

Abstract

The mid-Victorian world was overrun with commodities. In the wake of the Great Exhibition of 1851, spectacular display of commodity goods was not only a retail strategy, but it also prioritized visual consumption as a means to interact with objects. In this thesis, I examine gendered commodity consumption and visibility in Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*. These authors each respond to the demand for visual consumption of commodities, representing female characters whose consumer habits challenge the boundaries between subject and object. I approach all three cases through Marx's theory of the commodity fetish. For the women in these texts, fetishizing a commodity by projecting an agency onto an object creates a delusion that affects their engagement with the real world. Similarly, by displaying fetishized objects like jewelry on their body, these women are themselves visually consumed and objectified. This objectification is dangerous, as it counters their status as subjects and threatens to diminish their subjectivity. Each text also explores a solution to the alienating effects of commodity fetishism. I explore sympathy, a term used consciously by George Eliot, as a way of resisting the logic of a capitalist market that enforces patriarchal norms of gender, class, and sexuality by opening the possibility for affective relationships. Visibility is central to this project, and I discuss the illustrated editions of each of these works as a means of visually representing the text to readers. I explore how illustrations offer their own interpretation of the text they accompany to critique visual consumption within the narrative.

**Entering a “Goblin Market:”
Visuality, Commodities, and Gendered Desire in Mid-Victorian Fiction**

Kate Alanna Snyder

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Introduction

When, in George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, Hetty Sorrel is gifted a pair of earrings by Arthur Donnithorne, she falls in love with the sight of them. She admires them in their "pretty little box lined with white satin" and peers at herself in the mirror as she wears them (Eliot 234-35). Yet Eliot's narrator questions this consumer behavior, warning the reader not to "say that Hetty, being very pretty, must have known that it did not signify whether she had on any ornaments or not; and that moreover, to look at ear-rings which she could not possibly wear out of her bedroom could hardly be a satisfaction...you will never understand women's natures if you are so excessively rational" (Eliot 234). As a commodity, Hetty's earrings have no use value beyond their display on her body, and even this display cannot be successful, since she cannot wear the earrings outside of her bedroom without interrogation and judgement from her family. Her meetings with Arthur, her lover, have been kept secret, and it would have been inappropriate for Hetty, the daughter of a farmer, to be meeting with and receiving gifts from a man of a higher social class.

When Eliot's narrator condemns commodity consumption, such visual consumption is gendered feminine through the narrator's account of "women's natures" and is also declared irrational. Consuming commodities, whether by displaying or looking at them, is a futile means to satisfy one's desire, but commodity obsession is represented and interrogated in texts throughout the mid-Victorian period. In addition to exploring Hetty's relationship with commodities in *Adam Bede*, this project also examines these relations in Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*. Despite the texts' different genres, each represents women consumers: sisters Laura and Lizzie in Rossetti's poem, Hetty in Eliot's realist novel, and the heroine Rachel in Collins's sensation novel. These authors use each woman's

commodity consumption to question the relationship between subject and object. Each character discovers the dangers not only of attempting to satisfy their consumer desire through commodities, but of the visuality inherent to such consumption.

Marx's theory of the commodity fetish is key to understanding the relationship between visuality and commodity consumption. When seen as a fetish in a Marxist sense, the commodity becomes not merely a symbol or ideal, abstracted from its use-value, but an agent itself that erases its social context and thus the labor through which it was produced. Marx claims that in this erasure, "the social relationships of [producers'] instances of private labor appear not as direct social relations in which human beings are connected by their work, but as what is in fact the case here: things mediate the relations among people, while there are social relations among things" (49). As a result, commodities transcend tangibility and become "supersensuous," as Marx demonstrates using a table: a wooden table "isn't any less made up of wood for having been worked on, and the wood remains an ordinary sensuous thing. But the moment the table begins to act as a commodity, it metamorphoses into a sensuous supersensuous thing" (Marx 48). As a result, objects seem to be imbued with magic or mystical powers that enchant the consumer (Marx 49). Although purchasing and possessing an object may temporarily allow the consumer a sense of achievement, accomplishment, or satisfaction, it ultimately feeds their desire for further consumption. The authors of the texts I examine critique the irrationality of commodity fetishism, exposing the fact that a fetishized object cannot have magical properties: in fact, the commodity fetish amplifies a consumer's desires beyond their control, rendering these desires transgressive because they cannot possibly be satisfied. For the women in these texts, their enchantment by commodities can only harm them by creating delusions or illnesses that distance them from reality.

Yet these authors also, to some extent, remove blame from these women consumers. Commodity fetishization was inescapable in mid-Victorian England, which was saturated by the display of commodity goods. Fundamental to the pervasiveness of this saturation was the Great Exhibition of 1851, a “monument to spectacle” that displayed tens of thousands of objects to the British public in the specially built Crystal Palace (Richards 3). Designed to demonstrate the strength and progress of British industry and empire, the Great Exhibition created the “impression that commodities were running riot” (Richards 30). This overwhelming visual impression solidified the connection between commodity and display. Thomas Richards argues that “[t]he Great Exhibition succeeded precisely because it elevated the commodity above the mundane act of exchange” (39). Display encouraged visitors to imagine the objects in their own homes, yet in the absence of a price tag, the consumer could only gaze at the objects’ sensuous qualities and fantasize about their value. Erika Rappaport argues that the Great Exhibition taught its six million visitors how to take pleasure simply in looking at objects, thus leading a country to fetishize objects on display (28). The Great Exhibition developed and refined spectacle as a “cultural form for the representation of things” (Richards 54). Thus, spectacle became a means of constructing, disseminating, and perpetuating national ideologies that connected the strength of the British empire with a new logic of visual consumption. When I discuss spectacle through the rest of this thesis, I am referring to this kind of extravagant, ostentatious display that encourages fetishization of the objects commodified and offered for visual consumption.

Spectacle found its way into department stores as they emerged in the 1860s and 1870s, utilizing visual representation as a retail strategy. Window shopping increasingly became an activity in itself, specifically for women, who pursued not only the goods department stores offered for purchase but also the spectacle they presented. Women’s identity as a consumer was

challenged as “shopping emerged as a fully articulated form of leisure” in the 1860s (Lysack 2). Women’s presence in the public sphere, contradictory to their idealized role as “angel of the house,” created a perception that their commodity consumption was compulsive; they navigated the marketplace as a result of an unchecked desire for excess that mimics the transgressive desires evoked by commodity fetishism. In advertising and self-presentation, retailers created and disseminated a new vision of the economic woman, in which “the public and private were seen as overlapping and interconnected territories held together by a rational and moral female shopper” (Rappaport 36). Commercial spaces increasingly encroached on the domestic, and the blending of these two spheres enabled women to simultaneously occupy the position of “angel of the house” and of economic, public consumer.

However, women’s presence in a market that functions through visual consumption could easily transform them into an object of others’ gaze, likening them to the commodities on display. In the literary texts I examine, practices of visual consumption can be dangerous for the women performing them. Jewelry like Hetty’s earrings are commodities meant to be put on display on a woman’s body. But since this display makes women’s bodies objects of others’ gaze, visual consumption can lead to women’s objectification. Commodifying women through this objectification blurs the line between subject and object much like fetishizing a commodity bestows onto an object capacity for action. Krista Lysack claims that, historically, “the Victorian women shopper contested a traditional understanding of the self as distinct from objects” (11). Rossetti, Eliot, and Collins represent this breakdown in different ways and to different extents. As their characters are objectified, their status as subjects of their own experiences is threatened. These women are unable to fully engage with the world, whether through a fatal illness that resembles extreme apathy, a fantasy that makes the impossible appear real, or “hysterical”

behavior understood as transgressive for its extreme breach of etiquette. This loss of connection with reality may stem from these women's individual fetishistic relationships with objects, but in each case, the objectifying male gaze ultimately guarantees their altered subjectivity.

Each text, however, proposes sympathy as a model of forming relationships that are not facilitated by commodities, which allows women to maintain their full subjectivity. These authors mobilize sympathy differently, but in each text sympathy opens up different possibilities and ways of connecting with others. I draw much of my understanding of sympathy from Audrey Jaffe, who theorizes a connection between sight, or spectacle, and sympathy, as well as Rae Greiner, who conceives of sympathy as imaginative labor. Both build on Adam Smith's conception of sympathy in *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in which sympathy is an act of imagination. Sympathy requires mediation between the sympathizer and the object of their sympathy, which occurs by imagining oneself in the place of another. Yet the act of looking at another can inhibit the ability to sympathize. Merely witnessing another's suffering may evoke a feeling, but sympathy is in the act of reflecting between your experience and another's, not in the experience of this feeling itself.¹ Similarly, in her introduction to *Communities of Care*, Talia Schaffer proposes care as an active practice, rather than an appeal to feeling. Though she contrasts care with sympathy, claiming that, because care is an action, it can be subject to regulations that sympathy cannot, her understanding of care is nevertheless helpful to frame sympathy as a form of active, imaginative labor (Schaffer 7). Schaffer argues that George Eliot's emphasis on "the need to learn to think through others' perspectives" demonstrates "a displacement of self that matches core tenets of modern care ethics" (25). As Eliot developed her conception of sympathy, she ultimately explored a kind of care similar to that explored by Schaffer (Schaffer 25). This perspective-taking, when done through active reflection, attention,

¹ Greiner argues for a version of this in "Sympathy Time: Adam Smith, George Eliot, and the Realist Novel."

and acts of caregiving, is the mode of sympathy that I discuss in relation to Eliot, Rossetti, and Collins.

Additionally, sympathy deprioritizes the role of sight in forming real relationships. Seeing another in a worse-off position than oneself (Jaffe uses the example of walking past a homeless person), may actually promote disidentification with the object of one's sympathy. Citing Kaja Silverman, Jaffe claims that "[t]he act of looking...fills the spectator with the anxiety of bodily contagion, the fear of inhabiting the beggar's place" ("Introduction" 5). Jaffe links sympathy with Victorian capitalist economics, arguing that "Victorian representations of sympathy are...specular, crucially involving the way capitalist social relations transform subjects into spectators of and objects for one another" ("Introduction" 8). If spectacle and visual consumption objectifies, sight encourages one to treat another as an object without active reflection on their suffering. In a system that fosters commodity fetishism, human connections are lost as a consumer's interest in commodities usurps their personal relationships. While the texts I examine do exemplify this capitalist way of seeing, these authors recognize the dangers it poses and explore sympathy as an alternative way of relating to people that resists commodity and economic relations, whether through feelings of kinship, solidarity, or queer desire.

Following each chapter, I include a discussion of the illustrations from the first illustrated edition of each work. Illustrations allow a text to be consumed visually by the reader, and I am interested in how they interrogate visual consumption within the story they accompany. Foundational to my approach is the idea that the relationship between text and image is more than merely mimetic; the illustrations constitute their own interpretation of the text. In the cases of *Adam Bede* and the first British illustrated edition of *The Moonstone*, the texts were illustrated multiple years after the novels' original publications, further enforcing the idea of the illustrator

as critic. Julia Thomas describes this connection: “[m]eanings are generated...in the very interaction between the textual and visual, the points at which they coincide and conflict. These meanings, moreover, are highly political because they are bound up in the cultural events and assumptions that mark the moments of their creation and circulation” (Thomas 15). Through visual commentary, illustrators provide a new way to understand the text.

The points of contrast between text and image allow illustrations to “launch their own independent narratives” (Kooistra, *Artist* 20). Points of similarity are moments that “seek to produce a single harmonious composition by adding their individual voice” (Kooistra, *Artist* 20). In either case, the artist’s voice is distinct from the author’s, and I treat it as such in my investigation. Even seemingly faithful illustrations actively affect the text and shift its meaning, since the duplication of a moment in the text through an image amplifies this moment, and this amplification is itself a form of criticism or commentary on the material of the text (Kooistra, *Artist* 16). Like the author, the illustrator controls exactly how the viewer can consume by controlling what the viewer can access, and they also have the ability to make things, and people, a spectacle. If, as Kooistra claims, “[t]he visual maintains its individual integrity by answering the verbal with its own material form” (Kooistra, *Artist* 20), the illustrations must be examined in their own right for the ways they represent visuality and determine their own consumption.

Between the mid 1850s and 1870s, book illustration moved away from a decorative function and towards a textual interpretive one. This period, considered the golden age of Victorian book illustration, marks a style that combines earlier caricature with a movement towards photographic realism (Golden 94). Each of the images I examine were published during this period. The Sixties aesthetic was “one of ‘poetic naturalism’, a means of representing deep feeling which was still rooted in observation of the ‘real’ world” (Goldman and Cooke 1). As a

“flexible form,” the aesthetic encompasses a range of subjects and individuals’ styles, used to depict domestic realism (appropriate, therefore, for *Adam Bede*), idyllic ruralism, or social observation (Goldman and Cooke 2). The “commitment to naturalism and feeling” that characterizes the style privileged “close-ups over panoramic views, and an attention to figures over background” (Golden 93).

The Sixties illustration style and aesthetic are appropriate for my project, as they developed alongside the changes in book production determined by the Great Exhibition. The illustrated books with artistic bindings displayed at the Great Exhibition projected such books as art objects, or commodities to be appreciated through visual consumption. The Pre-Raphaelites, themselves Sixties illustrators, were interested in the unity in layout, illustration, printing, and binding in bookmaking to create this aesthetically valuable artistic product (Golden 104). Dante Gabriel Rossetti, an artist who helped found the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, produced two illustrations for his sister Christina’s “Goblin Market,” which I examine in the first chapter. As an illustration style that evolved as a response to Victorian habits of visual consumption, reading Sixties illustrations as a commentary on the texts they accompany provides crucial insight into visuality within the texts.

My first chapter examines commodity and sympathy in Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market,” first published in *Goblin Market and Other Poems* in 1862. Rossetti analogizes consumer desire with sexual desire, and she depicts the marketplace as essential for the development of these desires. Though these desires indicate subjectivity, the goblins threaten Laura’s status as a subject when they demand that she exchange a lock of her hair for their fruit, an act that literally makes her an object. Rossetti challenges the duality between subject and

object, and she theorizes sisterhood, similar to the conception of sympathy discussed above, as a solution to entering the market while avoiding objectification.

I return to the example of Hetty's earrings in my second chapter, which focuses on Hetty's relationship with commodities in *Adam Bede* (1859). Her love of finery feeds her wish to become an upper class lady, which is an impossibility and, for Eliot, a condemnable transgression of strict class boundaries. She pursues her own objectification, understanding a lady as an object of display, rather than a subject that labors. As her desire for commodities usurps her desire for Arthur, she is swept up in a delusion that alienates her from those around her and is intensified by her objectification. Eliot's exploration of sympathetic realism offers a fuller conception of sympathy than that in "Goblin Market," and it emphasizes affective connection as something real that can oppose the irrational delusion of commodity fetishism.

The final chapter traces the systems of value that adhere to a single object, the titular diamond of *The Moonstone*, through its circulation in multiple cultural and economic markets. Through the diamond, Wilkie Collins explores the interrelations between British imperialism and the capitalist market economy I have discussed so far. The Moonstone is treated as fetish, objectifying jewelry, and commodity, and by representing the recontextualization of a single object from a cultural, religious signifying system into British imperial capitalism, Collins exposes the violence of colonization as well as the interdependence between exchange value and visibility. Collins also introduces a colonial aspect to sympathy that opens up possibilities for desire not only independent of commodities, but distanced from the legacy of colonial violence as well.

Dangers of the Marketplace: Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market"

Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" provides insight into the site, and sight, of the compulsive shopping habits that troubled mid-Victorian gender norms, as well as the type of display of commodity goods that, as Rossetti argues, proved dangerous to women consumers. The sisters in the poem encounter a market directed by goblin merchants evidently fraught with danger, and they model different experiences inside the market. Laura exchanges her hair, and by extension her body, for fruit she consumes inside the market, and she succumbs to illness once she leaves. Lizzie, by contrast, attempts to perform a typical market transaction and exchange silver currency for fruit that she intends to bring back to her sister at home. The goblins refuse this transaction, assaulting Lizzie to force her to consume the fruit within the market. The goblin marketplace is inherently dangerous to women. Its reliance on visibility, in particular the spectacular display of commodities, leads to the objectification of women consumers; by entering the market, these women are commodified. At the same time, however, I argue that negotiating the goblin market space is necessary, and inevitable, for women to experience desire that affirms their subjectivity and individuality. "Goblin Market" provides a model for the acceptable types of sight, or visual consumption, that enable women to safely navigate perilous economic spaces and escape objectification while developing a desire that marks them as an individual subject.

Commodity Consumption and Spectacular Display

The poem begins with a list of twenty-nine fruits, instantly forcing readers to experience the abundance and spectacle of the goblin market. Readers are called in by the goblins' cry, then immediately see the

Apples and quinces
Lemons and oranges
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries; (Rossetti lines 5-14).

As this is how readers are first introduced to the poem as a whole, the lack of additional context encourages readers themselves to isolate these fruits to see them only for their potential to be consumed. As the list grows in length, the types of produce grow more complex, becoming multi-syllabic or hyphenated and ultimately including adjectives and epithets that increase their value as consumable commodities, like the “[r]are pears and greengages” or “[f]igs to fill your mouth” (Rossetti 23, 28). This market overwhelms its visitors; this is a world in which consumer desire is central, so strong that such desire is fostered in readers as well as characters. Yet, like Laura and Lizzie, readers do not receive further context for these goods, including information regarding how they were produced: they are “[f]ruits which that unknown orchard bore” (Rossetti 135). The way in which the fruits are listed demonstrates their “abstraction from their own physical properties and origins of their production” (Mendoza 918).

This decontextualization pushes readers to see the fruits as commodity fetishes in the Marxist sense. For Marx, as the commodity itself erases its origins of production, it gains the capacity to affect the consumer's engagement with objects; relationships between people become relationships between things. This creates the illusion that things can magically take on a life of

their own. Just as he describes the commodity fetish as “phantasmagoric,” and having an “enigmatic character” that comes from the object itself (Marx 49, 48), the fruits become almost characters in themselves even before Laura and Lizzie are introduced. With no image of the goblins selling them and no account of their origin, the fruit itself reaches out to the audience, instantly creating a world where commodities have a social quality.

Krista Lysack links the display of fruit in “Goblin Market” to display practices in department stores and in the Great Exhibition, which exoticized imperial goods to promote commodity fetishism. The commodities in the Crystal Palace included objects taken from British colonies and were meant to showcase the reach of British imperial forces in addition to the nation’s industrial power. If colonial, exoticized objects were primarily considered goods for visual consumption through the logic of spectacle constructed and disseminated in the Crystal Palace, then the Great Exhibition and the exhibitions that followed “helped commodify an Eastern aesthetic, creating in the British public a consciousness of their status as potential shoppers in relation to the exotic goods they surveyed there” (Lysack 22-23).

Both Rossetti and her goblins display imperial goods to the reader and the sisters respectively through the methods developed and disseminated by the Great Exhibition. Beginning the poem with twenty-nine fruits in twenty-nine lines and including sensory descriptions creates a rich image for the readers, encouraging them to fetishize the fruits as commodities like Lizzie and Laura do. The obscured origins of the fruit, as well as these descriptions of their rarity, contribute to their exoticization, and references to “[c]itrons from the south” indicate a colonial origin (Rossetti 29). The account of the market itself also encourages readers to delight in foreignness or strangeness in a way similar to colonial displays in the Great Exhibition. Like Laura “[w]ondering at each merchant man,” readers too are encouraged to react

with curious fascination to the animalistic goblins (Rossetti 70). Descriptions of the goblins are presented like a list, as is the fruit, which more easily presents the goblins as visually consumable and contributes to the spectacular effect of the market. Like a catalogue meant to sell goods, Rossetti's catalog of fruits produces an illusion that readers may purchase the goods listed while they cannot in fact do so. This is true also of the sisters, who as we will see cannot purchase goods through standard market transactions. This mode of purely visual consumption, like window shopping in department stores, stems from the Great Exhibition, which occurred about a decade before the poem was written. Rossetti likens the fruits and scene of the marketplace to national spectacle.

The goblins themselves also indicate a colonial presence. The foreign origins of the fruit are suggested by the goblins' likenesses to ratels, an African or southern Asian badger (Lysack 33); wombats, which are Australian; and even parrots from the tropical Americas (Menke 118). As a hybrid between man and nonhuman animal, these goblins represent a collapse of boundaries, in this case between foreign and domestic or, in another sense, domestic and economic, that occurred in places of spectacle like the Great Exhibition. As both fruit and goblins are exoticized, distinctions between colonized cultures merge together, creating one homogenized "other" to be put on sale. Objects stripped of their origin and context are recontextualized as merely exotic, a representation of the strength of empire, and they are made consumable, assigned value as commodities. Not only is this recontextualization violent, but, as I discuss in my final chapter, commodities transported from colonies to England were also gained through theft or as plunder that involved violence against colonized peoples. Similarly, Lysack connects the violence the goblins eventually inflict on Lizzie to the violence inherent in the process of commodification in an imperial market (38). The goblins' violence occurs when

Lizzie exposes their insistence on specific terms of transaction and consumption, demonstrating that such insistence is necessary to sell national imperial ideals to the English consumer. The Great Exhibition used spectacle to create this representation of imperial strength over a uniform foreign “other,” a representation that took root in spectators through the act of visual consumption.

