents were ruthlessly deported to Siberia by the Russians" (187). This corresponds to Vladimir's innate fear of police: "Descended from generations victimised by the instruments of an arbitrary power, he was racially, nationally, and individually afraid of the police" (169). Robert Anderson, former head of the Criminal Investigation Division (1888-1901), the Metropolitan Police division responsible for detectives, published *Criminals and Crime* (1907), in which he admits to disregarding the law, "taking some liberties with . . . the 'British Constitution' generally" (82). Still relatively new additions to society, police detectives in England acted much like state secret police in other countries by virtue of their ability to apply plain-clothes methods of secretive policing, and therefore, were regarded with suspicion by the public.

of Darkness, Marlow's bewilderment at the cannibals' restraint in not posing a threat to the Europeans despite their obvious hunger and their majority in numbers, for example, demonstrates for John G. Peters, "an internal restraint" divorced from any fear of reprisal or social scruple attached to "external absolutes or external enforcement" (142). The cannibals' restraint, not reliant on external codes and legal systems, elevates them over nearly all other characters who descend into "ethical anarchy" when clear external codes no longer serve to check their behavior (142).

The Secret Agent lacks any redeemable characters and contains a cast of characters who openly subvert any restraint the law seeks to embolden. Though often read as a sympathetic character, Stevie conforms to depictions of a mentally disturbed "criminal type" of the era.¹⁷¹ Conrad's original readers would have understood Stevie to be as dangerous as any other criminal character in the novel. Crime and its detection appear to organize the plot of the novel, but the multitude of accidental crimes and discoveries undercuts any stable framework from which to determine clear criminality. Divorced from rigid legal standards as a key to judgment, Conrad's reader is put in the precarious position of finding what Albert J. Guerard has identified as "a satisfactory balance of sympathy and judgment" in the absence of a clear moral and legal authority (82).¹⁷² Conrad's irony and ambiguity in his crime stories require a flexibility of

¹⁷¹ Stevie's botched episode setting off fireworks in the factory in which he works not only foreshadows the Greenwich bombing, but also identifies him as a troubled, deviant youth. Edwardians would have also seen Stevie's mental handicap as a sign of criminality instead of a trait inducing sympathy.

¹⁷² Guerard argues that *Lord Jim*'s multiple narrative points-of-view are designed for "correcting an excessive austerity of judgment or correcting an excessive sympathy" (84). Leaving "us in a provisional and perhaps lasting uncertainty," Conrad's multi-faceted narratives (and narrators) produce conflicting readings of Jim, and those, such as Marlow, who testify to his character and serve as moral guides for the

judgment that the law cannot tolerate. Readers are left to adjudicate their sympathies for his characters lost in the semblance of the “facts of the case” put before them.

Conrad’s fiction also embeds a critique of legalism through the law’s encounter with its own absurdities. As Dieter Paul Polloczek argues, Conrad often “explores the contexts in which the law’s exemplary economy of norms and precedents may become paradoxical” (203). In exhibiting the prejudicial discrimination of the state against immigrants founded on fears of cosmopolitan criminals, Conrad exposes the state’s curious belief in the reality of its own fictions. The Aliens Act and the cultural debates leading up to its passing, incited Conrad to expose the fiction of England’s insularity and the falsehood of the legal, political, and cultural arguments for anti-cosmopolitanism. Thus, Conrad participates in an Edwardian literary tradition that sought to uncover injustices and fractures in the logic of English law. Distressingly for him, advocating a minority perspective as an outsider, and writing narratives which argued for tolerance, in part by relying on making light of criminal aliens, Conrad found his works, at best misread, and at worst attacked and held up as proof of the corrupting influence of foreigners in England.¹⁷³

Aaron Matz posits that Conrad’s “satirical realism” makes his writing “especially difficult to interpret or assimilate politically” (33). In his works, we encounter “a

reader (89). I see a similar process at work in *The Secret Agent*, whereby, the absence of a clear moral, authorial voice leaves all the characters open to scrutiny and criticism.)

¹⁷³ This explains, somewhat, why Conrad opens his Author’s Note with a justification of the novel and a declaration that “there was no perverse intention, no secret scorn for the natural sensibilities of mankind at the bottom of my impulses” (3). Some of those “natural sensibilities” were the xenophobic responses (based on assumptions and misreadings) of a foreign writer caught up in seemingly advancing anarchic chaos and crime in England.

distressing sense that reality is an unchanging sphere of folly” (33).¹⁷⁴ Similarly, Mark Wollaeger connects Conrads’s satirical black humor to his “lived experience of fragmentation and hunger for coherence [which] could be narrated only as an uneasy mix of dark comedy and tragedy” (24). Laurence Davies identifies in Conrad’s writings “a streak of somber and sardonic humor” (224). Bumbling terrorists, self-interested detectives, lethargic double-agents, melodramatic murderous wives, are all members of the rogue’s gallery that comprise Conrad’s fallen modern world.

Conrad shows us the mire and corruption from every angle without offering a way out. In a very real way, the chaos of crime and anarchism in Conrad’s fiction mirrors English society’s more mystifying modern qualities. Davies tells us, Conrad “ironizes morality and moralizes irony . . . as if to recognize that we do not live in a steady frame of mind” (230). Conrad shows us that internal contradictions and moral ambiguities are features of the solitary mind, as well as natural elements of Edwardian society. His novel depicts the failure of our “moral illusions” to bring order to “an ever-present primal disorder” (Winner 84). Reared on Victorian moral certainties and a strong belief in social progress, many Edwardians could not bring themselves to tolerate Conrad’s apparent portrayal of social problems without easy solutions. His “outsider’s” take on English modernity, represented another fracture in a unitary, normative English viewpoint and was indicative of the reasons for resisting cosmopolitan imports. By bringing the

¹⁷⁴ Matz observes in Conrad’s fiction an effort to “suggest that folly is as innate to mankind as consciousness – and therefore as compulsory a subject for the writer of fiction” (161). In *The Secret Agent* Conrad “hints that the characters themselves may be aware of a universal, inescapable folly – usually in the form of some vast practical joke” (163). I read the novel as mordantly humorous, mobilizing a political critique by offering satirical portraits of criminals and transforming the conventional plot of a grand anarchic conspiracy into a pitiful melodramatic domestic drama.

language and ideas of anarchism into a broader cultural dialogue about the nature of restrictive laws and social change, Conrad advances his own beliefs about the cosmopolitan condition of England's modernization.

G. K. Chesterton's Anarchic Vision

Though the cultural and legislative background that incited anti-alien fervor in England at this time is crucial to my reading of *The Secret Agent*, William M. Phillips sees Conrad and G. K. Chesterton as following a similar method for divorcing "anarchism from its explicit political context" in their mid-Edwardian novels, to use anarchism as "a comprehensive vision of social reality, embodying both the nihilism and the comic absurdity of modern culture" (17). Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (1908) with its philosophical detectives and shapeshifting anarchist villain dramatizes London's carnivalesque confusion of appearances and viewpoints. Chesterton's novel takes Conrad's bleak outlook on human morality and justice to its extreme logical conclusion. If Conrad withholds a moral and social vantage point from which to judge his characters' crimes, Chesterton conflates the appearance of law and order, of police and criminals, so that judgment is revealed to be an illusory product of changing perspectives. He parodies the "modern" position that takes moral relativism as its starting point for judgment.¹⁷⁵ Specifically, *The Man Who was Thursday* dramatizes

¹⁷⁵ Like Guy Thorne's *When it was Dark: The Story of a Great Conspiracy* (1904), Chesterton's Edwardian novels often lament the "modern" decline in religious faith and dramatize the potential consequences that a loosening of moral certainties might provoke. See Chesterton's two Edwardian treatises on the "modern" condition: *Heretics* (1905) and *Orthodoxy* (1908). In *Heretics*, Chesterton writes that Rudyard Kipling's "cosmopolitanism is his weakness" (50). For Chesterton, the cosmopolite, unlike the "man in the cabbage field," cannot endure "permanent presence in one place" (50). The wanderlust gives way to a wandering mind, and the cosmopolitan "philanderer of the nations" is seduced to love everything and everywhere to

the ironic muddle that results from police agents acting as cosmopolitan criminals in order to purge anarchists from London. Chesterton portrays double-agents and secret police who by virtue of their expertise in mimicking cosmopolitan criminals threaten to undermine the social order they are trying to protect. The chaotic misrule in the English criminal justice system is indicative of what Chesterton identifies as the general Edwardian state of social confusion and a loosening of reliable English moral standards from which to judge people and behavior.

Chesterton's "prose fantasy" follows Gabriel Syme and his efforts to thwart an anarchic conspiracy (Greene 59). A young "poet of law, a poet of order," Syme meets the "anarchic poet" Lucian Gregory who believes in the "old cant of the lawlessness of art and the art of lawlessness" (11). Gregory and Syme engage in a debate about the anarchic nature of art. Gregory believes that "An artist is identical with an anarchist. . . . The man who throws a bomb is an artist, because he prefers a great moment to everything. He sees how much more valuable is one burst of blazing light, one peal of perfect thunder, than the mere common bodies of a few shapeless policemen. An artist disregards all governments, abolishes all conventions. The poet delights in disorder only" (12). As a member of the Central Anarchist Council run by the Council of Seven Days, Gregory discloses their intention to destroy society's faith in religion, law, and order. Gregory tells Syme that anarchism's true aim is "To abolish God! . . . We do not only want to upset a few despotisms and police regulations. . . . We dig deeper and we blow you higher" (23).

the point that "he has not the patience to become part of anything" (48, 50). Thus, for Chesterton, cosmopolitanism was another modern feature, along with a decline in religious faith, that contributed to the fracturing of solid English moral certainties.

Comically, after many failed attempts at disguising himself so as not to be picked up by the police as an anarchist, Gregory settles on dressing like an anarchist because “Nobody will ever expect you to do anything dangerous then” (25).

Syme, on the other hand, believes order is the true material and function of art: “take your books of mere poetry and prose, let me read a time-table, with tears of pride” (13). He comes from a rebellious family, and as a result of being “surrounded with every conceivable kind of revolt from infancy” he chose to revolt “into the only thing left – sanity” (41). Witnessing the firsthand effects of a “dynamite outrage,” Syme “did not regard anarchists, as most of us do, as a handful of morbid men, combining ignorance with intellectualism. He regarded them as a huge and pitiless peril” (42). Ironically, his obsessive hatred of anarchists turns him into someone who is just as dangerous as they are: “there was no anarchist with a bomb in his pocket so savage or so solitary as he” (42). Both Syme and Gregory are ridiculous pastiches for extremist views on art and anarchism, “worth listening to, even if one laughed at the end of it” (11). Representing two polar views on order and chaos, their extremism leads them to similar outlooks and actions.

Syme, by accident, attends a meeting of the anarchists with Gregory and boldly asks to replace a recently deceased member of the Council of Seven Days. The anarchist died of a “hygienic” substitute for milk because he wanted to avoid cruelty to cows, even though he had also organized a bombing in Brighton. The ironic absurdity highlights the ridiculous characterization of anarchists that Chesterton achieves in the novel. The

members of the Council of Seven Days are named after the days of the week so as to keep their real identities secret from each other. Sunday, the leader of the council, is preposterously large and, along with the other members of the Council, inspires in Syme a metaphysical dread of “an unnatural symbolism,” lying “on the borderland of things . . . on the borderland of thought” (61). Syme is granted Thursday’s seat on the Council, to the mortification of Gregory. Shortly afterwards, Syme is recruited by a mysterious man in a dark room to become a member of a secret police squad working to bring down the Council of Seven Days. One “of the most celebrated detectives in Europe” has created a special corps of “policemen who are also philosophers” to combat a suspected “intellectual conspiracy” involving the “scientific and artistic worlds” and their “crusade against the Family and the State” (44). While “the ordinary detective discovers from a ledger or a diary that a crime has been committed,” the philosophical detective discovers “from a book of sonnets that a crime will be committed” (44-45). Syme is told that one of their detectives thwarted an assassination because he “thoroughly understood a triolet” (45). Syme, the “poet of order,” masquerades as Thursday, an anarchist leader, while secretly working as a double-agent for the police on a mission to detect “the most dangerous criminal”: “the lawless modern philosopher” (45).

Of course, Chesterton means all this to sound rather ridiculous. He satirizes the tropes of the Edwardian thriller and anarchist-terrorist novel to undermine the fears attached to anarchists and other cosmopolitan criminals. Focusing on the ineptness of the police, the anarchist threat is revealed to be an exaggerated product of their own wild imaginations. Chesterton portrays the “anarchist problem” from the other-side and

depicts a fanaticism on the part of the police and state institutions that leads them to detect anarchism everywhere, even in lines of poetry. In the context of the disproportionate reaction to cosmopolitan criminals in the form of the Aliens Bills, Chesterton highlights the state's culpability in giving credence to the fictitious threats of foreign criminals. Syme's admission into the "New Detective Corps for the frustration of the great conspiracy" is founded on the absurd fear that anarchist "armies are on our frontiers. Their bolt is ready to fall" (49, 46). Syme's mission requires him to "track and fight the enemy in all the drawing-rooms of London" at the same time he endeavors to expose and arrest the other members of the Council of Seven Days. In a rapid series of outlandish chases, duels, and unmaskings all of the members of the Council of Seven Days, except for Sunday, are revealed to be philosophical detectives working for the New Detective Corps. Tuesday, for example, chooses to disguise himself as a hairy Pole named Gogol. When he is unmasked as a police spy his "clear, commercial, and somewhat Cockney voice" startles everyone "coming out of that forest of foreign hair" (70). He pulls off his "shaggy head-covering" to reveal his characteristically English "thin red hair and a pale, pert face" (71). Unsurprisingly, the rest of the English policemen choose foreign stereotypes as convincing anarchist disguises. Saturday, otherwise known as Dr. Bull and the last to be revealed, sums up their collective astonishment: "There never was any Supreme Anarchist Council. . . . We were all a lot of silly policemen looking at each other" (150).

Chesterton emphasizes the relationship between looking for criminal threats and believing that they exist. Because the members of the Council of Seven Days believed the

other members were dangerous anarchists they foolishly deceived themselves into committing crimes so as to remain above suspicion. Their faith in the fictitious figures of their own making leads them to act in the very ways of the figures they are trying to repel. The tendency to suspect criminality where it does not exist reflects the elaborate delusion about the dangers of anarchists and other cosmopolitan criminals in which many Edwardians took part. The extreme reactions to anarchism, Chesterton suggests, can lead to a similar illogical and chaotic response. As I have suggested, conventional crime literature depicting cosmopolitan criminals of this era was crucial for convincing the public of the overstated threats of cosmopolitan criminals residing in England. Evelyn Waugh notes that such British authors as “Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, John Buchan, Francis Breeding, Edgar Wallace” consistently use “the gang, the spy-ring, the subversive organization, the secret society” to depict villains who are not concerned with material gain, but “the actual subversion of the social and moral order” (73). He recognizes that Chesterton also depicts the “group villain” in his novel, but “significantly, the whole thing turns out to be moonshine” (73, 74).

As the writer of the extremely popular Father Brown mystery stories, Chesterton knew how to write serious and conventional crime fiction. In “The Domesticity of Detectives,” he writes that “the great detective story deals with small things; while the small or silly detective story generally deals with great things. It deals with diabolical diplomats darting about between Vienna and Paris and Petrograd; with vast cosmopolitan conspiracies ramifying through all the cellars of Europe” (38-39). By his own criteria, he would have described *The Man Who Was Thursday* as a “silly” detective novel

concerning “vast cosmopolitan conspiracies.” As I have argued, authors like Chesterton, Conrad, and Stevenson satirized anarchists and subverted conventional tropes associated with cosmopolitan crimes in order to draw attention to their fictional constructions, thus alleviating the fear and criminal associations of foreigners.

When the six members of the Council of Seven Days turn their attention to capturing Sunday, the most dangerous anarchist in Europe, the narrative’s fictional absurdities increase. Dudley Barker notes, “There is a strand of increasing unreality in the narrative itself, yet woven with dialogue of the most natural and commonplace kind, in which the comparison with Kafka’s surrealist nightmares enters the mind. . . . where Kafka’s are somber and bitter, Chesterton’s is clothed with comedy and good humour” (178). Syme and the others begin their pursuit of Sunday through the London streets. Sunday’s means of escape become more and more fantastic: first he eludes them in a cab, then on a fire-engine, then on an elephant he commandeers from the local zoo, and finally he escapes in a hot air balloon to his magnificent house. When the six philosophical detectives arrive, they are given robes that correspond to the six days of creation described in Genesis, and Sunday emerges in a white robe identifying himself as the peaceful Sabbath, revealing himself to be the head of the New Detectives Corps. Sunday takes on allegorical significance: he “is like nature itself, or the universe; he is, indeed Pan – the whole world, all of life. He shows that while life may appear to be dark, nasty, and brutish from one angle, from another and more informed point of view, it appears to be good” (Clipper 130). The confusion of criminal appearances with the forces of law and order highlight the ordinary misunderstandings that occur when people put too much

faith in their own partial, twisted views. Sunday “teaches” his philosophical detectives to be wary of the nightmares of their own making. Read in conjunction with other satirical anarchist novels I discuss here, Chesterton seems to suggest that the problem of anarchism is a problem of optics. That is, the discernment of value or threat of anarchism, or crime, depends on how individuals view it – as evinced by Gregory and Syme’s debate on anarchic art that opens the novel. Informed by cultural narratives, personal experiences, and legal frameworks, our vision may be partial, or obscured, or prejudiced, or thwarted by disguise, making it easy to see good where there is evil, or crime where there is none. This disorienting ambiguity of appearances, for Chesterton, marks the anarchic nature of English modernity. As O Donghaile argues, “true anarchy lies in its uncertainty: as the complexities and contradictions of modern and metropolitan existence radically alter the terms upon which subjective consciousness is experienced, they also shift experiential focus away from the norm of a stable British identity and re-orient the subject in the direction of a disrupted, decentered and profoundly fractured identity” (107). Counter to most period novels that villainized foreign anarchists for the fracturing of English identity and values, Chesterton portrays the English culpability for disrupting society through their overzealous response to the imagined threats of anarchic cosmopolitan criminality.

Cosmopolitan Criminal Excess and Edwardian Law

I have argued that Edwardians approached cosmopolitanism with a generally negative outlook, deeply rooted in the cultural debates that began to associate

cosmopolitanism with imported criminality. Additionally, negative consequences of cosmopolitan's corruption of a longstanding traditional English way of life centered on pastoral ideals of insularity and security that sprang up as focus on a new city-type exhibited the degenerative effects of urban living. Among the most harmful city conditions was the confusion of morals, traditions, customs, and habits in an atmosphere of extreme cultural mixing, brought on by the supposed refusal of immigrants' unwillingness to assimilate into the English way of life. London's characterization as a "monstrous city," equal to a jungle colonial outpost in its surplus of social codes, communicated the problems of cosmopolitan excess. The erosions of a distinctive English perspective and of a narrow set of appropriate English identities in the metropolis portended the disintegration of the superiority of English society in the twentieth century. London, specifically, was considered dangerous for its cosmopolitan neighborhoods, such as Soho, which harbored the worst of the foreign criminal classes, contributing directly to the deterioration of English society.

Havelock Ellis made the scientific case for a rise in criminal tendencies among migrants in *The Criminal* (1890):

The criminality of the Irish in England is far greater than that of the Irish at home, and it is a significant fact that while the Americans are more criminal than the English, the criminality of the English-born in the United States is more than double that of the native American whites. Like insanity, criminality flourishes among migrants, and our civilisation is bringing us all more or less into the position of migrants. (297)

Ellis's last remark here indicates that people thought that the free flow of migrants into the country was undermining social norms that maintained social cohesion and order. If migrants were preternaturally criminal, above and beyond what was common among native Englishers, then it stood to reason that an increase in migrant populations would cause a drastic increase in criminal offences. Many believed in such "scientific proof," showing that migrants contributed to the general "criminalization" of English society, estranging English society from itself.¹⁷⁶

In *The Task of Social Hygiene* (1912), Ellis argues that diversity dilutes communal understanding of objective morality: "As a community increases in size and cultivation, growing more heterogeneous . . . its moral ideas become both more subjective and more various" (259-60). This leads criminal law to take up the task of determining a common morality, which in principle, according to Ellis, corrupts the law and makes it the plaything "of a small upper-class social circle," ultimately hampering its universal appeals to justice (262).¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, because each nation inculcates a particular cultural attitude to anti-social acts and crimes, the migrant population in England further confused agreement on what should and should not be designated a

¹⁷⁶ Bernard Gainer notes that while at first immigrants were acclaimed for cleaning up some East End neighborhoods upon their arrival, it did not take long for them to gain criminal reputations as a general population. By 1902 the number of criminal offenses committed by aliens matched those of the rest of the population (Gainer 53).

¹⁷⁷ Ellis advocates for a foundational definition of "crime" determined by the public's "ruling opinion" of what constitutes the collective social opinion of what should or should not be criminal, divested from any concerns of partisan moralizing (259). He argues that, "The sanctions of the criminal law to be firm and unshakeable must be capable of literal interpretation and of unfailing execution, and in that interpretation and execution be accepted as just by the whole community" (261-62). For Ellis, a crime should be that which is authorized by the majority of the population as worthy of being called criminal, and treated as such in the criminal system. In this way, Ellis argues for a philosophy of criminal law that carries on the English legal tradition of marrying common law to natural law, or at least a nationally restricted natural law.

crime: “In such a shifting sphere we cannot legislate with the certainty of carrying the whole community with us, nor can we properly introduce the word ‘crime,’ which ought to indicate only an action so gravely anti-social [in] nature that there can be no possibility of doubt about it” (264). Xenophobia, racism, and anti-Semitism were important reasons for the passing of the Aliens Bill and other restrictionist immigration bills in the period, as many historians have shown. But another justification for such legislation that often gets overlooked in critical histories was the need to limit the muddling of the law that comes as a result of cosmopolitan mixing. The literature of the era reveals representations of the immigrant that are directly responsible for contributing to the heterogeneity of cosmopolitan England and introducing non-English attitudes on crime. Rather than just posing a criminal threat to property, then, immigrants posed a greater threat more central to the social foundations of English criminal law, and thus became criminalized.

Ideas of cosmopolitan mixing adhered to criminality because of the ensuing social mix-up which undermined a unitary “English” approach to crime. Once again, the connotations of criminal abnormality, irrationality, and absurdity are reflected in the cosmopolitan overproduction of social codes, beliefs, and practices. These together hamper the law’s aspirations toward restricting social behavior according to a coherent national tradition and perspective. Cosmopolitan excess endangers the law’s social legitimacy by introducing additional perspectives and approaches that do not match up with national legal statutes. Conceiving cosmopolitan criminality for the Edwardians stemmed from a particular English approach to the philosophy of law that sought to

ensure a unified, communal foundation for what was and wasn't to be considered criminal.

Ferry de Jong argues that the law produces its own “symbolic order” so that a “specifically juridical world emerges,” which “engenders an objectification of cultural life” subsuming the “plurality of individual interests under the governance of a shared *normative order*” (8-9, my emphasis). By virtue of its very existence, the law turns every social fact into potential juridical scenarios, at the same time it delimits and reduces reality by transforming “the lingually constituted public space into a symbolically dimensioned legal space” (9). The law’s founding of the social and linguistic landscape as “legal space”—imitated in crime fiction’s plotting of the conversion of any place into a “scene of the crime” and mere trifles into clues¹⁷⁸—functions to determine who and what is rightly desired and determined to be “normal,” where normalcy is conflated with legality. At work here is the law’s ability to overwrite any number of symbolic cultural formations and practices (identity, art, work) and turn them into predominantly legal concerns centered on questions of “normalcy” at any moment. Moreover, the law attempts to remain invisible in its juridical function, operating in the background, so that normalcy—as legality—takes on the appearance of objective naturalness. As normalcy became naturalized around the symbolic order of the law, the criminal figure remained a clear public display of the fetishization of abnormality, as illegality.

¹⁷⁸ In “The Boscombe Valley Mystery” Sherlock Holmes famously explains that his deductive method for solving cases was “founded upon the observation of trifles” (Doyle 65).

For the Edwardians debates about abnormality and illegality continued to center on categories of alien-otherness in contrast to their own conceptions of proper Englishness. Race debates that first began in the Victorian era continued into the Edwardian period, though there still remained no settled definition or lineage for what constituted the ethnic English race. Authors variously argued for Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Teuton, Anglo-Celt, Aryan, and other ethno-racial origins for defining what it really meant to be English.¹⁷⁹ Because of nineteenth-century colonial expansion, however, for most, English ethnicity meant something heterogeneous (as the hyphenated identities above indicate) and delocated across the globe, held together by equally contested notions about tradition, values, and culture. The concentration of nationalism and nationalist movements begun in the previous century put voice to the belief that “individuals possessed national subjectivities, and that nationality was the expression of conscious and unconscious individual desires” (Sluga 3). National identities (often laden with rhetoric of racial hierarchies) were understood to determine the characteristics of people. What remained certain about what did not constitute Englishness, then, were the inherent foreign qualities of the criminal *and* citizens of other nations. It did not take a large leap in logic to associate the “abnormality” of the criminal with the strangeness of the foreigner, concocting in the figure of the cosmopolitan criminal their shared characteristics.

