The Transatlantic *Moonstone*: A Study of the Illustrated Serial in *Harper’s Weekly*

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Perhaps no other novel of the mid-nineteenth century has attracted more varied ideological critique than Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868).¹ Ian Duncan has read the novel as a tale of “imperialist panic”; Albert D. Hutter as a symbolic theft of Rachel’s virginity or “jewel”; Elisabeth Rose Gruner as a critique of the Victorian family; Martha Stoddard Holmes as an “exploration of disabled women’s sexual subjectivity”; and Tamar Hel- ler as a novel that “recognizes the links between types of domination—of the colonies over the colonized, of men over women, and of the upper over the lower classes.”² What these critics do agree on, despite their interpretive differences, is that they are all reading the same text. They do not consider that *The Moonstone* took on strikingly different forms—and hence different meanings—in different markets. Just as the diamond circulates in the novel as a commodity that assumes various forms and values in different cultures (as Indian religious object, as weapon decoration, as jewellery, as exchange commodity, and as something whose value varies depending on whether it is cut up or left whole), Collins’s own text circulated as a commodity in the publishing market of the 1860s, and, like the diamond, the text also took on various forms and values. In an international market ungoverned by copyright law, Collins chose to cut up and sell his story on both sides of the Atlantic; the serial of *The Moonstone* that reached American readers in 1868 was markedly different from the British text. Whereas the British serial in *All the Year Round* was not illustrated, *Harper’s Weekly* advertised the American serial as “richly illustrated.”³ As we will show, the *Harper’s* illustrations formed an intrinsic part of the American *Moonstone*, heightening the text’s sensationalism, complicating its already intricate narrative structure, and shifting its treatment of gender, disability, class, and race.

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The Moonstone in Harper’s Weekly

Given the lack of international copyright law before the Chace Act of 1891, it is not surprising that Collins chose to serialize The Moonstone in Harper’s Weekly, one of the most widely circulated American literary magazines of the period.⁴ In an era when pirated versions and cheap Canadian editions of British novels flooded the U.S. market, Collins was an enthusiastic member of the Society of Authors (founded 1883) and, like Charles Dickens, worked with authors and publishers from both sides of the Atlantic to secure international copyright provisions.⁵ Despite the lack of any legal obligation to do so, some American publishers did pay English authors for serial and volume rights under a system of “trade courtesy.”⁶ Collins therefore habitually serialized his novels on both sides of the Atlantic in order to secure profits from the American market: The Woman in White (1859–60), No Name (1862–63), and The Moonstone (1868) were serialized in both All the Year Round and Harper’s Weekly, while Man and Wife (1870) was serialized in both Cassell’s Magazine and Harper’s Weekly (Peters 1991, 206; 316). For The Moonstone, Collins received £750 from Harper Brothers, slightly less than the £850 he was paid by Charles Dickens for the serial in All the Year Round.⁷

With Harper Brothers—and thence with his American readers—Collins enjoyed a relationship of strategic commercial advantage as well as of warm reciprocal approbation. In his 30 January 1868 letter acknowledging payment for the first part of The Moonstone, Collins referred warmly to the “[s]pecial friendship” that he shared with his American publishers.⁸ Harper Brothers also gained from the relationship. Collins’s fiction was extremely popular in the United States; indeed, when Harper’s Magazine’s sales slumped at the end of the Civil War, its fortunes were revived by the serialization of Armadale (1864–65).⁹ Such was Collins’s popularity with American readers that his name always appeared before any other novelist in Harper’s catalogues; in 1869, Harper Brothers promised to match any offer by a reputable American publisher for one of Collins’s works; and when Collins travelled to America in 1873, Fletcher Harper warmly hosted him, and the firm celebrated his visit by issuing an Illustrated Library edition of his sixteen novels.¹⁰ Notably, Harper’s made clear to its readers that the company had paid for—rather than pirated—Collins’s works: each instalment of The Woman in White carried an announcement that it had been printed “From Advance Sheets, purchased direct from the Author”; No Name had been “Printed from the Manuscript and early Proof-sheets purchased by the Proprietors of ‘Harper’s Weekly’”; and The Moonstone had been “Printed from the Author’s Manuscript.”¹¹