Not only did the Great Exhibition display fruits of its empire, but it also represented the technology used to reproduce literal fruits of the empire at home. Richard Menke recounts the process of “forcing” fruits, a process to accelerate the growth of produce by applying heat, particularly in a greenhouse (112). Greenhouses made it possible to grow fruit out of season “all ripe together” and to grow in England fruit like the “[c]itrons from the South” (Rossetti 15, 29). Forcing fruit also made it possible to grow fruit in England in 1859, the year Rossetti wrote “Goblin Market,” when severe frosts and weather conditions destroyed fruit crops throughout the country (Menke 114). Menke cites the Crystal Palace as the most famous example of a greenhouse in the period (113). He claims that “the popularity of forcing and hot-houses represents not only one of the fruits of imperialism, the desire to cultivate the exotic at home and to reproduce the Empire in the greenhouse, but also the growing ascendance of the market as an organizing social institution” (Menke 114). The Great Exhibition, then, reproduced the empire at home in multiple ways. On the one hand, it literally reproduced imperial scenes at home by putting them on display for visual consumption, hiding the history of their origins so viewers understood them instead as commodity fetishes. On the other hand, as a physical site it represented a technology by which new imperial commodities could be reproduced outside the context of the colonies, regenerated, or replicated to be consumed within one’s own home. If “Goblin Market” uses the same mechanisms of display as the Great Exhibition, then the market

is also capable of magically reproducing its fruit seemingly endlessly, and magically, as it is capable of providing fruit off season.

As a historical event, the Great Exhibition demonstrates that “imperial institutions depended on commodification to ensure the visibility and continuous representation of empire” (Lysack 28). The visual practices of consumption practiced at the Great Exhibition, including fetishization of colonial objects on display, are necessary for empire to sustain itself, namely through the replication of imperial images in the English homeland. By repeating these practices, “Goblin Market” reveals this mechanism by which empire is sustained by forcing readers to participate in it. By experiencing the visual and sensory effects of the fruit akin to the imperial fruit forced in greenhouses, readers also visually consume imperial goods. By having no choice but to treat the objects as fetishes in the poem’s introduction, they also partake in the consumptive habits of the visitors to the Crystal Palace. By replicating these practices, Rossetti uses her poem to expose and critique the inner workings of empire, in particular the necessity of visual consumption for its perpetuation.

Lysack argues that a woman’s gaze can disrupt and reveal this obscuring mechanism of imperial reproduction. Navigating a marketplace structured by visual economies that clearly demarcate subject and object, “the shopper’s gaze might disrupt the imperial market, revealing the extent of its surfaces, its spectacle, and its manufacture” (Lysack 28). As department stores adopted the same spectacular kind of display as the Great Exhibition, visual representation became an important retail strategy. As a result, however, women pursued not only the goods department stores offered for purchase but also the spectacle they presented. Looking without buying became a feminine mode of shopping. A “propensity to look was not always welcomed by shop owners,” and was transgressive of marketplace norms (Lysack 28). Such transgressive

desires frustrated the retail process: where display was meant to sell goods, some women prioritized the aesthetic experience of shopping instead of purchasing. Women's desires within the imperial marketplace unearthed the superficiality of its reliance on spectacle. Desire to consume objects visually rather than for its use-value upon purchasing it brought attention to the aesthetic experience of spectacle while refusing the behavior it was intended to promote, or the message it was trying to sell.

For Lysack, a woman's transgressive desires within the marketplace in the Victorian period denoted their status as a subject, an individual capable of determining and experiencing her own desires, and indicated an autonomy within the sphere of the market. But Rossetti does not necessarily allow Lizzie or Laura the same kind of agency that Lysack describes. Laura enters the market without currency but with full intention to taste the fruits. Her use of her hair as currency changes her experience from one of window shopping to one of exchange. Similarly, "Lizzie has come not to consume but to transact; for her, *shopping*, far from the experiential end-in-itself that nineteenth-century marketers were busy confecting, is a necessary means to an extramercantile end" (Tucker 126). She does not shop in the market for the aesthetic or economic experience. She determines the terms of the exchange, rather than falling prey to the goblins' manipulation. Laura's desires are controlled by the goblins, and Lizzie's desires lay outside of the marketplace: her motivation for economic exchange is to save Laura. Neither conform to Lysack's model of female desire. However, Lizzie alone is able to see the goblin market for what it is, much like Lysack describes female desires and shopping habits revealing the fragmentation of imperial spectacle. Megan Hansen claims that "[h]er desire to relieve her sister's suffering is the perceptual lens with which she enters the goblins' market, tied to the coin she places in her purse which provides the physical reminder of both her purpose and the potential danger" (35).

With her mind on Laura outside the market, Lizzie is capable of seeing through the goblins' strategies of mystification through her insistence on a standard market transaction not motivated by consumption.

It is not only an "extramercantile" intention that enables Lizzie to see through the guise of a goblin market, but specifically her love for Laura. Lizzie's love also allows her to gain distance from the market and recognize the reality that the goblins try to obscure through spectacle. Vision threatens one's knowledge of reality and thus her capacity for fellow-feeling. Falling prey to the goblins' spectacle deludes Laura and inhibits her thoughts of anything other than the commodities in front of her, much less for another person in the idealized, pre-capitalist space that both sisters initially inhabit. In this chapter, I use the term "sympathy" to describe this fellow-feeling, though I later discuss different, related interpretations of Rossetti's notion of "sisterhood." This idea of sympathy I draw from George Eliot, with whose work Christina was familiar (Jones 191, 195).² Although "Goblin Market" was not published until 1862, Rossetti wrote it in 1859, the same year as Eliot's *Adam Bede*. Here, I track the relation between vision and fellow-feeling or active care for others, looking forward to Eliot's fuller theorization of these relationships as sympathetic in my next chapter.

Though Lizzie sees the market for what it is, she also cautions not to "peep at goblin men;" she understands the difference between looking and peeping, and she can enact the correct gaze in the right circumstances (Rossetti 49). "Peeping" has a connotation of furtiveness or privacy; a peeping glance is not expected to be reciprocated. So when Laura peeps at the goblins, her gaze lacks a protective framework, which renders her vulnerable to temptation by the market.

² Rossetti references Eliot in her letters, at one point stating she is not "well versed in George Eliot as a bard," suggesting familiarity with her literary work, though not her lyrics (Jones 191). Rossetti later refused an invitation to contribute a biography of Eliot, though this is believed to be a consequence of her personal opinions of Eliot (Jones 195). Jones mentions that her "antagonism to George Eliot was hardly surprising," since Christina had tutored the former wife of George Lewes, who Lewes had left to live with Eliot (191-192).

By contrast, “looking” in the poem indicates an informed gaze, one that possesses an understanding of how the market works and can protect the viewer. Looking at the market from a critical distance allows Lizzie to recontextualize the fruit. Rather than a commodity on spectacular display, ripe for visual consumption, Lizzie understands it as a cure for her sister. In seeing the fruit only for how she can use it, she demystifies it and denies it the fantastical capacities of a commodity fetish.

Ashley Miller similarly connects the economy of perception in the poem with isolation, stating that in “Goblin Market,” perception “is dangerous not because it opens you up to the world – not because it renders you a participant in the perceptive economy of goblin-marketing – but rather because it isolates you from it” (Miller 149). Discussing the moment that Laura listens for the goblins’ advertising but realizes “her sister heard that cry alone,” Miller suggests that “[i]n a poem that has gone to great lengths to make the sisters nearly indistinguishable, the word “alone” is striking here” (Rossetti 254; Miller 149). Becoming enchanted by spectacle cuts off “avenues of perception previously shared with her sister,” and Laura is unsighted and isolated (Miller 149). A blindness to reality is simultaneously a blindness to others’ experience. Entering the market with an intention of sympathy and love towards another enables Lizzie to maintain her awareness of the dangers of the goblin market and navigate it successfully, but a blindness to these dangers inhibits feeling for others, further disorienting Laura in the marketplace.

When Laura first enters the market, however, the isolation she experiences emphasizes her individuality from Lizzie. The sisters are treated as a single unit, sharing behavior and echoing each other’s warnings not to look at the goblins until Laura chooses to look to do so. Laura’s looking separates them. Not only does she gain individuality for the first time in her separation from Lizzie, but, as Lysack discusses, she also formulates and pursues her own

desires. Her newly experienced desires indicate an interior self that her likeness to Lizzie initially obscures. The goblins control these desires, manipulating how Laura perceives the fruit and determining the price at which they can be attained. Their control quickly becomes an act of objectification: assigning Laura's hair an exchange value renders her body an object to be sold. As soon as Laura's hair is cut, it is no longer organic, but an inanimate object. Understanding the lock of hair to stand in for Laura's body as a whole, this act of exchange is also an act of objectification. Although entering the market has the benefit of distinguishing Laura as an individual subject from her sisters, it ultimately endangers her.

The moment in which Laura's status as a subject is endangered can be located at a single point in the text. Rossetti portrays this moment in the poem's shortest stanza, merely six lines:

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
 Like a rush-imbedded swan,
 Like a lily from the beck,
 Like a moonlit poplar branch,
 Like a vessel at the launch
 When its last restraint is gone (81–86).

Each simile is an image of whiteness and groundedness. The groundedness of the swan is the most clear, described specifically as "rush-imbedded." Like the "lily in a flood" to which Lizzie is compared as she stands against the goblins, here Laura's lily is similarly grounded in the beck. The poplar branch may be spotlighted by the moon but is still rooted to the tree. These three white images also indicate that, at this point in the stanza, Laura maintains her innocence. This innocence implies freedom from both consumer desire, a yearning to consume the fruit even outside the market, as well as sexual desire. Through her golden curl, Laura's body figures into an exchange, rendering this a moment of sexual exchange that is supported by the erotic image of her consuming the fruit. In the poem, the market incites these desires simultaneously; one

accompanies the other for Laura. She is experiencing desire as she first witnesses the goblins' approaching spectacle.

It is not until line 86 that this desire turns dangerous, and her "last restraint is gone." This shift is a loss of the groundedness of the previous similes. Where, in Lizzie's case, sympathetic thoughts of Laura act as an anchor outside of the market, here, Laura lacks such a mooring motivation and becomes "vessel at the launch." In this line, Laura's lack of sympathetic impulses becomes clear, which indicates that she is at risk in the market. This looming risk is further enforced by the eroticization of the metaphors—they are specifically images representing her neck. The focus on Laura's body again emphasizes the sexual nature of this exchange and her desires. Her potential for objectification is implied as she first experiences desire and looks at commercial spectacle without the protection of a care for others, or sympathetic grounding outside of the market.

As a result of this objectification, Laura's subjectivity is altered once she leaves the market. She can no longer engage with the world, and she lies in bed doing nothing, including eating. While some argue that Laura's desire for the fruit is so strong that it becomes self-consuming, by the end of her illness, Laura no longer has any appetite: she not only abandons her household chores, "[b]ut sat down listless in the chimney-nook / And would not eat" (Rossetti 297-298)³. Carpenter writes that what Laura has lost, or what has been "stolen from her in this shady transaction is her 'desire' itself, a desire which far exceeds that of the fruits, however exotic" (427). I agree: Laura is not experiencing perpetually unfulfilled desire for the fruits of the market, as her illness prevents her from experiencing anything, including hunger and sexual desire. Her illness is that of "balk'd desire," and she no longer yearns to taste even goblin fruit (Rossetti 267). Laura's all-consuming desire for commodities within the market

³ See Helsinger "Consumer Power and the Utopia of Desire" and Chapman "The Afterlife of Poetry."

affects her subjectivity outside of it. This transgressive desire blurs the boundary between subject and object, compromising Laura's status as the subject of her own experiences.

Lizzie, too, navigates the space between subject and object, though she does so differently. In trying to instill in Lizzie a consumer desire like Laura's, the goblins' assault similarly objectifies her, shifting the focus of the text to her body as the goblins "[t]witch'd her hair out by the roots, / Stamp'd upon her tender feet, / Held her hands and squeez'd their fruits / Against her mouth to make her eat" (Rossetti 404-407). Lizzie becomes part of the goblins' spectacle as her body is violently put on display to readers of the poem along with the fruit. Describing her feet as "tender" is notable here, as the same adjective is the quality that motivates her to seek the goblins in the first place: "[t]ender Lizzie could not bear" to watch her sister's suffering (Rossetti 299). It is through this sympathetic motivation that Lizzie is able to maintain her subjectivity to a full extent. When she returns from the market, she refers to the fruit residue on her body as "my juices" (Rossetti 468). This may seem to suggest that the boundary between subject and object has disappeared; Lizzie melds with the commodities as she takes on an aspect of the fruit. But I read this phrasing as a moment of possession: here, Lizzie claims the fruit for herself. She maintains her full subjectivity by failing to project power onto the objects, seeing them rather as means to an end, as possessions rather than fetishes.⁴

⁴ Ashley Miller extends the power of objects even farther: rather than projecting a capacity for action onto the object, as occurs in commodity fetish, objects themselves possess a power to act on others. Miller argues for a "radical objectivity" in which an object has "complete autonomy in the perceptual exchange. When you perceive an object...you are merely being acted upon by it; you turn yourself over to it; you may perceive, but it *is*" (Miller 146). She draws from John Ruskin's "Pathetic Fallacy," showing how considering Victorian object theory and an economy of perception suggests that objects have a vitality that acts upon humans; people do not assign qualities to things, but things impress their qualities upon people. To her, objects truly have a kind of autonomy themselves.

However, I locate the causal capacity of objects in the sisters' consumer habits. It is the nature of their exchange, what they sacrifice in the market, that threatens to alter their subjectivity and not the objects themselves. Laura's objectification by the goblins, not the action of the fruit upon her, dissolves the boundaries between subjecthood and objecthood.

Laura's desire to consume encourages her to fetishize the fruit on display, which in turn reduces her engagement with the world. As she projects the magic and powers of the commodity fetish onto the objects, she herself is objectified, and her subjectivity is diminished when she leaves the market. Lizzie, however, avoids this detachment from reality by refusing to project fetishistic powers onto the fruit. She can clearly see the use value of such fruit as a cure and is able to harness and manipulate the fruit by claiming it in a possessive voice. In the goblin market, fetishism can conceal the dangers of objectification and compromised subjectivity. The economy of the gaze in "Goblin Market" is not one that strips women of their subjectivity when they are perceived by others, but one that allows women to find subjectivity within this act of objectification. For Lizzie and Laura, blurring the boundary between subject and object is a part of their understanding of themselves as distinct from one another. Lorraine Janzen Kooistra argues that the poem refuses a binary dichotomy between an active male spectator and passive female object ("Visualizing" 139). In the world of the poem to be looked at is to be objectified, but this does not guarantee a diminished subjectivity as Laura experiences. Clear-sighted Lizzie can resist passivity and insist on her terms of transaction through her caring, extramercantile desire and intention.

Kooistra imagines the lesson Lizzie learns from the goblin market is that "a woman cannot live in the world without looking and being looked at. And she learns that, while these activities are paradoxically both destructive and redemptive, they are also essential to life, to love, to creativity" ("Visualizing" 141). Inhabiting a position that blurs the boundary between subject and object is also essential to the cultivation of desire for which Lysack argues. Laura enters the marketplace and develops a desire that distinguishes her from her sister, giving her autonomy and subjectivity, but which ultimately transforms her into an object of exchange on

goblin terms. Yet to never develop this desire in the first place is also dangerous. Mary Wilson Carpenter argues that for Lizzie to never enter the market and experience her own desires is a fate as equally troubling as Laura's illness, though different in nature, claiming that "[t]he sisters represent women's double plight in the Victorian sexual economy: either risk becoming a commodity yourself, or risk never tasting desire, never letting yourself 'peep'" (428). Looking, being a spectator, is paradoxically necessary and dangerous, as it cultivates desire essential for a woman's subjectivity while threatening their status as a subject.

Fantasy and Commodity Fetishism

As spectacular display demonstrates, fetishizing commodities both creates and prolongs a kind of fantasy that traps its consumer. But the relationship between fetishism and fantasy is not clear in "Goblin Market." The spectacle of the market allows Laura to develop both consumer and sexual desire, marking her independence from her sister. But these desires overwhelm and enchant her, and she is distanced from her sister not only in her misaligned desires, but also in her inability to see the reality of the market. The poem endorses the cultivation of female desire yet shows that its process entails delusion, isolation and loss. Desire plays paradoxical roles.

The contradiction in desire also does not solve the problem of what fantasy the objects in fact create. On the one hand, spectacle overwhelms with the number and variety of goods on display. The Great Exhibition, for example, made foreign goods seem widely accessible for consumption, at least visually, for the first time. Spectacle may create the illusion that all displayed fruits are consumable, or that any fruit can be produced for consumption regardless of its origin. Relatedly, the market could create the illusion that Laura herself has the purchasing power and autonomy to act on her newfound desires and purchase whatever she pleases. This is

impossible for her as an unmarried woman with no clear source of income; critics even question where Lizzie's silver penny came from if the women live by themselves in the country where they only perform domestic labor.⁵

Alternatively, the illusion of the market spectacle may be that Laura's desire has a consumable object at all. Though she believes that she desires to taste the fruit, doing so actually leaves her unsatisfied and leads to an illness of apathy. By extension, Laura's illness is a consequence of losing the individuality she gained in the market along with the loss of the desire itself. Her "dream...of melons, as a traveller sees / False waves in desert drouth" is in fact a dream of travelling, reentering the market to rediscover her own desires and subjectivity (Rossetti 289-90). In this case, the spectacle produces a mirage, a "dream" that its commodities are necessary to experience further desires of the kind that reinforce her autonomy. This illusion is proved false by Lizzie, who experiences her own individuality by reflecting on the distance between herself and Laura. It is possible that these potential spectacular fantasies, the accessibility of a diverse range of consumable goods, women's purchasing power independent of a husband, and the equation of consumption with desire, are all simultaneously produced in the poem. Rossetti's choice to leave open multiple interpretations contributes not only to what Menke describes as the poem "frustrat[ing] attempts to pin down its own allegory" (126), but it also demonstrates the scope of spectacle's power: the extent of its influence on consumers mirrors the range of commodities it displays.

To a certain extent, Rossetti's challenging of the subject-object duality resolves the paradoxical endorsement and condemnation of cultivating female desire through the marketplace. Experiencing desire, like the sexual or consumer desire that Rossetti analogizes in the poem, allows for a fuller experience of subjectivity. But since women develop this desire by

⁵ See Menke 127, Mendoza 928, and Rappoport 861.

entering public spaces that function through visibility, the sisters are susceptible to objectification. Strangely, the blurring between subject and object that both sisters endure allows for there to be social relations between objects like those imagined between commodity fetishes. As Lizzie is objectified, becoming herself the fruit she desires to take out of the market, she nevertheless retains her thoughts of and relationship to Laura. Entering the market is necessary for cultivating desire, specifically consumer and sexual desire. But sympathy, specifically a desire to care for others, allows the objectification experienced as a result of such cultivation to be empowering, rather than dangerous, by grounding one in a reality outside the logic of the marketplace. The fruit may still have mystical power and act as a fetish, and Lizzie may experience desire by entering the marketplace and its subsequent objectification, but she maintains her autonomy as subject-object through this process. Sympathetic desire, then, is capable of replacing and realigning the dangerous or transgressive desires that arise in the marketplace.

Sympathy also opens up possibilities for relationships not predetermined by the capitalist market or commodity relations, including queer relationships. The nature of Laura's restoration is homoerotic, a scene containing Lizzie's oft-quoted lines "Eat me, drink me, love me; / Laura, make much of me" as Laura "clung about her sister, / Kiss'd and kiss'd and kiss'd her" (Rossetti 471-472, 485-486). In her reading of this scene, Carpenter argues that "Lizzie appears to have restored her sister by recirculating the erotic energies first set into motion by the goblin market. Inviting her sister to feast on her instead of on the goblin fruits produces a saving satisfaction" (429). Laura's desires are not only restored, but finally satisfied through their redirection to Lizzie, an object outside the market, which the poem codes as predatorily heterosexual and patriarchal. Like Laura, Lizzie also shows that entering the goblin market is necessary to develop

sexual desire. She leaves the market “out of breath...with inward laughter” where before she lived fearfully, “content” and “placid” (Rossetti 463, 212, 217), and she is evidently excited when calling up to the garden for Laura: “Did you miss me? / Come and kiss me.” (Rossetti 465-466).⁶ Remembering that “one waits / At home alone for me,” Lizzie is able to bring her newfound desire outside of the marketplace (Rossetti 383-384). That she brings it to the woman who waits at home alone demonstrates how sympathetic motivation can open up possibilities for different kinds of desires divorced from the logic of the capitalist market.

Sisterhood in the poem can also be read as a relationship of kinship. Rossetti and her own sister Maria were both involved in the social services of Anglican Sisterhoods. In the 1860s, Christina was a lay-sister of the St. Mary Magdalene’s Penitentiary in Highgate (Rappoport 855). As charity institutions, Anglican Sisterhoods like this were “intended to redeem through spiritual reformation women who had strayed into a moral abyss,” namely the “fallen women” or prostitutes cast out of the Victorian moral and social order (Helsing 908). Beyond this spiritual reformation, such institutions also housed women and provided the means for a type of economic reformation as well, helping women remake their identities so they could make a living as needleworkers or domestic servants (Helsing 908). For Rossetti, sisterhood could be redeeming in an observable sense. Similarly, in an institution designed to serve women, femininity is central to the redemption sisterhood can provide. Sisterhood, then, can also embody a kinship among women that has the capacity to cultivate economic, spiritual, and even sexual recovery or redemption.