¹⁷⁹ See Lenn Platt’s edited collection *Modernism and Race* for various readings of the ways racial identity is “central to the formation of modernism and the idea of modern literature” (2).

I have shown that the literature of the day was crucial for broadcasting the arrival and criminal acts of the foreigner in England, even if it mostly provided an exaggerated picture of the problem. Kieran Dolan calls for literary critics to pay attention to the “complex strands which connect the novel and the law during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, strands including an evidentiary model of narration, a plot concerned with the commission and rectification of crime and civil wrong, and the adoption of a critical tone with respect to official agencies of law” (2). Using Conrad and Chesterton as my primary examples, I have demonstrated their method for critiquing the law through the exposure of the law’s supporting fictions. Bringing a cosmopolitan perspective to bear on the presumed singularity and unification of legal standards with cultural viewpoints, these authors interrupt two interdependent falsifying narratives, which endorse the criminal threat of foreigners in England, and the ability to resist modernity’s cosmopolitanization and return to “merrie England” by excluding the foreigner. Conrad and Chesterton foreground the legal and cultural absurdities surrounding the perceived “immigrant problem” in the hope that the public will recognize the disorder of their own nation, rather than focus on the perceived faults of anarchists and cosmopolitan criminals.

After the horrors of World War I, British authors living at a time of European political and economic unrest in the interwar years looked back at the Edwardian notions of anarchic futility and disorientation. Novelists like Graham Greene, Somerset Maugham, and Eric Ambler resurrected Edwardian crime thrillers to make their own political statements about the corruption of English society through narratives about criminal outsiders and cosmopolitan crimes. Focusing on Greene’s late-modernist

thrillers in my next chapter, I read his subversion of Edwardian crime literature conventions and characters as a means for offering alternative measures of justice and focusing attention on a new type of elite cosmopolitan criminal threatening English stability. As a reader of Chesterton, and a great admirer of Conrad, Greene carries on the political uses of crime literature to explore the corruption and depravity he saw in English society.

CHAPTER IV

POETIC JUSTICE IN GRAHAM GREENE'S LATE-MODERNIST THRILLERS

The Late-Modernist Political Turn in British Fiction

Typically, we think of high-modernist authors prevailing in the decades between the two world wars in Britain – the familiar names, among others, are Lawrence, Joyce, Eliot, Yeats, Ford, Lewis, and Woolf. The designation “high” modernism signified a height not only in literary modernism’s influence and stature but also its critical reception (driven by contemporary critics like F. R. and Q. D. Leavis and I. A. Richards) as literary “art,” the “high-brow” wing of literature.¹⁸⁰ Authors such as Graham Greene, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Aldous Huxley, Elizabeth Bowen, Christopher Isherwood, Eric Ambler, Cecil-Day Lewis,¹⁸¹ and George Orwell writing in the 1920s and 1930s employed popular genres¹⁸² and styles, participating in what Tyrus Miller identifies as

¹⁸⁰ William H. Pritchard also identifies a “literature of criticism” that emerges in the 1920s practiced by authors – such as, Eliot, Lewis, Woolf, and Lawrence – where “the artist as critic” engaged in polemics that “take on a special character” and “become ‘literature’ with appropriate plot and characters, when their authors begin to argue with each other or (as often) attack the other without receiving any response” (135). These debates, carried out in the pages of *Scrutiny*, *Criterion*, and in individual monographs, helped these authors argue for competing programs of the serious business of art, distinguishing between a “high” and “low” form of literary art themselves.

¹⁸¹ Day-Lewis wrote a series of popular detective stories under the pseudonym of Nicholas Blake featuring the Oxford-educated private detective Nigel Strangeways.

¹⁸² These authors entered a literary environment where debates about the low-brow, high-brow, and the emergent middle-brow were already ongoing. See *The Masculine Middlebrow, 1880-1950* for a survey of how middlebrow literature emerged alongside altering expectations of masculinity and new expectations of working-class male readership, which were an important audience for these writers.

late modernism's "self-conscious manifestation of the aging and decline of modernism, in both its institutional and ideological dimensions" (7).¹⁸³

While it is reductive to assert that high modernists turned away from political matters in their works, it nevertheless was the opinion of the new generation of post-war writers that they were turning away from what Spender identifies in *The Thirties and After* (1978) as a self-conscious aestheticism: "the essence of the modern movement was that it created art which was centered on itself and not on anything outside it" (25).¹⁸⁴ Spender recounts that the "thirties was the decade in which young writers became involved in politics," and their politics "were almost exclusively those of the left" (13).¹⁸⁵ The social and political conditions of the interwar period – extensive unemployment and poverty, labor strikes, bread lines, and hunger marches at home, along with political revolutions, the rise of fascism, and a sense of impending war across Europe – compelled the new crop of British writers in the thirties to feel "themselves divided by the thinnest

¹⁸³ "Late modernism," for Miller, "refers to a significant set of family resemblances between writers during a certain period of time" initiated in the "later 1920s and 1930s" (22, 23). Broadly, these authors react in some way to the aesthetics of "high modernism" against a background of "shifting hierarchies within the arts, intensive development of the mass media, and traumatic events of social and political history," ultimately perceiving the cultural situation "as a general state of affairs, a kind of all-pervasive, collective, and incurable shell-shock, from which all suffer" (24). Following Miller, I will refer to late-modernism, here, as a designator for both a period of time, as well as a political literary response to the perceived insularity of high modernism.

¹⁸⁴ As Spender puts it in his autobiography *World Within World* (1951) "Joyce, Proust, Eliot, and Virginia Woolf had turned a hero or heroine into a passive spectator of a civilization falling into ruins" (87-88). The heroic action of late-modernist literature revolved around contemporary political issues, reinstituting characters who restore a proper balance to the world.

¹⁸⁵ Christopher Gillie argues that the crises in English culture in the thirties led to a natural political response in the literature of the era: "The very fact that the thirties were a decade of crisis and disillusionment in public conduct and private expectations stirred up critical life; not only did literary criticism begin to take new directions, but imaginative writing became critical and didactic in reaction against the pessimistic inertia which writers felt in their society" (122). The fears of social rot from within and threats from without stemmed from the belief that "society might break down internally by its own inadequacies, or be destroyed from without by unprecedented barbarism" (123).

of walls from destructive forces which seemed absolute, from terrible suffering and pure evil” (24). “In writing about politics,” Spender reflects, “we were using the instruments of language provided for us by our predecessors to express what they lacked in their work, an overt subject matter. We were putting the subject back into poetry. We were . . . realizing our felt ideas about the time in which we were living” (26). Samuel Hynes notes that a recurrent subject of this literature was the uneasy relationship with external threats: “One clear feature of the ‘thirties is that as the decade passed, Englishmen became increasingly aware of the presence and importance of the world-out-there: as the Abroad became a threat, it became a reality” (228).

In “The Leaning Tower” Virginia Woolf also recognizes a change in the writers forging new ground in the thirties. She attributes “the influence of change, under the threat of war” as the impetus for abandoning high modernist modes of writing (170). Looking back on the previous decade and its writers in 1940, Woolf believed “in 1930 it was impossible – if you were young, sensitive, imaginative – not to be interested in politics; not to find public causes of much more pressing interest than philosophy,” the classics, and other public school ideals, including art and literature as a separate realm from the world (172). And because “In 1930 young men at college were forced to be aware of what was happening in Russia; in Germany; in Italy; in Spain. They could not go on discussing aesthetic emotions and personal relations. They could not confine their reading to the poets; they had to read the politicians” (172). Based on a talk Woolf gave to the Workers’ Educational Association in 1940, this essay makes the salient point that the successful male writers in Britain in the 1930s were mostly political in their writing

because of their privileged public school educations and middle-class backgrounds, which encouraged them to care about British and world politics.

Woolf implies that this led to a conflicted generation of writers, writing at times against their own class and national interests. Spender offers this rejoinder:

The writers of the thirties are often sneered at because they were middle-class youths with public school and posh university backgrounds who sought to adopt a proletarian point of view. . . . The thirties writers represented a middle-class *crise de conscience*. . . . some of these writers were travelled and had an awareness of what was going on in Europe, not just of the complacency of middle-class England and the apathy of most workers. (*Thirties* 24-25)

Spender makes it clear that politically motivated writers were conflicted by a social system they benefited from, but were ultimately at odds with. They reflected on their own positions of privilege and used the benefits of their status to broaden their political commitments across a wider cosmopolitan scale. Thus, politically minded late-modernists shunned disengaged aestheticism in order to upset convention, to take up the formal and stylistic innovations of the modernists, and reengage art with politics.

Looking at the corpus of popular literature during this time reveals that crime literature dominated literary markets.¹⁸⁶ The celebrated works of the “Golden Age” of British detective novels and their hard-boiled American cousins have been catalogued and discussed in the literary criticism of this era. What has received far less critical attention are the popular crime stories that do not fall under the detective literature genre, namely, the crime thriller. This chapter posits the significance of the crime thriller genre

¹⁸⁶ Colin Watson notes that “One of the most consistently busy of Britain’s home industries . . . has been the manufacture of crime fiction” (13).

for British authors' commitments to politics in the late-modernist period. Rather than follow common readings of the thriller as typically conservative, escapist, or formulaic, I discuss the varied political aims of the genre, focusing on Graham Greene's thrillers published during the 1930s and early 1940s. Deriving from Edwardian adventure stories and "shockers," Greene's thrillers center on cosmopolitan criminal characters and their complicated relationships with public sympathy, the law, and international politics.

I argue that Greene's replacement of middle-class, patriotic English protagonists (familiar in classic Edwardian thrillers) with seedy characters of the underworld performs a political transformation of readers' understanding of criminality. Reorienting readers' sympathies with criminal characters involves altering the nature of criminal narratives, especially by subverting the persistent portrayal of criminals as lower class and foreign. Rather than seeing criminals as foreign and lower-class individuals preying on society, Greene's thrillers portray them as products of society's inherent corruption, as well as potential heroes for justice. As a Leftist thinker and writer, Greene shares his late-modernist contemporaries' efforts to depict the injustices and plights of the less fortunate, identifying them as outcasts and victims of English society's organized partiality toward the rich and powerful. Greene, therefore, consistently casts unscrupulous international businessmen and other members of the social elite as cosmopolitan-criminal foils for his petty criminals to struggle against. He positions the less powerful criminal as a sympathetic political agent fighting against criminals who are part of the economic and social establishment. Thus, Greene's class-divided criminals marshal a *de facto* class

conflict made explicit by the injustices and imbalances inherent in the struggle for power and money of small-time felons opposing international criminal impresarios.

Greene's fiction speculates about the nature of justice in a corrupted English society skewed to protect the economic and social elite. I discuss his particular interests in matters of alternative measures of justice in his late-modernist crime thrillers. I argue that he introduces an alternative framework of poetic justice to address the failures of the state to ensure fair and equal measures of justice through legal means. Poetic justice discounts strictly legal decisions based on lawful or unlawful actions and instead prompts judgment based on fairness and matters of social justice. Greene overrides readers' natural inclinations of siding against the criminal in thrillers and reorients their sympathy with his criminal anti-heroes who fight against personal and social injustices themselves. The crime thriller's engagement with matters of injustice, crime, punishment, and law gave late-modernist authors a popular platform to reintroduce these subjects as a part of their politically motivated literary aims.

Origins of the British Thriller

The British crime thriller emerged from the imperial romance and adventure stories of the late-1800s and the Edwardian period.¹⁸⁷ Generally, the imperial romances were regarded as boys' stories, marketed as juvenile literature and published in boy's weeklies. Authors such as Mayne Reid, G. A. Henty, R. M. Ballantyne, Charles Kingsley,

¹⁸⁷ Characteristic popular romances of the era include: Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and *She* (1887), John Buchan's *Prester John* (1910), and Conan Doyle's Professor Challenger stories including *The Lost World* (1912) and *The Poison Belt* (1913).

H. Rider Haggard, and Robert Louis Stevenson all published popular tales of adventure in exotic settings, advanced myths of English imperialism that appealed to boys, and depicted an ethic of English heroic-daring abroad.¹⁸⁸ Around the same time writers like William Le Queux, E. Phillips Oppenheim and Edgar Wallace used the generic tropes of popular romance to write fiction aimed at an adult audience. According to Michael Denning the word “thriller” as a designation for this kind of fiction first “came into use in the 1880s and 1890s together with ‘shocker’ as a designation for proliferating cheap sensational fiction” (18). In his dedication to *The Thirty Nine-Steps* (1915) John Buchan offers a simple definition of the “shocker” as being a “romance where the incidents defy the probabilities, and march just inside the borders of the possible” (5).¹⁸⁹ Shady cosmopolitan criminals populated these tales, constructing fantastic and insidious plots for British heroes to foil. The foreign and lawless peculiarities of cosmopolitan criminals added to the shock and thrills of the narrative’s glimpses into the melodramatic shadow worlds of international criminal intrigue.

As David Trotter notes, the extremely popular thriller “genre established itself as a market leader in Britain at the turn of the century, gradually displacing the imperial adventure story, as the focus of anxiety shifted from frontier wars to Great Power rivalry. . . . The years between 1900 and 1914 saw the establishment, not at all coincidentally, of

¹⁸⁸ For example, the dedication of Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885) reveals that he partly had a juvenile audience in mind, as the book is dedicated “to all the big and little boys who read it” (3). The novel was especially popular with adolescents and the less-educated members of the working-class.

¹⁸⁹ Written during the outbreak of World War I, “in the days when the wildest fictions are so much less improbable than the facts,” Buchan’s novel shows that the outlandish plot devices of thrillers no longer seemed so improbable (5). The war had changed the stakes of the thriller genre, but did not tamper with its popularity. In fact, during and after the war, the thriller encouraged a “spy fever” where citizens were even more suspicious of foreigners living in England.

the British spy novel and the British secret service” (167-68).¹⁹⁰ Early popular spy novels such as E. Philips Oppenheim’s *The Mysterious Mr. Sabin* (1898), Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* (1901), Erskine Childers’s *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), and William LeQueux’s *The Invasion of 1910* (1906) established the tropes of “the Great Game” for the thriller genre.¹⁹¹ Generally, the Edwardian thriller, also known as the “classic” or “romantic” thriller, “involves the reasonably unproblematic staging” of the rules of the “games” of spycraft: “combining an institutional loyalty and reverence for hierarchical structures with a sense that social and political conflict was a game, to be played in a spirit of fairness, amateurism, and manliness” (Denning 33). In these novels, amateur, gentleman-heroes engage in the “great game,” acting with a strong moral code that closely aligns with upper class ideals of honor, duty, and patriotic allegiance to monarchy and country. The enemy was either tied to an international political or criminal plot to invade or profit off Great Britain at a grand scale. If not tied to a foreign government directly, the enemies were foreign criminals masterminding sophisticated crimes aided by a vast criminal network. In either case, the enemy usually adhered to archetypal cosmopolitan criminal characterizations of the era. Thus, the classic spy thrillers and crime thrillers depicted cosmopolitan criminals as their primary villains.

¹⁹⁰ In 1907 Lieutenant-Colonel James Edmonds was appointed head of M05 – the secret services section of military operations – marking the beginning of the professional and institutional espionage agencies in Britain. By 1910 the secret services bureau housed a Foreign Section (MI6) and a Home Section (MI5).

¹⁹¹ Thrillers also brought about real-world policy changes by depicting imaginary scenarios of security weaknesses that resonated in the public and political arenas. Anthony Masters observes, for example, that *The Riddle of the Sands* prompted the hasty creation of the Committee of National Defence which established a North Sea fleet in response to the fears of unprotected waters and coast raised by the novel (10).

These narratives, Nicholas Daly argues, rather than depicting Britain's security, revealed Britain's vulnerability "to penetration by mysterious and cunning figures who can pass themselves off as natives, and thus steal national secrets" (233). For Denning, the thriller "appears in the wake of the heroic novels of imperial adventure and narrates the threat to Empire. . . . providing explanations for its decline and betrayal" (14). In the buildup to the First World War, spy thrillers presented to a mass readership the threats of criminal outsiders to Britain. The cosmopolitan criminal's threats, as already familiar in the form of slummers and anarchist-terrorists, extended to the provocative political and economic arenas of espionage and international crime.

In "Boys Weeklies" (1939) George Orwell describes his early reading habits and admits to his love of Edwardian boys' weeklies that contained these popular adventure and crime stories. Looking at the output of this literature in the thirties, he bemoans the conservative and out-of-date outlook that such stories teach young and not-so young, readers. For Orwell, weeklies like the *Gem* and *Magnet* – weeklies first published in the Edwardian era – remained static for nearly forty years; even in 1939 the public school world of their stories replicates a lost English age in speech, manner, and conservative perspective. The weeklies that were started post-War, such as *Skipper*, *Modern Boy*, *Wizard*, and *Hotspur* and the American-imported *Action Stories* and *Fight Stories*, while updated to reflect changes in literary tastes centering around the "cult of violence," still carried on the ethos of the school stories but transferred the events of the plot to "the ends of the earth," and raised the stakes of the adventure, as he-man heroes engaged aliens,

spies, and master criminals with an “all-in, jump-on-his-testicles style of fighting” (104, 101).

Orwell claims that, perhaps more than other stories, these crime narratives reflect “what the mass of the English people really feels and thinks” (76). They reflect and shape the public’s perceptions of crime and their responses to criminals. His survey of the typical foreign, cosmopolitan criminals in these stories reveals that they are still drawn from ideas “dating from thirty or forty years ago”: “If a Chinese character appears, he is still the sinister pigtailed opium-smuggler. . . . If a Spaniard appears, he is still a dago or greaser who rolls cigarettes and stabs people in the back” (105). The problem with this, for Orwell, is that these crime stories are influencing generations of boys and girls that grow up “carrying through life an imaginative background” that is “hopelessly out-of-date” even “in the Central Office of the Conservative Party” (110). They are also perniciously defensive of the interests of the ruling class: “in England, popular literature is a field that leftwing thought has never begun to enter” and “sodden with the worst illusions of 1910” (114).

The conservative caricatures of cosmopolitan criminals Orwell identifies can also be seen in interwar crime novels, such as in Sapper’s *Bulldog Drummond* novels, Sax Rohmer’s *Fu-Manchu* novels, and Edgar Wallace’s crime novels and short stories.¹⁹² Sapper’s xenophobic and anti-Semitic pugilist hero, for example, consistently fights foreign and Jewish criminals with a bellicose disdain for anything unEnglish or

¹⁹² Peter Wolfe reminds us that “one of every five books sold in England in the 1920s, except for Bibles and classroom texts, was an Edgar Wallace title” (21).

compromising the values of his English gentleman friends, known as “the Breed.”¹⁹³ Colin Watson characterizes Bulldog Drummond’s “flamboyantly aggressive patriotism” as a marker of his public school background and upper class status (64). His “preference for the upper-cut as an effective and proper argument” appealed to the public’s desire for a no-nonsense approach toward criminals and outsiders (69). Rohmer’s British agent, Nayland Smith, combats the mad-doctor criminal Fu-Manchu all over the globe. Fu-Manchu recalls the Edwardian fears of the “Yellow Peril” and the racial cosmopolitan criminals who fought to usurp the West’s perceived superiority from the slums of East End London. Watson argues that the Fu-Manchu novels communicate “racial vituperation” and could not have been repeated bestsellers unless there existed “in the minds of many thousands of people an innate fear or dislike of foreigners” (117). Conservative crime thrillers like these equated criminality with foreignness. Thus, interwar crime novels contributed to conventional representations of cosmopolitan criminality, where foreign criminals are depicted as more daring, more cunning, more malicious, and therefore, more dangerous than English criminals. They present extreme pictures of sinister foreign criminals opposing decent English citizens and institutions, advancing a conservative picture of native English identity opposed to criminal and immigrant identities in England.

Several conditions of post-war England made the cosmopolitan criminal a ubiquitous and ready-made character for registering the internal fault lines of English

¹⁹³ Sapper was the penname for Herman Cyril McNeile. Bulldog Drummond’s popularity was enhanced by a series of film adaptations in the 1920s and 1930s with the title character played by Ronald Colman.

identity. The emphasis on national recovery – economic, social, psychological, and material – after the war focused people’s attentions on the nation.¹⁹⁴ Foreigners living in England, when not blamed for the war, were often regarded as interlopers, siphoning precious resources and jobs. The war had also conditioned citizens to be suspicious of foreigners as potential spies or lingering fifth columnists, so that when the war was over it was hard to abandon the feeling that foreigners were enemies lying in wait. Interwar thrillers, like their Edwardian counterparts, raised the specter of foreign agents and criminals threatening England and encouraged a general retrenchment of Englishness as a result. Susan Kent Kingsley argues that the post-war “peaceable flight to domesticity, to ‘quietude’ and ‘safety first’” resulted in the abandonment of a broad ‘British’ identity for a smaller ‘English’ identity on the part of many citizens . . . [and] involved pulling back from European, world, and imperial affairs and focusing on a much narrower field of view” (8). This created “a new national character” upheld by a national narrative that sought to “close down a number of alternatives to or contestations of the social and political regime that went to war” (8). Many citizens expressed a desire to cordon off borders and expel foreigners; Tory politicians were eager to oblige.

A political process of narrowing down, or thinning out, acceptable English identities was carried out after the war. An extension of the Aliens Bill (first passed in 1914 as the Aliens Restriction Act and revised in 1919 after the war) allowed the

¹⁹⁴ Jed Esty identifies an “imperial contraction” in post-war literature that manifests as an “anthropological turn” in “cultural doctrine and literary style” (2). This literature sought to promote England’s “redemptive agency of culture . . . restricted by national or ethnolinguistic borders” (3). Esty describes a general Anglocentric turn that recuperated nativist narratives that registered desires for more traditional national insularity against cosmopolitan and metropolitan models of broad inclusion, mixing, and hybridity. The cosmopolitan aesthetic and perspective became, once again, seen as anti-English, dangerous, and unwanted.

government to deport any alien – not just “enemy” or “criminal” aliens – it deemed harmful to the nation.¹⁹⁵ William Joynson-Hicks was appointed to the Home Office to forcefully uphold the Alien’s Restriction Act. He based his deportation decisions on whether or not an alien had, as he put it, “become an Englishman at heart and has completely identified himself with English interests” (qtd. in Kent 62). If individuals did not act and look as if they aligned with a vague definition of “English interests,” they were susceptible to forced transportation. The government used this subjective law to restrict immigration into the country, as well as establish measures that made it easier to remove undesirable foreigners, who were objectionable simply because of their foreignness or nonconformity. Thus, outsiders in England during this time were held up to greater scrutiny by the government as well as the public. Cosmopolitan criminality in popular novels and films exacerbated public and governmental suspicions of foreigners by unabashedly painting them as criminal. Individuals, too, began to think of themselves as potential participants in international affairs; they remained vigilant for possible infractions and alien perpetrators. Pre-war suspicions of foreigners, stimulated in part by Edwardian crime thrillers, were carried on in post-war thrillers with similar effects.

Orwell’s complaint about what he saw as the old-fashioned, Edwardian conservatism in most crime literature of the inter-war era concerned more than poor

¹⁹⁵ The House of Commons rejected the language of the initial 1919 Bill to make it stronger, working to overturn the careful distinction previous Alien’s Bills made between “alien friends” and “alien enemies” in the words of Home Secretary McKenna (qtd. in Kent 45). The Aliens Order of 1925 extended the government’s powers to deport British subjects from Britain, largely in response to race riots that broke out in London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Cardiff, Hull, and other British cities in 1919. Jews and “blacks” (meaning Indians, Asians, Arabs, Africans, and West Indians) were especially under threat of deportation. As in other European nations during this era, England saw racial tensions rise as segments of society sought to persecute or exclude those “others” – racial, religious, economic, and political – not identifiably a part of a tolerable contracted national citizenry.

taste and rehashed clichés. His worries about the unrealistic imaginative landscapes these stories impart to their readers led him to fear for the English public's unreflective consumption of these stories and their support of a restrictive, anti-cosmopolitan established social order. He recognizes the crime thriller genre's common intolerances toward foreigners and social outsiders.¹⁹⁶ Thus, Orwell calls for a crime literature of the left to reflect more contemporary concerns with a depressed, post-war climate in England. However, his claim that "leftwing thought" has never entered the ranks of popular crime literature is not quite true. Though the conservative crime thrillers of Sapper, Buchan, Rohmer, and Dornford Yates dominated the book loans of circulating libraries at this time, Britain did see the development of a more critical, and left-leaning school of late-modernist crime thrillers.¹⁹⁷

After the disillusionments of World War I, the "realistic" thriller emerged, characterized by "a crisis in the ideology of good sports," where spies and criminals "no longer played by the rules" because "the rules are in doubt" (Denning 33). The left-leaning thrillers of the interwar years written by such authors as Graham Greene, Eric Ambler, W. Somerset Maugham, Compton McKenzie, Helen MacInnes, and Peter Cheyney, all marked a shift away from strong English establishment heroes manfully fighting for king and country out of a sense of patriotism and duty. Rather, these authors

¹⁹⁶ Steven M. Neuse argues that the "traditional thriller is profoundly silent on the real or potential evil or threat to fundamental human qualities and values, or those hierarchical, specialized, rule bound apparatuses on *our side*" (298). The enemy's fixed externality in the traditional thriller halts any inward critical examination of the corruptions within English society. Greene solves this, largely, by making his heroes criminals and his cosmopolitan criminals foreign *and* English.