Given the recent interest in the rich transatlantic literary exchanges between North America and Britain during the nineteenth century, it seems
timely to examine the American serial of *The Moonstone*. The version of *The Moonstone* that reached American readers in 1868 was visually arresting, in accordance with Harper’s mandate to provide high quality letterpress with exceptional woodcuts. Printed on Harper’s 16 ½ by 11 ½ inch sheets, the serial featured sixty-six illustrations by at least two hands, or possibly more (many are unsigned). Collins did not communicate directly with—though he did offer some direction to—the illustrators of the American serial. His arrangements with Harper Brothers thus provide a fascinating glimpse of how authors and illustrators worked on the same serial while at great distance and time delay from one another. In a letter dated 20 July 1867, Collins promised Harper brothers that the first half of the manuscript would be sent to New York forty days in advance of the British serial’s commencement and the second half would be sent forty days before the fourteenth or fifteenth weekly number was published in England. He also promised to send corrected British proof sheets and asked Harper’s to print from these, so that the American edition would contain his final corrections. He made his arrangements with the illustrators’ needs in mind: the manuscript would be used “for the purpose of illustrating the story,” and he promised that his corrections at proof stage would not “affect the scene which your artist may choose for illustration.”

Collins, however, did not meet this schedule. He fell behind because of his own and his mother’s illness, leaving Harper’s with only the first seven parts of the manuscript when the illustrators started their work. Having fallen behind, he promised to send a “list of subjects for the artist, referring to a part of the story which is already settled in detail, and in relation to which he may feel secure against any after-alterations when I am writing for press.” Collins did not see the illustrations until they were already in print: the first (Jan 4) and second (Jan 11) weekly parts reached him in England on 30 January 1868. He wrote to Harper Brothers saying that he admired the “real intelligence” shown by the artist in conveying the “dramatic effect” of the story, and described the illustrations for Part 1 as “very picturesque.” He did object that the American artists had depicted Gabriel Betteredge in livery, pointing out that a British butler would never be so attired. But in large part, he liked what he saw. We focus in this article, however, not on Collins’s control (or lack of it) over Harper’s illustrators but on how the illustrations form an intrinsic part of the American serial, affecting its narrative structure, its self-definition as a sensation novel, and its treatment of gender, disability, class, and race.

**Illustration and Narrative Structure**

Alethea Hayter memorably describes the narrative structure of *The Moonstone* as one of “Chinese-box intricacy.” Structured on the chain of evi-
ence at a criminal trial, the novel presents multiple narrators (including Betteredge, Clack, Bruff, Blake, Jennings, Cuff, Cuff’s man, Candy, the Captain, and Murthwaite) and documents (including family papers, Herncastle’s will, Rosanna’s letter, and Jennings’s journal of Candy’s delirium), each suggesting a slightly different knowledge or interpretation of events. The reader must penetrate the resulting web of multiple “intersecting narratives” and “frequently shifted point of view” in order to solve the mystery of the stolen diamond. As Sandra Kemp argues, the novel thus creates intense self-consciousness about “the manipulation of stories and the ways they can be told.” We suggest that the illustrated version of The Moonstone that Harper’s readers encountered in 1868 added an intricate visual layer to this already complex narrative structure.

In analysing the effect of the Harper’s illustrations, we proceed on the premise that Victorian serial illustrations do not merely reflect or supplement the verbal text but constitute plot elements per se, thus profoundly affecting the narrative’s unfolding and meanings. The work of book historians and scholars of book illustration provides an important context for our analysis of the illustrated American Moonstone as they call for and model a scholarship that explores the interplay of visual and verbal text in lieu of “authorial intention and control, and artistic sympathy and submission.” Hence Stuart Sillars calls for an analysis of illustrated texts that considers “verbal and visual units . . . [as] equal partners in the discourse,” and Lorraine Janzen Kooistra similarly stresses the “bitextual” relationship between verbal and visual components. These arguments apply to all illustrated Victorian fiction, but are especially relevant to serial novels, in which the prominent placement of illustrations brought images to the forefront for the reader.