⁶ In “The Price of Redemption in ‘Goblin Market,’” Jill Rappoport discusses how Laura “profits from this service economy,” the entering into and resistance to the dangers of the marketplace (869). I see this profit not only as the discovery of “sensory delight,” but also the development of sexual desire, directed towards Laura in a queer understanding of the poem (Rappoport 869).

Years after Laura's return to health, Rossetti presents the sisters "when both were wives / With children of their own; / Their mother-hearts beset with fears" (543-545). The ending demonstrates the domestication of both sisters' lives through the implied introduction of husbands and marriage into the poem's established feminine order. Although desire for another woman restores the sisters' newly discovered sexual desire, it then seems to be immediately closed off and redirected into heterosexual desire. However, the sisters' presumed husbands are conspicuously absent from this epilogue. Rather than a heterosexual relationship, for Laura and Lizzie marriage means a relationship centered around nurturing children. Maintaining the focus on a feminine community effectively equates marriage with motherhood. The "joys brides hope to have" are the joys of caring for others. Like Schaffer's model of care discussed in the introduction, this is a relationship founded not just on affect, but on actions of care towards others. Schaffer even uses motherhood as an example of the relationship between affect and care, claiming that love for a child may proceed the action to take care of them, but caring for them may also produce a feeling of love (5). Although feelings and actions of care are intertwined, both are present in the epilogue: the Rossetti ascribes feelings of fear to their "mother-hearts," and depicts the cautionary tale they tell to their children as a caring educational act.

Sympathy allows not only for the development of sexual relationships, but also for the development of other relationships of care, the discovery of female community. By excluding men from the new domestic space, Rossetti not only emphasizes the relationship between mother and daughter, but she continues to emphasize their relationship to each other. If the lesson of the poem is that "there is no friend like a sister," then sisterhood in the poem entails female community, encompassing relationships of kinship, sympathy, and queer desire, which for

Rossetti lie outside of a model of desire determined by the market, and thus is ultimately redemptive and restorative.

Golden Head by Golden Head

If sympathy is an extramercantile relationship that allows for clear vision inside the market, then Rossetti's motif of gold in the poem covers a curious scope of representation. It is present both in and outside the market, from the sisters' hair or the furze around the glen to the goblins' golden plate. The qualities of gold align with the processes of spectacle and commodity exchange, its color and shine alluring like spectacular display and its exchange-value essential to purchase and consume commodity goods. Mendoza discusses Rossetti's use of gold in a Marxist framework, drawing from Marx's idea of gold as a fetish itself: it is capable of embodying or expressing value because of "its imaginary social relation—its exchange-value—with other commodities" (924). In Mendoza's view, Rossetti reveals that "[t]he fetishism of gold is primordial," and he argues that "it is not so much that gold provides the material expression of value by its uses in the text but rather that the text cites these images of nature as "golden" to lend them its value along with its character, since gold already announces value by virtue of being gold" (Mendoza 925-926). This does seem convincing, and it provides an account of why gold occurs in so many instances throughout the poem: particularly persuasive is his point that its prevalence allows it to be more easily fetishized in the first place (Mendoza 925). However, his account runs together natural instances of gold that occur in the sisters' rural domestic space and instances of gold in the market. While Mendoza's account is largely compatible with mine, I argue that the goblins' heavy golden fruit plate is in fact different from the domestic or natural

instances of gold, and that in many cases throughout the poem, gold derives its value from a source other than an a priori value determined by the fact it is gold.

The first instance of gold describes Laura's modesty. Rossetti focuses largely on Laura's head when introducing her: "Laura bowed her head to hear," and she delivers her own warning not to look at the goblins while "[p]ricking up her golden head" (34, 41). Gold imagery is also frequently associated with whiteness or purity. In the bedroom scene, where the sisters lie "[g]olden head by golden head," their connection is "[l]ike two flakes of new-fall'n snow, / Like two wands of ivory / Tipped with gold" (Rossetti 184, 189–191). The sisters are like untouched, white snow, and the gold in the wands is the external cap of their "ivory" innocence. Prior to entering the market, this innocence represents a lack of experiencing both sexual and economic desire, which are merged within a marketplace reliant on visuality. Laura's hair loses its gold when she enters the goblin marketplace: as she is corrupted in the market, her hair cannot retain its significance of purity. If purity or innocence indicates lack of traversing a market space, once Laura has done so, her hair cannot remain golden.

Similarly, as the goblins assault her, Lizzie stands "[w]hite and golden...Like a lily in a flood" (Rossetti 408-409). Gold further acts as an external signifier of Lizzie's lily-like purity, which here grounds and protects her against the goblins' attack. Though she enters the market, her desires remain outside of it, and she can maintain her quality of purity having experienced neither consumer nor sexual desire. Her golden standing can also be read as a sympathetic moment. It is primarily Laura who is described as golden, except when the sisters are represented as like two halves of one whole in the bedroom scene: prior to this scene, Lizzie only possesses this quality by association with Laura. Lizzie's standing "golden" against the goblins is itself a means of thinking of her sister and embodying the golden hair she possessed prior to her

exchange in the market. Sympathetic desire allows her to maintain the purity that gold represents. In these cases, gold signifies an absence of exchange value, and external marker of an innocence completely untainted from marketplace relations.

Similarly, uses of the gold motif to represent the natural world also derive value from their separation from the market, although they do recognize a potential for exchange as currency. Laura thinks of this natural gold initially when thinking how to pay for goblin fruit; when she says “all my gold is on the furze,” she means it in a literal sense, seeing the shrubs for a potential exchange value (Rossetti 120). Yet the furze is also qualified in her mind: it is specifically “the furze / That shakes in windy weather” (Rossetti 120–121). This windy weather contrasts from the distinct “summer weather” associated with the fruits and goblins (Rossetti 16, 250). It is instead like the “cooling weather” or the “first snow-fall of crisp Winter time” in which Jeanie died deprived of goblin fruits (Rossetti 37, 319). The location of the furze in the windy weather is necessary for Laura’s conception of it, indicating that the gold on the furze cannot circulate in the goblins’ space. Additionally, Lizzie picks “purple and rich golden flags” in a scene depicting domestic labor: milking cows, cleaning house, baking, and collecting water (Rossetti 220). The plants’ description as “rich golden” associate them with economic or exchange value, but their location in the sisters’ rural and isolated domestic space roots them outside the market. These natural appearances of gold align with Mendoza’s account, but rather than “the text cit[ing] these images of nature as ‘golden’ to lend them its value,” value arises separately from a different source than their mere description as golden (925-926). If Laura and Lizzie are golden because of their innocence and ignorance of the marketplace, it is natural gold’s removal from the marketplace that gives it a different kind of value, not an external, a priori value that the descriptor “gold” carries with it.

Furthermore, Mendoza does not provide a satisfactory account of the goblins' plate. The value of the plate comes from the commodities it bears, not the fact that it is made of gold. Every time it is mentioned, its weight is emphasized to the point of repetition in the text. When readers first see the goblins, "[o]ne lugs a golden dish / Of many pounds weight," and when Laura enters the glen, "[o]ne heaved the golden weight / Of dish and fruit to offer her" (Rossetti 58–59, 102–103). Laura later recounts the "melons icy-cold / Piled on a dish of gold / Too huge for me to hold" (Rossetti 175–177). Within the market, gold functions to physically support the display of commodities, emphasizing their abundance and assigning them a glittering visual quality. Here, gold is valued for how it contributes to spectacle. Unlike natural and pure instances of gold, this is not an innocent value. Rather than an external signifier of purity, gold that lies on the top of a woman's head or a king's ivory wand, this gold literally underlies temptation. As spectacle, this golden plate displays its fruit in a way that supports fetishism, desire, and delusion. Its exchange value is absent in this context, but its aesthetic value is even more dangerous, since its visual dimension creates the enchantment to which Laura falls victim. When it comes to a goblin marketplace, which functions through spectacle, aesthetic value is an equally significant facet of gold as is its exchange value.

Laura's hair, as an object of exchange, uniquely occupies all of the positions discussed above: a marker of innocence, natural gold that takes value from its removal from the market, and spectacular, fetishized object. Initially an indication of a purity derived from never having entered a corrupting marketplace, her hair can no longer retain this meaning when she has seen, fetishized, and longed for the goblin fruits. Instead, it assumes the potential exchange value of natural instances of gold. But these natural instances are valued because of their removal from the marketplace. Laura's hair, an organic part of her body that can grow or change, is rendered an

inanimate object that has value primarily within market relations. The lock of hair physically stands in for a coin in transaction, as does Laura's body by extension. Where her golden hair was a cap signifying purity, once this purity is lost, the new exchange-value of the gold makes her body a consumable good, too. As an object to be sold, she is like the fruit on display. She herself becomes part of the spectacle, akin to the golden plate valued for its aesthetic function and support of display. This quick transition in types of value constitutes the kind of misrecognition present in commodity fetishism, specifically the fetishism of gold, on which Mendoza's argument rests. Since social relations exist between fetishized objects, Laura is objectified to establish equivalent value with the commodity goods for which she is exchanged.

Finally, the "golden sheaves" reaped at the end of the poem indicate the dawn of a new day, and by extension Laura's recovery. But the image of golden stalks being cut harkens back to the exchange of Laura's hair, both assigning and obscuring a potential exchange value that recalls the exchange of Laura's hair and objectification of her body. This representation of a new day, "when the first birds chirp'd about their eaves, / And early reapers plodded to the place" where the golden grain is to be cut, suggests that Laura's experience is cyclical or inevitable (Rossetti 530–531). Though she has awakened from the dream induced by goblin commodity spectacle, somewhere nearby other golden locks are being reaped. This seems a disturbing message, and certainly one inconsistent with Laura's message to the children in the poem's epilogue. However, I argue that it ought instead to be interpreted as a reminder of the necessity and inevitability of a woman entering the marketplace. Taking Lizzie as an example, her entry into the market is necessary for her to cultivate desire. But her focus on Laura grounds her, allowing her to see through the spectacle and avoid its charms. Turning gold sinister here reflects the risks of entering, but the gold's reference to nature removes it from the economic sphere. The

“golden sheaves” here are not a hopeless repetition of Laura’s objectification and loss, but instead an instruction through nature, removed from the marketplace as one’s intentions should be, on how to safely navigate economic space as a woman in the poem.

“Where summer ripens at all hours”

While I have been discussing the sisters’ entry into the market, it should be noted that, in Laura’s experience, the market actually comes to her: “[c]urious Laura chose to linger” as “up the mossy glen / Turned and trooped the goblin men” (Rossetti 69, 87–88). In a story in which the pastoral domestic and economic spheres are clearly demarcated, the goblins’ approach to the natural space occupied by the sisters represents a threat to this dichotomy. In this way, the sisters’ rural, seemingly precapitalist sphere indicates a past that reflects on the present. The sisters’ household economy is self-sustaining: as Terrence Holt points out, “[t]he sisters produce foods for their own consumption, enacting on an economic level the hermeticism of their domestic scene” (53). They have no need for a goblin marketplace, living in a space clearly distinct from capitalist influences. However, as shown by the goblins bringing the market to Laura, the capitalist market threatens to encroach the boundary between the two worlds. Looking back from the perspective of Rossetti’s contemporaries, this encroachment reflects an intersection between the domestic and economic spheres. As I discuss in the next chapter, Eliot similarly reflects on the effects of this intersection on commodity culture. While she takes a retrospective approach and sets *Adam Bede* in 1799, both she and Rossetti reckon with their present through their respective fictional settings.

In response to the rise of department stores, Lysack claims that “the practice of shopping mediated between women’s traditional domestic sphere and a public one” (21). Department

stores had to provide domestic conveniences to accommodate women's new shopping practices. Shopping became a form of leisure, and consumption part of an urban woman's identity; the practice of looking without buying discussed above resulted from viewing shopping as a leisure activity. Cultivating a sense of home outside of the house was important to create an acceptable public space for women to circulate. In their advertising and self-presentation, retailers created and disseminated a new vision of the woman as consumer. By freely traversing both the public and private, this economic woman could create comfortable private spaces within public ones, and the virtue derived from her position as "angel of the house" carried over into economic spaces, lending virtue to these spaces in the process. Through this new idea of an economic woman, "the public and private were seen as overlapping and interconnected territories held together by a rational and moral female shopper" (Rappaport 36). Commercial spaces, particularly department stores that rely on spectacular displays, increasingly blended with the domestic, as Rossetti observes and critiques through "Goblin Market."

The temporal shifts within the poem complicate the blending of these two spheres. Time can only pass outside of the market; the market itself arrests time. The poem is written in the past tense, but the goblins exist in the perpetual present: "'[c]ome buy,' call the goblins / Hobbling down the glen" while "Lizzie covered up her eyes" and "Laura reared her glossy head" (Rossetti 46-47, 50, 52). There, "summer ripens at all hours" (Rossetti 152). However, days, nights, and seasons pass for the sisters outside the market. Jeanie's decline and death occur "[i]n earliest Winter time, / With the first glazing rime, / With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time" (Rossetti 317-319). "Winter" is capitalized and repeated, emphasizing the distance from the market that ultimately kills Jeanie but that also defines the domestic sphere. Additionally, "[d]ays, weeks, months, years" pass for the sisters at the end of the poem (Rossetti 543). The

static, perpetual presence of the goblin time contributes to the market's spectacle: the consumer is trapped in time like they are trapped by the commodity fetish. Similarly, when Laura and Lizzie leave the market, they "knew not was it night or day" (Rossetti 139). Exiting the static present of the market, they occupy a position outside of time, a position Laura continues to inhabit during her decline. She can no longer keep up with the moving routine of their feminine household. While the rural domestic setting suggests a past distinct from the reader's present, the movement of time in this pastoral space links the past and the present. In the poem's epilogue, Laura and Lizzie's experience are deemed "pleasant days long gone / Of not-returning time" (Rossetti 550-551). Their experience of pleasure within the goblin market, "pleasant days," must stay in the past because goblin time is immobile; the sisters, having learned how to safely cultivate desire in an economic space beginning to encroach on their own domestic space, continue to move through time and so need not return to the market.

"We must not look at goblin men:" Dante Gabriel's Representation

The first edition of "Goblin Market" was published with two woodcut illustrations by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina's brother and a founding member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The two worked in close collaboration, with Dante Gabriel sending drafts and proofs for Christina's approval. Each element of the final published product is also collaborative: in the Rossettis' "visual-verbal partnerships they sought a dynamic interactive relationship" and believed that "[i]mage and text should mutually explicate each other" (Kooistra, *Christina Rossetti and Illustration* 67). Considering the illustrations as an equal contribution to an overall product, the illustrated book, makes clear that they provide their own interpretation of Christina's text. Since the images, a frontispiece and title page, preceded the text, readers' experience of the poem was facilitated through its visual representation. For a poem conveying its own economics

of the gaze, the visual representation of the text is essential to its meaning, especially since this interpretation acts as an independent response to the text in the Rossettis' collaborative approach. The illustrations allow for both the inclusion of Dante Gabriel's outside perspective of the text and Christina's own commentary on it.

The title page illustration, "Golden head by golden head," depicts the two sisters in a moment of embrace together after Laura returns from the market (figure 1). Scholars have observed the voyeuristic position of the viewer in this scene, who is able to see the sisters in their domestic space while they sleep.⁷ In the text, their domestic space is one with strict boundaries, from which men are absent. These boundaries are also visually depicted in the image: the coverings of the sisters' bed extend behind them, creating the impression of a "nest" in which they hide, and the image itself is strictly bounded by the repetitive, angular lines that form a motif around the whole page. However, the viewer is not only allowed access to this private space, but they are in fact forced to look. Dante Gabriel has rendered the women not only erotic objects, and they "are pictured at their most passive, and in a way that makes them subject to every Peeping Tom's fantasies" (Kooistra "Visualizing" 144). By putting the women on passive display, the women become objects as they do in the market when they are seen by the goblins—in the image, the viewer occupies the same position as the goblins, and the women become commodities for them to gaze upon. Yet Dante Gabriel has forced the viewer to commodify the women within their own space, suggesting both a decreasingly private domestic sphere in an era of invasive capitalist market economies, as well as the inevitability of women's objectification in a world where such boundaries are becoming permeable.

The emphasis on the right sister's neck contributes to the eroticization of the image. However, I argue that it also provides a means to distinguish the sisters from each other. While

⁷ See Kooistra "Visualizing the Fantastic Subject" and Mendoza "'Come Buy.'"

depicted as nearly identical, Laura is thought by some scholars to appear on the left while Lizzie sleeps on the right. Yet the highlighting of the right sister's neck echoes the passage in which Laura loses her innocence in the market when she "stretched her gleaming neck...Like a moonlit poplar branch" (Rossetti 81, 84); her neck is similarly emphasized and moonlit in Dante Gabriel's second image. Highlighting her neck both makes her an erotic object and symbolizes purity in image and in text. While Kooistra notes that the contained dream of the goblins is closer to the left sister, who she reads as "the sleeping Laura, who clutches her sister's golden lock as if in memory of her own sexual loss" ("Visualizing" 75), I suggest that this sister be read as Lizzie, whose sympathy for her sister is so strong as to be thinking of her sister's loss in her sleep, holding her hair to express her thoughtful care. Lizzie arranges herself so as to protect her sister as they sleep. Dante Gabriel's choice to represent the sisters as virtually identical in the first place is striking, particularly since this moment in the text emphasizes physical closeness, rather than physical attributes: "[c]heek to cheek and breast to breast / Lock'd together in one nest" (198). Two halves of one whole, the sisters together are like a single woman. Acting as a single person, they collectively reflect an experience common to women of the period: the intersection between desire, danger, and redemption in the market is a fate that could happen to any woman.

The ability to read the sisters as visually reversible, Lizzie for Laura and Laura for Lizzie, recalls Mendoza's description of the circular image of the goblins in the upper corner of the illustration. He asks, "is this inset image in fact a dream? Or is it some other window through which the goblin merchants might also 'gaze in at them'? Or might it be a *coin*, whose face, in juxtaposition with the sisters' own circular-shaped repose, adds even more significance to the reversible, antimetabolic caption 'Golden head by golden head'?" (Mendoza 941). Reading the image through the lens of exchange or transaction, the fact that the inset is a circle allows it to be

read as a coin. In the same way that the two sisters are visually exchangeable for each other, two parts of one identity, a coin has two facets comprising a single whole. This reading introduces exchange value into the domestic sphere. If the inset is a reversible coin, an object that mediates exchange, the sisters are exchangeable for each other. The goblins' economic sphere is clearly contained in a circle where the sisters' domestic space is contained in a square, reflecting the strict boundaries between the two in the text. But, also like the text, the economic sphere invades the domestic, in this case at the moment the two sisters are sleeping and most vulnerable. They march towards the sisters, the ground under their feet merging with the shadows of the sisters' bed covers.

The coin should also be read as a window. If the readers occupy a voyeuristic position, so too do the goblins. Their position looking downwards towards the sleeping sisters indicates a power imbalance, and the goblins maintain visual access to the sisters in their vulnerable state. One result of the economic ever-invading the domestic is to be seen, to risk objectification as a woman. Yet, if the inset is read as Laura's dream, it also suggests the possibility of developing subjectivity, or internal autonomy without Lizzie, through desire. Trapped by her own desire, she dreams of the market. But this dream demonstrates independence from Lizzie; Laura's thoughts are on the commodities of her desire while Lizzie's thoughts are on Laura's hair, and by extension Laura herself. This illustration is a moment demonstrating the grounding effects of sympathy—Lizzie encircles and anchors Laura—and the dangerous desire inevitable in an invasive economic world.

The dangers of the market threaten even the reader in Dante Gabriel's second image, "Buy from us with a golden curl," in which readers are forced to enter, and thus visually consume, the goblin market (figure 2). Depicting Laura cutting her hair for the goblins, this

image combines and complicates multiple moments from the text into a single instance. For example, while she cuts her hair on line 126, the image also emphasizes her “gleaming neck” forty-five lines earlier, again drawing attention to the series of similes representing her innocence at the moment it is lost (81–86). Laura is the lightest part of the image, here connoting purity like the swan, lily, and poplar branch to which she is compared in these metaphors in the text. Her dress matches the value of this whiteness, but it is also spotted, indicating that this is also a moment she becomes tainted or contaminated in the market. That her neck is also highlighted makes Laura an erotic object, as does the focus on her neck in the series of similes. The image also portrays her as an exchangeable object. Her hair becomes exchangeable as it falls onto what is presumably the “dish of gold,” equating the value of both to the market. By extension, Laura’s body becomes an object of exchange: the commodities on display frame her head, and as her hair falls onto the plate, it becomes like the fruit on display below her, too. Her enchantment by marketplace spectacle is also represented by the position of her hair: one of the goblins has wrapped it around his own neck, trapping her within the market and his own terms of exchange, and thus the cyclical, insatiable desire that the commodity fetish produces.