¹⁹⁷ Denning reminds us that thrillers were most commonly read as hardback loans from circulating libraries, serialized in the popular press, and in short stories published in monthlies and weeklies devoted to the genre (19-21).

transformed the thriller “from a heroic adventure into a more complex and ironic tale of corruption, betrayal, and conspiracy” where the protagonist “rarely brought a mission to a triumphant conclusion, saving the homeland from enemy threats” (Cawelti and Rosenberg 46). Instead of depicting heroes preserving an English society worthy of being saved, these novels question and critique the corruptions of contemporary England through their heroes’ conflicted ambivalence toward the merits of English culture.

I contend that the shift between the “classic” English thriller and the “realistic” or late-modernist thriller is largely determined by changes in criminal characters.

Abandoning stock cosmopolitan criminal figures of classic and conservative interwar thrillers, late-modernist thrillers construct narratives around modernized conceptions of cosmopolitan criminality that reflect more Popular Front political concerns with class, equality, and justice. More than most, Greene’s thrillers, construct a new conception of cosmopolitan criminality, drawing attention to the political implications of modern crimes, not only perpetrated against the state, but also against the social welfare of its people.

Graham Greene’s Thrillers and Cosmopolitan Crimes of Injustice

After his first three novels failed commercially and critically, Greene began writing popular thrillers, or what he called, for many years, his “entertainments.” Greene’s first use of the “entertainment” label was used for *A Gun For Sale* (1936) and then affixed as subheading to *The Confidential Agent* (1939), *The Ministry of Fear* (1943), *The Third Man* (1950), *Loser Takes All* (1956), and *Our Man in Havana* (1958).

However, Greene was inconsistent in labeling his “entertainments.” *Stamboul Train*, for instance, was only given the label in 1936, but not in its first edition in 1932. *Brighton Rock* (1938) was labeled an entertainment in the first American edition, but not in the British first edition published a month later. The “entertainment” label in America was excised for all subsequent editions, thereafter. He publicly repudiated his use of the term in *Travels with My Aunt* (1970), listing all of his longer works, simply as “novels,” dropping the “entertainments” label altogether. The label, then, should not determine a reader’s approach to his texts, especially in clouding the estimation of his subject matter. We should not fall into the trap of thinking that his entertainments are less “serious” and therefore lesser works as some of Greene’s early critics asserted.

In an interview with Anthony Burgess, Greene comments on the superficiality of distinguishing between “high” and “low,” serious and entertaining, literature, saying: “I worry about this division of literature into the great because hard to read, the not so great – or certainly ignoble by scholars – because of the desire to divert, be readable, keep it plain” (qtd. in Diemart 8). For Greene, part of the appeal of popular genres, and in particular the thriller, was its ability to plainly relate an entertaining story at the same time it raised political concerns. As Orwell recognized, “The average man is not directly interested in politics, and when he reads, he wants the current struggles of the world to be translated into a simple story about individuals” (“Raffles” 220). The crime thriller translated simple political allegories centered on figures of justice and injustice into the form of a ripping yarn. The thriller, therefore, communicated its political messages to a wide audience in an appealing and comprehensible form.

Greene turned to the crime thriller as “an obvious and logical imaginative medium,” according to Morton Dauwen Zabel, “since the social and political conditions of the age had likewise reverted to primitive forms of violence, brutality, and anarchy” so that “he found his purpose matched in the events of the historic moment” (286). Zabel argues Greene’s “novels between 1930 and 1945 record the crisis and confusion of those years with an effect and atmosphere and moral desperation perfectly appropriate to the time” (286).¹⁹⁸ As Greene put it himself in *Journey Without Maps* (1936):

To-day our world seems particularly susceptible to brutality. There is a touch of nostalgia in the pleasure we take in gangster novels, in characters who have so agreeably simplified their emotions that they have begun living again at a level below the cerebral. We, like Wordsworth, are living after a war and a revolution, and these half-castes fighting with bombs between the cliffs or sky-scrapers seem more likely than we to be aware of Proteus rising from the sea. It is not, of course, that one wishes to stay for ever at that level, but when one sees to what unhappiness, to what peril of extinction centuries of cerebration have brought us, one sometimes has a curiosity to discover if one can from what we have come, to recall at which point we went astray. (11)

Greene recognizes that crime literature’s seedy appeal lies in its furtive potential for critical inspection of the unexamined causes for social ills. Moreover, he attributes a special protean quality in criminal characters that best reflected the vicious deviations he thought society was experiencing.

¹⁹⁸ Greene’s brief involvement with German spies in the 1920s, his work with the Ministry of Information and MI6 in the 1930s, and his experience as a “one-man office of the Secret Service” in Sierra Leone in the early 1940s also contributed to his repeated interest in espionage and crime in his novels of this period (*A Sort of Life* 26). See Anthony Masters’s *Literary Agents* for a brief historical accounting of Greene’s background in official espionage and its influence on his fiction. For a wider survey of the interconnected English literary scene and the British Secret Service see James Smith’s study *British Writers and MI5 Surveillance*.

In his autobiography *Ways of Escape*, he refers to the moniker Greeneland some critics adopted to describe his particular portrayals of the “strange violent ‘seedy’ region of the mind,” but remarks that these critics must “go round the world blinkered” in not recognizing the seedy characters and deeds he portrays as representative of the world: “I assure you that the dead child lay in the ditch in just that attitude. . . . They won’t believe the world they haven’t noticed is like that” (80). Greene views the “seedy” as the real, as the unnoticed and disregarded elements of society people don’t want to pay attention to. He draws attention to the seedy and criminal elements of society by writing it into his fiction. “It’s not that I enjoy puddling in the mess,” he would say, “but if there’s a mess, I feel it’s our duty to look at it” (Burstall 672). He views the disorder of England and Europe leading up to World War II through seedy criminal characters that best captured the current criminalization of these societies. He chooses the crime thriller in which to do so because it served as “the most effective form of mimetic-fiction” for the times (Silverstein 27). In the late-modernist era, criminal subjects suited readers’ tastes, but more importantly for socially conscientious authors like Greene, they also addressed overlooked contemporary concerns in a realistic fashion.

Greene talks of the “deep appeal” of criminal “seediness” satisfying “the sense of nostalgia for something lost” representing “a stage further back” (*Journey* 9).¹⁹⁹

Criminals, as they so often do in fiction, represent a prior stage of humanity without the

¹⁹⁹ In an interview with Christopher Burstall for *The Listener*, Greene made similar remarks about the evocations of seediness: “The seedy is nearer the beginning, isn’t it – or nearer the end I suppose” (672). The circuitous wavering of seediness occurring both at beginning and end suggests his belief in criminal tendencies at all levels and times of “civilization,” or in both premodern and modern societies. Crime is an essential element of society worthy of narrative attention.

burdens of modernity, without the corruption of too much thinking and too much of “civilization.” Greene’s complaint in *Ways of Escape* about British detective novels of the “golden age,” however, shows his frustration with authors’ tendencies at the time to romanticize criminals: “I found them lacking in realism. . . . the criminal never belonged to what used to be called the criminal class” (98). Greene resists classic models of criminals in favor of more “realistic” depictions to enliven the English “blood,” or thriller, genre: “There has never been a school of popular English bloods. We have been damned from the start by middle-class virtues, by gentleman cracksmen and stolen plans and Mr Wu’s. We have to go further back than this, dive below the polite level, to something nearer to common life” (*Reflections* 65-66).

The fact that the cosmopolitan criminal does not belong to a “criminal class,” according to Greene, creates an unrealistic timidity toward criminal venality and barbarity. Crime literature had become too sanitized with its “carefully documented references to Bradshaw’s timetable or to the technique of campanology or the geography – complete with plan – of a country house” (98). Fixated with locked-room puzzlers and clever solutions to the gimmicks of sophisticated crimes, crime had become a catalyst for ingenious detection and narrative plot twists, rather than an object of critical inquiry itself. Likewise, a criminal’s methods were of greater importance to many crime narratives than their motivations or characterizations. Crime literature in this era suffered, paradoxically, from its lack of criminal emphasis.

Since the late Victorian era, Sherlock Holmes's enduring popularity ensured that the British crime story's hero would be the detective for the first half of the twentieth century. However, the detective did not always figure so prominently in British crime fiction. In a two-part essay on the development of the British crime thriller Alick West argues that the genre's earliest works – such as *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and *Caleb Williams* (1794) – sympathize with the criminal, revealing their revolutionary aims in the Romantic era.²⁰⁰ As Victorian fears of social revolution took hold, the sympathetic perspective shifted from the criminal to the detective. Narrative suspense relied on the criminal's threat to the state's status quo. The detective emerged as the metonymic figure for the state's conquest over crime and social upheaval. Solving the seemingly “unsolvable” through a simple process of ratiocination, the detective story comforted readers that no crime was too big or too mysterious to undermine the state's guarantees of a peaceful and prosperous society. However, writing in the thirties, West identifies a shift back toward sympathizing with criminal characters as a result of a repressed desire for public insurgency within a failed, modern capitalist society. For the many experiencing hardship in the thirties the status quo seemed untenable. People lost faith in the state's authority, including its ability to administer justice fairly. Agents of the state, like the detective and policeman, were treated with greater skepticism and reproach.

This reproof of state agents can be seen in Edward Upward's *Journey to the Border* (1938) in the description of the unnamed main character's encounter with a police detective. The citizen suspects the detective will arrest him because “I didn't look rich

²⁰⁰ The two parts of “The Detective Story” appeared in January and February 1938.

and seemed to be enjoying myself” (46). This prompts the citizen to launch into a diatribe against the police:

A police spy isn't bound to always be in the right. As a matter of fact he's bound to be in the wrong. A man like that gets to think he can make his own narrow-minded stupidity into a law for everyone else. He thinks he is above the ordinary law. But actually there's nothing to choose between his methods and the methods of so-called criminals. He is a criminal. . . . He is the worst type of criminal. Far worse than mere pickpockets or housebreakers. They are only trying to get back what's due to them. They've been cheated out of a decent life, made to live in filthy conditions. He helps to maintain the swindle by criminal force. (47)

The citizen's remarks reflect a popular mistrust of the police as a part of a system that swindles the masses by protecting a privileged few through criminal force.²⁰¹

Deteriorating social conditions led people to believe that justices of the peace were protectors not of justice, but of a social system organized around inequality and injustice. The comparison between the “criminal” police and the “so-called” criminals set up a dichotomy between socially unacceptable criminality and publicly tolerable, or understandable criminality, and between criminal representatives of a corrupt system and those reverting to criminal methods in order to survive, or get back what the system owes them. Criminality's inversion recasts the agents of a corrupt society as criminally culpable for its maintenance.

The citizen reminds us about the public's commonplace reactions to crime: judging criminality by a measure of injustice, rather than through legal definitions. The citizen quickly revises his statement, saying “I was exaggerating when I said the detective

²⁰¹ In his memoir *Crime and the Police* (1951), former police detective Anthony Marienssen recalls how police officers went unarmed on their beats so they couldn't appear to be abusing their power. The police were aware of the public's mistrust, and adopted policies to counteract a bad public reputation.

was the worst type of criminal” (48). He falls back on class solidarity and recognizes that a detective is only a “hired subordinate” who is not “very highly paid, either” (48). The sense of criminal injustice diminishes because as a “subordinate” member of the working class, detectives are also exploited by the economic establishment they protect. The citizen continues, “The real criminals are his employers. People who get rich by cheating millions of others out of their right to a decent life. Who are all honey and bogus culture. Profess to believe the working class they’ve swindled is very well off. And when anyone retaliates he is arrested and they loftily pretend not to notice” (48). The disproportionate economic and legal privileges the wealthy few enjoy at the expense of “millions of others” determine their relative criminal injustice. In other words, the minority who control and profit from an unjust social system are the “real” criminals because their crimes victimize a greater number of people at a higher cost than those of petty criminals.

Greene arranges his criminals in his late-modernist thrillers around this dichotomous understanding of crime. He presents both premodern, petty criminals of the traditional “criminal class” and sophisticated, modern criminals who exploit economic and social systems at the expense of others. The former recalls outdated notions of cosmopolitan criminality of the Victorian and Edwardian ages, while the latter reconfigures cosmopolitan criminality for the modern age. The depiction of the cosmopolitan criminal in the interwar years had moved beyond the impoverished, Victorian atavistic-slummer and the Edwardian foreign anarcho-terrorist. In an age of post-war suspicion and intrigue, no one could be sure of the foreign criminal’s motives; it was hard to know if their crimes were purely self-motivated or directed by some larger

international plot. In the interwar years, then, the cosmopolitan criminal connoted a more refined and sophisticated foreign criminal, while the British criminal was seen as more petty, more common, more knowable and easier to control. The British criminal was still thought of as coming from the lower ranks of society, and had neither the flash nor panache of his cosmopolitan counterparts. Authors like Greene and Upward left no doubt as to which the “real” criminals to be worried about were during their time.

Characteristic of Greene’s thirties crime fiction is a broadening of the social classes and national identities of criminal characters. In *Brighton Rock* (1938), for example, his main criminal characters are an English criminal from Brighton slums and an upper-class mob boss from Italy. In *Ways of Escape*, Greene writes that he began drafting *Brighton Rock* as a “simple detective story” but that “the first fifty pages . . . are all that remain of the detective story” (80). Despite his claims, the novel comes closest to the detective story genre of any of his novels in the period, making it somewhat of an oddity. Greene abandons the thriller’s tropes and conventions he so often employs in favor of exploring “the distinction between good-and-evil and right-and-wrong and the mystery of the ‘appalling strangeness of the mercy of God’” (80). Taking over the role of the detective, Ida Arnold, the upstanding housewife from London, relentlessly tracks down Pinkie Brown who has murdered the newspaper reporter, Fred Hale. Thus, for the purposes of my study, one of Greene’s most well-known novels (and one of his personal favorites) proves useful for introducing Greene’s archetypal cosmopolitan criminal characters, rather than offering insight into his engagement with late-modernist thrillers.

Described by Bernard Bergonzi as a “tough, obsessively observed story of Brighton low life in the 1930s,” *Brighton Rock* dramatizes the encroaching influence of foreign criminals in England through the figure of Colleoni, an Italian racketeer.²⁰² He comes to Brighton to settle debts and muscle in on the racecourse gangs in town in the power vacuum left after the murder of the local racecourse kingpin Kite.²⁰³ He stays at the Cosmopolitan, the “elegant” hotel in Brighton: “not the sort of place” where Pinkie the English boy-wannabe-mobster would “feel at home” (63). The choice of hotel name suggests the swanky-continental associations the cosmopolitan criminal carries in contradistinction to the common British criminal at this time. When Pinkie goes there to have a meeting with Colleoni, it is Pinkie “who looked like an alien,” not the Italian (66). Greene calls attention to Colleoni’s legal status as a cosmopolitan alien while emphasizing Pinkie’s exclusion-by-class from the material comforts his own city provides to the wealthy criminal. From Pinkie’s perspective, cosmopolites like Colleoni inhabit another jurisdiction altogether, even when they are residing in his hometown. Colleoni’s wealth affords him social status that guarantees a freedom of movement and action Pinkie cannot obtain.

The class gulf between Pinkie and Colleoni is wide and clear. We know that both are criminals, and distinguish between the two by their difference in class and in the

²⁰² Bergonzi notes that in an earlier draft of the novel, Colleoni was “originally a Jew” and that the name Colleoni was likely chosen because of its “associations of power” with Bartolomo Colleoni, a “famous *condottiere*,” a leader of a troop of mercenaries (89)

²⁰³ Greene writes in *Ways of Escape* that Colleoni had a “real prototype” in Brighton and was similar to the European and American gangsters who lived glamorous lives openly as cosmopolitan criminals (81). Clive Emsley notes that “During the interwar period violent clashes between racecourse gangs were luridly reported in the press with . . . particular emphasis on the ‘foreigners’ involved in the disorders” (90). Colleoni perfectly fits the cosmopolitan criminal model of the foreign racecourse criminal.

difference of their class of crimes. While Pinkie aspires to be known as a good local criminal in the underworld of Brighton racecourse gangs, Colleoni identifies himself as a “businessman,” which Pinkie rightly understands masks the sort of criminal impresario who pays others so he doesn’t have to get his hands dirty; the kind of criminal who keeps the best company while openly running an international criminal organization, paying dearly for political and police protection. Pinkie knows that “businessmen” like this “owned the whole world, the whole visible world that is, the cash registers and policemen and prostitutes, Parliament and the laws which say ‘this is Right and this is Wrong’” (67-68). Cosmopolitan criminals, like Colleoni, manipulate the seats of power for their own criminal ends, mingling business with crime.

Cosmopolitan criminality develops in the twentieth century to describe an ever-widening scope of criminal effects across international borders. Colleoni travels to England to establish his criminal affairs there. When he leaves, he can direct them from anywhere he pleases, using his vast criminal network and political influence. Though only a minor character, he displays one important feature of cosmopolitan criminality in his dismissal of a solely national or local criminal influence. Criminals like Pinkie, on the other hand, highlight local conditions that foster homegrown, smalltime, and confined criminality. Edwin Muir notes in his review of the novel that Pinkie is a product of English society and “is an evil product of an evil environment, a living criticism of society” (153). Pinkie thinks only in terms of dominating the small province of felonious racecourse gangs in Brighton, while Colleoni already runs an international criminal empire. Colleoni, thus, exemplifies the cosmopolitan criminal in the interwar years,

where outward refinement fronts criminal seediness and crime-as-business endeavor exposes a thin line between the business of crime and the criminal aspects of big business.

Moreover, cosmopolitan criminals, such as Colleoni, exploit a legal and economic system seemingly for sale and ripe for exploitation. They are often members of the protected moneyed class that Upward's citizen complains are protected by the police, giving them a free hand to exploit other members of society. Therefore, they pose a greater existential threat to the well-being of society because they undermine society's stated interests in the values of justice, fairness, and proper balance. They pose another threat in that they generally operate from its outside, estranged from the societal consequences of their crimes; they work from the distance of a foreign country, or the remoteness of their insulating upper-class protection. In this way, the modern conception of the cosmopolitan criminal upends Victorian connotations of racial, slummed criminality, and advances Edwardian associations of crime with foreigners. In their late-modernist iteration, cosmopolitan criminals are identified more by the cosmopolitan scope and scale of their crimes rather than by their cosmopolitan identity constructions.

Concentrating on both native and cosmopolitan criminals, Greene's novels contribute to the shift back toward the revolutionary implications of a more sympathetic criminality that West identifies in crime literature of the thirties. A certain longing for a lost uncomplicated simplicity typified in criminal characters appealed to readers' sense of nostalgia for easily identifiable criminal identities and clear distinctions between right

and wrong. In previous stages of criminal literature, a criminal's foreignness and atavism – designated variably by class or race – largely determined his social danger. At a time of widespread sanctioned social and state brutality of criminalized “others,” – Jews, homosexuals, foreigners, etc. – intensified party politics, and class antagonisms criminals could serve as figurative rebels to constituted authority as they did in the Romantic tradition.²⁰⁴ The native criminal could gain the support of the public by fighting the machinery of a corrupt society and the cosmopolitan figures controlling it.

In thirties literature, criminals' atavism put them more in touch with the turmoil of the age, enticing authors and readers to see them as captivating lenses through which to examine the deterioration of modern European cultures. Greene's criminals point to a historical mode of existence retained in a modern world, and expose modern conditions and settings that support their continuation. In his novels, a criminal's power of critique comes from his exposure of the fault lines in society's image of itself as highly “civilized.” In depicting England's criminal underworld he draws attention to the false security and corruption inherent within the English social and economic systems: the very systems that condemn as well as produce criminality. Depicted as tormented human characters living on the fringes of society, his criminals remain sympathetic to readers because of their centrality as protagonists, as well as their positions as victims of an

²⁰⁴ Dennis Porter identifies three types of representational crimes in the romantic period: gothic, sacred, and profane. The profane criminals are usually “heroes who made themselves social bandits as acts of political protest” and are “victims of usurpations or other acts of injustice” (13). While Greene's criminals are generally not freedom fighters or revolutionaries engaging in political crimes, they are “profane” in Porter's sense that they are to be read as victims of social injustice, and as such their politicization becomes apparent as products and opponents of societal injustices.

unjust society. We follow their attempts to restore balance to a corrupt society by seeking their own forms of just remediation.

Common understanding has it that crime stories unmistakably delineates right and wrong, good and evil, and present a knowable world of uncomplicated binaries. The straightforward divide between good and evil in many crime novels has led critics to dismiss them as conservative homilies presenting prescriptive resolutions of social disorder through the state's legal apparatus. In his essay, "The Heresy of Our Time," W. H. Auden comments that the crime thriller's epic representation of a "war between two sides" where the reader is "made a partisan of one side . . . is apt to make the thriller a bit priggish" (93). Crime fiction's narrative point of view typically encourages readers to align themselves with the state's authority, usually in the form of a detective or police agent. On the other hand, Greene's crime thrillers, according to Auden, get around the "crudity" of partisan priggishness by "relating the thriller" to allegories of "outer melodramatic action of the struggles which go on unendingly in every mind and heart" (93). Auden praises Greene's use of the thriller to explore enduring human dramas raised by our complicated emotional, intellectual, and cultural conditioning and responses.²⁰⁵ Greene's thrillers elevate the criminal to the role of complex human protagonist marking one of his enduring legacies to the genre.²⁰⁶ Hynes also argues that "Greene has used the

²⁰⁵ Peter Wolfe echoes this sentiment: "Nowhere in Greene's work do human energies pulse more vividly than in his entertainments" (4).

²⁰⁶ O. Catherine Frank argues that novels are able to "represent the individual more fully" than legal narratives (139). With a narrow focus on guilt and innocence, legal narratives – experienced in the court system – disregard irrelevant evidence and testimony, whereas crime fiction has room to allow "more evidence" to develop a character's subjectivity. However, classic crime fiction typically expands on the detective, fleshing out his or her character, holding back on the criminal's character development. In a

conventions of an escape-art to create parable-art” (232).²⁰⁷ Not embodiments of “evil,” Greene’s criminals reveal the human fragilities and feelings that makeup our common reactions to injustices.

Auden’s insight leads to considerations of the allegorical roles criminals play in Greene’s fiction to stand in for problems of the age. Denning reminds us that crime fiction’s popular audience in the thirties had yet to be “disciplined to read stories as novels, as tales of ‘individuals,’” leading readers to take “modern allegorical forms like melodrama, adventures, and thrillers” in the way they would “popular allegory from religious traditions (like *The Pilgrim’s Progress*)” (32). Readers expected righteous local heroes defeating alien villains, and were satisfied by these narratives’ allegorical implications of Good triumphing over Evil. Wolfe says Greene’s “belief in original sin carries the entertainments beyond the crime-puzzle drama” (14). Reading him as a “religious writer,” Wolfe argues Greene “plays the thriller game for higher stakes,” writing them to “cause us to wonder what metaphysical sense their crimes make” (16, 15). Wolfe’s retention of the religious framework for reading Greene leads him to read the thrillers as conforming to the religious allegorical registers commonly associated with crime literature.

literary market that saw the popularity of recurring, fully realized hard-boiled detectives (Philip Marlowe and Sam Spade) and refined private detectives (Hercule Poirot and Sexton Blake) Greene’s criminal protagonists show the human struggles of those on the other side of the law, garnering sympathy for their faults in the context of a broadened understanding of justifiable criminality.

²⁰⁷ Hynes borrows the terms “escape-art” and “parable-art” from Auden’s essay “Psychology and Art Today” (1935): “There must always be two kinds of art, escape-art, for man needs escape as he needs food and deep sleep, and parable-art, that art which shall teach man to unlearn hatred and learn love” (qtd. in Hynes 14). Hynes glosses the period uses of the term parable as, “message-bearing, clarifying, instructive . . . like a myth, it renders the feeling of human issues, not an interpretation of them. . . . It is moral, not aesthetic, in its primary intention; it offers models for the problem of action” (15).

However, Greene's novels are not concerned with crime as the dramatic allegory for the contest between Good and Evil. I say this because the main drama, so often in Greene's novels, centers around two competing criminals vying against each other. The allegorical register shifts to one of lesser criminality opposing greater criminality. There is no uncomplicated, redemptive Good hero in a Greene novel. The characters that would traditionally represent Good in a thriller are often corrupt or apathetic police agents who have little concern with serving a higher ideal of justice or the state. Greene interrupts crime fiction's standard allegorical narrative model and replaces it with one more suited to his perspective on the problems inherent in late-modern society: namely, class inequalities and social injustices that motivate crime and suspicion.