In mid-Victorian illustrated serial fiction, visual representations of plot elements often preceded verbal representations because illustrations were usually placed before or on the first page of the serial. Victorian serial illustrations are therefore almost always proleptic, anticipating the events of the letterpress to come. The letterpress then seems to repeat what the image has already shown, matching (or ironically failing to match) readers’ visual expectations. Illustrations may also be analeptic, referring to a previous scene in the letterpress; repetitive, representing similar but different scenes; iterative, representing habitual or repeated action; extradiegetic, representing scenes that do not appear at all in the letterpress; or even interpictorial, referring to other illustrations in the text or in other print media. The illustrated chapter initials undermine narrative linearity even more, being often less tied to plot events, and more to iterative, extradiegetic, or intertextual effects. These complex visual/verbal effects all arise in Harper’s layout for the American Moonstone. The non-illustrated version of the novel was highly complicated in narrative structure, with strategically delayed revela-
tions and narrative red herrings as well as competing accounts of events by multiple narrators with differing points of view. As we will show, illustration added even more complexity to the novel’s intricacy of narration and point of view, creating interpictorial effects of irony, juxtaposition, and parallelism; emphasizing the novel’s key settings at borders or boundaries; creating self-reflexivity about acts of investigation and reading; emphasizing the visual codes associated with the genre of sensation fiction; and, for a post-bellum American audience, heightening the novel’s treatment of race, gender, and disability.

Reading Page Layout in the American *Moonstone*

The American serial was divided into thirty-two weekly parts, each consisting of three folio pages of letterpress, with all illustrations on the first page. The illustrations could be taken in at a glance, before readers ever started looking at the letterpress. The pattern of multiple images on the first page of each serial part of the American *Moonstone* created complicated interpictorial effects through tensions, parallels, and ironies of their placement (often three at a time) in the same page layout. These effects, in turn, set readers’ expectations of the serial part (or parts) to follow. The first page of Part 1 (fig. 1) exemplifies how illustration created meanings in advance of and in relation to the letterpress. As Collins notes, the three illustrations on *Harper’s* opening page of the serial convey the story to follow with “real intelligence.” The first three illustrations together create a sweeping visual mini-narrative of the diamond’s trajectory from the Indian shrine at Benares to the siege of Seringapatam to the Indians’ quest to recover their stolen religious object in Britain. The linked images span from the eleventh century to the Victorian present and from ancient India to modern England, anticipating the enormous time scale as well as the cultural and geographical scope of Collins’s narrative.

Analyzing the letterpress alone, Melissa Free contends that the novel uses the storming of Seringapatam as a significant starting point for its intertwining of imperial and domestic plots for a number of related reasons: because Victorian history books identified the siege as the beginning of British domination in India; because of the British raiding of the treasury of Tippoo Sultan in which they plundered two million pounds’ worth of “specie, jewels, military, and other stores”; and because the siege allowed Collins to displace his critique of the Indian Mutiny, still too inflammatory a topic to address directly. Free also argues that the novel cultivates ideological “distance” whereby the account of the diamond’s theft by John Herncastle during the siege of Seringapatam is placed in an anonymous family paper written by Herncastle’s cousin, then filtered through Franklin Blake, and further disavowed by its placement as a prefatory document,
Figure 1: The Moonstone, Harper's Weekly (Part 1, 4 Jan. 1868): 5. All images courtesy of the University of British Columbia library.
not part of the story proper.\textsuperscript{29} However, Part 1’s illustrations reinforce a critique of British domination by focussing on the diamond as Indian rather than British possession: the chapter head showing the diamond in the shrine at Benares with Indian worshippers kneeling before it strongly suggests that the stone’s rightful place lies in Indian culture.\textsuperscript{30} Moreover, the American illustrations efface any ideological distance between the reader and the imperial narrative, placing the viewer on the very edge of the murder scene at the siege, witnessing Herncastle with the dripping dagger in his hand. The dying Indian guard falls away from the diamond (now in the dagger’s pommel), a composition that reverses the reverential pose depicted in the chapter head, and strongly suggests that the murder constitutes religious or cultural violation as well as personal assault. Part 1’s page layout, which links the Moon God, the crime of murder, and the Indians’ start of their search in England, thus suggests a strongly sympathetic attitude to the Indians’ quest for the diamond, arguably more so than in the unillustrated novel.