At the same time that these multiple textual moments within the market are represented, Lizzie is seen retreating up the hill, which happens even before Laura finds herself within the market. Strangely, Lizzie seems to be looking down the hill at Laura and the goblins. While this draws the reader’s attention to the market scene and aligns with Lizzie’s sympathy for or thoughts of Laura, it directly contradicts her warning to her sister not to peep at the goblins. Here Dante Gabriel ensures that she looks at them herself. To peep at the goblins is inevitable, and in fact encouraged as necessary to develop subjectivity through individual desire. Lizzie is removed, at a safe distance, but simultaneously sharing an experience with her sister. Her gaze

could also be directed towards the viewer. In this case her face seems a solemn warning to the viewer of the dangers Laura suffers in the market below.

Yet if Lizzie's gaze is outward, directed at the viewer as a visual warning to "not peep at goblin men" (Rossetti 49), the viewer has no choice but to do so. As the reader is forced to look, the fruit enchants them, too. The goblins are crowded into the corner and spill out of the image, creating the appearance that there are more of them than are actually depicted. The same is true of their fruit, hidden in the goblins' shadows so that the more a viewer looks, the more types of fruit they see. A spectacle on a smaller scale, the reader falls victim to the false appearance of abundance in the market. But an illustration representing this static moment also allows the viewer to remove themselves from the scene and comprehend it as a whole. As they look, they occupy both Lizzie's and Laura's places in the image. Combined, the reader perceives the goblins but remains grounded outside the market, seeing the spectacle of the fruit while understanding its dangers, especially since Laura's miserable expression is one of the illustrations' most immediately noticeable features. Representing multiple moments in the text at once allows for this complicated viewing position; it also contributes to the sense of perpetual temporal present within the market.

Encountering the text through both of these images demonstrates the centrality of visuality to Christina, Dante Gabriel, and their subject matter. The visual mode is so important as to be considered necessary by the creators to facilitate the reader's experience. The proleptic nature of frontispiece illustrations typically provides a foundation for the story they represent by setting readers' expectations. "Goblin Market," however, proves to be a story that cannot be rooted in such expectations. Both text and image resist allegory, and, in the case of illustration, perhaps all interpretations should be read at once. If both women are read simultaneously as

Laura and Lizzie in “Golden head by golden head,” the representation of their exchangeability is heightened. Similarly, if Lizzie is read as simultaneously looking at the goblins and the reader in “Buy from us with a golden curl,” she is demonstrating that there is in fact a safe way to “peep” within the marketplace. These illustrations disrupt readers’ expectations and create an atmosphere of instability like the uncertainty that surrounds women’s position in the marketplace or the economics of the gaze within the poem. With Christina’s help, Dante Gabriel reveals the instability of visuality in the poem through the visual medium of illustration, and his polysemic woodcuts attest to this.

Consumer Fantasy and Sympathetic Realism: George Eliot's *Adam Bede*

Much like Rossetti contrasts the goblin market with Laura and Lizzie's precapitalist, pastoral utopia, George Eliot's *Adam Bede* looks backward to a time before commodities saturated consumers' lives in the mid-Victorian period. In the novel, the narrator's condemnation of Hetty Sorrel's consumption is clear. In a moment where readers watch her gazing into a mirror to admire her own image, the narrator proclaims "it is too painful to think that she is a woman, with a woman's destiny before her—a woman spinning in young ignorance a light web of folly and vain hopes which may one day close round her and press upon her, a rancorous poisoned garment, changing all at once her fluttering, trivial butterfly sensations into a life of deep human anguish" (Eliot 235). Hetty's relationship with commodities is suffocating, its painful imagery reminiscent of Laura's experience of goblin fruit as "wormwood to her tongue" in Rossetti's poem (Rossetti 494).

Hetty's consumer habits are gendered: in this passage she has "a woman's destiny before her." Her habits are also fundamentally visual, as she purchases clothing and accessories that signal the luxurious lifestyle of an upper class woman. Her "light web of folly and vain hopes" are her impossible desire to become a lady of the same class as Arthur Donnithorne, the aristocratic landowner with whom she has a secret relationship. As she wears finery, including accessories that Arthur gifts her, she fetishizes them, which ultimately feeds her vain desire, obscures her sense of reality, and inhibits connection to the people around her. Eliot's use of sympathetic realism, however, poses a possibility for restoring affective connections outside of those determined by visual consumption. By the time of the novel's publication in 1859, everyone was wearing a "rancorous poison garment," suffocated by the inescapable spectacle of

commodities; Eliot explores sympathy as a means to avoid a subsequent descent into “a life of deep human anguish” that such visual consumption may cause.

Class and Commodity Consumption

Hetty’s desire to become a lady is shaped by her desire for objects that symbolize the lifestyle of an upper class woman. On receiving jeweled earrings from Arthur, the narrator emphasizes her joy, stating “O the delight of taking out that little box and looking at the ear-rings!” (Eliot 234). Yet the narrator struggles to rationalize Hetty’s feelings, as her beauty is such that earrings cannot enhance it, and she is unable to wear these earrings outside of her own bedroom for fear of being shamed by her family. The earrings evidently have a complicated use value. In theory, the consumer uses them by wearing them, and her beauty is complemented through this display. But Eliot acknowledges that wearing these earrings does not serve Hetty, as it cannot increase her publicly perceived beauty. Hetty seems to understand this, “peep[ing] at them in the glass against the wall...like a listening bird” in an attempt to be both viewer and display. Her pursuit of commodities is ultimately meaningless, as is her attempt to channel her desire to become a lady through them.

Additionally, Hetty prioritizes the earrings over Arthur, indicating that she desires Arthur primarily, if not only, for his access to commodity goods. Eliot writes, “she was not thinking most of the giver when she smiled at the ear-rings, for now she is taking them out of the box, not to press them to her lips, but to fasten them in her ears...to see how pretty they look” (Eliot 235). Despite the fact that the earrings are material objects, Hetty interacts with them as though they are a person, kissing them rather than immediately displaying them. She does not love Arthur, but consumable things. She misidentifies the object of her desire, assuming it is a person while it

is objects instead. Earrings, “white stockings,” and “Nottingham lace” inspire in Hetty the same kind of thrilling feeling that falling in love ought to (Eliot 94). Objects become a metonym for people, in particular a metonym for a fantasy, rather than a real person. Hetty also desires a life free from labor, which she considers the life of a lady, strikingly different in form from the physical labor she performs at Hall Farm: understanding a lady as an object to be seen, rather than a subject who works, fosters a desire to become like an object herself. Hetty’s interaction with the earrings is an attempt to emulate the kind of display her idea of a lady would experience.

In her mind, she has already achieved the higher status of her dreams. In her fantasies, “already she lives in an invisible world of brilliant costumes, shimmering gauze, soft satin, and velvet, such as the lady’s-maid at the Chase has shown her in Miss Lydia’s wardrobe” (Eliot 235-36). At the same time, the crisis in value inherent to commodity fetishism, the obscuring of an object’s use-value, creates a contradiction, one between what the fetish promises and what it can actually do as a material good. This confuses Hetty’s conception of herself: if Hetty already considers herself living the life of a lady but remains a farm girl in reality, her own internal state is unstable as she lives somewhere in between her real and imagined class status. Similarly, the gauze, satin, and velvet not only symbolize the upper class ideal to Hetty, but they also recall the “supersensuousness” of Marx’s commodity fetish (Marx 47). The sensory aspects of the commodities transcend physicality to create an invisible fantasy. As seen with Laura in “Goblin Market,” Hetty fetishizes these commodities; they sustain her delusions. There even seem to be social relationships between objects as they stand in for real human relationships. Additionally, commodities’ magic power is activated by Hetty’s proximity to them. She does not need to wear these commodities publicly, as display to an audience is not necessary when proximity alone can

activate them. Hetty's world is defined by costumes, a fiction masquerading as reality that forges a bond between her real and projected self.

Nancy Armstrong's account of the sexual contract in domestic fiction can illustrate how Hetty's relationship with commodities renders her desires transgressive of the boundaries of her gender and class positions. Armstrong defines "[r]espectable fiction...as that which represented political conflict in terms of sexual differences that upheld a peculiarly middle-class notion of love" (41). The domestic sphere, separate from the social or political world, acted as an alternative to it and was thus able to resolve conflict seemingly apolitically. When describing the replacement of the social contract with the sexual contract, Armstrong draws on John Stuart Mill, writing that "[Mill] assumes that a woman's destiny depends on her desire for a mate, in exchange for which she will readily relinquish a political identity of her own" (39). Women were responsible for domesticating their husbands in the world of domestic fiction, and in doing so they forfeit their political identity, distinguishing the household from a public sphere where masculine competitive practices are reflected in economic and political processes. The middle-class notion of love that "respectable fiction" upholds involves this exchange of the wife's political control "in order to acquire exclusive authority over domestic life, emotions, taste, and morality" (Armstrong 49).

In *Adam Bede*, it seems that political transgressions are represented as sexual transgressions, most relevantly misguided sexual desire: Hetty's relationship with Arthur masks the class conflict of the novel, her transgressive desire to become a lady. But Hetty clearly does not desire the kind of domestic control that she would gain in exchange for surrendering a political identity, for she does not dream of authority over a domestic household. Rather than a desire misdirected because its object is the wrong person, Hetty's desire is misdirected because

its object is not a person at all. Her desire to become an imaginary lady not only surpasses but even replaces her sexual desire. At the same time, Hetty nevertheless surrenders her political identity. Her desire for objects renders her unable to maintain social relationships, consumed entirely by her fantasy in a way that isolates her from those around her. She cannot think of others when her “little silly imagination” is deciding what she should wear to meet Arthur: “[i]n this state of mind, how could Hetty give any feeling to Adam’s troubles,” or those of anyone else (Eliot 95)? In the second section of this chapter, I examine Hetty’s later sympathetic shift towards considering Adam’s perspective. But here Hetty enters Armstrong’s interpretation of the sexual contract incorrectly, the object of her desire ontologically wrong, and willing to sacrifice the correct thing but unable to acquire the correct benefits in exchange.

Similarly, Hetty’s desire cannot be domesticated, nor does she desire it to be so. For Armstrong, desires that conflict with what is dictated by one’s social, political, or economic situation are enclosed within the domestic sphere where they are represented as sexual desire, and this enclosure could “provide the complement and antidote” to the political world (48). But Hetty’s lack of maternal desire demonstrates how incompatible Hetty’s behavior is with domestic life. Hetty feels no instinctive inclination towards motherhood, a fact that is itself presented as unnatural. The text likens Hetty’s disdain for children to her disdain for animals: “round downy chicks peeping out from under their mother’s wing never touched Hetty with any pleasure; that was not the sort of prettiness she cared about, but she did care about the prettiness of the new things she would buy for herself at the Treddleston fair with the money they fetched” (Eliot 146). Set in her compulsively consumptive frame of mind, she sees the chicks, here analogous for children, only for the goods worth their equivalent financial value. She also assigns the idea of children and motherhood purely aesthetic value, seeing the world as a set of images,

commodities on display to be visually consumed. Hetty is not only unable, but also lacks the desire, to embody the ideal mother, giving her a transgressive status before she has committed violence towards her own child.

As a result, Hetty is removed from both the public and domestic spheres. Initially sentenced to death, a punishment for committing infanticide, the punishment for her transgressive desire is ultimately total banishment from the social sphere, or banishment from both England and the text itself. Additionally, Armstrong claims that, in mid-century domestic fiction, “marriages that changed people’s social status never led to personal happiness. Most often they led to personal disaster, especially for women” (177). Similarly, Eliot’s novel condemns a change in class status as impossible for Hetty, and Eliot does not allow her a way to restore the boundaries her desire has crossed. Without authority over a household, her desires cannot be brought into the domestic sphere nor brought under control within it. Misdirected desires make her unredeemable in her character, not just for the act of murder she commits. While Eliot’s narrative aligns with Armstrong’s account of the expulsion of transgressive characters, Hetty’s misaligned desires demonstrate that Armstrong’s domestic fiction cannot account for the strength of consumer desire that had developed by 1859. Hetty’s sexual desire is not masking a social conflict; rather, Hetty experiences a consumer desire that overwhelms this domesticating sexual desire. In Eliot’s novel, capitalist consumption foils the process by which desires are domesticated and conflicts resolved. As I later argue, *Adam Bede* constitutes Eliot’s critique of mid-Victorian consumer culture’s capacity to foil human connections.

Hetty’s consumer desire is compulsive: when at the Treddleston fair, she “could not resist spending her money in bits of finery which Mrs Poyser disapproved” (Eliot 147). This compulsion in turn drives her desire to be seen and desired by others. Such a desire seems close

in kind to the sexual desires meant to “magically claim priority over any social duty” according to Armstrong (47). Contrary to Armstrong’s argument, however, her manipulation of others’ gaze instead results from her desire for commodities that makes her into an object herself.⁸ Hetty is “quite used to the thought that people liked to look at her,” and she actively encourages others to do so, dressing or positioning herself for men to see her in church or in her home (Eliot 91). Her transgressive desires cause her to objectify herself, transforming her into a commodity to be consumed by others. Armstrong describes this as a “crime,” claiming that a “woman of fashion,” enjoying public, leisurely amusements in a ballroom or opera participates in a “spectacle that injures her, for as an object of display, she always loses value as a subject” (77). Hetty turns even moments of piety into a personal spectacle by encouraging others to perceive her in the church. Hetty’s compulsion to consume becomes compulsion to be seen, a crime rivaling infanticide that harms Hetty as a subject by working towards her own objectification.

Similarly, in private spaces, her compulsion to be seen is expressed as a need to see herself. Sitting before the mirror in her bed chamber, the narrator comments that “devout worshippers never allow inconveniences to prevent them from performing their religious rites, and Hetty this evening was more bent on her peculiar form of worship than usual” (Eliot 141). Hetty’s delusional dress-up has the weight or importance of a religious rite. To her these objects themselves command the same kind of reverence as religious objects. Her idolatrous worship of commodity goods subverts Methodism central to the novel. Specifically, this Christian worship centers community and caring action, as indicated through Eliot’s representation of the Methodist preacher Dinah, an idealistic moral exemplar. While Dinah’s faith depends on

⁸ Given that Hetty cannot display these commodities in public, since her relationship with Arthur must be kept secret, it seems she cannot truly make herself the object of desire through commodity display as she attempts. But this does not change the fact that she does participate in her own objectification through the means available to her, namely by manipulating others’ gaze and showcasing her own beauty. The objectifying nature of her mindset is a result of her delusional perspective, rather than her reality.

sympathy, modes of capitalist consumption corrupt Hetty's faith, turning her into an aesthetic object worshipped by others rather than a subject who can feel sympathy herself. For Eliot, if capitalist consumption restricts interpersonal connections, it similarly impedes the community central to Christian worship, demonstrating the widespread social dangers of such consumption.

In the chapter "The Two Bed-Chambers," Hetty's fantasy becomes a kind of reverie produced by the mirror that, as an object, parallels her delusion. Though tarnished and inconvenient to use with its sticky drawers and blotched surface, the mirror had still "been considered a handsome glass in its day," and its brass candle sockets "would give it an aristocratic air to the very last" (Eliot 141). An object signaling the upper class, the mirror seems like an object that Hetty would covet, even if not a mass-produced commodity. The mirror is therefore appropriate for the projection of the fetishistic capacities. Anne McClintock claims that "[i]n the domestic world of mirrors, objects multiply without apparent human intervention in a promiscuous economy of self-generation" (218). The mirror offers Hetty an inverse reflection of herself that obscures reality in much the same way the commodity fetish obscures its origins of production. As the mirror transforms the finery that Hetty wears into that which a lady wears and amplifies this image, it sustains her fantasy seemingly without effort from Hetty herself.

However, the mirror's age and impracticality also puts the aristocracy it suggests out of Hetty's reach. The mirror itself represents inflexible, or literally immobile, class boundaries that separate a wealthier class from Hetty's. The distance in social status between Hetty and Arthur is like that between a divine and mortal being: Hetty is "a simple farmer's girl, to whom a gentleman with a white hand was dazzling as an Olympian god" (Eliot 95). The mirror belongs to a world she reveres as nearly divine, one that puts her in a spell-like trance and "dazzles" her with shiny consumables. She can only achieve a tarnished copy of this world. The mirror's

incongruity with her other belongings parallels the impossibility of Hetty's fantasy, demonstrating that becoming a lady through marriage or by consuming objects that stand in for a lady is not feasible, and suggesting that Hetty does not fully understand what ladyhood entails, nor that it can only be established through birth. Her disdain for the mirror is an expression of frustration at this impossibility.

Meanwhile, Dinah sits in her unlit adjacent room. Eliot represents a severe contrast between Dinah's moment of worship and Hetty's, as Dinah is emphatically concerned with looking outwards and away from herself. She first looks out her window, the frame reminiscent of Hetty's mirror, though here she quite literally looks outwards, contrasting the self-feeding and objectifying cycle that traps Hetty. While Hetty struts up and down her room, Dinah sits still in silence. Her "mode of praying in solitude" is "[s]imply to close her eyes, and to feel herself enclosed by the Divine Presence" (Eliot 148). This is a more recognizable form of worship, one focused on "the presence of Love and Sympathy" rather than commodities, none of which are mentioned in this passage (Eliot 148). Dinah even has a vision like Hetty does in this moment: Dinah's "imagination had created a thorny thicket of sin and sorrow, in which she saw the poor thing struggling torn and bleeding, looking with tears for rescue and finding none" (Eliot 149). Just as absorbing as Hetty's fantasy, Dinah's vision does not concern herself at all. It is a product of "imagination and sympathy" rather than vanity (Eliot 149).

This scene of sympathetic worship leads up to the moment where vision itself is notably denied, and Dinah is able to read her Bible nearly in the dark, as she "knew the physiognomy of every page, and could tell on what book she opened, sometimes on what chapter without seeing title or number" (Eliot 149). The difference between Hetty's and Dinah's experiences locates the nature of Hetty's transgressive behavior in her compulsive, idolatrous relationship with objects

and the visuality that arises from it, including both her desire to be viewed and her worship of her own image. Hetty's transgression is a narcissistic, superficial cycle that Dinah is able to escape by looking outward both literally and by caring for others. The second section of this chapter discusses sympathy as an alternative and solution to the dangers of visuality by restoring affective connections between people, rather than commodities, and Dinah's model of sympathetic worship perfectly represents the difference between sympathetic and consumer relationships.

In this chapter, the narrator also describes Hetty as the ideal wife, saying, "[t]he dear, young, round, soft, flexible thing! Her heart must be just as soft, her temper just as free from angles, her character as pliant. If anything ever goes wrong, it must be the husband's fault there: he can make her what he likes" (Eliot 144). The narrator emphasizes Hetty's vulnerability to men who shape her image, much like her uncle Mr. Poyser implies when he states that young girls like Hetty "are like th' unripe grain; they'll make good meal by-and-by, but they're squashy as yet. Thee't see, Hetty'll be all right when she's got a good husband and children of her own" (Eliot 147). Mr. Poyser's analogy makes her consumable in a literal sense by likening her to food. It further demonstrates that he sees Hetty as an object to be shaped to fit male expectations and control: this malleability commodifies her. This ideal of malleability accounts for the frequent description of her beauty as childlike. The narrator claims that "[i]t would be the easiest folly in the world to fall in love with her: there is such a sweet baby-like roundness about her face and figure" (Eliot 144). Hetty's childishness renders her dependent, in this case on her husband. It also renders her vulnerable to her compulsiveness: unable to resist its "pleasant narcotic effect...a sort of dream," Hetty is in a sense controlled by the objects she uses to fashion herself (Eliot 94). Objects, then, once again take the place of a husband. Although Hetty wants to

become an object of men's desires, she does not permit them to shape her in this way, allowing commodities to do so instead. Hetty simultaneously resists the model of the pliant woman by refusing to be shaped by men while becoming more vulnerable than this model woman suggests, since she allows herself to be molded by objects with no real power into a fictional identity.⁹

Hetty also experiences shame for using objects to shape her image. In her bed-chamber, she "would have been ready to die with shame, vexation, and fright, if her aunt had this moment opened the door," and she hides her earrings and locket from her aunt and uncle (Eliot 147, 235-36). This reaction is more extreme than mere embarrassment; it is a mortification and willingness to die. On some level, Hetty seems aware that her love for finery transgresses social norms, and imagining death as the alternative to her fantasy similarly suggests that she knows her dream is impossible to realize. Her shame indicates an unconscious knowledge of the strictness of class boundaries in the novel. But her obsessive consumption blinds her to the impossibility of her fantasy. Were she caught wearing these objects, they would lose their imagined power, and she would rather die than face this reality.

According to conduct books from the period, this kind of display "was the same as saying that [a woman] was supposed to be valued for her body and its adornments, not for the virtues she might possess as a woman and wife" (Armstrong 75). Such display emphasized external, superficial value of a woman that contrasted from supposed internal, ideal domestic value. While idle public amusement was condemned for putting a woman's body on display, the ideal woman does not perform labor either. Instead, Armstrong argues that "[t]he domestic woman executes

⁹ This contrasts Lori Anne Loeb's account of how consumption could empower the female consumer. Loeb writes that "[a]s a consumer ideology of choice and pleasure proliferated, women were empowered. They gained a new form and degree of economic control and they became arbiters of new social values including gender" (Loeb 34). While the husband may make the household's money and determine how much his wife could spend, it was ultimately up to the wife what was purchased. Hetty's purchases reflect her own values and self-image, rather than an image determined by a husband, and by mimicking this action, it seems Hetty would truly become more like the middle class woman Loeb describes. However, rather than shaping her own image, Hetty sees objects as shaping it. Treating objects as fetishes denies her the power of Loeb's female consumer.

her role in the household by regulating her own desire....So conceived, self-regulation became a form of labor that was superior to labor” (81). This subtle, paradoxical form of labor underlies Hetty’s misunderstanding of what a lady is. Desiring a life free from labor, like that of the aristocratic woman or ideal domestic woman of the conduct books, Hetty does not see that controlling her desires is an act of labor necessary to become such a woman. Her extreme shame demonstrates that, whether or not she understands that she is performing a type of labor by enclosing her desires within the private sphere, this exact labor is necessary for the lady she desires to become. Self-regulation, specifically the containment of one’s desires, is then necessary for the ideal of the domestic woman. Since Hetty’s engagement with commodities denies her the possibility of ever embodying the characteristics of the ideal wife, her vanity impedes the realization of her fantasy on a deeper level than do the novel’s rigid class divisions.