I am arguing against a longstanding critical tradition that argues for Greene's fiction as primarily concerned with Catholic interests, and particularly the relationship of faith in God and sin in late-modern English society. Critical assertions, like A. A. DeVitis's that "Ultimately, in all his writings – entertainments, novels, stories, plays – the final point of reference is God," ignore Greene's more pressing aims to dramatize political human dramas in his thrillers (37). Recently, Brian Lindsay Thomson has lamented critics' tendencies to focus on Greene's personal life including his Catholic faith: "the critical record reveals an astonishing lack of curiosity on the part of scholars toward aspects of Greene's work that do not bear directly on the writer's life" (2).²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Thomson represents an emerging trend in Greene scholarship that extends Brian Diemert's focus on genre and changing literary markets in England as they relate to issues of class, abandoning a biographical critical framework for reading Greene's fiction. See also Murray Roston's example for reading Greene's "novels as texts, watching how they manipulate reader response, and attempting to identify the strategies whereby they achieve their effects," rather than reading for "pseudo-biographical" analysis (5).

Thus, recent critical assessments of Greene's fiction have performed what Cates Baldrige describes as reading through "other gateways" by paying attention to the uses of "political commitment" and "criminality" (23). Of course, Greene's religious beliefs were never absolute; he wavered in his faith, alternatively arguing for its virtues and at times renouncing it.²⁰⁹ More importantly, when it came to his writing, he would say, "I am more of a political writer than a Catholic writer. . . . I happened to become a Catholic before I wrote my first published novel. Nobody discovered I was Catholic for about ten years. *Brighton Rock* gave the game away" (Burstall 676). In *Ways of Escape*, Greene grumbles that since *Brighton Rock*'s publication he had "been forced to declare [him]self not a Catholic writer but a writer who happens to be Catholic" (77). Greene's admission that politics was a bigger motivator than his faith in his writing is evidenced by the fact that until readers encountered his overtly Catholic criminal, Pinkie, his novels did not betray their author's faith.

To be sure, religious faith (or its loss) plays an important role for characters in novels like *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The End of the Affair* (1951), and *A Burnt-Out Case* (1960). But even these novels should not be read as primarily concerned with religious matters, or as proselytizing tracts.²¹⁰ Rather, they are like Greene's early novels – his "entertainments"

²⁰⁹ See Norman Sherry's three-volume biography of Greene for an examination of Greene's ever-changing stances on his religion, as well as his autobiographies, *A Sort of Life* and *Ways of Escape*.

²¹⁰ In *Ways of Escape* Greene writes, "faith was more like a tempest in which the lucky were engulfed and lost, and the unfortunate survived to be flung battered and bleeding on the shore. A better man could have found a life's work on the margin of that cruel sea, but my own course of life gave me no confidence in any aid I might proffer. I had no apostolic mission, and the cries for spiritual assistance maddened me because of my impotence" (261).

– in that they employ the same focus on crime and guilt to reflect on personal and societal issues of betrayal and injustice. I believe Greene invokes religion to present a character's guilt on a scale of justice that is not strictly legal. Scobie's suicide in *The Heart of the Matter*, for example, is judged by standards of being "criminal" according to divine law rather than secular law. His suicide does not accomplish his intended goal of leading his wife and his mistress to happier lives. As is the case more often than not with Greene, a happy, triumphant conclusion does not materialize. Scobie's "crimes" – suicide, adultery, accomplice to murder, embezzlement – contribute to the constellation of cases each one raises for readers to judge his character as a whole. "Crime" in Greene's novels, then, relates characters to compound levels of culpability and responsibility in terms of multiple scales of justice. Eschewing grand narratives of Good and Evil, Greene's novels interrogate justice at the levels of the legal, divine, and poetic. Readers of Greene do not "escape" into a world of crime, violence, and murder; they do not sit back and watch crime unfold with equal measures of a suspension of disbelief and a suspension of ethical scrutiny. Reading Greene, our faculties of judgment are mobilized in order to scrutinize the measure and means of justice meted out to each character.

My reading of Greene, therefore, concentrates on his repeated interest in matters of justice. Greene so often writes from a criminal's point of view in order to foreground sensitivity to injustices. According to him,

The outlaw of justice always keeps in his heart the sense of justice outraged – his crimes have an excuse and yet he is pursued by the Others. The Others have committed worse crimes and flourish. The world is full of Others who wear the masks of Success, of a Happy Family. Whatever crime he may be driven to

commit, the child who doesn't grow up remains the great champion of justice. 'An eye for an eye.' 'Give them a dose of their own medicine.' As children we have all suffered punishments for faults we have not committed, but the wound has soon healed. (*Escape* 75)

Greene's criminals believe themselves to be crusaders suffering the imbalances of justice, victimized by grander criminals wearing masks of success. They justify their own crimes as a means to rebalance society or as a necessity to make-do in a social system rigged against them. They hold on to their righteous sense of indignation at having been victimized and seek out their own means for righting the wrong, making them ideal characters to examine our complex response to crime and justice. Greene's inversion of the petty criminal "as the great champion of justice" forces a reversal in outlook of the criminal as "other," leading to an unusual shift in perspective for viewing social injustices.

Wai Chee Dimock argues that in the Western tradition justice is best understood "by that adjudicative instrument long taken to be its emblem: the scales" (2). As far back as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, it has been described in terms of proper balance and equitable ratios. The unjust, often categorized as a crime, "violates the proportion," requiring justice's restorative equilibrium (2). For Dimock, justice is "a concept more or less migratory and more or less mercurial in its migrations," leading us to search for it in its many iterations: "Absolute and categoric in philosophy, negotiable and assignable in law, wayward and unsatisfactory in literature, justice dispensed in different operative theaters, seems to carry different causal circumferences, different modes of evidence, and to yield up different styles of knowledge as well as different descriptive textures of the

world” (8). Literature unsettles these axiomatic conceptions of justice – taken as transcendent, universal, intrinsic, and ultimately prevailing in law and philosophy – by presenting its messiness and failures to bring the world into balance. Crime literature, in particular, with its avowed interests in the workings of justice and its “generic requisite” (8) to dispense justice, leads to “casting doubt not only on any particular instance of punishment but also on that higher idea which underwrites it and which it incessantly echoes: the idea of justice itself” (34). In other words, crime literature’s generic expectations for just resolutions, in terms of characters’ proportional punishments and rewards, encourages readers to perform a series of judgments about a narrative’s internal logic of justice as they read. This in turn, highlights “crime as a semantic effect,” whereby the presentation of “a ‘crime’ is never simply a given, external to or antecedent to its verdict, but is rather a semantic effect, given meaning by the very process of judgment” (33). The interpretive response to crime literature, then, requires more than an aesthetic evaluation because the genre’s representation of crime and criminals calls into question the many personal and social contexts and judgments that determine crime’s definitional purposes in terms of personal ethics and social justice.²¹¹

With this in mind we can begin to explain why Greene returns to the criminal plot so many times in his fiction when we realize that crime naturally attunes the reader to read for guilt, retribution, and just resolutions. Placing criminal characters at the heart of

²¹¹ In *The Rise of the Novel* Ian Watt makes a similar case for the English novel’s development and its close relationship to the techniques and concerns of a jury in a court of law. Watt points to a novel reader’s and jury member’s mutual interests in knowing all the details of a particular case, as well as expecting an unfolding of events through witness testimony. I would add that they also both work to judge the evidence of characters and events based on a critical framework of justice.

his novels, he dictates a critical response that meets his political aims: to address injustices by appealing to readers' natural heuristics of justice applied to criminal scenarios. He relies on the public's regular responses to crime, realizing that a simple denunciation of all criminals as embodiments of evil only exists in fiction, and that in reality criminals are judged in the court of public opinion according to cultural and religious beliefs, in addition to legal standards. R. W. B. Lewis, in his reading of *Brighton Rock*, for example distinguishes between Ida's "moral world of right and wrong" and Pinkie's "theological world of good and evil" (54). As Pico Iyer has observed in Greene's fiction: "God's law and man's seldom converge" (19). The "guilt" of a criminal depends on what measures of justice one employs, meaning that standards of "guilt" on a divine level are calculated differently than on a legal one. The guilt of criminals, therefore, does not always correspond to their public condemnation. Their reception, rather, is determined by a complex calculus of justice, delimited by concepts of legal, divine, and poetic justice.

Jonathan Kertzer identifies poetic justice's "nonjuridical regime" (8) as being part of a literary mode traditionally "associated with the virtue of poetic thought to organize, interpret, and justify the chaotic misrule of experience" (4).²¹² He argues that "Logical, ethical, and emotional satisfaction is the ideal reward of both justice and literature" (45).

²¹² Kertzer relies on Thomas Rymer's coinage of the term "poetic justice" in *The Tragedies of the Last Age* (1692) as a way of describing literature's ability to offer something better than truth. For Kertzer, literary genres "are defined by the kind of satisfaction they define and provide, where satisfaction involves a vision of what is just and proper. . . . We feel satisfied when justice is satisfied, and it is satisfactory when it fulfills its own principles and formal procedures. This ideal may seldom be realized in everyday experience, but one of the joys of literature is that it convinces us, at least for as long as we are reading, that we can know exactly what is sufficient, and be content when it is achieved" (14).

Poetic justice requires “reciprocal accountability . . . between a crime and its consequent punishment,” whereby the punishment follows from the crime “logically, but answers to it ethically” (51). The “eye-for-an-eye” and “dose of their own medicine” approaches to justice Greene describes conform to this idea of poetic justice. His criminals are forced to seek justice in their own way, directed by their own ethical standards. Greene shows us criminal characters outside the normative vision of judicial justice, struggling to dish out proper punishments to those heinous criminals who, ironically, are protected by the social and legal institutions they secretly endanger.

I see poetic justice as a teleological measure of the degree to which a narrative pleasingly resolves its conflicts and restores proper balance to its characters by rewarding or punishing them in proportion to their conduct. We expect good characters to be rewarded, and evil characters to be penalized as the narrative comes to a close. Any loose ends or disturbances in readers’ expectations for just deserts upset our desire for fiction to present a redeemable world organized by the actualization of poetic justice. Perhaps, more than any other category of justice, poetic justice provides the foundational framework for understanding our desires for “right” to win out. That is, we desire justice to be a natural part of the order of things. We take pleasure and experience satisfaction in its fictional representations because we recognize its frequent absence from our actual experience of life. We register the fictitiousness and improbabilities of natural justice by consigning it to the poetic realm.

Poetic justice attempts the same rebalancing of equilibrium the juridical aims for; however, it can be realized through a looser chain of events, accidents, or coincidences, while legal justice requires a methodical bureaucracy incorporating legislatures, police agents, courts, and prisons. Whereas the juridical seeks to narrowly and objectively define and police criminality through law, and the divine does the same for sin under the strictures of “divine law,” the literary acts as a catch-all for the messiness of satisfying justice.²¹³ According to Kertzer, by transforming the search for justice into a kind of “‘seeing’ of justice,” literature ensures that justice is “always a spectacle” and “illuminates judicial thinking by recasting it as aesthetic form” (50, 44). I see the literary presentation of justice’s accomplishments and failures as conveying a perpetual search for various means to accomplish it and make it visible. “Judicial thinking,” or the series of judgments by which we seek out and serve justice understood in many forms, reveals itself to be at the heart of social and narrative organization.²¹⁴

Literature makes the search for justice visible by depicting its frustrating imponderables and resolutions. It reveals justice to be a matter of differing indices of judgment. Because crime literature works from the perspective of a world already out-of-balance, it serves as an appropriate genre to portray the project of justice’s attempt to restore equilibrium. Most crime stories resolve their crimes legally *and* poetically, where

²¹³ Costas Douzinas and Lynda Nead argue that “Jurisprudence creates an imaginary picture of law as ordered, systemic, closed, coherent, and hermeneutically stable, while art and literature are seen as anarchic, open, and free” (4). Art and literature relate to law in two ways: “The relationship between law and art can be analytically distinguished into two components: law’s art, the ways in which political and legal systems have shaped, used, and regulated images and art, and art’s law, the representation of law, justice, and other legal themes in art” (11). This study primarily discusses the latter, but insists art’s regime also introduces alternatives to juridical and legal themes when representing matters of justice.

²¹⁴ Even Flaubert’s concept of *le mot juste* speaks to the literary search for the “right” or “just” word, fitting into its rightful place in the aesthetic text.

the legal resolution closely aligns with the poetic restoration of a proper balance. Relying on scenarios of individuals unrestricted by the law, crime thrillers emphasize the moral and social implications of justice unfettered from a law code. Cut free from strictly legal frameworks of criminal innocence and guilt, crime thrillers bring into focus the multiple measures of justice readers employ in judging criminal characters and deeds. Greene's thrillers present a range of complex criminal characters who require a careful adjudication of their crimes from many possible standpoints. Thus, Greene points us to think of crimes and criminals outside of strict legal frameworks, in order to focus our attention on the basic formulas of equitable social justice: what is socially and morally fair and unfair. In doing so, Greene reorients the crime thriller's narrative concern from the arrest of criminals and the resolution of crime, to questioning about what makes a criminal a criminal, what makes a crime a crime, and by what structures of justice do we judge them.

Emile Durkheim offers a supra-legal definition of crime, distinguishing between what he calls "religious" crimes and "human" or "individual criminality" (41). Religious crime comprises general crimes against tradition, deity, custom, heads of state, and the collective ideals and materials of a culture or society. Human crimes are those directed at the individual – murder, violence, theft, fraud, etc. – consisting of crimes that perform "the disruption of some human interest" (41). Durkheim claims that in modern European cultures human crimes were becoming more numerous and more publicly revolting, while religious crimes that once offended and carried the severest punishments were arousing lesser legal and public resentments. In other words, in the modern era crimes

against the collective, social order were overshadowed by the crimes against individuals and property. We see this reflected in the expansion of detective literature's treatment of individual cases concerning theft of property and murder. Modernity conditioned a view of crime and its legal responses to be measured against the harm done to individuals rather than to society as a whole. Thus, a cosmopolitan feeling of collective offense was becoming less and less a part of modern legal and social life when responding to crime. With this in mind, I will offer brief readings of Greene's major late-modernist crime thrillers to show how they work to recall the collective sense of injustice, showing us that the cosmopolitan criminals who commit crimes against the wider society still deserve to be treated with disdain over and above the criminals who commit crimes against individuals.

***Stamboul Train* (1932)**

Greene's first popular success, *Stamboul Train*,²¹⁵ exploits the then fashionable train-journey narrative to transport "a cosmopolitan and heterogeneous collection of people" across the frontiers of Europe in dangerous circumstances (Bergonzi 25).²¹⁶ The train lines of the Orient Express and the Ostend-Vienna-Orient-Express of the novel²¹⁷ were the quickest means of travel across Europe, but they also conveyed a sense of

²¹⁵ Published in America as *Orient Express*. Upon later reflection, Greene voiced his displeasure with the novel, writing in *A Sort of Life* (1971) that "The pages are too laden by the anxieties of the time and the sense of failure" (212).

²¹⁶ Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), the German film *Orient Express* (1927), the film *Shanghai Express* (1932), and Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) – based on Ethel Lina White's novel *The Wheel Spins* (1936) – all involve crimes carried out on long train journeys. Before the book was completed, Greene secured £1378 from Twentieth Century Fox for the movie rights to *Stamboul Train* in 1931. As with so many of the films made from his novels, the film adaptation disappointed Greene.

²¹⁷ The trip route in the novel begins at Ostend, traveling through Cologne, Vienna, Belgrade, and ending in Istanbul.

adventure to readers because of the dangerous territory they traversed and the tense, involuntary intermixture of nationalities, classes, and ideologies of the passengers onboard. The young, English chorus girl Coral Musker, for example, feels “the melancholy of departure and the fear of strangeness” as she boards the train at the Ostend station (4). Her apprehension comes from her first long train journey across Europe and the anxiety of not knowing who and what await her on the journey. Greene plays on the strange quality of encounters that frequently occur on these train lines, and exhibits the isolation one has in traveling “the unwanted dreaded adventure of a foreign land” (8).

Continental train travel was a true close-quarters cosmopolitan experience that induced familiar anxieties when encountering foreign lands and people. The perceived dangers of the people and places on the European continent in the 1930s left English passengers uneasy about leaving the comforts of home. David R. A. Pearce contextualizes the landscape of Europe in the 1930s as one of “tensions, pogroms, coups, uprisings of the people, condoned cruelties, and petty lawlessness” (32). For an English readership at the time, Europe could be as wild as the African jungles and the colonial outposts of the novels of Haggard and Kipling. Furthermore, riding on a cross-continental train forced passengers to confront people they would normally not encounter; thus, continental trains acted as vehicles for cosmopolitan encounters. Cosmopolitan criminals, of course, used the continental train systems the same as anyone else, relying on false passports, bribes, or lax security to travel freely in disguise. At the start of the novel, at the Ostend docks the ship’s purser sees the disembarking passengers from England, and notices the suspicious accent of Richard John and “wondered momentarily whether

something dramatic had passed close by him, something weary and hunted and the stuff of stories” (5).

Crime stories and thrillers conditioned people, like the purser, to be suspicious of cosmopolitan criminals traveling the rails and waterways of Europe. The logic of the criminal parade, or police line-up, relies on people’s memories of faces and their active recording of suspicious characters. The purser registers the mental toll of being vigilant, saying: “I can’t get away from their damned faces” (3). When he meets Coral Musker as she disembarks he fancies her and calls after her: “Remember me. . . . I’ll see you again in a month or two” (4). But he knows too well, that “he would not remember her; too many faces would peer during the following weeks through the window of his office, wanting a cabin, wanting money changed, wanting a berth, for him to remember an individual, and there was nothing remarkable about her” (4). He immediately forgets Musker because she is nondescript, nonthreatening, while Richard John and “the young Jew” last longer in his memory because they arouse suspicion (5). The English purser inventories the surface features of characters who merit suspicion in the culture: the characters who demonstrate “otherness,” such as foreigners and Jews. His private thoughts that open the novel alert the reader to be wary of false appearances, and to be on the lookout for suspicious characters.

The purser’s suspicions of Richard John (a laughably caricatured English name) turn out to be well-founded because he is actually the political revolutionary Dr. Czinner traveling back to Belgrade to lead a planned uprising against the government in his home

country. The one-time head of the Social Democrats there, Czinner was forced into secret exile in England because of his role as chief witness for the prosecution in a high profile rape trial of General Kamentz. The government rigged the trial for acquittal by stacking the jury, and Kamnetz arranged for an assassination attempt on Czinner for daring to speak against him on the stand. Czinner finds out from the *Clarion* reporter Mabel Warren, who recognizes him on the train, that Colonel Hartep, Chief of Police in Belgrade, has suppressed the Communist revolt three days before he could arrive to lead it. He resolves to arrive in Belgrade and give himself up to stand trial so that he can speak on a world stage: “the world will listen to my defence as it would never listen to me, safe in England” (62).

Czinner carries the hallmarks of a cosmopolitan criminal in classic English thrillers: a dodgy-English accent clearly masking a foreign tongue; holding a fake English passport obtained on the black market; a background as a slummer in a European metropolis; and a criminal record in his home country. To a standard English reader Czinner would tend to be read like any other foreign Red: deserving of a criminal trial. His fraudulent adoption of English identity would be taken as an affront, another example of a cosmopolitan criminal passing as an honest Englishman. When Musker finds out his true identity and his Communist affiliations, she immediately falls back on the quaint English response of distrust, and sees him as “one of the untidy men,” “one of the kill-joys” (131). Musker represents a conventional English distaste of Czinner’s politics and foreign qualities. But Greene portrays Czinner sympathetically, as a courageous man fighting for noble ideals, standing up for the impoverished of his country.

Greene clearly approves of Czinner's leftist politics but also recognizes that many of his readers would have the same dismissive reaction to the Communist cosmopolitan criminal as Musker. Knowing this, Greene devises a way for Musker to witness Czinner's trial in a kangaroo court in a small military outpost outside of Subotica. Czinner does not get his public trial in Belgrade and the chance to speak to the world, but instead is taken by border agents inspecting the train at the Serbian border. When Czinner realizes soldiers are on the train and are likely looking for him, he passes a note to Musker for her to post for him. When she tries to hand the letter back, the soldiers walk in and see the transaction, taking her to be Czinner's accomplice. They take her and Czinner away to stand trial as the train moves on to Istanbul.

In addition to their detention of Czinner and Musker, the border agents also arrest Josef Grünlich, another cosmopolitan criminal who has just committed his latest robbery in Vienna and boarded the train illegally to escape capture from the local police hot on his trail there. Because he murdered a man to pull off the heist, Grünlich's latest crime "raised him to the dangerous peak of his profession" (79). Grünlich serves little purpose in the novel other than as a comparison with Czinner.²¹⁸ Greene presents a hardened thief and murderer alongside a frustrated exile wrongly criminalized in his own country for his political views. Though both are in effect cosmopolitan criminals, they are set apart by the assumed reactions to their crimes. Judged against Grünlich's crimes, Czinner's pale in comparison. In this way, Greene relies on the reader's condemnation of Grünlich over

²¹⁸ Obviously an intended homophone with "sinner," Czinner's name connotes a man fallen from grace, rather than a hardened criminal. Following Durkheim's classification, the "religious" nature of Czinner's crime compare favorably to Grünlich's "human" crimes in the modern era.

Czinner, and in effect increases readers' sympathies with Czinner, whom they might have otherwise scorned. Thus, Greene performs a trick of the narrative to have English readers sympathize with a Communist, foreign criminal. His drawn-out death scene – he is shot in the back as he tries to escape with Musker and Grünlich – only enriches the pity we have for him as readers. Musker hides with him, and cares for him, jeopardizing her own chances at escape, while Grünlich thoughtlessly leaves both of them behind. Having heard his paltry speech on injustice in the small barracks, Musker softens her response to Czinner's politics, serving as a model for the proper response to his political message for English readers.

Czinner delivers his speech to a single soldier, juxtaposing the soldier's fight for territory against his fight to change the world: "What I am fighting for is not new territory but a new world" (148). He continues, "You are employed to bolster up an old world which is full of injustice and muddle. . . . You put the small thief in prison, but the big thief lives in a palace" (149). The injustice Czinner speaks about aligns closely with Greene's repeated aim in his novels of this era to expose the unjust political and social systems that protect the "crimes" of the rich and punish disproportionately those of the poor. Greene frequently exposes the "old world" injustices that Czinner describes. He does this in his crime thrillers by weighing the petty crimes of "small" criminals, like Czinner and Grünlich, against those of "big" criminals, like Colonel Hartep, who manipulate their power and status to corrupt the social contract of the state for their personal gain. Hartep is the true villain of the novel. Greene shows those who corrupt justice – via Hartep's kangaroo court – are greater criminals, than political dissidents and

cosmopolitan crooks. Shot in the back, while trying to escape, Czinner dies unable to foment the revolution he desires, and “sets a pattern” for Greene’s portrayal of “his revolutionaries as failures, though not in a way that discredits the justice of their cause” (Baldrige 175). I read their failures as a narrative strategy for enhancing readers’ sympathies for them and their causes.

Like Musker and Czinner, the other protagonists depart from the stereotypical heroics of the classic English thriller; neither brave nor optimistic, they abandon Edwardian attitudes toward adventure as uplifting and invigorating, and instead approach it as “unwanted” and with dread. For example, Carleton Myatt, a Jewish currant dealer of the firm Myatt and Page, wanders the train conscious of the anti-Semitic behavior of the other passengers, feeling he is in the “centre of a hostile world” (6). He would prefer not to be travelling to Constantinople but must go to sort out a rocky purchase of a rival company. He suspects his agent, Mr. Eckman, of working with Mr. Stein, the owner of the other company, to drive up the asking price, and receiving double-commission from the sale. Along the way he has a romantic connection with Coral Musker after he looks after her when she falls sick on the train. He takes her virginity and talks about marrying her when they arrive at their mutual destination in Constantinople.

When she is taken away during the military train search, he tries to track her down at the local military barracks where she has been taken, but meets opposition from the locals. His hired driver calls him a “dirty Jew” on the way to the military outpost (153). When he arrives, the military guard yells at him with seething hatred: “Go away. We

don't want spies round here. Go away, you Jew" (155). Myatt turns around reluctantly without finding Musker and thinks to himself: "It was in some such barren quarter of the world, among frozen fields and thin cattle, that one might expect to find old hatreds the world was outgrowing still alive" (170). Sadly, Myatt knows all too well that prejudicial thinking was not only alive in the desolate quarters of Eastern Europe. English characters on the train also voiced their displeasure at his presence on board. Mabel Warren tells her partner, Janet Pardoe, "I don't like Jews" and "Jews are not to be trusted" (43, 47). Mr. Peters, a stereotypical English character, mistrusting of foreigners, chides Musker for the company she keeps on the train, telling her: "Jews and foreigners. You ought to be ashamed" (97).