In addition, the first page of the Harper’s serial introduces more visual perspectives than the letterpress, further complicating the points of view from which we see the cultural expropriation of the diamond. Part 1’s letterpress begins with John Herncastle’s cousin narrating the siege of Seringapatam (1799) and then shifts to the perspective of Gabriel Betteredge on recent domestic British events (1848). However, the Harper’s illustrators provide two additional points of view. First, the image of the Benares shrine lies outside the text’s predominantly British perspective, giving us a view that Herncastle’s cousin refers to as existing only in “stories” and “traditions” and that situates the American reader at the foot of the Indian shrine at a time before the British presence on the continent.\textsuperscript{31} Moving to the right of the page, we get a radically proleptic view of Franklin Blake’s glimpse (narrated to Betteredge in Part 3) of the Indians mesmerizing the English boy in their quest to recover the missing diamond.\textsuperscript{32} Finally, in the third illustration, we share the cousin’s shocking view of John Herncastle murdering the Indian guard in order to steal the moonstone. Notably, this the only image that shares the narrative perspective of Part 1’s letterpress as well as the only illustration accompanied by matching letterpress in the instalment: “The dying Indian sank to his knees, pointed to the dagger in Herncastle’s hand, and said, in his native language: ‘The Moonstone will have its vengeance yet on you and yours!’” (4 Jan. 1868, p. 5). This illustration, then, sutures the reader into the narrative at the very point at which Free considers that the letterpress creates ideological distance between the reader and the witnessing of imperial crime.

Other opening pages of The Moonstone’s serial parts feature similarly rich relationships between their illustrations—or, more complexly, between one opening page and another—that in turn produce marked
ideological effects. Just as Part 1’s three illustrations juxtapose cultural and temporal locations, so too Part 2’s two illustrations pit the foreign (a pointedly extradiegetic view of Murthwaite smoking the hookah in India) against the domestic (Betteredge at home with his dogs). This juxtaposition in turn suggests the way in which the novel contrasts what Dickens termed “wild” and “domestic” elements, while undercutting the binary British/domestic vs. foreign/wild.\(^\text{33}\) (Betteredge’s dogs may seem domestic but the reader already knows that they are bloodhounds and that he will not hesitate to use their force to guard the estate.) Part 3’s illustrations (fig. 2) oppose comedy in the chapter head (Cuff and the gardener arguing about the moss rose) against anger and tragedy in the illustration (Limping Lucy confronting Betteredge about Rosanna’s death). They also heighten the novel’s theme of class exclusion in this novel set in 1848, juxtaposing those who belong in the estate’s walled garden against Limping Lucy, who is an intruder within its gates. As in Part 1, the illustration of Limping Lucy provides a point of view other than that of the letterpress, in this case departing from Betteredge’s condescending perspective. We see through the eyes of a third party, a visual point of view that highlights Lucy’s bent body against the classical shape of the urn and its podium, and centers the illustration on her starkly angry face, highlighted in white space against the dark foliage. The visual contrasts between the elegant house and angry intruder anticipate Lucy’s warning to Betteredge in the letterpress that “the day is not far off when the poor will rise against the rich,” the novel’s most pointed reference to the revolutionary uprisings of its temporal setting.\(^\text{34}\)

In a relationship between sequential parts of the serial, the illustrations to Parts 17 and 18 ironically invert each other’s relations of singles (in the chapter initial) and couples (in the larger illustration), with the larger images playing up Miss Clack’s amorous desire for Godfrey Ablewhite as well as his desire for his cousin (and/or her money). They highlight the novel’s mockery of evangelicalism, revealing Godfrey’s hypocrisy in proposing to Rachel (Part 17) and Clack’s libidinous desires in embracing Godfrey (Part 18). They also create pathos surrounding Rachel, seen alone at the window in Part 18’s chapter head, a scene that underlines her status as a vulnerable and guardian-less femme sole once her mother is dead. While at times the illustrations share the point of view of the verbal plot (as, for example, when Clack watches Godfrey and Rachel from behind a curtain in Part 17), at others they give an alternative perspective, that of a hypothetical outside observer (as when we see Clack resting her head on Godfrey’s shoulder in Part 18, a view that seems to position the reader as covert voyeur).