If virtue of character, specifically cultivating self-regulation, signals what it means to be an upper class woman, Adam’s humility proves the perfect counterpoint to Hetty’s vanity. The narrator claims “[w]hen Adam heard that he was to dine upstairs with the large tenets, he felt rather uncomfortable at the idea of being exalted in this way above his mother and Seth, who were to dine in the cloisters below” (Eliot 243). This is discomfort not at the rigid class system itself, but at the idea that he is not worthy of even his own slight shift within it. However, people from a range of classes disagree, including Arthur and Seth, who says the upstairs table is “a place o’ trust, and thee’t above a common workman now” (Eliot 242, 243). Adam earns his new status through his humility and noble character; he was one of those guests who “derived dignity from their functions rather than from their pocket” (Eliot 243). He is the last person to desire an invitation to the upstairs table, which makes him the ideal candidate to do so.

Armstrong discusses how domestic virtues similar to humility may enable similar experiences among households of different incomes. To achieve a similar lifestyle and household as someone with a higher income, one would have to be prudent with their spending, proportioning it correctly among different categories of household expense, thus demonstrating qualities of restraint. According to the conduct books she examines, “anyone can observe the correct proportions and, within proportioning categories, the correct exercise of priorities....only the exercise of these personal qualities—elsewhere known as ‘discretion,’ ‘modesty,’ ‘frugality,’ and ‘regularity’—can ensure domestic happiness” (Armstrong 86). The ideal life depends on these internal, virtuous qualities as well as observation of properly proportioned spending categories. This is why Adam’s humility and respect for class boundaries is recognized. Additionally, humility, frugality, and discretion are qualities that limit the scope of one’s desires. Adam’s virtues allow him to manage his own desires, assuring that they lay within the realm defined by class. Hetty’s desires, on the other hand, run unchecked without this kind of self-restraint.

While the Donnithornes’s butler, Mr. Casson, describes him as “one o’ them as mounts hup’ard apace,” Adam does not actually experience upward social movement (Eliot 245). Rather, Adam’s seat at the table is a symbolic reward that exposes him to a higher class experience without allowing him to fully join. Adam’s humble virtues enable the possibility of achieving cultural mobility, but not economic mobility. The butler makes this comment feeling spiteful since “he thought the gentry made more fuss about this young carpenter than was necessary; they made no fuss about Mr. Casson, although he had been an excellent butler for fifteen years” (Eliot 245). Overlooking the fact that it is character being fussed over, not skill or labor, he refers to Adam as the “carpenter,” seeing him only for his occupation. Class status remains fixed, though it is possible to change one’s character outside of it. In contrast, Hetty, blind to the necessity for a

lady's self-restraint and modesty, tries to cross the boundaries of class through economic relations, her fetishization of objects.

Through Hetty, readers watch the development of the visual consumer culture that developed in the sixty years between Hetty's 1799, rural world and Eliot's 1859 contemporaneous reality. Eliot depicts Hetty as a site of the development of Victorian consumer culture, using a single individual to represent this cultural paradigm shift. Readers can watch not only compulsive consumption happen in real time, but also watch its harmful consequences unfold. By distancing the reader from Hetty both by placing her in the past and by condemning the vanity of her behavior, Eliot defamiliarizes readers from Hetty's compulsive consumption, and by extension their own participation in the mid-century capitalist market economy. She similarly warns readers of the dangers of this extreme behavior, namely their tendency to replace desire for human connection. Eliot demonstrates that capitalist consumption foils romantic love as a mechanism to circumvent the rigidity of the novel's class boundaries. To counter this, Eliot proposes sympathy as a means of restoring the affective connections lost through a compulsive consumption of commodity goods; the following section explores *Adam Bede* as a work of sympathetic realism.

Sympathetic Realism

Just as Hetty is trapped in a fiction of her own making while still able to see reality, readers too have a complicated relationship to Eliot's realist form and the fictional world she creates. Eliot's narrator addresses the audience directly, in effect inviting them into the world of the novel. At the same time, however, the narrator controls exactly how the reader can access the world, introducing the Hall Farm by instructing readers to touch their face to the window. Eliot's

narrator constantly keeps the reader at a threshold, allowing them to see inside while also determining precisely where they are allowed to look: “[t]he ‘real’ is thus rendered simultaneously accessible and as always slightly out of reach” (Jaffe, “Realist Territory” 22-24, 24). To accept the narrator’s invitation, the reader must imagine themselves into the space, but the realist narrative necessitates that they imagine what is already familiar to them, simultaneously demanding their imaginative involvement and restricting its scope. Realist representation requires engagement with fantasy, as by its nature it attempts to “reconstruct or resurrect a past that has effectively been lost” (Beaumont 5). Fantasy, or imagination, is necessary for Eliot’s realist form, though her narrator manipulates the extent to which the reader must be imaginatively engaged. Eliot’s sympathetic realism, then, requires both imagination and a grounding in reality in different amounts.

In fact, *Adam Bede* begins by invoking the fantastic to create the real. Narrated in the first person, the novel opens: “[w]ith a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past. This is what I undertake to do for you, reader” (Eliot 7). In response to this opening paragraph, Matthew Beaumont asks, “[i]s the novel’s experiment in representation like that of empirical science or else like some enigmatic spiritual séance?” (Beaumont 5). Certainly, by likening the narrator to a sorcerer and calling her story a “far-reaching vision,” Eliot evokes the fantastical in the world that she constructs. Yet by providing an exact time and date, “the roomy workshop of Mr Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder in the village of Hayslope, as it appeared on the eighteenth of June, in the year of our Lord 1799,” she immediately constrains the fantastical elements necessary for reconstructing a past in which the readers cannot live. Her words, her “drop of ink,” act as a mirror in that her audience must draw from their own real experience to participate

in fiction, and also in that the words act as a lens the reader must look through without crossing. Just as the mirror in Hetty's bedchamber magically sustains Hetty's illusion, the drop of ink here sustains Eliot's fiction.

Dinah's moment of prayer in "The Two Bed-Chambers" is not only distinctly sympathetic, but it also demonstrates the requirements for sympathy in Eliot's realist fiction. Dinah is able to connect with Hetty through reflection and imagination. She sits in a dark room, distinctly partitioned from Hetty's, and the absence of vision and division from Hetty both prompt and facilitate her imagination and feeling of "the presence of Love and Sympathy" (Eliot 149). Separation and imagination are central to Rae Greiner's theory of "sympathy time" in which "certain nineteenth-century realist techniques may be fundamentally sympathetic—that they work in the service of a 'sympathetic realism'" (293). Like Schaffer's active care, Greiner argues that sympathy is an action, not a feeling, and one that requires imaginative labor. Sympathy requires a kind of speculation, mediating one's own behavior by reflecting on how another epistemologically removed from oneself would see a situation. This mediation cannot be successful if the object of one's sympathy is too spatiotemporally close to oneself. Imaginative labor is not necessary when one already identifies with the object of their sympathy. Nor can sympathy work by only witnessing another's experience; vision too easily leads to this kind of identification. Thus, "[s]eeing can be inimical to sympathetic investment" (Greiner 296). But this imaginative work cannot stray into the realm of the fictional—it must be grounded in reality. Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth similarly claims that "[a]ny vision that disregards the hard, unaccommodating actual is an unsympathetic vision and one that usually turns destructive" (26).

Caroline Levine agrees that only an accurate understanding of reality, or real knowledge, can provoke sympathy. Realism requires disciplining imagination: rather than using imagination

to project yourself onto another, sympathy instead requires “jolt[ing] the imagination into a properly feeling and knowing orientation towards the otherness of the world” (Levine 63). Sympathy is an awareness of “an otherness outside oneself” (Levine 63). Recognizing that the world is otherwise allows one to change their views. Thus, the gap Jaffe describes between self and other is present in Levine’s sympathy, too. Levine uses this model of sympathy and imagination to argue that surprise is essential to Eliot’s sympathetic realism. Surprise, or new, unexpected knowledge of reality, startles one out of selfish habits and the expectations of the world formed by projecting oneself outward rather than seeing it how it is. The selfishness Levine describes is social in kind, a quality that allows characters an understanding of themselves that is not self-absorbing and leaves them open to others’ input. Hetty’s vanity, a selfish quality, is distinctly unsocial. She understands her relationship to others through commodities, inhibiting real, human relationships. This prohibits her from change; unable to accept alterity, the idea that the world is other than she imagines it, Hetty cannot sympathize with others, and so cannot change herself until it is too late.

Her inability to sympathize extends to her own child; her relationship with commodities makes her unable to see her own baby as a human being. Frequently referring to the child as “it,” she states “I don’t know how I felt about the baby. I seemed to hate it—it was like a heavy weight hanging round my neck; and yet its crying went through me, and I daredn’t look at its little hands and face” (Eliot 425). She understands the baby as an object, though one that does not accord with the commodities she cherishes. Where her commodities have the power to realize her dream, her child prevents it: she cannot be the lady she imagines with a child born outside of marriage. At the same time, her refusal to look at the baby, unlike the commodities she believes work through vision, is what allows her to begin to acknowledge its humanity. It is only

when she “daredn’t look” that she recognizes the baby’s human features and feels the emotional weight of its cry. Similarly, when she returns to the site where she abandoned it, she says “I don’t know what I felt till I saw the baby was gone,” only then reacting emotionally to her decision (Eliot 426). Only when the baby is gone from her sight does she understand her act to be infanticide, killing a human baby rather than the impulsive disposal of an object that lacks the magic her earrings may have. Lack of vision momentarily enables sympathy to a small extent, in particular an absence of the vision that bestows power on commodities.

The closest Hetty comes to change is when she confesses to Dinah in the prison. Hetty initially tells Dinah “I can’t feel anything like you...my heart is hard,” but after recounting her story, she does seem to “see that God encompasses her,” asking if God will take away her memory of her baby crying in the wood in exchange for her confession (Eliot 422, 423, 426). This is a dramatic change in Hetty’s faith; it is so dramatic, in fact, that it breaks Hetty from her delusion and causes her to recognize the wrong she has done to Adam. When she recognizes change in herself, she sees him truly for the first time: “when Hetty and Adam looked at each other, she felt the change in *him* too, and it seemed to strike her with fresh fear. It was the first time she had seen any being whose face seemed to reflect the change in herself: Adam was a new image of the dreadful past and the dreadful present” (Eliot 431). Her confession has forced her to accept the reality outside of her fantasy, enabling an emotional connection with Adam that she was unable to feel before. This unfamiliar feeling induces new fear, as does the realization that Adam has changed her for the worse.

The new emotional connection is not quite sympathy. But it is similar in that it demonstrates progress in Hetty’s ability to develop affective connections with people, not things. As she sees him, Adam collapses the past and the present, and thus is too temporally close to

Hetty's experience for her to truly mediate between Adam's experience and her own. Adam functions as a mirror; her reading of his face is still self-informing and self-serving, but it is nevertheless a social action. Like a sympathetic relationship, she mediates her understanding of the moment by reflecting on another when she sees herself through Adam. The darkness of her prison cell contributes to the emotional growth and an accurate vision of reality that Hetty finally achieves in her last moments. If merely witnessing others' experiences cannot prompt the proper reflection sympathy requires, the cell in which "the only light...was that of the evening sky, through the small high grating" would be the perfect setting for reflection, and Dinah's determined preaching the perfect company. This moment parallels the earlier scene in "The Two Bed-Chambers." In both, restrained vision allows for distance that prompts imaginative reflection and enables sympathetic connection.

The fact that sympathy works through lack of vision enables real affective connections, whereas commodity culture and the visibility it requires denies them. Hetty's relationship with commodities relies on spectacle, the display of commodities on her body and of her body in public. Visibility is dangerous to genuine, affective connections in this novel, and where commodity culture encourages visual spectacle, it prohibits these connections. To the extent that sympathy provides a solution, it must counteract visual consumption. Darkness prompts the imaginative engagement between subject and object of sympathy necessary for active reflection. This is similar to Laura and Lizzie's relationship in "Goblin Market." Laura, entranced by her visual consumption and fetishism of commodities, is punished with an illness depriving her of any feeling. Lizzie, however, maintains distance from the market through her sympathy for Lizzie, and this distance allows her to see the danger that the goblins pose and avoid the enchantment Laura experiences. In terms of the retrospective structure of the novel, Eliot

distances readers temporally from her plot, allowing them to recognize the reality of their own commodity consumption and engagement of spectacle, and thus to the extent to which they are blind to others' affective states.

Similarly, Eliot's narrator distances readers from Hetty by prohibiting them to see, or imagine, her pregnancy, perhaps the most surprising revelation in the novel. Levine's model of surprising realism also accounts for *Adam Bede's* plot twists. Such events do not seem to align with ordinary life, which from a grand scope may seem "monotonous, unexciting – plotless" (Levine 73). If surprise is necessary for sympathy, the elements of the plot that may seem contrived are in fact compatible with Eliot's distinct sympathetic realism. The narrator omits knowledge of Hetty's pregnancy to keep readers in the fantasy that the whole town of Hayslope experiences. Rather than ground readers in reality, as does the narrator's explicit condemnation of Hetty's vanity, the narrator's omissions here delude us.

Therefore, seeing Hetty's pregnancy would have denied readers full understanding of her situation. Were we, as readers, told of Hetty's pregnancy from its beginning, we would accept it more quickly. We would more easily project our own self onto her, rather than fully understanding the reality of her situation. Similarly, describing Hetty's pregnancy could put her on display, encouraging readers to see her as an object and inhibiting sympathy with her. Readers would objectify her, as does the town of Hayslope, and they would connect with her as an object, rather than acknowledging her as an individual, causing them to fall into their own consumptive fantasy. Visual consumption of people is as blinding and alienating as the visual consumption of commodities. Discovering the fact of her pregnancy only after she leaves Hayslope prevents us from this extension of ourselves, jarring our expectations of Hetty's character as simply vain, and causing us to reckon with a more complicated reality. Denying sight and visual consumption

allows for a nuanced understanding of reality. This particular surprise does invite us to sympathize with Hetty. Despite her antisocial qualities that make sympathy with her difficult, as readers we do genuinely care whether or not Hetty is sentenced to death. As information is withheld from the readers, the gap between their knowledge and that of the characters widens to meet the temporal gap between them and the novel's setting, enabling sympathy by forcing the reader to perform imaginative labor to cross this gap.

In the novel, absence of sympathy can also account for why the people of the town live in their own fiction and similarly refuse to recognize Hetty's pregnancy. The townspeople only see Hetty for her beauty, but this shallow viewing prohibits their sympathy. They parallel her own misrecognition of reality. While Hetty's immersion in her fantasy ostracizes herself from her community, the town is also responsible for their sympathetic misrecognition. Hetty may be closed off to sympathy, but the town nevertheless tries to see Hetty as what they expect her to be, rather than accepting that she is something different. In particular, describing her as moldable, "squashy," suggests that they understand Hetty as an extension of themselves: by seeing Hetty solely as an object of their desire, they also "desire to project the self onto the other" and fail to recognize reality. Similarly, the town fails to see that Hetty does feel shame about her vain behavior. The people of Hayslope project her obsession with her image back onto her, failing to see that she has an internal subjectivity and is not simply a superficial object.

While I have been discussing Greiner and Levine's accounts of sympathy together, they do posit two different roles of imagination for the sympathetic process. Greiner claims that, in anticipating how another would see your actions, this imaginative labor makes a sympathizer like a reader of fiction. Additionally, the reader is actively invited to use their imagination in order to see into characters' experiences. In the fictional narrative, "[i]magination is a licensed

trespasser...and not only does Eliot give us our provisional license, but she tells us precisely how to use it” when dictating what things are worth looking at (Jaffe, “Realist Territory” 22). Eliot’s sympathetic realism then relies on a kind of self-created fiction that is a product of imaginative labor. This seems dangerously similar to Hetty’s self-created fantasy of class mobility. If reality is so necessary to successful sympathy, what prevents potential sympathizers from becoming trapped, or blinded to reality, in the same way that Hetty is? Combining Levine’s idea of imagination with Greiner’s can provide a solution. On Levine’s model, imagination must be disciplined: it must be oriented towards a recognition of reality as other than a projection of yourself or what you know. Extending a vision of yourself or your expectations outwards is a form of blindness to reality. While imagination, self-created fiction, is essential to sympathetic realism, it must be informed by an awareness of a reality that may be different than one’s expectations about the world.

Sight is inimical to sympathy because sympathy is incompatible with visual consumption. Sympathy cannot occur when one is, like Hetty, obsessed with commodities that work through display value. This obsession is blinding and alienating, prohibiting affective relationships. If this mode of sympathetic realism is necessary for characters in *Adam Bede*, then Eliot also suggests its necessity to mid-Victorian readers saturated by commodities and practices of visual consumption. With privileged access to characters’ experiences while being appropriately removed from them, the reader acts as a spectator when sympathizing, making the realist form “situate...ordinary life as spectacle and readers as observers of a fixed display” (Jaffe, “Realist Territory” 22). As the narrator controls the reader’s sight, the reader is led into an apathetic lull that is broken with the news of Hetty’s infanticide. By forcing readers to recognize Hetty’s reality and opening the possibility of sympathetic connection with her, Eliot exposes the reader’s

own commodity-induced fantasies and the limits of their vision in a world overrun by spectacular relationships. Through the novel, she explores the possibilities of sympathetic realism as a counter to the visual commodity culture she herself observed.

The Illustrated Domestic and Aesthetic Object

William Small's illustrations of Hetty for an 1870s edition of *Adam Bede* complicate the way visuality works in Eliot's narrative. Small produced six full-page illustrations for the illustrated edition, which was printed in England in the mid 1870s as part of a library series by William Blackwood, where it appeared without a date (Cooke "William Small's Illustrations"). While there is little scholarship on Small's work, his illustrative style places him in the school of artists that emerged after the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. His style and the quality of his images are frequently compared to du Maurier's, indicating Small's talent, and at one point in his career "he became the highest paid illustrator of his time, earning sixty guineas for each drawing for the *Graphic*" (Goldman 140). In his work for *Adam Bede*, readers are allowed visual access to Hetty in a way impossible through text, which heightens the process of objectification that stems from her compulsive consumption. However, her face is never represented, forcing readers to see her for the objects she wears, and thus objectify her. By controlling what the reader is allowed to see, Small controls how the reader consumes Eliot's text, encouraging objectification and sympathy by turns to promote Eliot's sympathetic realist project.

Though Eliot foregrounds Hetty's beauty in the novel, making it Hetty's most distinguishing feature, the illustrations deny readers access to her beauty, as William Small never illustrates Hetty's face. Of the six illustrations, Hetty only appears in two, "In the Wood" and "Dinah and Hetty in the Prison." In the former (figure 3), while her face is turned to the reader, it

is obscured by Arthur's; Cooke claims that this makes her "an object to be kissed...re-casting her as an anonymous lower-class girl, interchangeable with all others, and subject to the authority and exploitation of her social superiors" (Cooke "William Small's Illustrations"). Like Hayslope and Hetty herself when she gazes into the mirror, the readers are able to participate in objectifying Hetty because Small makes her into a "type," not giving her any distinguishing features. Readers can access only Hetty's clothes. Most prominent is the bow of her hat under her chin, well lit in the darkness of the woods in the image. The vertical lines of her dress contrast from the curved strokes of the grass around her. Clothing replaces Hetty herself, objects standing in for her identity in an instance of literal objectification. If Hetty's self-fashioning occurs through her clothing, viewers are able to see only the effect of her manipulation of others' gaze, rather than her own understanding or sense of self. Small invites readers of *Adam Bede* to participate in objectifying Hetty through their gaze.

Where Eliot provides descriptions of Adam's and Dinah's faces, she does not describe Hetty's. Instead, her beauty is likened to other images: "a beauty like that of kittens, or very small downy ducks making gentle rippling noises with their soft bills, or babies just beginning to toddle and to engage in conscious mischief—a beauty with which you can never be angry, but that you feel ready to crush for inability to comprehend the state of mind into which it throws you. Hetty Sorrel's was that sort of beauty" (Eliot 78). Rather than interpreting this, Small reproduces the effect that the "spring-tide beauty" has on the characters around Hetty. Small's replacement of her beauty with the markers of her vanity cause readers, like the town of Hayslope, to see her superficially and objectify her. Small skips the risk of depicting her beauty, which readers may find subjective, instead forcing viewers to misrecognize Hetty for her possessions, which ultimately makes her more easily consumable.