Long-term figures emblematic of negative qualities of cosmopolitanism in England, Jews in Greene's fiction serve to critique close-minded views toward cosmopolitan figures as well as to expose the perniciousness of anti-Semitism. Pearce writes that Greene explores "conventional attitudes" toward Jews in England in the novel, and by doing so, he makes "us consider our own position" on the matter (34). He argues that Greene "is primarily concerned to see how Jews, among others, managed to hold on to what they are" in the face of prejudicial hate and opposition (33). I read the anti-Semitic reactions towards Jewish characters as contributing to Greene's representation of the greater injustices corrupting English and European cultures. Depicting religious and racial intolerance in a crime thriller criminalizes the conduct, as characters' actions are read and judged according to criminal frameworks. Moreover, Greene relies on the thriller's conventions to magnify and multiply the actions of individuals, where the

crimes or heroics of a few affect the lives of everyone, even if they don't realize it. Thus, the hostility Myatt experiences while trying to help Musker in her time of need forces him to abandon his rescue mission and turn back in fear for his own safety. This episode, rather than showing Myatt's cowardice, reveals the knock-on effects of prejudice. Musker suffers a greater ordeal because of the mounting impediments Myatt faces simply for being a Jew. Knowing that Musker languishes unfairly because of the prejudicial attitudes toward Myatt, Greene emphasizes the nature of injustice to be compounded and aggravated by other incidents of injustice.

Counter to generic expectations, Greene's narrative does not offer a scene of a daring rescue of the maiden-in-distress. Nor does it bring the lovers back together in a scene of romantic-embrace at its conclusion. Rather, Myatt returns to the train resolved to forget Musker and carry on with his business trip. The thrills come from the suspense of whether or not Myatt will make it back to the train in time to carry on with his journey, not whether or not he will arrive in time to save the girl. Greene sets up the narrative for a typical thriller scenario, but holds back, frustrating the anticipated payoff the setup heralds. Readers feel aggrieved, or cheated, or suspect something's off in the way the narrative's resolutions don't match up to its conflicts in the way they have come to expect. Greene does this in order to raise the feeling of injustice in his readers. He matches the sense of injustice Myatt, Musker, and Czimmer feel by frustrating the sense of poetic justice readers expect from the thriller genre.

The subversion of stock thriller scenes creates an imbalance in the narrative; it fails to deliver on what it sets up, and fails to reward good and innocent characters for their attempts at heroics. The injustices on display in the narrative seem to affect the narrative arc itself, as if Greene can't get around the obstacles of injustice to deliver the kinds of escapist thrills a reader believes is forthcoming. The corruption of justice in the plot corrupts the poetic justice of the text. Thus, readers focus on those characters who frustrate the generic tropes and scenes they have come to expect, namely, Grünlich, Hartep, and the anonymous anti-Semites outside Belgrade. Greene performs a hierarchical recalibration of our judgments about criminal characters in such texts, manipulating readers to sympathize with a leftist, cosmopolitan criminal they would have probably despised as a matter of course, by comparing his crimes to the more odious ones of Grünlich, and the socially corrupting crimes of Hartep and anti-Semites.

It's A Battlefield (1934)

Greene's follow-up to *Stamboul Train – It's a Battlefield* – carries on his method of using generic elements of crime thrillers to address larger social issues in the form of a popular novel that would sell.²¹⁹ The novel extends the metaphor of the battlefield to the realm of social and legal justice, which Greene identifies as the “main theme” of the novel in *Ways of Escape*. Specifically, he says he intended the theme to be “the injustice of men's justice” (35). Greene reveals the battlefield of justice to have many players, but that the social institutions serving justice are rigged from the start, and are the playthings

²¹⁹ In *Ways of Escape* Greene comments on writing *It's A Battlefield* “at a time of great financial anxiety” (33).

of a fortunate few. Brian Diemert argues that in this novel “Greene presents crime and murder as stemming from deep fissures within the structure of society between the wealthy and the powerful, who control the established institutions within the society, and the great mass of people who subscribe to a sociopolitical ideology that fails to recognize them as equals” (“Pursuit” 305). The imbalances inherent in English society in the novel present justice as a sham, carried out by morally bankrupt individuals in service of a corrupt legal system.

Because Greene re-read Conrad’s *The Secret Agent* three weeks before beginning writing *It’s A Battlefield*, critics often compare the novels, looking for Conrad’s influences on Greene.²²⁰ Cedric Watts argues, for example, “In these two novels, Conrad and Greene offer pessimistic vistas of struggling selves lost in the urban crowd, of fallible authority, of hypocritical idealists and rather naïve patronesses. In both works, a vulnerable individual is killed while making a futile political gesture” (46).²²¹ Malika Rebai Maamri writes that “Conrad and Greene depict societies in which modern man is crushed beneath the fear of a political power that engenders social injustice, and the perverse effects these inequalities can have on the different members of society” (179). For Maamri, the central concern of both novels “is no longer how justice can be made but rather how it can survive in a world ruled by unreason” (179-80). While many similarities to Conrad’s novel exist, Greene’s novel foregrounds the machinations of the legal system

²²⁰ Greene also read James’s *The Princess Casamassima* leading up to his writing of *It’s A Battlefield* (Sherry 433).

²²¹ Rod Mengham also shows how Greene’s reading of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* “determined the plot, cast of characters and settings” of Greene’s short story ‘A Chance for Mr Lever’ and his abandoned novel “The Other Side of the Border” (62).

from the authorities' side, instead of Conrad's dominant criminal perspective. Greene exposes the miscarriage of justice, not only by criminals, but also by those empowered by the state, sworn to protect and serve it, drawing attention to the class divide in the distribution of justice. Thus, the "criminals" in the novel are classified as criminal strictly in legal terms, but in actuality are shown to be victims of a criminal state. The state's authorities, though not called "criminal," act maliciously in the name of justice. Greene calls into question the state's misuse of its authority to define criminality in an effort to shield its own crimes.

While attending a Communist political rally, Jim Drover, a bus driver, stabs a policeman by the name of Coney during a brawl between rally goers and police. At the behest of authorities, police were told to disrupt the rally and worked to disperse the rally goers through violence.²²² Drover did not intend to kill Coney, and only attacked in fear for his wife's welfare, as the policeman was about to beat her with his club. The riot and Drover's subsequent trial are only described in passing details between characters. This is not a detective novel; there is no question as to who committed the murder, and for what reason. At the start of the novel, Drover is already behind bars waiting to hear whether or not he will be executed for his crime. Rather than focus on the pursuit and detection of the criminal, Greene ingeniously focuses on the rarely fictionalized period between guilty verdict and sentencing.

²²² Hynes connects the deadly police suppression of a political rally in Hyde Park in 1932 and the outbreak of violence at a British Union of Fascists rally in 1933 as corollaries for the events depicted in the novel. Greene captures the overall "sense of violation, of un-English violence invading England" by "bringing together incidents that are imagined, but close to reality" (133, 136).

If legal justice was impartial and carried out as a straightforward equation – crime A= punishment B – as the law purports it to be, this period should have no tension or conflict. But in the case of Drover, the standing government worries about the political consequences that executing him would bring. With cotton workers on strike and railway workers threatening to join them, the Prime Minister fears that an order of execution might cause more strikes to spread as retaliation. And because Drover is a Communist, the government is also afraid of looking weak to the 10,000 member Communist Party if they do not execute Drover, emboldening them to call more strikes out of “over-confidence” (13). Either way, the government fears that what they decide in Drover’s case will have a direct impact on whether or not the economy will lose upwards of 50 million pounds as a result of more strikes. If that were to happen, they anticipate they would have to raise taxes to compensate and would likely lose the next election. The government delays Drover’s execution so they can secretly ascertain the mood on the street and make the right political choice to safeguard their majority seats in government. His execution is not a straightforward matter of justice but one of political expediency. The Prime Minister’s meddling in Drover’s case reveals that the legal system is not divorced from partisan political concerns: political calculations and consolidation of power matter more to the ruling elite than considerations of an individual’s life and matters of legal justice.

It falls to the Assistant Commissioner²²³ of Scotland Yard to find out if the execution of Drover is likely to spur more strikes. He, however, is more concerned with catching the Streatham murderer – Janet Crowle has been murdered and her legs have been found in a trunk – than with playing politics. He believes that as a policeman “justice was not his business” because his “job is simply to get the right man” (7). In his mind, he and his men had already fulfilled their duty: Drover was safely under lock and key. The Assistant Commissioner sees the role of the police as working to “preserve the existing order” (19), not justice, and in the “case of Drover he was upholding a system in which he had no interest because he was paid to uphold it: he was a mercenary, and a mercenary soldier could not encourage himself with the catchwords of patriotism – my country, right or wrong; self-determination of peoples; justice. He fought because he was paid to fight” (129). The bare economic thinking behind the Assistant Commissioner’s mercenary attitude to law enforcement further calls into question the popular belief that police officers serve the higher call of justice at the behest of the state. For the Commissioner, “it was only when he was tired or depressed or felt his age that he dreamed of an organization which he could serve for higher reasons than pay, an organization which would enlist his fidelity because of its inherent justice, its fair distribution of reward, its reasonableness” (130). Sadly, he believes he will never see such an institution. The Assistant Commissioner gives voice to Greene’s belief in the

²²³ Greene’s Assistant Commissioner is closely related to Conrad’s in *The Secret Agent* as they both see themselves as cogs in a legal system. Like Conrad’s character, Greene’s Assistant Commissioner is a colonial transplant, having worked in “eastern forests” before his move to London (7). Greene recognizes Conrad’s influence by naming Jim Drover’s brother Conrad. When Conrad Drover asks his parents why they gave him such an unusual name, they respond that he was given the “the name of a seaman, a merchant officer” who had stayed with them once, clearly referring to Joseph Conrad’s merchant marine past (22).

corruption of society with special emphasis on the failings of the state's legal and police institutions. By presenting a high ranking police official's inner thoughts and blatant disregard for serving justice in favor of serving the moneyed interests, Greene indicts the police constabulary's false public face of a judicial system purporting to espouse justice for all.

As the Assistant Commissioner begrudgingly acts as police spy, the crime reporter Conder slinks around town trying to dig up juicy details about Drover's impending execution verdict for an exclusive story for his paper, while also shadowing a prominent Communist speaker, Mr. Bennett. Conder tires of the meager pay and undercover work of a crime reporter, saying "I can't stand all this watching and spying" (136). As a periphery player in the legal system, the crime reporter adopts the covert tactics of criminals and the police.²²⁴ But even with his public school background, Conder can't make crime pay. He does not follow in the mold of the intrepid and glamorous crime reporter of the movies; rather, "the genuine Conder" is "an unmarried man with a collection of foreign coins, who lived in a bed-sitting-room in Little Compton Street" (26).²²⁵ As a result of his job, Conder's familiarity with the messy workings of the

²²⁴ The role of the press for determining popular conceptions of crime "was of at least equal importance to the role of fiction" according to Clive Emsley (117). The English press relied on "convincing stereotypes and statistics" to paint a picture of English criminals against those "un-English" cosmopolitan criminals who engaged in extreme violence and carried firearms (117). The press was also as influential as fiction in constructing popular conceptions of the justice system, reporting on both its efficiency and faults in high profile cases.

²²⁵ Alfred Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), for example, follows the dashing newspaper man John Jones's (played by Joel McCrea) European exploits as he exposes enemy spies working in London. The international newspaperman was a popular occupation for heroes of thrillers during this period as their job often gave them a narrative excuse to be in exotic locales, or get embroiled in international conspiracies while reporting on interesting characters or events. Moreover, the undercover reporter, like Conder, utilized the spying methods of police and spies, positioning them as civilian agents of espionage.

legal system, largely out of view of the man on the street, leads him to a “life in learning the incomprehensibility of those who judged and pardoned, rewarded and punished. . . . They hanged this man and pardoned that; one embezzler was in prison, but the other men of the same kind were sent to Parliament” (39). Conder realizes he reports on an arbitrary system of justice that, despite its public image, follows no hard-set laws, follows no rules of logic. Like the Assistant Commissioner he sees the system for the shell game it is, and chastises idealists who seek out justice “as if justice were a pound of tea, as if it existed anywhere” (103). Conder represents another of the public faces of the justice system: the crime reporters who present the narrative resolution of crime with justice in tidy newspaper columns. His economic concerns for getting the flashy exclusive that will pay big outweighs any concern he might have in using his public platform to reform the incomprehensible system of justice he sees.

The spying and covert operations of Conder and the Assistant Commissioner are mirrored by Jim Drover’s brother, Conrad. A successful working-class clerk, Conrad feels familial pressure to do what he can to help his brother. He feels guilty, however, because he has been having an affair with his brother’s wife, Milly, since Jim’s arrest. His relationship with Milly is threatened if his brother’s appeal is granted, as Jim would serve an eighteen-year sentence with monthly visits allowed for his wife, with the expectation of continuing a normal life with her after his eventual release. Conversely, if his brother were to die, he could continue his relationship with Milly. Conflicted by having to balance his love for Milly and his desire to help his brother, Conrad is pushed to an emotional breaking point, and decides to buy a gun. He thinks to himself:

you can't shame me any longer with a word like murderer; I know what a murderer is – Jim is a murderer. The law has told me that, impressed it on me through three long days, counsel have made expensive speeches on the point; six shopkeepers, three Civil Servants, two doctors, and a well-known co-respondent have discussed it together and come to that conclusion – Jim is a murderer, a murderer is Jim. Why shouldn't I be a murderer myself? Always from the time I went to school, I have wanted to be like Jim. It's no good calling me a murderer. I've seen through that. (111)

Conrad's thought pattern here cuts through the social stigma of murder, seeing through society's appeals to justice by preventing crime through shame. Conrad, though, is beyond shame, having slept with his condemned brother's wife. He feels guilt for this but not shame. The source of his guilt comes from the rules of others, but ultimately he rejects them: "it was unfair that they should leave him so alone and yet make the rules which governed him" (159). Conrad rejects the law and its disciplinary control of his actions because he believes it is unjust or unfair to succumb to the rules of others, when the law has condemned his brother for rightfully defending his wife.

He has also seen firsthand the grinding reality of justice over three long days in the courtroom, which has caused him to abandon society's ideal picture of the institutions and agents of justice. His experience leads him to believe more strongly in the fact of social injustice. He feels betrayed by the English legal system and feels that there is a class divide between those who make the rules and those who must live by them: "he was daunted . . . by his own and Milly's insignificance. He heard the world humming with the voices of generals and politicians, bishops and surgeons and schoolmasters, who knew what they wanted, who knew what everyone else wanted" (64). These "others had made the rules by which he suffered," and yet they did not seem to follow them (159). The

events surrounding his brother's trial and sentencing convince him that "injustice did not belong only to an old tired judge, to policemen joking in Piccadilly: it was as much a part of the body as age and inevitable disease. There was no such thing as justice in the air we breathed" (62).

Conrad fixates on the Assistant Commissioner for being responsible for Jim's predicament because he believes it was the police's fault for clubbing innocent men and women the night of the rally that forced Jim to protect his wife with retaliatory violence. Moreover, he believes that in court, more could have been done to present the police's evidence "more sympathetically" to recognize the police's role in the murder: "a word from that man might have saved Jim" (156). For Conrad, the Assistant Commissioner becomes the totemic figure of the system's injustice. He confronts the Assistant Commissioner on his way home from a meeting with Lady Caroline – a wealthy and influential member of the aristocracy who wants to save Drover – where he has revealed that he will put in his report that executing Drover will not make a difference to the state's affairs. Conrad pulls his gun on the Assistant Commissioner, but before he can shoot a car jumps the curb and strikes him down. Conrad is rushed to the hospital where he dies of his injuries. This is another of Greene's inversions, for the *deus ex machina* saves the figure of injustice, while killing the lowly seeker of justice. Conrad's attempt to rebalance the system by a threat of violence performs a literal reversal of the scenario that condemned his brother. Conrad's threatening the police agent, however, does not end with a neat resolution in terms of poetic justice's reprisal. It appears that the natural order cannot allow someone like Conrad to obtain justice.

The Assistant Commissioner discovers that the gun was filled with blanks, and fails to make sense of the incomprehensible act. In the context of the novel's concern with the inadequacies of a bifurcated justice system, the blanks can be read as standing for the impotency of the little man's fight for justice against the authority of the state. Conrad intended to use the gun as a bargaining tool, as a scare tactic, not as a murder weapon. The murder of the Assistant Commissioner would not have served justice for Jim, nor would it have atoned for the initial killing of constable Coney. In the logic of the novel, Conrad could never have achieved justice, even with, or because of, the threat of the same violence his brother and the police had used. Greene reveals that men like Conrad and Jim cannot expect justice under the current makeup of the legal and social system, because the legal system is not concerned with impartially delivering it. They are inadequately equipped with the tools to fight for justice. Hynes writes that Greene depicts a war "of the law against those outside the law, of the rich against the poor, the haves and the have-nots" raging on the battlefields of London (138). The vast majority of have-nots trudge off to battle for social justice shooting blanks.

Not surprisingly, then, the Assistant Commissioner finds out from the prison Chaplain that before he could submit his report to the government that the execution should go through, the Prime Minister had already decided to grant the appeal and call off the execution. Upon hearing the news in prison, Jim tried to commit suicide by throwing himself off the landing outside his third-floor cell, only to be bruised by the safety nets strung below. Jim realized that Milly could not remain faithful for the eighteen years he was to be imprisoned and that it was unfair to expect her to wait for him. Jim is also

denied the justice he seeks for himself and his wife; poetic justice is thwarted once again within the (literal and metaphoric) confines of the legal system. Because of this instance of injustice, the Chaplain informs the Assistant Commissioner that he is going to resign. He “can’t stand human justice any longer. Its arbitrariness. Its incomprehensibility” (199). At the end of the novel, the Chaplain voices the readers’ frustrations with the many instances of thwarted justice Greene presents in the novel.

Greene gives the impression that the Chaplain condemns the failings of “human justice” and poetic justice against a purer form of “divine justice.” I don’t think, however, that he dramatizes the corruption of justice, in order to point to God as the answer. After all, the Chaplain’s complaint stems from his realization that the stay of execution means that Drover will be denied a justifiable escape from the mental and physical torment of prison. The Chaplain does not think Drover deserves to die for murdering Coney, but rather that it would be better for him and his wife if he did die, freeing both of them from years of suspicion, guilt, and mental anguish. Drover recognizes this same injustice, which is why he attempts suicide when he hears news of the stay of execution. Ironically, the Chaplain sees the stay of execution and Jim’s survival of the failed suicide attempt as poetically unjust. The Assistant Commissioner tells the Chaplain that this makes divine justice “much the same” and “very like” human justice (199). The Chaplain finds comfort only in his belief that Conrad will look after Jim’s wife for those long eighteen years. He does not know that Conrad has just died in the hospital.

The novel ends in frustration for the Chaplain, for the Assistant Commissioner, for Jim, for Milly, and for the reader. Greene upsets a traditional narrative closure that sees justice meted out in correct proportion, with rewards and punishments paid to each character as they deserve. In this way, Greene also thwarts poetic justice along with the human and divine. For Greene, and authors like him in the 1930s, the rarity of justice's realization makes it a worthy concern for narrative form. In Greene's novels, the human drive for justice compels characters to act in certain ways recognizable to readers already attuned to life's frequent injustices. We understand Conrad and Jim Drover's motivations for committing their crimes. Readers sympathize with these characters and their "criminal" acts as fellow sufferers of injustice at the human, divine, and poetic level. Instead of convicting them the narrative encourages readers to condemn the conditions of the system that fails them.

Time and again, Greene's novels of the 1930s subvert narrative conventions of crime literature's embrace of straightforward criminal justice and position the solutions of crimes in the realm of poetic justice. Greene does not write formulaic crime literature; he does not follow the conventions of the police procedural, detective literature, or the spy story. Conventional crime fiction, according to Diemert, "places enormous trust in the mechanisms of justice, which are assumed to be impervious to the vagaries of the everyday world's political squabbles" (*Thrillers* 108). When this "trust disappears . . . a new kind of literature emerges that realigns the matrix of criminal, detective, judge, and jury" (108). While crime may drive Greene's plots and determine the cast of characters, often with a criminal as the main character, his novels unsettle crime literature tropes

because they discourage the easy alignment between poetic justice and criminal justice at their conclusion.

In *It's a Battlefield*, Greene points to the more traditional crime novel he could have written about the Assistant Commissioner's other ongoing case: the Streatham murders. When he sits at his desk still shaken by the incomprehensibility of Conrad Drover's threatening him with a gun filled with blanks and the troubling news of Jim's failed prison suicide, the Assistant Commissioner reflects on "his dissatisfaction and self-distrust and shame" stemming from the case's irresolution (202). There are too many loose ends for the Assistant Commissioner (and the reader) to be comforted because there is neither a neat resolution nor the satisfaction of poetic justice being served. The Assistant Commissioner thinks about resigning, like the Chaplain, because he can't convince himself that he "was on the right side" (202). He admits he is too cowardly to do so, and can't bring himself to make a personal stand for what is right. A top official of law and order, and a state representative of the justice system, the Assistant Commissioner recognizes that he has contributed to a miscarriage of justice.

"Without warning," he forgets the Drover case and "the blank cartridge" as he turns his attention to the Streatham report, realizing that "What the officers in charge of this case have not realized is the significance of the prostitute's evidence that she saw Flossie Matthews waiting on a Park chair as early as 6 p.m. Taken in conjunction with the other evidence. . . ." (202). These details are incomprehensible to the reader because Greene does not provide contextual details about this other case. But this doesn't take

away from the picture of satisfaction that comes from knowing a crime has been solved. R. H. Miller argues that for the Assistant Commissioner, the Streatham case is a “much more satisfying business to him than the muddle of the sordid, politically motivated Drover affair” (20). The Assistant Commissioner’s “spirits rose” as his sudden insight solves the Streatham case: “It was for these moments of unsought revelation that the Assistant Commissioner lived” (*Battlefield* 202). Greene dangles this minor plot point at the end of the novel to indicate the kind of neat conclusion he could have written for the Drover case. He shows us what a happy resolution of a crime looks like, and what it means to the social authority of justice that the resolution of crime is achieved with no moral loose ends. By focusing on the unresolved injustices of the Drover case, however, Greene’s narrative critiques the hollowness of justice served only at the level of human, or criminal, justice. He demonstrates that in order for justice to be accomplished and accepted, our conceptions of human, divine, and poetic justice must align.

England Made Me (1935)

Greene quickly followed *It’s a Battlefield* with his next novel, *England Made Me*, the story of English twins Kate and Anthony Farrant living abroad in Stockholm. Kate is both lover and secretary of the self-made Swedish business tycoon Erik Krogh, the world’s leading manufacturer of matches. Anthony floats from place to place, making meager profits off shady business practices before moving on before local authorities can catch him. Similarly, Krogh builds his commercial empire on unscrupulous business practices, committing financial fraud and buying political favors. Borrowing money

against his own business's subsidiary, he hopes to drive down stock prices in the American markets so he can afford to buy out more American plants. In reality, he knowingly borrows against his leveraged holdings and includes the American factory in his portfolio of assets before he purchases it. Essentially, he borrows against the value of a company he does not own in order to buy it for the purposes of securing more of a monopoly on the world's match market. At the same time, he orders the suppression of his striking Socialist workers in his Swedish factories who are worried that he will lower wages once he owns the American factories. Krogh works to maximize profits through criminal means at great costs to his international labor force; his crimes influence global markets as well as thousands of workers across the globe.

Krogh follows the archetypal model of the cosmopolitan criminal member of the establishment Greene depicts in his crime thrillers. He is the fat-cat-swindler posing as a reputable businessman profiting off exploited workers while engaging in criminal business practices to maximize personal gains. "Krogh, the internationalist, who had worked in factories all over America and France, who could speak English and German as well as he could speak Swedish, who had lent money to every European government" (38-39), embodies the cosmopolitan traits of the modern businessman whose allegiance to his "international purpose" (140) far outweighs his national affiliation.²²⁶ He "was like a

²²⁶ Greene bases Krogh's "swindles" on those of the Swedish financier Ivar Kreuger, "a Napoleon of finance," who defrauded banks as well as governments on a massive scale: "The figures in the case of Kreuger were more than usually astronomical. The mind can grasp them no more easily than the position of a new star a few more light years further away" (*Reflections* 25). In his review of George Solveytchik's book *Ivar Kreuger*, Greene takes pleasure in the downfall of this "man who lent money to half the governments of Europe" (25). He recognizes a familiar pattern in the recurrence of the "Great Man" – naming Ivar Kreuger, Whitaker Wright, and Uncle Ponderevo as examples – whose distinguishing features

man without a passport, without a nationality” (105). Kate describes Krogh and his business to her brother in cosmopolitan terms: “There are no foreigners in a business like Krogh’s; we’re internationalists there, we haven’t a country” (11).

Krogh’s cosmopolitanism signals his “modernity” in contrast to Anthony’s outmoded nationalism. Anthony still uses English trench slang from the war, carries a copy of Edgar Wallace’s Edwardian crime thriller *The Four Just Men*, and connects with an English girl visiting Sweden on holiday because they “laughed and sighed and felt English and wistful and exiled” together (115). Living abroad, he suffers a “spasm of longing for the tea urn . . . the stacks of English cigarettes” (120). Kate diagnoses her brother’s antiquated nationalism as their common problem:

We’re done, we’re broke, we belong to the past. . . . We’re national. We’re national . . . from the soles of our feet. But nationality’s finished. . . . That’s all nationality is – it’s we, the hangers-on, the little dusty offices I’ve worked in, Hammond, your pubs, your Edgeware Road, your pick-ups in Hyde Park. (135-36)

Kate recognizes the “poor national past” had little to do with the “international present” Krogh typifies (136). Krogh, she says, “doesn’t think in frontiers. He’s beaten unless he has the world” (135).

Anthony shares with Minty – an English newspaper reporter working in Sweden – a resigned indignation in cosmopolitan surroundings. They exhibit an outdated desire to think in terms of national particularity, playing the part of the adventurous exile in

“from other men” are few except the “extent of the ruin . . . left behind” (26). Greene recognizes the devastating cosmopolitan scale of “ruin” their crimes leave behind.

foreign lands. When Minty visits the British Foreign Minister, Sir Ronald, he sees the portrait wall of all the former ministers. He likes the old portraits painted “in their ruffs, in their full-bottomed wigs, painted by local artists” because they clearly mark their figures’ nationality (88). He reacts bitterly towards the newer portraits which “bore no national mark” and “represented an art internationalized at the level of Sargent and De Laszlo” (89). He identifies with the ministers of the past whose nationality clearly set them apart from Scandinavians. Sir Ronald chastises Minty for thinking himself exiled and “cut-off” from England in modern Sweden: “Damn it all, Minty, this isn’t the Sahara. We’re only thirty-six hours from Piccadilly. . . . You can always trot across for a weekend. No you can’t pretend we’re cut off here” (87). The minister reminds Minty of modernity’s “shrinking” of the world; England is only a short train, plane, or boat trip away. Anthony admits that “Although he had traveled half-way round the world in the last ten years he had never been far away from England. He had always worked in places where others had established the English corner before he came: even in the brothels of the East English was spoken” (75). Greene undercuts the former romance of British thrillers that depict courageous Englishman in exotic places by pointing out the obvious “closeness” of England to the rest of Europe and the world.

Greene’s Englishmen abroad complain that their lives don’t live up to the glamor and intrigue of their childhood thrillers; their adventures are only “shabby adventures” carried out in foreign locations, which remain familiar and tame (26). Anthony must invent fantastic tales about his life to meet storybook expectations. He tells various people that he acquired a facial scar saving a minister in a foreign revolution or saving

people on a sinking ship in the Indian Ocean, when in fact he accidentally inflicted the wound on himself while skinning a rabbit as a child. Anthony's stories are pathetic; they are an attempt to make himself something greater than he is. R. H. Miller argues that as "an Englishman he is a failure, for he has been taught to worship the icons of English respectability, though they have become time-worn" (26-27). His idea of what the travelling Englishman should be and do comes from outmoded storybook ideas from childhood reading. He does not perceive that those stories were only fiction. The thrilling tales of the heroic Englishman are nothing but pitiful lies a nation of readers told itself to affirm their heroism and superiority. Greene not only upsets classic thriller characterizations and scenarios, but also caricatures them to the point where Anthony's outlandish stories signify his pathetic delusion of trying to live up to a fictional English past. He has yet come to terms with cosmopolitan modernity and its implications for changing old national narratives.

For the English characters, cosmopolitan internationalization signals a decline in the superiority of Great Britain; cosmopolitan characters neither recognize nor reward them for their antiquated national identity. For example, Minty's posh public school education at Harrow no longer guarantees his status or success. He toils as a journalist, scraping a living by reporting on the daily exploits of Krogh. Mistakenly, Anthony also assumes that an English public school background will aid him in his business endeavors and wears a Harrow tie, even though he did not attend the school. Anthony sees himself, like Minty, as

the exile from his country and his class, the tramp whose workhouses were Shanghai, Aden, Singapore, the refuse of a changing world. . . .They were neither one thing nor the other; they were really only happy when they were together: in the clubs in foreign capitals, in pensions, at old boys' dinners, momentarily convinced by the wine they couldn't afford that they believed in something: in the old country, in the king, in 'shoot the bloody Bolsheviks', in the comradeship of the trenches. (180)

The modern world has left them behind. Anthony feels lost amidst the conditions of the "changing world." He struggles to let go of deep-rooted English notions that no longer serve him because he does not know how to adapt to new cosmopolitan models that operate from an extra-nationalist footing. He sees himself as part of a generation caught in between: "I'm not young enough and not old enough: not young enough to believe in a juster world, not old enough for the country, the king, the trenches to mean anything to me at all" (180). Anthony's frame of mind captures the mindset of the English generation who missed out fighting for their country in the war, but are also skeptical enough not to be filled with utopian illusions about remaking a "juster world."

Once again, Greene's characters reflect on the nature of justice and experience unjust social inequities. In this novel, those imbalances are extended beyond the particularities of English society, and are broadcast on a cosmopolitan scale. Krogh's criminal business practices affect American, Swedish, and English characters, as well as countless others as banks, governments, and businesses are threatened by his multiple financial frauds. As usual, cosmopolitanism carries negative associations with crime. Greene contributes to the construction of modern cosmopolitan criminality as potentially leading to greater peril because of its international consequences, where the effects of a

crime victimize many people across many places. Cosmopolitan thinking, which doesn't respect traditional borders, affects more than nostalgia for outmoded practices grounded in nationalism. Many people, like Anthony, assumed that disregarding customary limits led to criminal conduct because it justified ignoring the restrictions of the law. While Krogh's cosmopolitanism appears to Kate as progressive and the reason for his success, to the anti-cosmopolitan Anthony, Krogh's conduct is hazardous because "there are limits to what you can do," and Krogh did not respect those limits (143). Influenced by Krogh's philosophy, Kate imagines a "new frontierless world, with Krogh's on every exchange," which leads her to believe in "having no scruples while one got what one wanted most – security" (141).²²⁷ She has been expecting to find out about Krogh's criminal practices all along, and when she does she thinks to herself: "This is the moment I've always been expecting, the moment we leave the law behind, push out for new shores" (140). The positive metaphoric links between committing a crime and travelling beyond frontiers marks the perverted logic Krogh and Kate use to justify his crimes. Kate's comfort with Krogh's cosmopolitanism means that she is more willing to abandon "the old honesties" and legal restrictions for the sake of profits (141). Kate reckons that her brother "wasn't unscrupulous enough to be successful. He was in a different class to Krogh" (144).

²²⁷ Greene plays on the double-meaning of security: the stocks traded on the global securities exchange, and the security that money provides. He shows that people like Krogh often get away with their crimes, or at least get away with them longer, because their wealth provides a measure of respectability that puts them above criminal suspicion. Because Krogh's credit "stood a point higher than the French Government," and the logic of the day dictated that "a man was honest so long as his credit was good," Krogh was above criminal suspicion, even though a cursory glance at his books would have revealed his criminal business practices (35). Greene implicitly critiques the credibility and security that wealth grants people, revealing that this cultural situation actually allows for criminal malfeasance at a grander cosmopolitan scale.

Greene's class-based critique contained in this line of thinking exposes the corruption in a global economic system that requires criminal dishonesty and unscrupulousness to succeed. Greene would have been familiar with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's famous association of cosmopolitanism with capitalism in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848):

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere. The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. . . . In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. (10-11)

In Marxist terms, Krogh is clearly representative of the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie, disintegrating national borders through global commerce. As a one-time registered Communist and sympathetic Socialist, Greene would have recognized in cosmopolitanism the roots of an insidious capitalism.²²⁸ According to Marx and Engels, capitalism's inherent cosmopolitanization of the world influences "material" as well as "intellectual production" (11). Greene, therefore, focuses on the material consequences of Krogh's cosmopolitan crimes, as well as the intellectual effects of his capitalist cosmopolitan philosophy, emphasizing its criminal tendencies.

²²⁸ According to Norman Sherry, at the time of writing Greene was involved with establishing an Oxford branch of the socialist Independent Labour Party, which was "more extreme than the modest Labour Party" (461). In *Ways of Escape* Greene identifies the "subject" of *England Made Me* as "the economic background of the thirties and that sense of capitalism staggering from crisis to crisis" (40). See Baldrige's assessment of the influence of Marxist thought on Greene's political philosophy in his chapter "Political Philosophy in Greene's Novels."

Accordingly, as Anthony befriends Krogh while working as his personal bodyguard, he learns of Krogh's criminal practices and falls back into his own petty criminal schemes. When he tries to blackmail Krogh, threatening to expose the details of his crimes, Krogh's longtime associate Fred Hall murders him. Anthony's attempted blackmail shows the limited ambition and scope of his crime, targeting an individual, in contrast to Krogh's cosmopolitan crimes. As an English foreigner preying on a Swede, Anthony performs the function of the antiquated cosmopolitan criminal who travels abroad to commit crimes. Thus, Greene presents his familiar criminal dichotomy between the smalltime cosmopolitan criminal, Anthony, and the modern cosmopolitan criminal, Krogh. Pitiably, Anthony stands in contrast to the reprehensible Krogh. Krogh gets away with his crimes, insulated by his prestige and wealth, and stands to profit off of his latest financial fraud. The modern cosmopolitan criminal's greatest menace, Greene confirms, comes from their free-license to operate with impunity, endangering governments, businesses, and people all across the globe without the appropriate criminal scrutiny.

Greene's most direct political statement appears in the last pages of the novel, where Kate becomes disillusioned with Krogh after she discovers his role in her brother's murder. She breaks off her engagement with him, and sets out for a new job in Copenhagen. Before she leaves she tells Minty, "There's honour among thieves. We're all in the same boat. . . . We're all thieves. . . . Stealing a livelihood here and there and everywhere, giving nothing back" (206). Minty replies with one word: "Socialism." To which, Kate responds, "Oh, no. . . . That's not for us. No brotherhood in our boat. Only who cuts the biggest dash and who can swim" (206). Kate puts into words Greene's

underlying socialist sympathies and the problem with modern society under capitalist cosmopolitanism, likening big business to thievery, where the most powerful and wealthy prosper through their crimes at the expense of the working class. Rather than promote universal brotherhood and equitable prosperity aligning with socialism's cosmopolitan regard for the plights of common workers across the globe, Kate sees that she too has been a victim of the crimes of crony capitalism she has witnessed working as Krogh's personal secretary. Cosmopolitan criminality, Greene demonstrates, has long been incorporated and supported through capitalism's sinister cosmopolitanization of the West. Modern cosmopolitan criminals, like Krogh, commit class crimes at the cosmopolitan scale sanctioned by the logic of the economic system they manipulate. Cosmopolitanism, capitalism, and criminality go hand-in-hand.

A Gun for Sale (1936)²²⁹

In *A Gun for Sale*, one of Greene's most famous criminal characters, James Raven – the tormented, hare-lipped assassin – murders the Czech Minister of War for £250 from an anonymous employer. Though he has killed before, this job marks the first time he has been paid as an assassin: “Murder didn't mean much . . . It was just a new job” (1).²³⁰

²²⁹ Published under the title *This Gun for Hire* in the American edition.

²³⁰ In one of the few cross-over characters of Greene's novels, Raven murders the racecourse mobster Kite who features more prominently in his next novel, *Brighton Rock*. As a product of the same criminal environment, a comparative analysis of Raven and Pinkie proves useful for examining Greene's characterization of social forces in England that lead a certain class of juveniles to turn to crime. Clive Emsley shows that in England worries about the rise of juvenile crime after the war was explained by the deaths of strong, positive role models in the working class, such as boys' fathers and schoolmasters (24). Both orphans, Pinkie and Raven, however, did not lose their fathers in the war. Raven's father was hanged for his crimes, and Greene suggests that this psychological blow leads Raven down a path of crime. Not so much a product of genetic criminality under a Victorian construction of cosmopolitan criminality, but rather endowed with an inheritance of psychological strife from the crimes of his father and the suicide of

“Dark and thin and made for destruction,” Raven believes he has been destined for a life of crime, partly because of his background as an orphan of criminal parents, and partly because of his appearance (9). Raven’s hare-lip is important beyond a mere physical deformity because it marks him as a social outcast. Teased and shunned his whole life for his disfigurement, Raven thinks that “He had been made by hatred; it had constructed him into this smoky murderous figure” (61). Raven traces his criminal roots to the injustice in people’s reaction to his appearance: “If a man’s ugly, he doesn’t stand a chance” (40). His effectiveness as a cold-blooded criminal comes from his hatred of others, born from his experiences with people recoiling from him simply because of his physical deformity. Moreover, because of his criminal profession, his hare-lip causes him to be more ruthless in his crimes because he must eliminate any witnesses who might easily identify him: “When you carried about so easy an identification you couldn’t help becoming ruthless in your methods” (1).

Raven’s hare-lip serves as more than just a memorable marker or an explanation for his crimes; we are to see Raven as a product of his class as well as an object of hatred. We are reminded by one of the narrator’s few interventions that Raven’s hare-lip “was a badge of class. It revealed the poverty of parents who couldn’t afford a surgeon” (10). Thus, in *Raven*, Greene presents a sympathetic criminal character. He is an orphan, coming from an impoverished background, with an unsightly physical flaw, who by necessity of being shunned by society turned to crime to survive. Though he is a

his mother, coupled with the resentment of his lower-class struggles, Raven’s criminal behavior can be attributed to his heightened sense of being cast off by his parents and society. Greene’s narrative conforms to criminological theory that accepted that “economic factors played a significant role in the causation of crime” (Emsley 25).

murderer, the reader feels sympathy for him, and might even forgive him his crimes, believing that society's injustices have pushed him to a life of crime. Greene emphasizes the role that injustices of economic disparity play in Raven's life, as he turns his criminal character into an indictment of an unfair English social system.

Raven's crime can be characterized as cosmopolitan because its effects extend beyond the scope of a fixed locality. His victims are not only those immediately affected by the crime, but rather involve a radiating transnational scale of influence across all of Europe. Though he does not know why his employers want the Minister of War murdered, he soon realizes that he has had a hand in bringing about the onset of war. The Czechs suspect the Serbs for the murder of the Minister, causing them to issue an ultimatum that if not met will lead Italy, France, and England into armed conflict. Raven's crime manifests itself on the world-stage; it sets in motion the plot of a thrilling chase across England against the backdrop of impending war. If this were a classic thriller we would expect the trappings of an older brand of redemptive adventure story, in which Raven would realize his duty to his country and stop the war. In essence, he would act as an independent state actor (a kind of unconfirmed spy), thwarting the law to preserve it, and be rewarded for his actions.

But as Greene has it, Raven's motivations for tracking down his employer and the man responsible for the start of the war are strictly personal and stem from a slight of justice. Greene sums up Raven's motivations in *Ways of Escape*: Raven was "a man out to revenge himself for all the dirty tricks of life, not to save his country" (72). When

Raven returns to England from the continent, he unwittingly accepts stolen marked money from Mr. Cholmondeley, his employer's agent, as payment for his services. Raven quickly realizes he has been double-crossed by his anonymous employer. The pound notes are reported stolen and lead the police directly to Raven's location in London. For the first time, "He was touched by something he had never felt before: a sense of injustice. . . . These people were of his own kind; they didn't belong inside the legal borders . . . he had been betrayed by the lawless" (25). While he has been accustomed to unjust treatment his whole life, he has experienced a kind of honor among thieves as a member of a criminal gang. Striking out on his own criminal endeavors as an assassin, he experiences unfair treatment from other criminals who are not playing by the assumed criminal code of conduct. He sets out on a mission of revenge, intending to murder those who betrayed him. His mission of murder seeks to redress the imbalance he feels by paying back his deceivers in kind. Raven's revenge hinges on the desire for justice to achieve equilibrium even if it has to be achieved through extra-legal, or criminal, means.

Armed and on the run from the cops, Raven does not care to put a stop to the oncoming war his crime has caused.²³¹ Instead he thinks war will rebalance the scales of an unfair society: "A war won't do people any harm. . . . It'll show them what's what, it'll give them a taste of their own medicine" (43). He sees the oncoming war as a

²³¹ Any time Green has his English criminals carry, let alone use, a gun he breaks down popular conceptions of English criminality. Clive Emsley tells us, in the first half of the twentieth century, it was a part of the "rose-tinted perception" of English citizens that "ordinary English criminals" did not engage in "extreme violence" or use firearms when committing crimes because this was considered "un-English" and simply not done (117, 121). Carrying guns was still thought to be a distinguishing characteristic between more "civilized" English criminals and their barbaric foreign counterparts. This view was largely reinforced by the popular literature of the day. Therefore, when English criminals, like Raven, commit gun violence, Greene is dramatizing a further erosion of English exceptionalism in terms of national differences between criminals.

fortuitous benefit of his crime, harboring a “curious pride” that he has initiated a social tonic to those who deserve violent retribution (26). Thus, his motivation for revenge on his employers arises not from the sense of betrayal for being set up as the fall guy for starting a war, but instead comes from their simple double-cross, their unjust disloyalty to a member of their own criminal kind. Though Raven is “harassed, hunted, and lonely, he bore with him a sense of great injustice” that drives him to seek vengeance on those who betrayed him (26).

The murder of a murderer’s double-crossing employer by his own gun for hire reads as a tale of poetic justice, and it follows a standard narrative formula common to revenge plots. Readers excuse one crime because they see it as rectifying an injustice; the lesser crime of the murder of an individual corrects the greater cosmopolitan crime of starting a continental war. That crime can bring about justice outside the authorized operations of the legal system means that justice is not wholly dependent on legal standards. Crime at times can also administer swift personal and social justice. Raven’s all-too-human indignation at being wronged reveals the desire for justice to be common even in the criminal ranks and shows that vigilante justice executes the same desire for bringing outlaws to pay for their crimes. If murder can be excused as a viable response to serving justice in response to the failings of an official justice system, we are left questioning the degree to which the system’s faults are to blame for fomenting crime. We start to think differently about the institutional mechanisms that might contribute to the production of certain crimes. Moreover, if certain crimes can be excused, or cheered on by passive observers as we do with Raven’s revenge plot, our definitional thinking about

crime begins to loosen from narrow legal codes. We realize the ways we judge crime based on basic feelings of what is unfair or unbalanced. We are challenged with the question of whether there is such a thing as “just crime.” Greene confronts us with these questions as he presents a sympathetic portrait of a conflicted murderer out for revenge.²³² He does not exhibit a righteous outrage that justice is not administered through institutional channels, but rather shows that in most cases people care more about the achievement of justice than its proper unfolding through the legal system. He taps into this common public reaction to crime to raise concerns about the merits of crime as a tool for justice. His thriller makes us uneasy about the wider social implications the genre raises for us.

Greene employs the classic thriller formula, made famous by Buchan’s *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, where the protagonist pursued by the police evades capture to pursue the “real” villain, the criminal mastermind.²³³ The thriller’s tension comes from the desire to see justice served and the criminals caught, but the state’s agents – typically, the police or Foreign Office agents – unknowingly work against the only person who can discover and resolve the larger criminal plot. Greene deviates from the classic formula, however,

²³² Diemert also notes that “Raven’s background, his tenderness for a stray kitten, his trust in Anne, and his desire to confess his crimes and so remove the burdens of the past all render him a sympathetic victim of environmental forces” (*Thrillers* 128).

²³³ Greene also employs the chase-within-chase narrative model to good effect in *The Confidential Agent*, *The Ministry of Fear*, and *Our Man in Havana*. Allan Hepburn argues that in crime thrillers and spy fiction “the trope of the pursuit implies a fable of the proper latitude of action. The private individual may exceed the limits of lawfulness, may pursue supposed enemies, in the service of nation . . . with the ulterior assumption that the individual has a civic responsibility to enact justice by arrogating the authority of the state” (44). Within the logic of the thriller, a hero’s crimes are justifiable as long as they secure justice in the service of the state. Because Raven’s pursuit of his employer only obliquely serves the interests of the state, Greene complicates the operating logic of the thriller to question to what degree we can turn to crime to secure personal justice.

by replacing the patriotic Englishman who typically performs the role of the protagonist with a murderous cosmopolitan criminal. However, Raven's characterization guarantees the reader's sympathy, so that his criminality does not turn the reader against him. The political recalibration Greene accomplishes in *A Gun For Sale*, where the reader roots for the smalltime criminal against the backstabbing criminal employer, relies on the reader's empathy with "the little guy," the socially downtrodden, the used and ill-treated, even if criminal. Class divisions in Greene's novels are key determinants to the ways his criminals are judged; the reader is always in the position to sympathize more with the lower-class criminal than the upper-class one.

From the least likely of characters, then, Greene models the possibility for political engagement ensuing from a sense of injustice. At the outset, Raven's work as an assassin is strictly an economic choice. Growing in the knowledge that he has been embroiled in a conspiracy to start a European war, however, his apathetic response to his circumstances changes as his personal involvement in the criminal plot becomes clearer, and his feelings of betrayal stronger. The sense of personal injustice he feels against those who are responsible for also betraying countless others into a war scenario equates a cosmopolitan regard for European politics with personal affairs. In other words, Greene reveals that personal politics often share the same concerns and effects with international matters. That Raven gets caught up in an international political conspiracy shows that we are all politically susceptible to the actions of others. Raven's political awakening – in that his actions carry political importance for many nations, for millions of people – illustrates the potential any individual has for affecting others on a cosmopolitan scale.

Greene makes it clear that the crimes of Raven and his secret employer, Sir Marcus, originate from greed. The logic of the assassin devalues human life for ruthless monetary gain. In this way, Raven's crime mirrors his employer's. Sir Marcus fits the modern characterization of the cosmopolitan criminal Greene so often uses: a wealthy businessman respected in his local community hiding vast cosmopolitan criminal conspiracies. One "of the richest men in Europe," he owns Midland Steel (106). His grand wealth affords him political favors and an air of social untouchability. In fact, Marcus hires Raven to start a war so that he can profit from the increased business producing war armaments.²³⁴ Marcus follows modern cosmopolitanism's shirking of nationalism, intending to sell munitions to both sides regardless of endangering England's war efforts. As Cholmondeley tells Raven, there is "more than a half million at stake" (60).

Sir Marcus's obscure origins also add to his cosmopolitan criminal traits:

He spoke with the faintest foreign accent and it was difficult to determine whether he was Jewish or an ancient English family. He gave the impression that very many cities had rubbed him smooth. If there was a touch of Jerusalem, there was also a touch of St. James's, if of some Central European capital, there were also marks of the most exclusive clubs of Cannes. (103)

His ambiguous nationality and ethnicity do not hide the clear class markers of his wealth and privilege. Though his identity provides the local townspeople of Nottwich a compelling mystery for dinner conversation, his current social position insulates him from criminal scrutiny, even with rumors circulating of his criminal past. Ivan Melada

²³⁴ See Melada for his contextualization of the "contemporary publicity given the armaments industry" in the 1930s, particularly for advancing the "image of the armaments maker as fomenter of war" (311).

notes that Greene's presentation of Sir Marcus as an armaments maker and "a foreigner, a cosmopolite, perhaps a Jew" trades on "the thirties' preoccupation with the activities of the merchant of death" in that form.²³⁵ The wealth and status of modern cosmopolitan criminals like Sir Marcus assure their continued criminal success. Because the police will not risk tarnishing the elite's "good names," it can require criminal crusaders like Raven to serve them justice.²³⁶

When Raven shoots Sir Marcus in his Midland Steel offices, the two key crime scenes of the novel become directly linked; the murder, the oncoming war, and Raven's double-cross all stem from Sir Marcus's penthouse office. While there, Raven learns that the Czech War Minister and Sir Marcus came from the same boys' home. They were both orphans like him, only they had managed to climb to the highest positions in business and government through criminal cunning. Raven bristles at Sir Marcus's pattern of betrayal, not only setting up hired guns like him, but also backstabbing his boyhood friend simply in the desire for more money. Sir Marcus confirms that he stood to earn half a million pounds from the war started by Raven's crime, but that even with his millions he stiffed Raven with "two hundred phoney pounds" (164). For Sir Marcus the setup of a common criminal or the murder of a friend was all the same to him, all a part of good business:

"The deaths he had ordered were no more real to him than the deaths he read about in the

²³⁵ Rumors abound that Marcus was Greek, born in a ghetto, a descendant of an "old English family," and had been charged with theft as a youth in Marseilles. The problem was that "everyone knew a lot about Sir Marcus," but "all that they knew was contradictory" and "it wasn't possible to follow any rumour to its source" (105-06).