Cooke acknowledges that Small's depiction of Hetty differs from Eliot's, claiming that Small chooses to depict Hetty as "purely the innocent, acted upon rather than acting." He describes Small's refusal to illustrate Hetty's beauty as a choice that indicates that her beauty is "irrelevant to what is essentially a seduction based on Arthur's power" (Cooke "In the Wood"). Yet Cooke also mentions that "Eliot's attitude to Hetty is deeply ambivalent" and suggests that Hetty's attractiveness "absolves Arthur from at least some of the implications of his actions; somehow she is almost as much to blame as he is" (Cooke "William Small's Illustrations"). Cooke's confusion about how Hetty's beauty makes her responsible for the consequences of Arthur's actions would be justified if Hetty's beauty were truly to blame. But in the text, it is Hetty's detachment from reality, her consumerist fantasy, that the narrator clearly disdains; to Eliot, Hetty is indeed to blame for her misplaced desires and their consequences, even if such consequences also stem from Arthur's condemnable neglect. To the extent that Hetty is a victim in the way Cooke describes, she is a victim of her own fantasy and a victim of the objectifying gaze. But in "In the Woods," prior to her suffering Arthur's abandonment and committing infanticide, Hetty's body language does not necessarily suggest victimhood. She is positioned in front of Arthur, her dress more visible than his body, and she looks up into his face as they kiss. There is a boldness in her positioning that contrasts with her hunched form in the other image in which she appears, suggesting that readers ought not to increase their pity for Hetty's vanity in this moment. Just as Hetty's relationship to objects inhibits her sympathetic connection with others, readers' forced misidentification of Hetty for her clothing discourages their sympathy for Hetty in this scene.

However, just as readers are encouraged to sympathize with Hetty when in prison, where she is better able to connect with others herself, Small has presented Hetty more as a victim in

“Dinah and Hetty in the Prison” (figure 4). Hetty is represented as shorter than Dinah, retreating from the viewer and sinking into her arms. The tone of Hetty’s dress blends into the wall and the floor where Dinah’s black dress creates a solid support to which Hetty clings. Here, Small is “expressing sympathy for Hetty’s predicament,” making Hetty a figure with whom the reader immediately connects (Cooke “William Small’s Illustrations”). By turning Hetty’s face away from the viewer, Small allows the viewer to better connect with her; Small creates the distance necessary for imagination to provoke sympathy. Additionally, the lighting of the image shows that Hetty is not a passive victim but is undergoing change herself. The light color of Dinah’s methodist cap draws the viewer’s attention upwards from Hetty’s hunched form, iconically aligning with Dinah’s reminder to Hetty that “God’s love and mercy can overcome all things” (Eliot 422). Standing on the lightest part of the floor, which ought to be darkness in the light that casts the shadow on the wall behind them, Hetty is about to confess, feeling repentance and a newfound sympathy for others that indicates a dramatic shift in her character. Seeing only the back of her plain dress and the bare prison environment, for the first time Hetty cannot be identified by or with the objects she covets. Though she blends into the background and needs Dinah for support, she is notably herself in this image.

The style of Small’s illustrations is consistent with the realist style of the Sixties movement. As part of the school that grew out of the Pre-Raphaelites, Small’s illustrations retain the use of physical qualities to express inner attitudes. At the same time, this new, “idyllic” school “were less interested in a ‘remote past’, a dreamy medieval world peopled by knights, swooning mistresses and tales of legend far from reality or everyday life which the Pre-Raphaelites perfected. Instead they created scenes which were more earthbound but, at their best, were no less poetic or intense” (Goldman 115). Small’s emphasis on the mundane best

exemplifies this earthbound intensity: rather than providing an image of the Donnithorne mansion, Small picks quiet, intimate scenes in working-class domestic homes or the Poysers' farmyard that invite appreciation of the everyday. T

his focus recalls Eliot's descriptions of settings, like that of the Poysers' dairy, as well as her own account of novelistic realism, which, like Dutch painting provides "a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of a monotonous homely existence, which has been the fate of so many more among my fellow-mortals than a life of pomp or of absolute indigence, of tragic suffering or of world-stirring actions" (Eliot 166). The realism of her text invites readers to find things "lovable that are not altogether handsome," specifically everyday scenes experienced regularly by her own audience. As in the illustrations of his realist contemporaries, in Small's work "the extraordinary becomes the ordinary—accorded significance, reverence, and...always seen as meriting the highest form of aesthetic engagement" (Leighton and SurrIDGE, "Hallowing the Everyday" 1-2). Assigning aesthetic value to quotidian scenes by choosing to represent them, Small's illustrations similarly force readers to slow down and appreciate mundanity and "asks readers to watch the details of people's lives and observe them with...loving compassion" (Leighton and SurrIDGE 41-42). Small, like Eliot, uses realist tools to encourage sympathy with his working-class subjects.

As such, he assigns moral value to the mundane as well. Working class people and environments, for example, are represented as moral exemplars. Cooke notes Adam's athletic build and Small's emphasis on his hands, signs Small has used in other works to similarly show integrity and honesty (Cooke "William Small's Illustrations"). The idyllic school "often depicted a harmonious rural life with decent but poor people apparently leading simple, noble existences from urban squalor" (Goldman 115). Small's representations of Adam and the humble settings

Adam and the Poysers occupy emphasize the nobility of their character in contrast with their social standing. However, Cooke interprets this moral depiction as a means by which “Small re-figures the novel as a struggle between privilege and peasantry in which he elides the complications of the situation and offers in its place his own reading of the class-theme as a matter of exploitation and resistance” (Cooke “William Small’s Illustrations”). Cooke claims that the emphasis on the laboring class demonstrates that Small does not feel any sympathy whatsoever for the privileged classes. Cooke’s stark view contrasts from the nuance of Eliot’s approach to the class system, and it marks a departure from the text. He reads the realist elements and choice of what gets represented as “a Socialist interpretation which champions the workers,” a radical departure from Eliot’s text.

But the rigid model of the class system in Eliot’s text complicates the reading of these images as condemning the exploitation of an agricultural laboring class. If Adam is a moral exemplar because of his respect for the rigid class system, then it seems that the idyllic emphasis on the mundane is similarly a respect for this class system. Adam and Arthur are only pictured together once, when Adam knocks Arthur unconscious (figure 5). While Cooke convincingly reads this as a visible representation of class conflict, Adam’s distraught expression and positioning show instant regret, not only for harming Arthur, but for dealing a blow to hierarchical class norms as well. I would argue, therefore, that in this illustration class boundaries are not transgressed and humility, which restricts one’s desires from exceeding one’s means, is what Small depicts in the end.

Hetty’s invisibility, then, is part of Small’s use of realist techniques to align his illustrations with Eliot’s moral messaging, rather than promoting a socialist meaning that contradicts it. While his portrayal of Hetty may seem to contrast from Eliot’s text, since readers

cannot see her most recognizable trait, beauty, it actually serves Eliot's purpose: Hetty is unrepresentable as she loses her sense of reality to her compulsive consumption and deluded fantasy. The fact that both images in which she appears are dark, whether secluded in the woods or lit by a candle in the prison, may also suggest a moral condemnation of Hetty's character. Dinah, by contrast, is seen in profile both times she is depicted. With Adam, her eyes are downturned in a gesture of clear humility; in the prison, candlelight turns her downcast gaze from one of humility to something more stern. Though she may not seem ready to give the monologue to Hetty filled with passion from the feeling of "Divine pity...beating in her heart," perhaps she, like Small, is condemning Hetty's actions, her severe expression representing the severity of Hetty's situation. Where Hetty is unrepresentable, Dinah the moral exemplar is pictured with the humility exemplary to Small and Eliot's combined sympathetic realism.

The Colonial Commodity: Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*

As a work of sensation fiction, Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) differs in genre from both Rossetti's fantasy poem and Eliot's realist domestic fiction. But viewing it in light of these previous two works demonstrates how Collins explores capitalist commodity consumption, spectacular display, commodity fetishism, and the danger of objectification through the Moonstone, the mesmerizing yellow diamond that gives the novel its name. The diamond's value shifts as it moves between different social, cultural, and geographical contexts. Originating as a religious object valued for its function in Collins's version of Hindu belief, the Moonstone is stolen from India and brought to Britain, where its display value as a piece of jewelry and aesthetic object moves to the forefront of its signification. As a birthday gift to Rachel Verinder, the novel's heroine, the Moonstone is incorporated into an English domestic space in a symbolic act of colonization. As the quiet English house [is] suddenly invaded by a devilish Indian Diamond" (Collins 33), the diamond leaves chaos in the wake of its circulation through England. Its visuality affirms Rachel's gender and class position while rendering her vulnerable to objectification, much like Hetty and Laura in the previous chapters. Visuality also renders the diamond a priceless commodity, as seen in the resolution of the novel's mystery, when it is revealed that one of Rachel's suitors, Godfrey Ablewhite, had stolen Moonstone from her, planning to cut into smaller diamonds and sell it to repay his debts.

From the novel's prologue, Collins expresses deep suspicion about the violence inherent to British empire-building while simultaneously endorsing imperial perspectives. To the extent that Collins depicts the British theft of the Moonstone from India as a crime, its incorporation into a capitalist market system is similarly criminal. Like the other works I have examined, in

The Moonstone capitalism encourages commodity fetishism through aesthetic appeal. Collins's investigation into how capitalism is intertwined with British imperialism reveals not only the irrationality of commodity fetishism, but also the irrationality of the imperial project itself. Despite his ambivalent stance on colonization, Collins aligns readers' sympathy on the side of the colonies, and he uses representations of difference or otherness as a means to produce sympathetic connections resonant with those seen in "Goblin Market" and *Adam Bede*.

Origins in Reality: The Koh-i-Noor Diamond

Collins's *Moonstone* follows a similar trajectory to the real Koh-i-Noor diamond, which was taken from India following the Anglo-Sikh wars. Examining shifts in the Koh-i-Noor's cultural signification as it moved from India to England between 1813 to 1852 illustrates Collins's similar representational uses of the *Moonstone*. Art historian Siddhartha Shah acknowledges that while other diamonds surpass the Koh-i-Noor in size and beauty, "having passed through the hands of many legendary rulers...the diamond embodies an allure and mystique that no other jewel can claim" (29-30). The Koh-i-Noor carried a legacy of conquest in India. It entered the Sikh empire through Maharaja Ranjit Singh's victory over the king of Kabul in 1813 and was later passed down to Ranjit Singh's youngest son, Duleep Singh, who ruled through the Anglo-Sikh Wars (Shah 30-31). Men like the Maharajas of the Singh dynasty wore their diamonds, including the Koh-i-Noor, in armlets and jewelry as symbols of pride: "[i]n displaying their own beauty and wealth, Indian princes cover themselves in large gems to affirm their masculine, divine right to rule" (Munich 14). Following the Second Anglo-Sikh War, the governor-general of India, Lord Dalhousie, chose the Koh-i-Noor as a prize from among other

war booty because of its rich history of conquest, and its entry into the crown jewels was meant to symbolize a “conclusive assimilation” of India into the British Empire (Shah 33).

The presentation of the diamond at the Great Exhibition further promoted this narrative of assimilation. The Koh-i-Noor was displayed in the British section, making it first and foremost British property. However, it was also displayed within a domed, gilded cage topped with a crown, distinctly isolated from the rest of the iconically British items in the section. The diamond was no longer from India but from the now decisively British colonies, stripped of its origins and cultural specificity. It was not an Indian object, but it also resisted identification as a product of British industry (Kinsey 404). As I discussed in the case of “Goblin Market,” spectacle and display are necessary for the perpetuation of empire. The way that display commodifies its subject is necessary to render objects from the colonies, and by extension the colonies themselves, as easily accessible and consumable, ordered and under control. These representations also allowed viewers to define a British national identity against a foreign “other.” The Great Exhibition miniaturized and replicated India at home in England, and its ostentatious display presented the colonies as excessively extravagant, in contrast to a rational, modest British ideal (Shah 36). The diamond’s literal enclosure within the crown attached the jewel to Queen Victoria, the head of the British imperial project, physically representing the incorporation of India into the imperial order (Kinsey 407). Furthermore, once it had entered the British representational system, it entered the capitalist system of value as well. Representing the diamond without any context of its Indian history allowed it to become a commodity object with an assigned economic value; accounts of the jewel’s fiscal value ranged from £500,000 to £3,000,000 (Kinsey 402). Its value shifted into the present (now the jewel could be purchased and consumed) out of its Indian past.

The gilded cage signifying Queen Victoria also connected the Koh-i-Noor to the body of a woman – the cage was likened to women’s hoop skirts in a popular *Punch* cartoon (Shah 38; Kinsey 407). The display both naturalized the association of diamonds with a woman's body and made the diamond itself a source of feminine spectacle. As shopping and consuming became increasingly central aspects of the ideal Victorian bourgeois woman’s identity, the Queen’s habits as consumer were closely examined by the public. Victoria’s presence at the Exhibition aimed to “strike a balance between her symbolic status as a facilitator of British industry...and her identity as a female shopper-consumer involved in the launch of British consumer society” (Kinsey 403). The display feminized and made a spectacle of Victoria’s consumption habits and made women the primary audience for the Koh-i-Noor.

Yet making a spectacle of a woman’s body questions the acceptability of consuming such displays. A viewer looking at a diamond under a woman’s skirt is an extraordinarily vulnerable image. As we will see, this exhibit parallels Rachel’s vulnerability to objectification when she wears the Moonstone as a brooch. On the other hand, it makes the viewer’s position uncomfortably voyeuristic; looking at the diamond becomes a transgressive act. Evidently, women’s reactions to seeing the Koh-i-Noor were also transgressive, though they violated social etiquette, rather than personal boundaries. Shah claims that women “were reported as losing all sense of civility and public grace in the presence of the Koh-i-Noor” (37), and Kinsey claims that the Koh-i-Noor enabled women to “indulge themselves...through the spectacle of the diamond” (407), a behavior that disrupted social norms of modesty. Framing the Koh-i-Noor as eliciting transgressive behavior reveals an anxiety around women’s visual consumption similar to department store owners’ suspicion about women’s window-shopping habits. In the novel, the mesmerizing effects of visual consumption are evident in the diamond’s mesmerizing and

rapturous influence on the women at Rachel's birthday celebration. Upon receiving it, Rachel stood "like a person fascinated, with the Colonel's unlucky Diamond in her hand. There, on either side of her, knelt [Ablewhite's sisters], devouring the jewel with their eyes, and screaming with ecstasy every time it flashed on them in a new light" (Collins 59-60). This literal visual "devouring" implies an extreme form of visual consumption. The feminization of these real and fictional diamonds exposes that visual consumption can not only render its object vulnerable to objectification and, to some extent, violation, but it can also foster uncontrollable, excessive desires in women as well.

Despite accounts of women's unrestrained reactions, the public response to seeing the Koh-i-Noor at the Great Exhibition was overwhelmingly one of disappointment over its appearance. Under the glass, it appeared unexpectedly small in size. Shah cites accounts criticizing its "ungraceful peculiarity of shape" and that claim "it did not possess any beauty as an ornament" (38). Furthermore, the diamond did not shine, disappointing the expectation that all diamonds phosphoresce (Munich 3). Such expectations are purely aesthetic; as part of the spectacle in the Crystal Palace, the diamond was seen and valued for its qualities as an object, in addition to and perhaps instead of the colonial history it represents. The aesthetic expectations surrounding the Koh-i-Noor indicate the great extent to which aesthetic appearance underlies other systems of value.

In response to public disappointment, Prince Albert had the diamond cut to better conform to English expectations, "improving" its shape and size. Such a plan truly demonstrates an eradication of its value in India, since "of greatest value to Indians was the crystal's octahedral shape. Interest had long been in preserving as much of the diamond's natural size and shape as possible for the wearer to benefit most from the stone's talismanic properties" (Shah

39). The shape of the stone is fundamentally connected not to its beauty, but to its significance within a religious system. In *The Moonstone*, the diamond's properties as a talisman similarly reflect its religious fetishization, which I discuss further below. In the case of the Koh-i-Noor, forty-three percent of its weight was cut off by the Coster firm in Amsterdam, whom Albert had commissioned to alter the gem (Shah 40). The completely altered shape of the stone severed it from its Indian history and previous value system. European science and machinery had to violently alter the diamond to conform to aesthetic ideals before it could be fully "civilized," suggesting that exhibiting the diamond as part of a spectacle could not completely incorporate it into the British social order. Kinsey posits that "via a complete structural intervention, the stone would no longer be associated with an outdated imperialism of plunder and instead...the "work" the gem would be doing would be to model a perfect, useful kind of subjecthood for all of India" (Kinsey 415). The Koh-i-Noor's forced alteration reveals the multiple, interconnected systems of value and signification on which the capitalist imperialist system depends, including its display value, aesthetic value, and exchange value that subordinate and obliterate its original cultural and religious values. In his preface, Collins states that the Koh-i-Noor inspired his own fictional diamond, and the Moonstone does follow a remarkably similar trajectory to that of the Koh-i-Noor (Collins xliii). Consequently, the Moonstone inherits the Koh-i-Noor's multivalent systems of signification.

The Moonstone's Multivalence

Rather than the annexation of the Punjab by the British after the Second Anglo-Sikh War, Collins begins his novel with the Siege of Seringapatam (now Srirangapatna), an earlier moment marking British sovereignty over Indian territory. In its Indian context, the Moonstone clearly

holds sacred or religious value. But the novel's account of its religious history, written by an unnamed Verinder cousin, dismisses its religious role by framing it as "superstition." The cousin states that "[p]artly from its peculiar colour, partly from a superstition which represented it as feeling the influence of the deity whom it adorned, and growing and lessening in lustre with the waxing and waning of the moon, it first gained the name ...of The Moonstone" (Collins 2-3). In this brief account, the Moonstone is already fetishized in an anthropological sense, animated with a spirit that allows it to have feeling and to change its own qualities to correspond with nature despite its status as an object. While its appearance is mentioned, its primary significance is in relation to the deity. In her introduction to *Empire of Diamonds*, Munich writes that "[a]s fetish, diamond functions like a materialized guardian angel and promises unending love, immortality, or, at the least, invincibility" (13). Standing in for the deity itself, the diamond itself can bestow the same qualities on the person or community that possesses it.

The Moonstone's curse also stems from its function as a fetish: the agency it gains as a fetishized object gives it the power to act and bring disaster upon others. The diamond is believed to be cursed in the religion that Collins purports to be Hinduism. After the deity breathes on the diamond, he "predicted certain disaster to the presumptuous mortal who laid hands on the sacred gem, and to all of his house and name who received it after him" (Collins 2). The diamond curses those who do not respect it and its religious function, like the unnamed Verinder cousin whose family document constitutes the prologue. The cousin represents the British perspective, as he, like his group, prioritizes rationality over superstition. But simply by calling it a "superstition," thus diminishing the diamond's religious value, the British men invite the curse upon themselves. The diamond's curse, then, is a form of vengeance against the violence of colonialism, a process that itself necessitates "laying hands on the sacred gem."

Calling it a “superstition” obscures the violence of colonization. This language locates violence in the Moonstone, its history, and its religious function, rather than in the British presence in India and the murder and plunder accompanying the siege, effectively justifying colonial action.

Rumors of a curse also followed the Koh-i-Noor. When Albert advertised the Koh-i-Noor’s display in the Great Exhibition, he commissioned Lord Dalhousie to research its history to provide more information for the press (Kinsey 398). The resulting collection of stories became public knowledge, and as the public's widespread interest increased, the stone’s narratives spun out of the court’s control. Kinsey explains that a “rumor, perhaps started by the *Delhi Gazette* and quickly taken up by the *Illustrated London News*, had it that the diamond was cursed: all who possessed it would run into ruin, as evidenced most forcefully by the ‘tragedy’ of Singh’s ruling line” (400-401). This rumor, which did not have any basis in the diamond’s biography that Dalhousie circulated, was prominent enough for Victoria herself to worry about the diamond’s curse. It was the newspapers that effectively spun the story to negate its potential threat to the crown jewels. The solution was gender: “the queen’s status as female rendered her exempt from a curse ill-disposed only toward ‘Oriental’ male despots. This discursively set the diamond in the same context as the feminine body of the British monarchy and made this proximal relationship a necessity for counteracting the effects of the ‘Indian’ curse” (Kinsey 401). While it was still cursed, Koh-i-Noor’s powers could be subdued solely by the British crown, and specifically through an association with femininity.

The invention of a gendered curse domesticated the Koh-i-Noor by presenting Britain as a feminine influence and the gem’s addition to the crown jewels as a solution to the curse. This narrative justifies the colonization of India: if the Koh-i-Noor is a symbol for India as a whole, then the narrative demonstrates that India needs the orderliness and femininity of England’s rule

to avoid masculine violence inherent in its own system of rule. As a feminine body, Victoria was able to symbolically eliminate the Koh-i-Noor's curse of violence by incorporating it into the crown jewels. Likewise, using the Moonstone to depict violence as inherent to India created the illusion that this violence could be eliminated only through the diamond's incorporation into the British empire.