²³⁶ Sir Marcus uses his friendship and clout with the local police chief Major Calkin to protect his criminal interests. Though Calkin does not know that he assists Marcus in his crimes, the fact that he is unwilling, and even afraid, to stand up to him illustrates the unbalanced security a citizen's wealth grants him in a corrupt society. If Calkin must placate Marcus by doing his personal bidding, the mercenary nature of the police as "guns for hire" also becomes a central point of the novel.

newspapers. A little greed . . . a little vice . . . a little avarice and calculation (half a million against a death), a very small persistent, almost mechanical, sense of self-preservation; these were his only passions” (164). Maria Cuoto argues that Greene’s characterization of Sir Marcus as an internationalist and capitalist “lifts him out of nationality and race to make him the embodiment of the forces of exploitation” (55). We are to see him in the same way we saw the cosmopolitan white-collar criminal Erik Krogh in *England Made Me*: committing crimes at the cosmo-scale protected from criminal suspicion by his socio-economic status. Sir Marcus exhibits the cold calculation of the modern capitalist – mirroring the logic of the assassin – where the bottom-line outweighs decency and regard for human life. Greene portrays the modern villain as the cosmopolitan criminal in the form of the capitalist exploiter of the common man *and* the common criminal.

When Sir Marcus begins to rattle off his international business assets – “the West Rand Goldfields,” “the East African Petroleum Company” – Raven shoots him mid-sentence as the police close in. Raven’s assassination of Sir Marcus achieves the poetic justice the reader desires. The cops never arrest nor charge Sir Marcus for his crimes; the legal authorities remain blind to his crimes until after he has been killed. If not for Raven’s actions stemming from his sense of injustice, Sir Marcus would have earned vast amounts of money with the blood of thousands on his hands. The authorities taken notice only of Raven’s crimes – he fits the profile of the criminal after all – but are not suspicious of Sir Marcus because of his wealth and status. The appearance of criminality, or its non-appearance, directs who and what the legal system focuses on in their pursuit

of criminals. This makes Greene's project of depicting cosmopolitan criminality in the higher ranks of society important for his project of a larger critique of criminal corruption in English society. Greene wants others to be aware of an overlooked class of criminals threatening society. The real villains, his 1930s novels show, are those whose crimes affect people at the cosmopolitan scale and who manipulate the social system as cover for their own underhanded deeds. The make-up of modern society, under a capitalist framework, props up a system where cosmopolitan criminals purchase their immunity from criminal suspicion with prestige and economic power. That a gun can be for sale, that an English assassin can start a war at the behest of a greedy man, reveal the degree to which the criminal corruption of society at the highest ranks has taken hold. The spy, the assassin, and the war-monger, Greene shows, are no longer only government agents. They have moved into the private realm of international trade; they have become criminal assets of cosmopolitan capitalism.

The Confidential Agent (1939)

Greene's most overt "spy thriller," *The Confidential Agent*, follows literary professor turned secret agent D. in his mission to buy coal in England for socialist revolutionaries fighting against a fascist government in an unnamed European country.²³⁷

Robert Lance Snyder argues that the novel elides the "formulaic conventions of earlier

²³⁷ Greene acknowledges in *Ways of Escape* that "the Spanish Civil War furnished the background" for the novel, but "it was the Munich Agreement which provided the urgency" (91). Greene also notes in his Introduction to the novel: "I called them D. and L. because I did not wish to localize their conflict" (xi). His "vague ambition" was to "create something legendary out of a contemporary thriller: the hunted man who becomes in turn the hunter, the peaceful man who turns at bay, the man who has learned to love justice by suffering injustice" (xii).

spy thrillers that ‘localize their conflict,’ thereby defining it along purely ideological lines, while straining toward facile resolutions” (208-09). Greene’s sense of “urgency,” I suggest, came from a desire to warn of the local consequences of nonlocal events; that is, what was happening on the Continent had real political urgency in threatening peace for the people living in England. The novel dramatizes the need to recognize the interrelated political and revolutionary events of the continent with England’s fate. Thus, in this novel, he continues his project of calling attention to the cosmopolitan influence an individual’s crimes can exert on nations.

The success of D.’s side in the civil war depends on his securing the coal contract before his enemies do. While in England he contends with L., the spy for the fascists who is also trying to buy coal from Lord Benditch, owner of the mines. In London, D. works with K., a fellow countryman employed as a teacher at Dr. Bellows’s Entrenationo Language Centre, and the Manageress of his hotel.²³⁸ He does not trust anyone, especially his contacts, because everyone involved in the civil war could be a possible spy and traitor for the other side: “You could trust nobody but yourself, and sometimes you were uncertain whether after all you could trust yourself” (4-5). Foreign agents for both sides litter the London landscape. The atmosphere of mutual suspicion wears on D.

Having lost his wife to a firing squad during his imprisonment for political crimes in his home country, D. has come to terms with his own death and is ready to die at any moment. This suits his role as a confidential agent; not unafraid of death, but recognizing

²³⁸ Greene satirizes the international language Esperanto and its founder’s (L. L. Zamenhof) goals to foster peace among nations through creating a neutral *lingua franca*.

its inevitability, D. coolly operates under constant threat of assassination while in England. The stock elements of the English spy thriller all appear – danger, intrigue, secret identities, betrayal, murder, and the chase – except that Greene once again substitutes a cosmopolitan criminal in the role usually reserved for an English hero. A restaurant manager on the coast accosts D. when he mistakenly takes the car of a drunk English girl to quickly get to London, saying, “I know your sort. Worm your way in on board a boat. . . . You foreigners . . . come over here, get a hold of our girls” (34). D.’s foreignness immediately associates him with criminality, sneaking into the country, preying on local women. Greene shows us what a typical English response to D.’s type looks like, highlighting the knee-jerk response of explaining criminality by a person’s foreignness.²³⁹

D.’s foreignness, however, also equips him with an outsider’s lens with which to view the English culture he encounters. For example, he meets a young chambermaid, Else, at his London hotel. She is mistreated by the hotel manageress (who is a double agent) and considers going into prostitution to make more money. D. reflects on her condition, extrapolating a critique of English “civilization” from her abject condition and the limited prospects she has as a young working-class girl. He compares the chaos of his war-torn country to the veneer of civility in England, and damningly prefers the straightforward barbarity of war over the soft-war waged between classes in England:

²³⁹ D.’s competitor L. does not receive the same hostile response from the English because of his clear aristocratic status. Obsequious to L. but obstructive to D., the English characters’ reactions to these foreigners are largely determined by how their class statuses contribute to their associations with criminality. As with Sir Marcus and Raven in *A Gun for Sale*, Greene draws attention to the additional ways class marks the criminal suspicion of cosmopolitan criminals in *The Confidential Agent*.

If this was civilisation – the crowded prosperous streets, the women trooping in for coffee at Buzzard’s, the lady-in-waiting at King Edward’s court, and the sinking, drowning child – he preferred barbarity, the bombed streets and the food queues: a child there had nothing worse than to look forward to than death. Well, it was for *her* kind that he was fighting: to prevent the return of such a civilisation to his own country. (56)

D. finds the English state-of-affairs despicable. In England Else’s best hopes are to turn to prostitution to eke out a living while oblivious or uncaring citizens walk the high streets, the “crowded prosperous streets,” taking no notice of this “drowning child” and those like her in their midst. England, from D.’s perspective, is ripe for a similar outbreak of civil war his country has experienced resulting from such clear class antagonisms. As he does in *It’s a Battlefield* and *A Gun for Sale*, Greene criticizes the English class system through his criminal outsiders who perceive injustice at the heart of English culture.

Greene’s confidential agent voices a critique too often kept secret, kept confidential, about the state of modern England. While the plot centers on his undercover mission to buy coal, the real product of his espionage is the uncovering of the corruption in English society. Greene transfers the political foreign intrigue of the formal spy thriller to domestic policies and conditions that divide the classes in England between the haves and have-nots. D.’s observations are a prescient warning for what might become of England if it does not address its class antagonisms.

D.’s sympathy and simple kindness for Else lead her to fall in love with him. In an attempt to set him up for a fall, the hotel manageress murders Else and makes it look like a suicide of scorned love, implicating D. Suspected by the police for an immoral relationship with the young woman and unable to produce his passport because it has

been stolen, D. becomes in the eyes of the law “just an undesirable alien” committing crimes in England (61). His situation, as he puts it, has become “a strategical and political – and criminal – one” (155). Adopting the criminal’s role, D. must now fight the English police as well as his enemies. The narrow directive of the police to focus on criminality in strictly legal terms, however, means that they fail to grasp the larger political implications of D.’s activities in England. While they may think they are serving justice because they are pursuing an alien criminal operating in England, in fact they are thwarting what the reader sees as D.’s just mission for his people. Ultimately, the police stand in the way of D.’s honorable mission, and ironically, obscure a grander scale of justice by serving their local interests. Their adherence to judging him through the narrow prism of local criminal law blinds them to the larger project of justice that D. pursues for his own country.²⁴⁰

D.’s quest for justice is motivated by Else’s murder. Her murder, crucially, puts D. over the edge, and forces him to act, marking the turning point in the novel where D. no longer identifies as “The Hunted,” but becomes “The Hunter.” Examining the body of “the dead child,” D. resolves to get revenge on her murderers and his betrayers (130). His personal philosophy discounts divine justice in favor of poetic justice: “You could leave punishment, then, to God . . . just because there was no need of punishments when all a murderer did was to deliver. . . . But he hadn’t that particular faith. Unless people received their deserts, the world to him was chaos, he was faced with despair” (138).

²⁴⁰ D. works for the socialist side in the civil war, fighting for the “poor” – “certain people who’ve had the lean portion for some centuries now” – over the interests of “my country” (67, 68). D. is another of Greene’s socialist heroes fighting against the wealthy and powerful who exploit others in the name of old-fashioned patriotism.

Typical of Greene's heroes, D. is forced to operate outside the realm of divine and criminal justice. He must take it upon himself to track down the villains at the expense of being labeled a criminal himself. And characteristic of Greene's fiction, D. must compete with other cosmopolitan criminals who by comparison are much worse, distinguished by their upper-class interests and their victimization of common citizens.

When D. meets with the coal consortium, he fails to produce the proper credentials because they have been stolen from him. The coal baron, Lord Benditch, will not sign a business contract without assurance that he is dealing with a credited agent. The owners of the mines, naturally, suspect D. is a foreign conman, trying to swindle them out of money. Brigstock warns him, "there's a law in this country against trying to obtain money on false pretences" (106). Unwilling to do business with D., the coal barons decide to grant L. the coal contract. Frustrated, D. resolves to travel directly to the mines in the Midlands and appeal to the workers to strike, telling them that their coal will aid a fascist government that oppresses common workers like themselves in his home country.

He gives his best rabble-rousing speech in the decaying mining town Benditch, named after the owner of the mines. The miners fail to show class solidarity with their fellow laborers abroad, however, saying they look forward to the mines reopening with the new contract, as they have been recently closed due to a lack of demand. One miner asks him, "What's it got to do with us where the coal goes" (200)? D. tells them the coal is not going to Holland as they have been told, but rather to aid the fascists in their war

effort in his home country. He tells them that the only reason why the fascists need English coal is that they have shot all the miners in his country because they refused to work for them. As the miners shuffle away, D. tries one last plea: “Do you want to dig coal to kill children with” (203)? The miners reply: “Aw, shut up” (203). To make matters worse, L. discredits D. by telling the miners he is a criminal wanted by the police. D. fails to convince the miners to strike.

In this compelling scene, Greene shows how personal and local interests divide a common pursuit of justice, and the common socialist cause for laborers. The miners’ questions about why one should care about what happens somewhere else could serve as a refrain for Greene in his crime thrillers. He works to expose the dangers in old-fashioned thinking that puts up false barriers between “over-there” and “over-here.” He writes about cosmopolitan criminals and their crimes to show his readers that events and actions that occur, on the face of things, someplace else or to someone else might actually affect local matters and people in important ways.

In *The Confidential Agent*, Greene transports the insecurity and mutual suspicion of a foreign civil war to the peaceful shores of England, revealing the cosmopolitan extension of foreign politics into the local. D., for example, fails in his mission to secure the coal contract, and all he has to show for his travels to England is a new love interest and a trail of dead bodies. Unintentionally, D.’s commotion at the mines makes the English papers. Their sensational headlines and the stories written about “the civil war being fought out on English soil” make the coal barons back out of the coal contract with

L. due to the risk of such unwanted media scrutiny (232). Astute readers will see that the papers' references to the civil war carry a double meaning in the context of the novel. D.'s civil war, fought between fascists and democratic socialists, revolves around the same class conflict, between the aristocratic establishment and ordinary people, he observes in England. The civil war of real importance fought on English soil is not the fictional civil war of the novel's unnamed country, but rather the class war Greene presents evidence of by way of D.'s travels through England.²⁴¹ Significantly, D. realizes that in England, without the excuse of war, "Treachery darkened the whole world" (122).

The Ministry of Fear (1943)

If *The Confidential Agent* foreshadowed a war-torn England, *The Ministry of Fear* captures the ongoing crimes of cosmopolitan criminals during war. Contributing to what Mia Sprio calls "anti-Nazi modernism," the last Green novel I consider here, *The Ministry of Fear*, reconfigures cosmopolitan criminals as Nazi spies living in England at the height of the Blitz.²⁴² Again, borrowing from classic thriller plots, Arthur Rowe finds himself caught up unwillingly in an international spy plot he must thwart while falsely suspected of murder. While attending a small fundraising fair for the war effort in

²⁴¹ In a way, Greene employs the Mass-Observation methods of Mr. Muckerji in the novel, as well as the travel reportage style popular in the 1930s – such as in George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) and *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) – to record the class conditions of England through D.'s simple observations during his travels from the southern coast of England to the industrial Midlands. The chase narrative gives D. a good excuse to travel all over England and observe and comment on what he sees. The novel ingeniously marries the political critique of ethnographic reportage with the narrative thrust of the popular spy thriller formula.

²⁴² Anti-Nazi modernism, according to Spiro, encompasses novels in the 1930s and 1940s that "examine the various ways in which aspects of Nazi culture are brought to light and challenged" and the ways "different kinds of oppression were interconnected in modern European discourse," especially across Nazi and fascist ideologies (244). These novels "expose the mentality, the discourses of exclusion, and the modern anxieties that led entire countries either to ignore or to facilitate the oppression, subjugation, and annihilation of Others" (244).

Bloomsbury, Rowe wins a prize cake by guessing its weight. Originally intended for a smuggler in a Nazi spy ring in London, the cake contains stolen English naval plans on a roll of film. When they realize they have given the cake to the wrong pickup man, the Nazis, run by the Austrian émigré Willi Hilfe, put an elaborate scheme into motion to retrieve the plans.²⁴³ They first attempt to steal the microfilmed plans from Rowe's lodgings by poisoning him, but this fails when a German bomb demolishes the house during a night raid. Willi then conspires to set Rowe up for murder at a séance to get him out of the way, so they can search for the lost microfilm. Though he does nothing wrong, Rowe is accused of murdering a man who appears to be stabbed at the séance. Rowe flees, thinking the police will be after him, relying on Willi and his sister Anna for assistance.

Willi eventually succeeds in getting Rowe out of the way through a planted bomb that knocks him unconscious, causing him to lose his memory. As Rowe recovers from his wounds and amnesia, Willi arranges for him to stay at his associate's secluded asylum, with the express intention of keeping him there and slowing the recovery of his memory. While at Dr. Forester's asylum he tells Rowe his name is Digby, and prevents him from learning about his real past. The Nazi spies do everything they can to prevent Rowe from remembering his previous predicament and his discovery of their spy ring. However, Rowe eventually escapes the asylum and goes to the police because he suspects criminal malfeasance when a friend of his goes missing there. While he works with the

²⁴³ Willi Hilfe would have been classified under the Aliens Act as an "enemy alien," as an immigrant from a country England was currently at war with. His foreign status would have made him criminally suspicious, even if he was not committing crimes.

police, he begins to recover his memory in bits and pieces and helps them track down Forester, Willi, and the stolen microfilm. Dr. Forester is murdered as the police close in on his asylum. Willi commits suicide in a public bathroom after he brutally reminds Rowe that he too has a criminal past.

Rowe had once been found guilty of mercy-killing his ill wife and sentenced to confinement in a madhouse.²⁴⁴ His murderous act had changed his outlook and his demeanor: “He had not been a criminal when he murdered; it was afterwards that he began to grow into criminality like a habit of thought. . . . There were times when he felt the whole world’s criminality was his” (40). While Rowe struggles to come to terms with his criminal past, Willi embraces his own criminality and justifies it as a necessary part of living in the modern world, telling Rowe: “you have to be prepared these days for criminals – everywhere” (48). In this novel, Greene utilizes his usual criminal dichotomy, where two criminals face off, and the lesser one fights for justice when no one else will.

Rowe’s sense of justice, as we would expect from Greene’s criminal protagonists, does not meet judicial standards, but rather follows a principal of poetic justice. He would “do anything to save the innocent or punish the guilty,” including murder, making him “a murderer – as other men are poets” (89). He feels “haunted by a primitive idea of Justice” conforming to that of a child’s (88). To a child, “justice is measured and faultless as a

²⁴⁴ Fritz Lang’s movie adaptation of the novel, *Ministry of Fear* (1944), starring Ray Milland alters Rowe’s (Stephen Neale in the film) culpability in the murder of his wife. In the film, Neale holds the hand of his wife as she dies a willing participant in assisted suicide. In the novel, Rowe poisons her milk and leaves her alone to die. His extreme sense of guilt in the novel, even after serving a short term of imprisonment in an asylum rather than jail, suggests that his wife was likely unaware of his motives to murder her out of mercy.

clock” (89). It organizes the world around simple truths and a proper balance of everything in its right place: “God is good, the grown-up man or woman knows the answer to every question, there is such a thing as truth” (89). Children’s books reflect this simplified version of experience, where “heroes are simple: they are brave, they tell the truth, they are good swordsmen and they are never in the long run really defeated” (89). Of course, Rowe’s “early childhood had been passed before the first world war,” meaning that his childhood reading consisted of the classic Edwardian thrillers, which “promised a world of great simplicity” (88, 89).²⁴⁵ Diemert recognizes that in *Stamboul Train*, *England Made Me*, and *The Ministry of Fear* Greene “presents the values of the Victorian and Edwardian ages in order to reject them; and, as part and parcel of his approach, he rejects the literary form that promotes those values” (*Thrillers* 161). Thus, Rowe’s predicament brings him to the realization that these thrillers did not reflect the complications of human experience; heroes are not all good, and villains are not all bad, but rather they all commit their own “sins in corners” (89).²⁴⁶ The complicated matter of justice – who deserves to get punished and who doesn’t for his crimes – is not suitably addressed in thrillers that presume their criminal villains to be inherently evil, and therefore deserving of their punishment.

²⁴⁵ Damon Marcel DeCoste argues that “Rowe’s steady adherence to the adventure-tale ethics learned in childhood . . . shows both Rowe and his war-torn world more generally to be repeating their respective pasts in the form of deadly force” (429). For DeCoste, Rowe “experiences history, both biographical and cultural, in terms not only of rupture but also of decline,” so that Rowe’s story points to the larger decline and corruption of English society Greene highlights in his fiction of this era (435).

²⁴⁶ Rowe hasn’t resolved for himself whether justice was served in the sentencing of his own crime. He questions whether or not it was right that he did not serve a long prison sentence for the murder of his wife. Because of his past crime Rowe consistently thinks about his relationship to justice and atonement: “The grand names stood permanently like statues in his mind: names like Justice and Retribution” (33).

This doesn't discount the thriller genre's potential for properly addressing a complicated cosmopolitan world, however. Rowe, for instance, believes that the topsy-turvy logic of a world at war mirrors the fantastic melodrama of contemporary thrillers. It was hard to "take such an odd world seriously," but it must be done (33). To Rowe, the "unreality" of living in England during the blitz seems "like something written," like something out of a dream (63). In fact, one night he dreams about how he would describe modern England to his dead mother, who stands for a lost Edwardian innocence. For Rowe, it seems that criminality and the current war are natural effects of the corruptions of contemporary society. He tells her:

This isn't real anymore. . . . It sounds like a thriller, doesn't it, but the thrillers are like life. . . . You used to laugh at the books Miss Savage read – about spies, and murders, and violence, and wild motor-car chases, but dear, that's real life: it's what we've all made the world since you died. I'm your little Arthur who wouldn't hurt a beetle and I'm a murderer too. The world has been remade by William LeQueux. (65)

Reality has caught up with the picture of lurking criminality in every corner of the world that the thrillers have presented to their readers. Rowe represents the criminal corruption of seemingly upstanding individuals living in a criminally corrupt society.

Greene's novels trace criminal corruption, especially for those who weren't traditionally thought of as possibly being criminal: the wealthy, the successful businessman, the member of the elite. As Willi puts the matter to Rowe: "There's no longer a thing called the criminal class. . . . There were lots of people in Austria you'd have said couldn't . . . well, do the things we saw them do. Cultured people, pleasant

people, people you sat next to at dinner” (46). Ironically, at this point Willi doesn’t know he is talking to Rowe the ex-convict, the murderer. If Willi and his Nazi allies prove that “cultured people” usually held above criminal suspicion can commit atrocities, then Rowe proves the same point from an English perspective. Crucially, Rowe’s criminality does not register on the same cosmopolitan scale as Willi’s, which obviously makes him a more sympathetic criminal character. Nevertheless, his complex criminal past complicates Rowe’s heroic qualities in the context of the classic thriller. If Greene shows us that the villain can also be those people who don’t “look” like criminals, he also shows us that our heroes can be villains too. In reality, as in Greene’s sophisticated late-modernist thrillers, “we cannot recognize the villain and we suspect the hero and the world is a small cramped place. The two great popular statements of faith are ‘What a small place the world is’ and ‘I’m a stranger here myself’” (89).

Notice that the “two great statements of faith” that Greene pronounces for the modern world of the novel are not religious; rather, they describe common feelings of estrangement attributable to cosmopolitan processes that bring us closer to each other and magnify the effects others have on our lives. He explores this contracted sense of global effects in novels about heroes and villains. Thus, this passage cited above serves as a good summary of what Greene’s crime thrillers are all about. He reflects on the claustrophobic cosmopolitanization of the world and dramatizes the bewildering effects of cosmopolitan criminality for overturning simplified notions of absolute evil and

absolute good, injustice and justice.²⁴⁷ Though we might long for the storybook world of classic thrillers with their representations of straightforward heroes and villains, these narratives misrepresent the complex nature of an increasingly integrated world, which puts us in closer proximity to foreign criminals, and in the positions to feel the harmful effects of their cosmopolitan crimes. Greene does not write escapist crime fiction that relies on reassuring classic thriller tropes and characters. Rather, he uses the thriller to ruminate on the difficult matters of justice in a connected modern world. He confronts us with our desire for easy heroes and villains in a genre that consistently delivers on this formula. He frustrates the conventional crime narrative resolutions achieved through the state's judicial apparatus and presents alternative measures of justice realized by sympathetic criminal characters. His thrillers consistently question, rather than affirm, our relationships to the state, to each other, and to criminal others through an interrogation of modern cosmopolitan criminality.

Crime thrillers, Greene tells us in "Subjects and Stories," (1937)²⁴⁸ utilize the tropes of "popular drama . . . in the simplest terms of blood on a garage floor . . . the scream of cars in flight, all the old excitements at their simplest and most surefire," which in the right hands, "can begin – secretly, with low cunning – to develop our poetic drama ('the power to suggest human values')" (66). Greene, here, tells us his purpose for writing thrillers: they secretly communicate human values in the form of popular tales. I

²⁴⁷ Petra Rau links the "uncanny" similarities between Nazi ideology and British Imperialism in the novel: "The old order of British Empire and the New Nazi regime appeared to share a preference for clearly defined structures and a range of more or less arbitrarily defined, undesirable forms of otherness as opposed to the hodgepodge heterogeneity of democracy" (40). Rau reminds us of the political context of Edwardian sentiment that shunned cosmopolitan hybridity I discuss in the previous chapter.

²⁴⁸ Originally published in *Footnotes to the Film* (1937) and collected in *Reflections*.

have identified justice in its many forms as an important “value” he explores in his novels, time after time. When reading Greene, then, we must register the various measurements of justice the narrative imposes on its cosmopolitan criminal characters to discover the subtle critique he frames in terms of poetic justice in his novels.