Additionally, the Moonstone's masculine associations extend to the Indian colony as a whole. The diamond's masculinity is used to justify the siege in Collins's prologue. For the Verinder cousin, conflict between Hindu and Muslim leaders is an unruly struggle that British intervention can resolve. The cousin's account of the Moonstone's history as one of "havoc and rapine" as it passes "from one lawless Mohammedan hand to another" (Collins 2-3) indicates that the Moonstone, and the cultures through which it is passed, are in need of the order or "laws of discipline" that the British impose (Collins 4). This narrative is gendered like the Koh-i-Noor's. If the Moonstone is literally imbued with a masculine spirit through the god's breath and its legacy of masculine strength and military victory, John Herncastle's gift of the Moonstone to Rachel literally feminizes and domesticates it, both by containing it within a household and by making it the property of a woman. Munich writes that "[r]eaders can link Rachel's diamond birthday gift and Victoria's reception of her Koh-i-Noor as a ritualistic imperial ceremony. To reinforce his allusion to Victoria, Collins calls the birthday girl 'queen of the day'" (Munich 50). Though still cursed, domestication rids the diamond of its unruly masculine spirit. Once in British hands, the curse is not religious in nature but rather is a result of its recontextualization; it is haunted by its former significations, as is the person who possesses it. The fact that the Koh-i-Noor's curse was wholly fictionalized, created as propaganda to reconcile colonial anxieties, draws attention to this recontextualization. In both cases of real and

fictional diamond, the religious significance and sacred value the diamond previously held follow it into a public that condemns that belief system, creating new fears that must be assuaged and domesticated by inventing new narratives.

Again, Collins does not completely endorse this justificatory narrative, since he ultimately portrays this recontextualization as a theft. Not only does he elaborate on the violence and murder Herncastle commits to steal the Moonstone, but Lillian Nayder also mentions that by “[r]eferring to Herncastle ironically as “the Honourable John”...which was also the nickname for the East India Company—Collins ties the thievery of a seeming renegade to the official policies of those governing India in the years leading up to the mutiny” (146). The Indians are cast as the victims, and Herncastle’s actions as a crime. He commits this crime in the context of a military siege, and although the Verinder cousin condemns Herncastle’s actions for their motivation of personal profit, his very condemnation calls into question the murder and plunder he had performed moments earlier in the name of British imperialism. The Verinder cousin tries to gloss over this hypocrisy when he only briefly describes the details of the siege, attempting to obscure the similarities between his actions and Herncastle’s. But this concealment in fact reveals Collins’s framing of all imperial plunder as theft, regardless of whether done for personal profit or imperial gain. Though the stone is domesticated when it enters the Verinder household, the curse still affects the house like colonial legacies of the Koh-i-Noor haunt the nation. Its recontextualization from a religious object to an aesthetic one is a form of crime, even if it is one that supports empire.

Herncastle’s desire to display the diamond motivates his crime. Herncastle, alone of the British soldiers, believes in the Moonstone’s curse, declaring “in his boastful way, that [the army] should see the Diamond on his finger, if the English army took Seringapatam” (Collins 3).

Herncastle already views the diamond as a commodity, specifically one with display value. The similarity between his behavior and the British public's obsession with the Koh-i-Noor's curse shows how Herncastle treats the diamond as a commodity fetish even before he possesses it. The public's excitement around the Koh-i-Noor led to the very invention of its curse, while the Moonstone produces a similar kind of frenzy in John Herncastle. After the attack on Seringapatam, the British soldiers have fallen into disgrace and disorder, and the narrator finds Herncastle looking "like a madman" with the Moonstone in hand around three Indian officers whom he presumably killed (Collins 4). It is not clear exactly what motivates Herncastle's desire beyond an aim to display a pretty jewel on his hand. Herncastle behaves like a "madman" not only in that he pursues a seemingly empty desire, but in that he takes others' lives to do so. This abominable means to an empty end demonstrates the irrationality of commodity fetishism, and it critiques the centrality of display or aesthetic value to imperialism. If the British public experienced a kind of frenzy in their desire simply to view the Koh-i-Noor, their eagerness to participate in the imperial agenda through visual consumption is also irrational.

Like Herncastle, Godfrey Ablewhite steals the Moonstone from the Verinder household because he understands it as a commodity with exchange and aesthetic value. The motivation behind Ablewhite's theft is not empty, however: he sees the diamond as a solution to his debt, and thus as a "marketable commodity" (Collins 445). This perception is inseparable from his fetishism of the diamond: when he believes that "[t]he Moonstone stood between him and ruin" (Collins 444), he assigns the Moonstone agency. To exchange the diamond for the money he needs, the diamond must be cut. As Franklin Blake explains, "[t]he flawed Diamond, cut up, would actually fetch more than the Diamond as it now is; for this plain reason—that from four to six perfect brilliants might be cut from it, which would be, collectively, worth more money than

the large—but imperfect—single stone (Collins 37). Its luminosity matters for its economic value, in part because it removes the physical flaw in the heart of the diamond. Munich states that because of its phosphorescence, a “[d]iamond has the power to addict the eye,” a capacity that generates capitalist profit by promising future consumers by feeding an addiction (3). In the text, the term “commodity” does not appear until describing the cut diamond, indicating that the gem must be physically altered and divided into separate stones to become a marketable commodity. Cutting the Moonstone increases its phosphorescence, and thus the extent to which it promises consumers.

Ablewhite even intends to take the stone to Amsterdam, where the firm that cut the Koh-i-Noor was located, to have the Moonstone recut. For Albert, cutting the Koh-i-Noor enhanced its aesthetic value; Ablewhite demonstrates that cutting a diamond also increases its exchange. As a commodity, Collins uses the Moonstone to collapse the constructed relationship between aesthetic and economic value, demonstrating that the aesthetic and economic are fundamentally connected in a capitalist economic system that functions through spectacle. The novel also shows how a commodity’s colonial origins must be eradicated to determine its economic value in a capitalist economy. Cutting the Moonstone would sever it from its origins, like the Koh-i-Noor was separated from its original legacy as an object owned by Indian royalty. Before leaving the Moonstone to Rachel, Herculio threatens to have the stone cut in the event of his murder, saying “[k]ill me—and the Diamond will be the Diamond no longer; its identity will be destroyed,” directly demonstrating that cutting the diamond prohibits it from being the same Moonstone that circulated in India (Collins 37). But if cutting it is necessary for it to be a commodity, as Ablewhite proves, then it must be stripped of its origins to be placed on the market in the first place. Its identity as a precolonial and precapitalist object has no place in the

new economic system, and so it must be destroyed. This severance allows a consumer to see the diamond as the commodity fetish with no origins, only relations with other objects for sale and on display.

Evidently, a capitalist system of exchange and colonial system of representation both require violence. Cutting the Moonstone is a form of violence, suggesting that Collins aims to expose the violence obscured in the narrative surrounding Koh-i-Noor. Munich writes that “[o]nce a diamond is recut, not even an expert could certify whether it was cut down from a stolen gem...Criminals contribute to the diamond empire’s population” (5). Munich’s use of “criminals” likens Ablewhite’s theft to larger colonial crime. If removing the diamond from India is a colonial crime, so is its incorporation into the capitalist system. Herncastle and Ablewhite are both English criminals; the inconsistency of Ablewhite’s charitable, pious public persona and corrupt inner personality is equal to Herncastle’s abhorrent character in terms of moral failings. If colonial goods inevitably end up circulating in the capitalist economy, then the capitalist system is as criminal to Collins as is colonization.

Commodity and Affective Connection

The interdependence of aesthetic value and exchange value is also evident when considering diamond, or diamond ring, as a symbol for marriage. The history of diamond engagement rings in particular extends to fifteenth century Europe, though they were not common until around 1912 (Munich 211). Although no diamond engagement rings appear in *The Moonstone*, Rachel’s makeshift use of the diamond as a brooch and Herncastle’s ambition to see it as a ring liken it to jewelry. Queen Victoria also wore the Koh-i-Noor as jewelry, providing a historical precedent for the Moonstone as accessory. Jewelry further feminizes the diamond

through association with a woman's body, but its display also likens the woman's body to a commodity. Like the example of Hetty and her earrings, displaying jewelry on a woman's body makes her an object to be visually consumed by others. In the context of marriage, display of jewelry signifies a woman's attractiveness as a potential wife. Kathy Psomiades claims that "[i]f women are like jewels, and men are like people in search of jewels to purchase, then there is a structural homology between marriage and the market that makes them compatible" (103). The aesthetic act of displaying diamond jewelry determines a woman's market value. In marriage as in the cutting of a diamond, the exchange value of a commodity depends on its aesthetic qualities. In exchanging engagement rings, the diamond becomes a symbol of a different kind of exchange, signifying future entry into the marriage contract. Prior to marriage and the surrender of a woman's public self, a woman is "on the market" for a husband. Exchanging a diamond wedding or engagement ring closes her off from this public status. A diamond's exchange value, then, connotes not just how much it is worth in a capitalist market, but also how a woman can be commodified and exchanged through the marriage contract.

When first given the Moonstone, Rachel "was naturally the great attraction of the party. On this occasion she was more particularly the centre-point towards which everybody's eyes were directed...for she wore her wonderful birthday present" (Collins 63). The Moonstone may be admired in this moment for its "prodigious size and beauty," but it is specifically Rachel's body that is viewed by the party's attendants. Though the Moonstone was given to Rachel without a setting, she wears it as a brooch in this scene, since Franklin Blake uses wire to attach it to the "bosom of her white dress" (Collins 63). Rachel herself is made the setting for the diamond, and in this act, her own body is commodified and sexualized. Readers' and characters' attention is drawn to her chest where the Moonstone rests in much the same objectifying way

that Laura's neck is emphasized in "Goblin Market." This commodification makes her desirable, as Psomiades describes by stating that "[w]hen jewel and body come together in heterosexual exchange, the jewel defines the body's value" (109). Indeed, the Moonstone shines specifically on a white dress, indicating Rachel's purity and assigning value to her virginity as a desirable quality.

But while displaying the Moonstone as a piece of jewelry may assign Rachel and her body a value that puts her into circulation as a desirable wife, Franklin's bestowal of the Moonstone is also similar to the exchange of a wedding or engagement ring, which ends this circulation. I interpret Psomiades's claim that the jewel "defines" the body's value to mean that the diamond both assigns value and constricts it. Interpreted in this way, Rachel's desirability and what she signifies as a commodity or object of desire cannot change; her meaning is fixed in place, or domesticated, as is necessary in a marriage contract. When the gem is stolen, however, she is put back into circulation again. She fluctuates between considering Ablewhite and Blake as potential husbands, but she also experiences what Miss Clack describes as a kind of hysteria. She writes that Rachel lacked "all ladylike restraint in her language and manner... She was possessed by some feverish excitement which made her distressingly loud when she laughed, and sinfully wasteful and capricious in what she ate and drank at lunch" (Collins 194). Having lost the diamond that affirmed her beauty, gender, and eligibility for marriage, Rachel feels unmoored and reacts in a manner that contradicts social etiquette.¹⁰ Desperate to retrieve the Moonstone,

¹⁰ Rachel's transgressive behavior resembles Herncastle's frenzy in the novel's prologue. Both Rachel's and Herncastle's behavior are caused by their fetishism of the diamond. But Herncastle's "madness" is a reflection of his empty desire, which is not explicitly defined beyond merely a desire to consume. Rachel's hysteria, however, is not empty in the same way. Rather, since jewelry is so crucial to determining a woman's value, both as a marriageable subject and visually consumable aesthetic object, her loss of the Moonstone is also a loss of her position within social relationships. If Rachel really is "insignificant-looking," as Miss Clack describes, and Rosanna claims it is only Rachel's clothing and ornaments that give her beauty, Rachel needs the Moonstone to enhance her own aesthetic value and secure a husband (Collins 194, 304).

she mimics her consumption of the diamond through literal, overindulgent consumption of food and drink. She circulates on the marriage market, her value undetermined, as the Moonstone does the same. Through both aesthetic and economic powers, a diamond has the power to commodify women, affixing meaning to them and determining their social worth as they enter the market, and eventually the marriage contract, which is itself a form of exchange similar to the capitalist exchange seen throughout the novel.

The Moonstone inhibits Rachel's ability to form relationships, its loss causing her to circulate the marriage market unmoored, and its presence committing her to a symbolic engagement. Like other commodities I have examined so far, the Moonstone dictates relationships that must follow the logic of a patriarchal, capitalist marketplace. In *Adam Bede* and "Goblin Market," sympathy can reactivate affective relationships, and it does so in *The Moonstone*, too. Collins directs the reader's sympathy throughout the novel. Though his stance on colonization is complicated, his clear depiction of Herncastle's theft of the Moonstone from India as a crime directs readers' sympathies towards the Indians as victims of the crime. As the three Brahmins who pursue the diamond through England come to represent the Moonstone's Indian past, our sympathy is similarly directed towards them in England, even when their racial identity makes characters in the novel fear and condemn them. In general, Collins introduces signs or aspects of difference, notably Indian otherness, to cue readers' and characters' sympathy.

The combination of the familiar and unfamiliar in a single figure, Ezra Jennings, prompts the reflective work necessary for sympathy that I have described in the last two chapters. Ezra is both an ostensibly hybrid figure and arguably the most sympathetic character in the novel. His loneliness and ultimately fatal illness are designed to evoke emotion in the reader. His hybrid

status is manifest in his appearance, from his “gipsy-complexion” that implies a biracial identity later confirmed in a conversation with Franklin, to his “extraordinary parti-coloured hair, [and] the puzzling contradiction between his face and figure which made him look old and young both together” (Collins 356). Ezra resists being seen through a single identity, which characters find unsettling: “Jennings’s appearance is calculated to be especially distasteful to anybody fearful that ‘pure’ English blood might become polluted by foreign racial elements” (Glendening 296). Betteredge, for example, sees Ezra’s lack of friends and unknown history as suspicious (Collins 313). Ardel Haefele Thomas writes that “[t]hrough Ezra Jennings, a figure who belongs neither here nor there, we get a clear picture of what England’s ‘savagery’ against those who were ‘Other’ could look like” (38). Ezra’s liminality critiques Victorian fears of the racial “other,” encouraging readers’ sympathy despite characters’ distress.

However, though struck by Ezra’s irregular appearance, Franklin nevertheless tries to make sense of it, writing that “[j]udging him by his figure and his movements, he was still young. Judging him by his face, and comparing him with Betteredge, he looked the elder of the two” (Collins 312). Upon first seeing him, Franklin is prompted to mediate between familiar and unfamiliar standards of figure, movements, and age. This is the kind of work required for sympathy, the imaginative labor needed to mediate between your perspective and expectation of another’s. The shock of Ezra’s appearance functions as the kind of surprise that Levine claims can prompt this reflection. The unfamiliar aspects of Ezra’s hybridity, in particular those “so often found among the ancient people of the East, so seldom visible among the newer races of the West,” create the distance that necessitates sympathy. At the same time, his familiar characteristics render him recognizable, and Franklin can relate to the man with “*unsought self-possession*, which is a sure sign of good breeding, not in England only” (Collins 358).

Additionally, the kind of looking Franklin does is personal, not consumptive; in fact, this looking inspires Franklin to draw Ezra's likeness, thereby multiplying his image, not depleting it. Ezra's blending of the familiar with the unfamiliar makes him sympathetic, both for readers and characters in the novel.

As in "Goblin Market," those who evoke sympathy can also be objects of desire, particularly queer desire. Ezra "traverses the ground between a British and an 'Other' world and his character provides a locus for important racial, gender and sexual ambiguities" (Haeefe-Thomas 39). His liminality makes him a site of others' desires. Franklin finds his thoughts unpromptedly, and frequently, returning to Ezra, proclaiming, "the impression produced on me by Ezra Jennings—it seemed perfectly unaccountable, in such a situation as mine, that any human being should have produced an impression on me at all!" (Collins 314). He describes his curiosity about Ezra as "impossible to control," later calling him "irrepressible" when drawing over a dozen images of him from memory (Collins 348). While Ezra evokes in Franklin at least a desire for emotional connection, there is also "a sexual component in Blake's desire: while necessarily aware that by race and social position he is dominant, he may also find attractive that his new friend is one of those men 'born with female constitutions'" (Glendening 297). Ezra Jennings directly describes himself as such to Franklin (Collins 361).

Similarly, Haeefe-Thomas writes that "Jennings's homoerotic tendencies are easy enough to trace," citing Ezra's "secret attraction" to Franklin, a hint that Ezra has expressed feelings for others he may later regret, and his request that Dr. Candy kiss him on his deathbed (Haeefe-Thomas 42). For Haeefe-Thomas, this is a "queer identity that cannot be labelled or understood from the Western perspective" (42). As in "Goblin Market," these desires are represented as those not determined by the logic of the capitalist market. Significantly, Ezra is a

narrator without personal interest in the Moonstone; while his is not a life free from commodities, given his opium addiction, the Moonstone's capacity to restrict personal and cultural relationships does not affect Ezra. While Ezra's desires may resist the logic of the market, he himself cannot; his reliance on opium, a colonial colony, reflects Hetty's "poisoned garment" and Laura's "wormwood" fruit juice. Commodities are poison to affective relationships in these works, addicting a consumer and distracting them from their social reality. But as a figure symbolizing extramercantile desire and hybridity, Ezra can open up a multiplicity of affective connections, including queer desire.

If Ezra "represents new possibilities" to Franklin (Glendening 97), this possibility of queer desire is closed off and contained through the heterosexual marriage that concludes *The Moonstone*, much like the implied heterosexual marriages for the sisters in "Goblin Market." Haefele-Thomas calls this closure "ironic," as it is Ezra's "exact position as an outcast that enables and empowers him to be the broker of this particular heterosexual marriage plot...the solution to Franklin and Rachel's reconciliation and future marriage lies well beyond either English (Western) or Indian (Eastern) help, but rather must be produced by someone who traverses simultaneously within and outside this dichotomy" (41). Ezra becomes a conduit for restoring the possibility of heterosexual desire between Franklin and Rachel. Ezra's simultaneous familiarity and unfamiliarity shows that Rachel is kind of hybrid herself, and therefore can appropriately evoke Franklin's sympathy in the same way. Critics like Glendening comment on the Indian suggestions of the name "Verinder," as a kind of portmanteau to suggest "truly Indian," and Rachel is described as having herself having a "dark complexion" (Glendening 293; Collins 146). Ezra is defamiliarized so strongly that he is ultimately a more sympathetic character than Rachel. However, the overlap between the two of them allows Rachel, too, to be

an object of sympathy and emotional connection. Thus, Franklin's attraction to Ezra can be replaced by attraction to Rachel, since both are hybrid figures, though to different degrees.

Ezra enables this emotional possibility between Rachel and Franklin by removing some of the Moonstone's mystery: his scientific knowledge allows for the verification that Franklin did in fact remove the Moonstone from Rachel's room. As a diamond with the power to bar Rachel's social relationships as a woman in the marriage market, the Moonstone causes a rift between Rachel and Franklin. The partial resolution of the mystery through Ezra's experiment, which is premised on giving Franklin a dose of opium so that he unconsciously recreates his actions on the night of the Moonstone's theft, generates a new understanding of reality for the characters. Since being grounded in reality is another requirement for sympathy, Ezra's experiment reopens the possibility of connection between Rachel and Franklin, including romantic and sexual desire. To the extent that Ezra is excluded from this conclusion, his dependence for survival on opium, another Indian commodity, prohibits his involvement in this newly established romantic order. Although Rachel and Franklin recognize his role as scientist, detective, and friend, sharing with him words too precious to write down that "will help [him] through what is left of the end of [his] life," he has no place with the two of them, as he must resign himself to "the dreadful alternative between the opium and the pain," (Collins 418). His addiction to colonial commodity consumption prohibits his own social connections despite his function as a conduit for others' relationships. These newly established relationships are located in a world where the unruly colonial commodity has been removed, and Ezra cannot sustain a relationship of his own when addicted to a type of commodity consumption. Concluding the fourth narrative with perhaps the novel's most heartrending passage, the emotional relationships Ezra has created remain open, and readers remain sympathetic for him in his last moments of narration and life.

Ezra's experiment, itself involving opium, involves making Franklin's body the site of spectacle, similarly to how the display of diamond jewelry commodifies women's bodies. Unaware of even his own thoughts and movements when under the influence of opium, Franklin walks through the house in an opium-induced trance, fascinating those who observe him. This instance of spectacle introduces masculinity into the scheme of display; it seems that this system of objectification is not unique to women. However, Franklin and Rachel's bodily spectacles do differ in kind. Franklin's spectacle notably occurs in darkness. Ezra takes great care that the candlelight in Franklin's bedroom is concealed and that Rachel extinguishes her lights immediately upon seeing Franklin. Thus, while his body is observed, visibility is not emphasized in the same way as in Rachel's display when she wears the Moonstone. It seems that a spectacle that relies not on sight, but instead on darkness and literal consumption of a commodity, does not entail the same dangers as that of a commodity spectacle that relies on ostentatious display.

Franklin is the object of a scientific spectacle that aims to access an obscured memory or subjective experience, whereas Rachel is the object of a commodity spectacle dangerous because it depletes women of their own status as a subject. The Moonstone's assigning Rachel a status as both beautiful object and valuable potential wife is similar to the objectification of Hetty in *Adam Bede*, and to a certain extent Laura in "Goblin Market." To the extent that her value is determined by the Moonstone, Rachel is objectified. Her appearance supercedes the value of her selfhood, much like the town of Hayslope sees Hetty only for her beauty. For Franklin, however, vulnerability in spectacle does not entail objectification, but merely temporary repression of his consciousness. Though he cannot control his own actions in the moment or remember them after the fact, his spectacle actually acknowledges his subjectivity. Franklin maintained some kind of consciousness that motivated his choice to enter Rachel's room when drugged. The experiment is

designed to recover this experience that is later restricted to his memory. When Franklin is observed, he occupies this blurred state of simultaneous consciousness and unconsciousness. Where women's subjectivity is diminished or ignored, the point of Franklin's spectacle is to recover a subjectivity that has been lost. Similarly, the use-value of a piece of jewelry is continuous, suggesting the inevitability of women's objectification. Women like Rachel have no choice in being made spectacle, as it is an inevitable consequence of practices of visual consumption and commodity exchange. Franklin's experiment is not only voluntary, but it is also produced through a commodity with temporary use-value. As a man, he may regain control over the way he is seen independent of commodities, and he could have chosen not to become a spectacle in the first place.

Despite this seeming control that Franklin has over the way his body is perceived, the actual experience of the experiment is described as incredibly chaotic. Ezra writes, "I saw the Law (as represented by Mr Bruff's papers) lying unheeded on the floor" and even Betteredge, always class-conscious and the representative of English domesticity becomes "oblivious of all respect for social distinctions" (Collins 411). Opium upsets the domestic order. Putting men's bodies on display is disruptive, whereas the spectacle of women's bodies is not questioned. This is emphasized by Ezra's protection of Franklin during the experiment. He determines exactly who can see the unconscious Franklin and carefully documents Franklin's symptoms and actions, ready to intervene if the experiment goes wrong. The display of the male body must be protected, while female bodily spectacle is naturalized. Through the contradiction between disordered masculine spectacle and domesticating female spectacle, Collins calls attention to the way that spectacle is gendered, as well as the way that feminine spectacle is naturalized.

Similarly, Franklin's consumption of opium shows that, subconsciously, England still considers India a threat to their power. As a colony, India has not been incorporated into the English order and still presents a threat of unruliness. Lilian Nayder argues that "Blake experiences, under its influence, a loss of selfhood and autonomy that mirrors the condition of the colonised" (148). Here, too, Collins critiques the British imperial project. By likening Franklin's state to the "condition of the colonized," Collins demonstrates how the exploitation, commodification, and consumption of a culture's resources affects the cultures' autonomy. Where Franklin is simultaneously conscious and unconscious, colonized people experience a dependence on the country depleting their resources, or a simultaneous position as Indian and British colonial subject. Collins reveals imperial anxieties that the colonies have a hidden agency that mirrors Franklin's repressed consciousness, and that rebellion awaits under the surface.

The Moonstone is one of Collins's responses to the Indian Sepoy Rebellion of 1857-1858, often described as "the most significant and horrific event in the history of British India," in which thousands of Indians were killed (Mehta 617; Fox-Williams 32). By the publication of *The Moonstone* in 1868, newspapers commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Mutiny, and the first sensationalist histories of the Mutiny were starting to gain popularity (Mehta 617-18). The shock of the violence was still present in the mind of the British public, as the Mutiny had simultaneously exposed the contradiction between methods of imperial control and the British moral order while also fostering racial hatred (Nayder 139). However, "Collins deliberately predates the novel so that any historic reference to the insurrection is impossible. Instead the colonial event that inaugurates the mystery is the 1799 Siege of Seringapatam, a siege not of British troops but by British troops" (Mehta 618). While Franklin's unconscious state may reveal a cultural fear of colonial rebellion, Collins nevertheless aligns readers' sympathies with the

colonized in the case of this uprising. In this sense, *The Moonstone* uses a similar retrospective structure to Eliot's. Collins distances the reader from the familiar, here the shock and anger of the 1857 Rebellion, forcing them to reflect on the British violence both events have in common, thereby exposing that such violence is inherent to the British imperialist order.

In the final scene of the novel, the Moonstone is returned to India, and its original place in a sacred value system, in a ceremony that demonstrates an alternative to the imperialist, capitalist, gendered violence Collins condemns. The epilogue, dictated by Mr. Murthwaite, a frequent traveler to India, represents an India not associated with rebellion, a point of contrast both from the mind of the British public after the 1857 Rebellion and the British characters' conceptions of India in the novel. While Murthwaite describes the scene as a spectacle, it is truly the "grandest spectacle of Nature and Man" Murthwaite can recall, distinguishing it from capitalist display (Collins 455). Similarly, the "white mass" of people attending the ceremony recalls Rossetti's use of white to indicate a purity that stems from the absence of encounter with commodities and the market (Collins 456). Haefele-Thomas considers this moment the site of the "incredible pathos of the story," and our sympathy as readers is here evoked for the Hindu priests who must part from one another after tracking the diamond through England and restoring it to India together. Though this moment depicts the end of the Brahmins' relationship, it is nevertheless a moment of strong affect and community in a non-capitalist world. For Collins, this sympathetic India triumphs over the violence of British imperialism.

Coda: Commodity and Absurdity

Although it was not illustrated in England until 1875, *The Moonstone* was first illustrated in its serialization in *Harper's Magazine* in the United States in 1868, the same year as its first publication in England. In general, Collins approved of the *Harper's* illustrations, expressing only minor qualms like the inaccuracy of Betteredge's clothing to what a British butler would wear (Leighton and Surridge 209). Many of the sixty-six published illustrations were unsigned, though at least two artists have been identified through their initials (Leighton and Surridge 209).¹¹ Of these sixty-six images, the chapter head for the sixth installment in *Harper's*, opening with chapter eleven of the first period, is distinct for its representation of the Moonstone (figure 6). The image precedes the text in the installment, and it is the focus of the image, appearing without any of the human characters who accompany it in other illustrations. To a certain extent, it is socially decontextualized in the same way as the commodities at the Great Exhibition. Depicting the diamond as the sole subject of the illustration represents it as a commodity, as opposed to a colonial object.

However, this illustration is unsuccessful in representing the Moonstone's extraordinary beauty. Overall, it is a comical, awkward image. While the size of the diamond may suggest its mesmerizing effect on those who view it, its scale gives it a sense of ungainliness. In reality, the diamond could not be this size proportionally. Its size also heightens its two-dimensionality: despite the shading of its facets, the Moonstone feels particularly flat. Additionally, the fact that it has facets at all indicates a departure from the text. This artificially shaped diamond cannot be

¹¹ Francis (F.A.) Fraser produced only eight illustrations in the English edition, which also includes an additional frontispiece by George du Maurier. Not only was du Maurier experienced in illustrating sensation fiction, having also illustrated *The Notting Hill Mystery* and *Eleanor's Victory*, but he also "seems to have had a foot both in the camp of the Pre-Raphaelites and in that of the Idyllics," the illustrative schools of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Small, respectively (Goldman 116-117).

the Moonstone, which never makes it to Amsterdam to be recut. If, to capture the Moonstone's beauty, it needs to be represented as faceted, this image cannot account for characters' enchantment by the Moonstone's appearance at the point in the story in which this image is placed. Similarly, this illustrated diamond needs external, geographical and connotative context to indicate its identity as the Moonstone, in particular the moon at the top of the image and the Taj Mahal-like dome in the background. Leighton and Surridge write that the illustrator aligns the diamond with "the religious order of the Moon God...and with Indian culture" through these references ("The Transatlantic Moonstone" 230). But if the illustrator wants the viewer to fetishize and admire the diamond, as suggested by its huge size and faceted beauty, his inclusion of these references foils this intention by linking the diamond to its colonial origins. As I have argued, the diamond would be severed from its origins to be cut and sold as a commodity object; representing the origins of an artificially cut diamond is a contradiction according to the logic of the text. Furthermore, because the powers of the commodity fetish seem to come from the object itself, the illustration's inclusion of external signifiers diminishes this value by suggesting that the diamond's power comes at least in part from its history. Even though this "extradiegetic visual scene strongly naturalizes the rightness of the Indians' quest to return the diamond to its cultural and religious home" (Leighton and Surridge 230), this representation contradicts the illustrator's attempts to depict the diamond as commodity fetish.

The illustrator's intentions not only fail, but rebound: this Moonstone is ridiculous. This extradiegetic scene not only does not happen in the novel, but it cannot ever happen in reality. There is no massive diamond that exists in a barren, vaguely Indian coded landscape, reflecting its luminosity into the water over which it stands. The diamond's enchanting beauty and status as commodity fetish is absurd because it can never be captured visually; trying to portray a

commodity fetish through illustration will inevitably fail. In this sense, it is unrepresentable, which may account for why the Moonstone is absent from George du Maurier and F.A. Fraser's illustrations for the British edition.

While I have argued that Collins critiques the irrationality of colonization, this image exposes a parallel absurdity of commodity fetishism. Projecting agency onto an otherwise meaningless object cannot save or ruin you, as Ablewhite believes (Collins 444). A diamond cannot satisfy Herncastle's empty desire simply to wear the diamond as a ring, but nor can its beauty alone satisfy any desire. A beautiful object cannot be used, only displayed, and therefore cannot be a solution to one's problems. To the extent that the Moonstone intervenes in Rachel's life, the dangers it poses are a consequence of irrationally participating in commodity fetishism, not of any fantastical powers the object possesses itself. The absurdity of commodity fetishism makes it dangerous, and this danger extends to the spectacular capitalist markets that rely on commodity fetish as well.

In the period between 1859 and 1875, commodity fetishism was so naturalized that its absurdity was hard to see, but the authors of the works I examine here expose this reality. As works of realist fiction and long-form poetry, *Adam Bede* and "Goblin Market" are to some extent more serious works than *The Moonstone*. Yet these texts, too, have absurd plots of their own. In *Adam Bede*, a pair of earrings can amplify a delusion, making it so strong that it results in infanticide, and in "Goblin Market," eating fruit can literally be fatal. In all three texts, commodity fetishism is condemned as dangerous, but also as pointless. However absurd, commodity fetishism causes actual alienation from reality and other people. In the *Harper's Moonstone* image, there are no people present. In this sense, the image does get one thing right: people cannot relate to each other when treating objects as commodity fetishes, so they must be

banished from an image glorifying the commodity. Through their works, Rossetti, Eliot, and Collins all search for a solution to repair these social relationships. They frame sympathy, a form of active attempts at social connection, as something resistant to the market. Seeing others in sympathetic ways is a different form of visibility than visual consumption. Sympathetic vision does not enchant, nor does it objectify. As an alternative to the visual consumption fundamental to the imperial capitalism with which these authors were reckoning, and the effects of which are present today, sympathetic vision can restore social connection to an alienated world.

Images

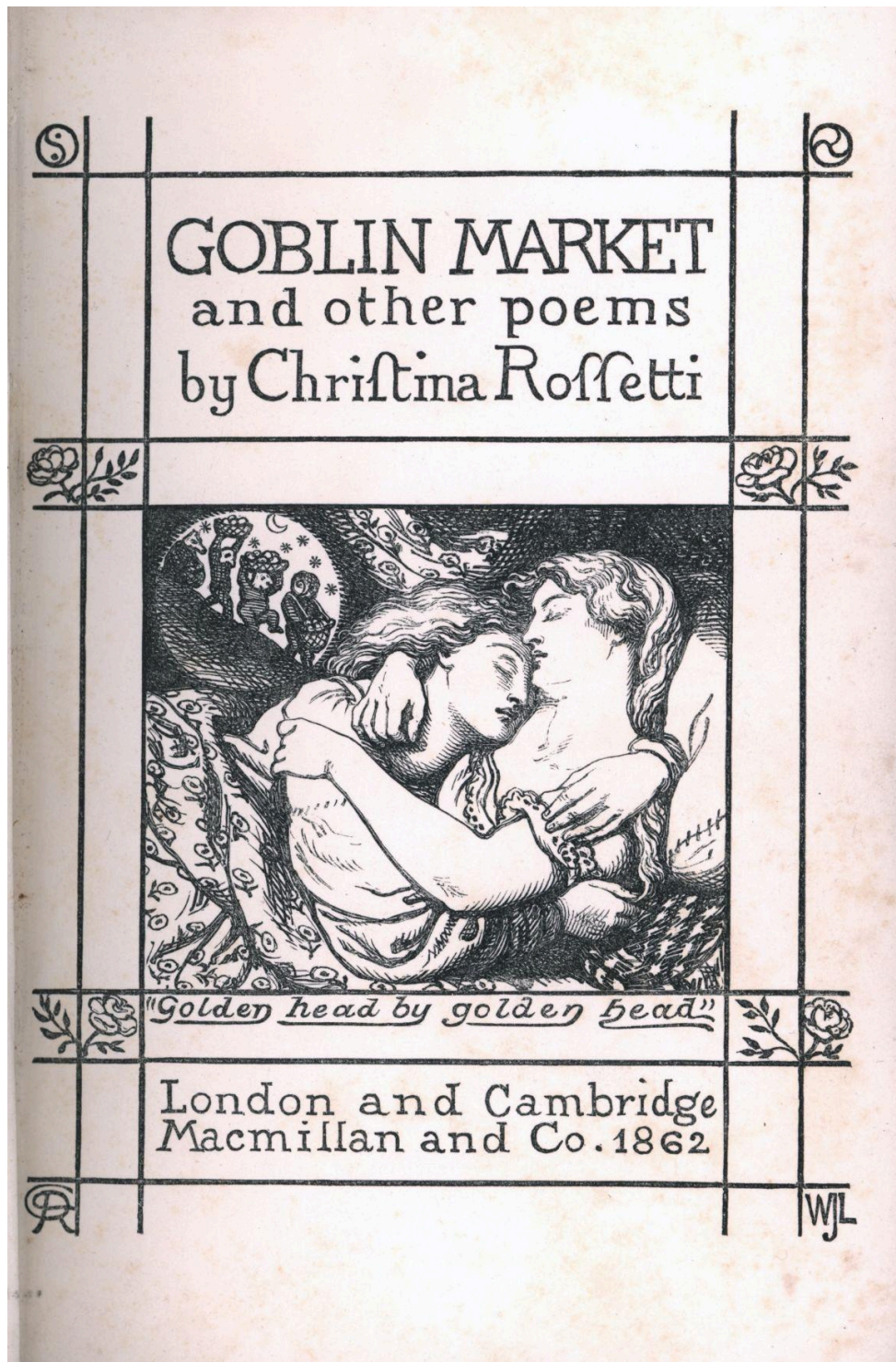


Figure 1

(Dante Gabriel Rossetti. *Golden head by golden head*. 1862, Cove.

<https://editions.covecollective.org/content/dante-gabriel-rossetti-golden-head-golden-head-goblin-market-1862>)



"Buy from us with @golden curl"

Figure 2

(Dante Gabriel Rossetti. *Buy from us with a golden curl*. 1862, *The Met Museum*
<https://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/642949>)



Figure 3
(William Small. *In the Wood*. 1879, *George Eliot Archive*,
<https://georgeeliotarchive.org/items/show/48902>)



Figure 4

(William Small. *Dinah and Hetty in the Prison*. 1870, *George Eliot Archive*, <https://georgeeliotarchive.org/items/show/48904>)

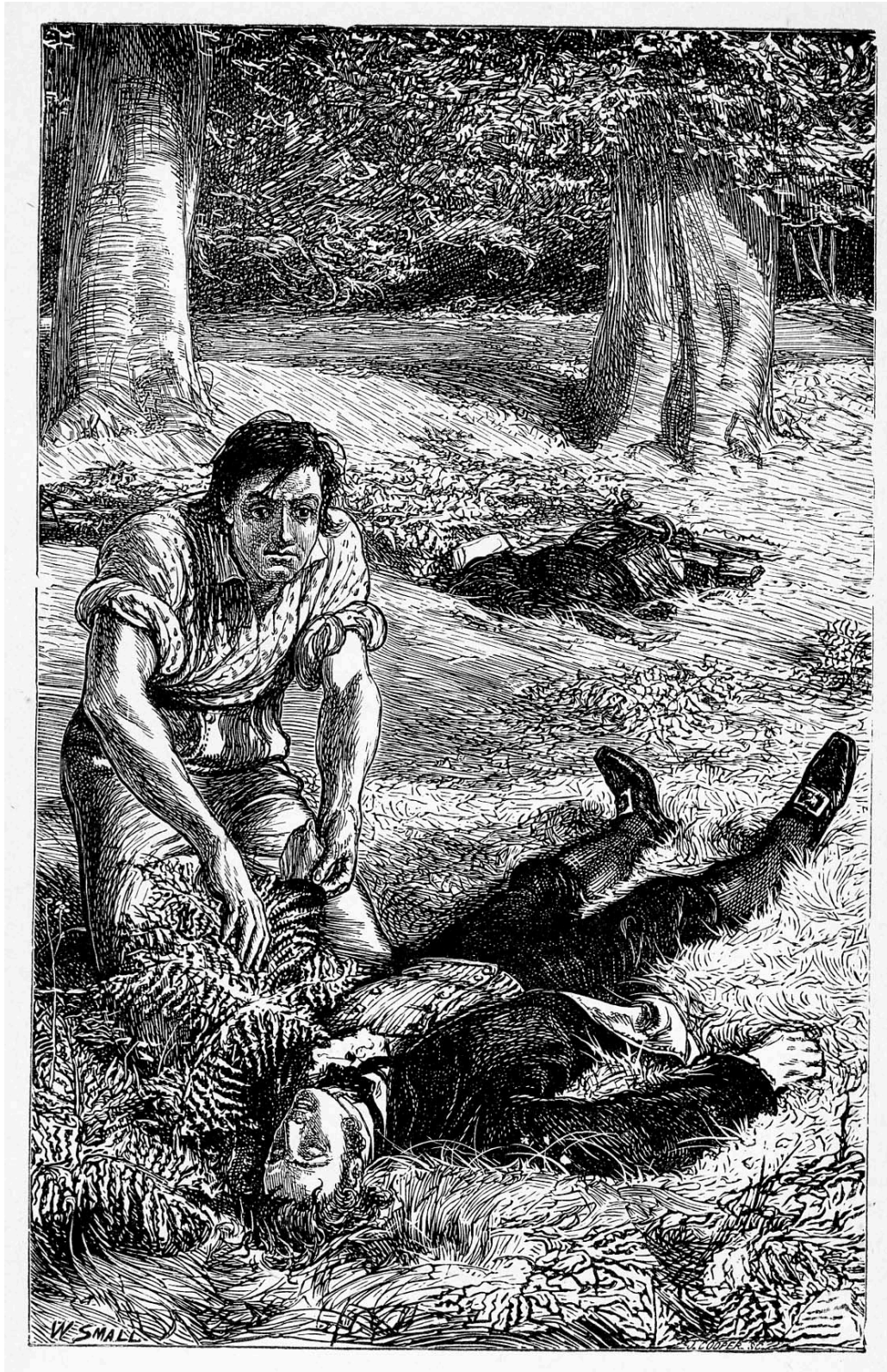


Figure 5

(William Small. *Adam Bede and Arthur Donnithorne*. 1870, *George Eliot Archive*, <https://georgeeliotarchive.org/items/show/3369>.)

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year
1867, by HARPER & BROTHERS, in the Clerk's Office
of the District Court of the United States, for the
Southern District of New York.]

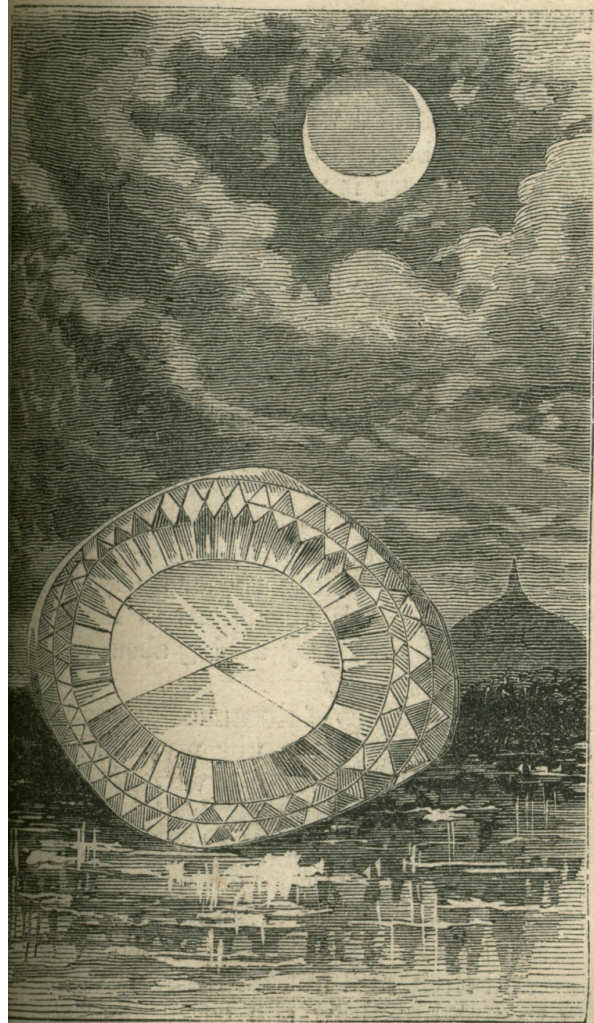
THE MOONSTONE.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

Author of "The Woman in White," "No Name," etc.

Printed from the Author's Manuscript.

RICHLY ILLUSTRATED.



CHAPTER XI.

Figure 6

(Illustration of the Moonstone for *Harper's Magazine*. Feb. 2, 1868, *The Victorian Web*,
<https://victorianweb.org/art/illustration/jewett/16.html>)

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