We can say that Greene is a product of his generation, created by the conflicts of his day, driven to write about the injustices he saw at home and abroad. In the crime thriller, he found a way to surreptitiously influence a wide audience under the guise of a ripping yarn. In order to do so, he had to update the thriller from the classic models of his childhood to incorporate a more nuanced view of crime and criminals. In *Ways of Escape* he reflects on his own disappointment when re-reading the classic thrillers of his childhood because they failed to address the contemporary corruption of modern England:

An early hero of mine was John Buchan, but when I reopened his books I found I could no longer get the same pleasure from the adventures of Richard Hannay. More than the dialogue and the situation had dated: the moral climate was no longer that of my boyhood. Patriotism had lost its appeal, even for a schoolboy, at Passchendaele, and the Empire brought first to mind the Beaverbrook Crusader, while it was difficult, during the years of the Depression, to believe in high purposes of the City of London or of the British Constitution. The hunger marches seemed more real than the politicians. It was no longer a Buchan world. (72)

Perhaps more than any other writer of his time, Greene transformed the late-modernist thriller to reflect a changing picture of cosmopolitan criminality and the complicated responses it brought about for obliquely accusing the Establishment and its members of criminal acts. He cleverly turned the crime thriller into a literary political genre of leftist politics and thought, drawing attention to new class crimes and a new

class of cosmopolitan criminal. Instead of glamorizing criminality, Greene turned the cosmopolitan criminal's glamor and his ill-gotten status and wealth into an object of scorn. He recalibrated the blank condemnation of lower-class and foreign criminality and reoriented the public's condemnation towards those criminals who posed greater threats to the greater social good, raising scrutiny of members of high society immorally profiting from criminal endeavors. If we are not living in Buchan's world, we are living in one still influenced by Graham Greene.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this study I have attempted to present a historical understanding of the politics of modern British fiction in crime literature that engages with cosmopolitan criminality. I have shown that cosmopolitan criminality was a major subject and concern for British authors who wanted to comment on the complex changes in English identity brought on by an influx of immigrants, developments in criminology, and a cosmopolitan expansion of vision and interaction with people at a distance. I have argued that during the late-Victorian and modernist periods British authors produced a wide range of representations of cosmopolitan criminality. A focus on crime fashioned new literary genres including the detective story, slum fiction, anarcho-terrorist novels, crime thrillers, and hardboiled crime stories. As new literary genres emerged to treat the expanding visibility of criminal subjects, new stages and scales of criminal interaction established crime as a dynamic presence in literature and daily life. The increasing importance of representations of crime and criminals, both foreign and domestic, in these texts signaled a larger concern with the rapid changes modernity instigated. Rooted in the developments of criminological theory, state policies and laws, and cultural practices, cosmopolitan criminality's literary depictions explored the expanding horizons of action, identity, and security in the modern age.

The authors examined in this dissertation represent divergent ways of engaging with the political and literary responses to the perceived porousness of the physical and ideological borders of England. However, they share an impulse found in modernist fiction to explore the nature of a crisis of community troubled by modernity's breakdown in traditional models of identity and national belonging. As Ben Highmore argues, "In modernism, estrangement is the constant (unfinished) work that preoccupies cultural producers" (82). Cosmopolitan crime distilled the ordinary sensation of estrangement felt by those exposed to a hostile world that was both shrinking – in the fact that global influences and outsiders were "closer" than ever – and expanding beyond the limits of knowability and control of an individual or nation. One way of coping with the estrangement caused by an encroaching cosmopolitan immensity was to retreat into strong local and national identities and fashion procedures for policing and securing their hard boundaries.

The authors I discuss reacted strongly against these conservative and restrictionist policies that were often supported by traditional depictions of foreign criminals in popular crime narratives. Arthur Morrison, Robert Louis Stevenson, E. M. Forster, Joseph Conrad, G. K. Chesterton, Graham Greene, and others stressed the injustices and dangers of strong nationalist sentiment that sought to exclude "others" based on what they believed to be the exaggerated relationship between foreignness and criminality. They destabilized the simple narratives that argued for resisting outsiders because of their putative criminal and social harm to an already waning and fracturing English national identity. Their critical crime literature draws attention to the complicated nature of

navigating the problems of policing and preventing local and foreign crime while maintaining a just balance between tolerance for others and national security.

Crime literature exerts a strong cultural influence on the ways people think about and react to crime. Crime literature's scenes, characters, and subjects find their way into our everyday thinking about crime with both positive and negative effects. Its themes and tropes shape new ways of recognizing and classifying criminals, determines our imaginative and institutional approaches to the threat of crime, and enables reflection on the limits of the state. Specifically, cosmopolitan criminality in crime literature informs our moral, institutional, and material concerns about our relationship with criminal "others" whose actions influence people's lives from a distance. In this way, cosmopolitan criminality mediates between optimistic sentiment about the flattening and mixing of the modern world and the anxieties about the inherent harms this might bring.

This mingling of hopeful and fearful outlooks characterizes the complex literary reactions to cosmopolitan expansion in modern British literature. Modernity's accompanying sense of everyday deracination and alienation resulted in literary texts that explored the positive and negative material and psychological effects of living as a global citizen in a modern world. Furthermore, as Nels C. Pearson argues, "Interpreting modernist style as a vehicle for such postnational cosmopolitan belonging was central to the production and early critical study of international English-language modernism" (320). Criticism that details the historical significances and assumptions about what cosmopolitanism actually meant for modernists is now catching up with the long-held

critical recognition that modernism was an essentially cosmopolitan artistic movement dependent upon international cultural exchange and transnational affiliation.

Cosmopolitanism's widely held adverse association with crime in the modern period has been unduly ignored, along with the literature modernist authors wrote to subvert the tropes and storylines about foreigners and criminals contained in popular crime literature.

I believe that many modernists wrote to register alienation as commonplace; therefore, strangeness and strangers became more conventional not through the erasure of "otherness" but through their ubiquity. Terry Eagleton writes that British modernists utilized the outsider's perspective and "alternative cultures and traditions" as "broader frameworks against which, in a highly creative tension, the erosion of contemporary order could be situated and partially understood" (15). Cosmopolitan criminality, I suggest, provided authors with the vantage point of the exiled criminal outsider to call into question the state of English civilization against the background of cosmopolitan modernization. For example, as an émigré Conrad questions the xenophobic logic behind the Edwardian Aliens Bills in *The Secret Agent* by depicting the corrupt web of international *and* local politicians, criminals, and police agents that are already a part of the international political fabric of England. His novel demonstrates that new anti-immigration laws will not deter the kinds of small and large-scale crimes they intend to because metropolitan London contains the institutions and individuals that foster local and international criminal conspiracies. Conrad shows that the "foreign" is already pervasive in England, for good and bad.

Thus, crime narratives instigated critiques of the law and its policing and juridical arms, as well as assessed the state of English culture at a time of increased cosmopolitan pluralization and fracturing of English identity and culture. Recognizing the novels' legal backgrounds – slum clearance regulations, tramp laws, Poor Laws, Anti-Aliens Bills, non-extradition policies for foreign anarchists and terrorists, criminal law, and international law – is crucial to understanding their historical and political perspectives. When read together, the legal and cultural contexts of the fiction of this time reflect an uneasy coming-to-terms with the general decentralizing upheavals of modernization: industrialization, globalization, transnationalism, migration, cultural transmission, mass communication, and cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan criminality provided an evocative subject matter for the dangers of modern global dispersal, while offering readymade plotlines and characters that would capture the public's imagination about the thrills of mobility and displacement.

Attending to cosmopolitan criminality in modern British texts reveals the conflicted relationship of many British authors with the laws and attitudes concerning foreigners and criminals. For example, in Greene's late-modernist thrillers, we see that portrayals of wealthy cosmopolitan criminals focus attention on the ingrained corruption of the English legal and social systems and the criminal exclusion of the rich and powerful. He blames the social and legal protections that foster cosmopolitan criminality and suggests considering poetic justice as an alternative means for judging criminal behavior due to the failures of England's justice system. By way of conclusion I will briefly discuss other prominent modernist authors' views on the nature of the English

legal and social system found in their essays and letters, focusing on the injustices and confusion suppositions about cosmopolitan crime generate. I end with a letter written to Conrad's socialist friend R. B. Cunninghame Graham that addresses the two main themes of the dissertation: modernism's engagement with cosmopolitanism and criminality.

Ford Madox Ford ruminates on the capricious nature of English law at the turn of the twentieth century in *The Spirit of the People* (1907), commenting on English law as an eminent "national expression . . . full of theoretic unreason," noting how strange it is that "crimes against property are no longer capital offences to a society that values property and its acquisition over anything else" (137). He also finds it strange that a man might escape with a small fine for bungling an attempt at murder, but will hang if he is successful at carrying it out.

Despite these seemingly logical discrepancies in the law, Ford notes that the English have supreme faith in the workings of their legal system. He sees the public's unflinching response to the "unreason" of the law as indicative of the modern Englishman's acquiescence to the authority and righteousness of the law. Their faith that "the law knows best" reveals an affinity between the law of the land and its people: "English law, like that of the typical Englishman, is singularly unimaginative, is essentially lacking in constructive sympathy" (128). This "almost ferocious lack of imagination" in the "English race," Ford flatly states, leads to their "almost imaginative lack of ferocity" (28). He posits a "sort of mathematical progression" to explain the common English citizen's approach to maintain social docility: "i. I do not enquire into

my neighbour's psychology; ii. I do not know my neighbour's opinions; iii. I give him credit for having much such opinions as my own; iv. I tolerate myself; v. I tolerate him. And so, in these fortunate islands we all live very comfortably together" (28). Thus, Ford presents a picture of a tranquil cultural *nomos* dependent on a characteristic English tolerance for others in spite of the failings of a sometimes unimaginative, unsympathetic, and unreasonable legal system.

Missing from Ford's assessment, however, is the degree to which the "unimaginative" English law and culture justified an unsympathetic anti-cosmopolitanism. His description of the English citizen's forbearing tolerance of his neighbors fails to capture the cultural conditions which encouraged criminal suspicion of foreigners I have attempted to convey in this study. If English law was as unimaginative as the ordinary citizen, as Ford suggests, then my dissertation shows in what ways the imaginative landscape of English literary culture both reinforced and revolted against the dominant narratives about the dangers of criminals and foreigners and the official state agencies and policies that policed them. There was no greater issue in the crime fiction of the modern period than how to protect against the encroaching violations of cosmopolitan criminals *and* the state in private and public life.

When John Galsworthy, a barrister by training, turned his attention to English law, he most often focused on the unreasonable injustices arising from English law's assumption of equality before the law.²⁴⁹ In his essay "Justice" (collected in *A Commentary* 1908, and first appearing in the *Albany Review*), he makes it evident that the

²⁴⁹ His successful plays of the period *The Silver Box* (1906) and *Justice* (1910) explore this theme.

impartiality of English law “made without fear of favour, for the protection and safety of us all . . . founded on justice and equity” actually favors the very rich and the very poor when it comes to paying for recourse to the law – divorce in this specific case (247). The destitute working man or woman who is not granted a reduced rate for legal services as a pauper cannot afford the law’s remedy as a man of sufficient means could.²⁵⁰ For Galsworthy, the “great principle of payment . . . underlies all justice in a greater or a less degree” because in reality “[i]t is money that dictates the measure of justice and its methods” (250). Equity under the law, he makes clear, is only “abstract justice” when justice has a price tag too many can’t afford.

The “cost of justice” and the corrupting influence of money in the legal system were common subjects of ridicule in the fiction and essays of the period. In his essay “England Your England” (1941), George Orwell comments that everyone recognizes that there is one law for the rich and one for the poor, but still the English hold on to “the respect for constitutionalism and legality, the belief in ‘the law’ as something above the State and above the individual, something which is cruel and stupid, of course, but at any rate *incorruptible*” (260). He continues, “In England such concepts as justice, liberty, and objective truth are still believed in. They may be illusions, but they are very powerful illusions. The belief in them influences conduct, national life is different because of them” (261). Orwell, like Ford, identifies the English public’s stubborn obstinacy in the belief in the law in the face of its unequal administration. Moreover, he acknowledges

²⁵⁰ If someone could prove that “he is not worth the sum of five-and-twenty pounds” he was able to sue for divorce at a reduced rate *in forma pauperis* (245).

that “until some deep change has occurred in the public mind” about the true nature of people’s relationships to the law, there cannot be any change in their understanding of England and their relationship to the state (261).

The authors I have discussed tried to shake the public from its dogged faith in the English law to be fair and just, especially in matters concerning the criminalization of foreigners. They portray the insidious creep of anti-cosmopolitan stemming from the legal code as well as many popular crime narratives of the day. Their works combat and critique what they see as the unreasonable and unfair treatment of others, who, because of their identities and origins, are assumed criminal. Galsworthy, for example, writes about the injustices foreigners receive in English law courts in his essay “The Grand Jury” (from *The Inn of Tranquility* 1912). He recounts his time serving on a Grand Jury and hearing 87 cases over the course of a few days, drawing attention to the blatant disregard of justice committed in the name of English values. The cases range from larceny, to arson, to rape, and murder, but Galsworthy details the case that stood out to him because of its gross injustice. Working as a prostitute, a German immigrant from Hamburg was given a five-pound note by her English customer for her services, and she was compelled to give three sovereigns as change as her set price was only two pounds. Upon realizing that the note was a forgery, she brought a case against the man for defrauding her of three pounds. After hearing evidence from the woman and the serving detective, the “purifiers of Society” sitting on the Grand Jury talk themselves into throwing the case out, even though they are all quite certain the man had in fact defrauded her. His “mean trick,” they reason, is “too irregular” and small a thing for the law to consider, and furthermore, it

would be “very dangerous – goin’ on the word of these women,” “specially the foreign ones” (101-02).

Galsworthy reckons that the jury “save two or three” were acting under some “secret compact to protect Society” from the likes of “these women” and thus could not “possibly recognise them as within the Law . . . without endangering the safety of every one of us” (102). The problem for the jury is maintaining a sense of a proper English “us” defined against the illegal and foreign, embodied by the immigrant prostitute. The jurors don’t want to set a “dangerous” precedent for establishing the equality of these types of people (woman, foreigner, and prostitute) under the law because it “would be exceedingly awkward if their word were considered the equal of our own” (103). Clearly, justice is undone by the Grand Jury’s attention to the identity of the foreign woman, rather than the criminal act of the Englishman.

Galsworthy runs into the woman in the halls of the courts where she vents her frustration to him:

I work ‘ard; Gott! how I work hard! And there gomes dis liddle beastly man, and rob me. And they say: ‘Ah! yes; but you are a bad woman, we don’ trust you—you speak lie.’ But I speak druth, I am nod a bad woman—I gome from Hamburg. . . . I do not know this country well, sir. I speak bad English. Is that why they do not drust my word? . . . Will you please dell me sir, why they will not give me the law of that dirty little man? (105-06)

For Galsworthy, this “inarticulate outburst of a bitter sense of deep injustice” reflects the fact that foreigners were treated unfairly by the court system and by the privileged Englishmen who were able to serve on juries and who saw their role as moral arbiters of

their society. The woman suspects that because she is foreign and speaks bad English the men on the jury did not trust her. The irony of this, as we know, is that the jury members did trust her despite her bad English, but still discounted her because they want to reserve English law for those they consider to be exhibiting proper Englishness. Her mistake is the presumption that the English law will apply to her the same as anyone, or better, that the English will apply the law fairly to her without prejudice.

Galsworthy's transposition of her muddled final question pinpoints this very injustice, as she seeks to understand why she hasn't been given the same recourse to the law as the Englishman. What we translate her meaning to be – why doesn't the law punish this criminal? – differs from the truth of what she says in her broken English: why don't the English apply the law that protects this Englishman the same for me? If the criminal is protected only by virtue of her incapability of living up to what the jury considers Englishness, then Galsworthy shows the dereliction of duty on the jury's part by not judging the case by legal standards alone. Clearly, he draws attention to the capricious nature of criminal juries in England and their prejudicial administration of legal justice in criminal courts. Galsworthy is left speechless at the woman's question and is "quite unable to explain to her how natural and proper it all was" (107).

While Galsworthy aims his critique at the unjust prejudices of the common Englishman, G. K. Chesterton blames the government and magistrates for the sorry state of affairs in "The Anarchy from Above" (collected in *Eugenics and Other Evils* 1922). He argues that England had "suddenly and quietly gone mad," befitting an "insane"

modern world, “not so much because it admits the abnormal as because it cannot recover the normal” (25). He ties the sense of social anarchy to the confusion and abuse of the law, stemming from cosmopolitan excess and the fracturing of traditional English values, evidenced by the “general fact” that “the definition of almost every crime has become more and more indefinite, and spreads like a flattening and thinning cloud over larger and larger landscapes” (26). The inability to label, distinguish, and control crime with any certainty was a result of the pressures of cosmopolitan criminality. The seat of anarchy, for Chesterton, then, is not “in the populace” but rather, “in the organ of government,” and particularly with the magistrates “who cannot distinguish between cruelty and carelessness,” “opinion and slander,” “a mad and a sane man” (28). Chesterton recognized that cosmopolitan corruptions had crept their way into the courts to the detriment of English society. The courts’ failures to distinguish clearly between criminals and noncriminals, between crime and order, had resulted in the anarchic criminalization of society.

Decades earlier Joseph Conrad had come to a similar conclusion about the criminalization of society. Shortly after completing *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad wrote (8 February 1899) to his friend R. B. Cunninghame Graham describing society’s criminal essence: “Man is a vicious animal. His viciousness must be organised. Crime is a necessary condition of organised existence. Society is fundamentally criminal—or it would not exist” (160).²⁵¹ The short lines read like a logical progression from a

²⁵¹ Conrad is responding to Graham’s invitation to attend a “peace meeting” organized by the Social Democrats Federation to hear him speak. Conrad says he is “not a peace man, nor a democrat” and argues against the socialist propaganda spoken at such meetings that “weaken the national sentiment,” believing

Hobbesian “first principle” of human viciousness – implying brutishness *and* vice – to a natural conclusion in social criminality (160). Conrad is not commenting on a criminal class, however, nor is he talking of specific criminal deeds. Instead, he is identifying the criminalization of society as he sees it, describing the corruption that seeps into its very foundations and stems from the indispensable vices of the people that society arranges into an aggregate. Not so much a Durkheimian recognition of crime’s positive functioning in societies, Conrad expresses his personal belief in “the idea of nationhood” as “a lost cause,” upholding the “cruel truth” that any society is criminal from its inception (160-61).²⁵² Conrad reassures his socialist friend that he has not abandoned his “fidelity” to the lost cause of the nation – “an idea without a future” – even though he recognizes that strict national allegiance demonstrates a kind of “logic that leads to madness” (161).

Conrad counters Graham’s belief in “humanity” and “international fraternity” and believes his friend’s Socialist allegiances to a universal coalition of the working class are misguided: “Fraternity means nothing unless the Cain-Abel business. Thats [*sic*] your true fraternity” (159). Conrad is sympathetic to the plight of the working class; his disagreement is with Graham’s misplaced trust in Socialism’s cosmopolitan approach – preferring to think in terms of international affiliation beyond national allegiances and

“international fraternity” to be an “illusion” (158-59). Ludwig Schnauder identifies an intellectual resemblance in this letter to theories from Nietzsche, Freud, Darwin, Huxley, and particularly Schopenhauer’s idea that “the role of the state could not be to improve citizens but only to restrain them . . . to protect individuals against themselves and each other” (91).

²⁵² In an earlier letter to Graham (23 January 1898) that initiates their exchange on these issues, Conrad writes that “Into the noblest cause men manage to put something of their baseness . . . Every cause is tainted. . . . I belong to the wretched gang. We all belong to it” (25).

determinism – as a solution for society’s problems. Graham participates in the nascent brand of cosmopolitanism that emerged in the Modernist period that, according to Jessica Berman, resisted “the consolidation of community identity in the form of the patriarchal nation-state,” paving the way for a “dual positioning of community and cosmopolitanism” in “new realms of non-national affiliation . . . that resist the consolidation of force, take strength on the margins, and insist that a fluctuating being in-common be the source of any political common being” (200). For Conrad, though, shifting from the nation-state to another political model or perspective only shifts the scope of the set of problems that always arise because any society, no matter how it is conceived, will always have criminal aspects. In this way, Conrad understood cosmopolitanism’s criminality and its implications for politics, social causes, and literature. Conrad recognizes the intermediary role “society” has to play as both an object of crime and as the author of criminality.

Moreover, Conrad believed that the nation-state could serve its citizens, or at least that it was less “criminal” than other political models, such as those he encountered in the Russian and Belgian colonial systems. He ascribed more to what H. G. Wells described as “the essential idea of nineteenth-century nationalism” and the “legitimate claim’ of every nation to complete sovereignty, the claim of every nation to manage all its affairs within its own territory, regardless of any other nation” (962).²⁵³ As an exiled son of a

²⁵³ As a Fabian and “liberal cosmopolitan” working for greater unification of world affairs, Wells argues that the ideals of nineteenth century nationalism are out-of-date: “The flaw in this idea [of national sovereignty] is that the affairs and interests of every modern community extend to the uttermost parts of the earth” (962). See John S. Partington for commentary on Wells’s cosmopolitan advocacy of a world government system.

convicted, radical Polish nationalist, Conrad was forever holding out hope that a unified and independent Polish nation would form in his lifetime.²⁵⁴ Therefore, Conrad judged Graham's political cosmopolitanism, while noble, as impractical and illusory.

Graham and Conrad represent two competing views on cosmopolitan thinking in relation to political action at the turn of the twentieth century. However, as I have argued, cosmopolitanism was seen as more than a (revolutionary or foolhardy) political and philosophical approach. Cosmopolitan debates flourished in the arts and divided the artists and intellectuals in Britain during the first decades of the twentieth century. Paul Peppis notes that in the Modernist period, "as self-styled cosmopolitan intellectuals advocate increasing Anglo-European contacts to advance England's art, literature, and cultural work to promote peaceful international exchange and introduce new continental movements into the English cultural sphere, programmatically patriotic critics oppose such contact as a source of danger, strive to protect the assimilation of 'alien' culture, and urge English cultural purity and British military supremacy" (53-54). Therefore, cosmopolitanism set the terms for the debate about the larger cultural traditions that art and literature should engage and the cultural work it could perform. Naturally, the literature took on this debate and the authors' ideas made their way into their plots and

²⁵⁴ In an essay originally published in *Fortnightly Review* (1919) and later collected in *Notes on Life and Letters* (1924) Conrad described Poland's dissolution in 1795 as the "Crime of Partition," "the Crime being the murder of a State and the carving of its body into three pieces" (118). We see Conrad's nationalist pride in his praise of the peaceful Union Treaty of 1413 and the exceptionalism of the "Polish State" which offered "a singular instance of an extremely liberal administrative federalism which, in its Parliamentary life as well as its international politics, presented a complete unity of feeling and purpose" (120). Moreover, Conrad disdains the "internationalists" and their "sinister purpose" of disrupting efforts for resolving the "Polish question" with statehood (121). From Conrad's particular perspective we can understand his distrust of internationalists and their cosmopolitan approach and his faith in "the nationalist temperament, which is about the only thing on earth that can be trusted" (129).

stylistic forms, as well as in the minds and mouths of their characters. We can take the practitioners and defenders of the flourishing literary movements of the Modernist period at some level as engaging with not only the common concerns of literary aesthetics but also debates about to and for whom they were writing: an insular local readership, the nation, or a broader global humanity.

As I have argued, for the wider English public cosmopolitanism was also associated with notions of criminality in the literature of this era. Therefore, for the expanding reading British public cosmopolitanism pointed to the aggravations and anxieties produced by the complicated expanding relations between nations, between natives and immigrants, between locals and outsiders, and between law-abiding citizens and criminals. From the criminal slummers to anarchist-terrorist conspirators to international crooks, assassins, spies, and white collar criminals, cosmopolitanism in modern British literature indexed the new threats and risks of international criminality opened up by changes in travel, technology, and international statecraft. Cosmopolitanism was more than a positive alternative to the vices of the nation-state as authors like Graham and Leonard Woolf argued in this period.²⁵⁵ As the works I have discussed demonstrate, cosmopolitanism's criminality was also keenly felt.

I have shown that writers used cosmopolitan criminality to strengthen social cohesion and codify an idea of "Englishness," as well as to exaggerate and institutionalize the criminal threats of outsiders (broadly based on criminal identity).

²⁵⁵ See Leonard Woolf's *International Government* (1916) for his ideas on the formation of a cosmopolitan form of international government and law similar to that conceived by Immanuel Kant in "To Perpetual Peace, A Philosophical Project."

Disputes on the practicality and usefulness of a cosmopolitan approach, like those between Conrad and Graham, played out against the backdrop of an already existing insistence on the cosmopolitanization of criminality. The responses to the new dangers of cosmopolitan crimes, therefore, involve what Roland Robertson has identified as “the conceptual bundle consisting of security, alterity, transparency, and surveillance” (400). These issues revolve around practices of espionage and “securitization” not only “confined to the institutional realm” but also “may be seen to be operating at all ‘levels’ and in all spheres of modern life” (401). Thus, the state’s responses – political, policing, and juridical – were increasingly integrated with policies and practices that engaged crime at an international level and encouraged individuals to be suspicious of outsiders and diligent in their duty to secure the nation. Crime fiction’s popularity reminded people that criminals were everywhere and inculcated a hypersensitivity to suspicious characters who might be criminals, with cosmopolitan foreignness as the surest sign of this potential. Crime fiction authors used the discourse of cosmopolitan criminality to critique the anti-cosmopolitan policies and attitudes that they found harmful to the fair treatment and acceptance of outsiders, new outlooks, and faith in the overriding benefits of cosmopolitan modernization.

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