Finally, the novel is book-ended with complementary illustrations (Parts 3 and 31), the lonely deaths of Herncastle and Ablewhite (fig. 3) echoing each other through twenty-eight weeks of serialization. These two men
Figure 2: The Moonstone, Harper’s Weekly (Part 13, 28 Mar. 1868): 197.
Figure 3: The Moonstone, Harper’s Weekly (Part 31, 1 Aug. 1868): 485.
(both of whom only value the diamond for its material worth) are linked in the novel’s visual iconography by their lonely deathbeds, their darkly bearded faces highlighted against white sheets and their solitary bodies surrounded by figures of officialdom. Notably, the illustrator shows Ablewhite’s corpse before his identity is revealed; he is still wearing the dark beard, wig, and brown make-up that enabled him to pass as Indian. The page layout thus balances the imperialist thief (Herncastle, depicted in Part 3) against the thief of cultural identity (ironically named Able/white). Each opening page of the serial, then, presented complex visual information, much of it proleptic and none of it ideologically neutral. In providing jarringly disparate points of view, the illustrations refuse to endorse a straightforward notion of narrative perspective, instead highlighting even more than the letterpress how events may be perceived from multiple and ideologically distinct points of view. The illustrations thus form an intrinsic part of the novel’s interrogation of class boundaries and the British imperialist project; they are not mere decoration or addition, but form a key part of the text as it reached its American readers.

Illustration and Sensation

In addition to creating interpictorial relationships, the illustrations to *The Moonstone* contributed to the novel’s generic identification as sensation fiction. Critics such as Ann Cvetkovich, Jonathan Loesberg, Lyn Pykett, and Winnifred Hughes have focussed almost exclusively on verbal texts in theorizing the key components of sensation fiction. An exception is Deborah Wynne, who attends to the role of illustration in particular texts, although her study does not provide an overarching analysis of the relation between illustration and genre. However, sensation fiction had its own generic visual codes, as evidenced by the parodic illustrations for F.C. Burnand’s mock-sensation narrative *Mokeanna* (*Punch* February–March 1863). Illustrators of sensation fiction tended to deploy a repertoire of visual tropes that included atmospheric turbulence, boundary crossing or liminal spaces, female transgression or nocturnal activity, and the use of white space to create ghostly effects. We may speculate that they did so partly to convey mystery without giving away the plot. Given the proleptic nature of illustration, it is clear that nineteenth-century illustrators of detective and sensation fiction faced a problem that existed to a lesser extent in realist or historical fiction: that is, how to illustrate the text without giving away the serial part to follow. In realist texts, illustrators tended to focus on quotidian or repeated activities that did not destroy suspense, but the illustrators of detective or sensation novels like *The Moonstone* could illustrate the novel’s main clues (such as Franklin sleepwalking in Part 30 or Rosanna sewing Franklin’s new nightgown in Part 23) only ana-
leptically. Instead, the illustrators for Harper’s Weekly chose to heighten the sensational atmosphere of Collins’s text by means of iterative scenes of darkness and turbulence, scenes of borders and boundary crossings, and tropes of hermeneutic activity.

Part 1 (fig. 1) initiates the novel’s sensational visual motifs, as the chapter head and Herncastle illustration iterate tropes of atmospheric turbulence. The dark smoke from the lamp at the lower left of the chapter head and the roiling smoke from Herncastle’s torch suggest the disturbance that will result when the diamond is stolen from India. As we have already seen, the page layout links this crime of murder to cultural and religious violence; the darkness thus carries ideological significance as well as conveying atmospheric effect. This motif of darkness and mystery is taken up in the dark chapter heads that frame the novel’s early instalments. As the mystery unfolds and the diamond disappears, Harper’s illustrators used the dark chapter heads to create a visual pattern of darkness and unreadability.

These focus on the Indians, whose exaggerated black shadows seem to symbolize nightmarish racialized bodies (fig. 4); on Betteredge guarding the estate, looking into a darkness that we cannot see (fig. 5); and on the women servants, who peep through Rosanna’s keyhole, trying fruitlessly to understand her actions (fig. 6). These chapter heads are characterized by deep cross-hatching and very limited white space (none of which illuminates characters’ faces). The lack of light on faces suggests the sensation novel’s capacity to challenge what we might call common sense—that is, the deeply embedded ideological assumptions about gender, race, and nation that underlie habitual actions. In each of these cases, because the dark illustrations are chapter heads, their brooding atmosphere looms prophetically over the serial part to follow. Indeed, Part 4’s chapter head (fig. 4) represents a threatening scene that never actually transpires (though it is feared) in the letterpress, thus increasing the sensationalism of the narrative. In Part 3, Betteredge tells us that he saw “the shadow of a person in the moonlight thrown forward from behind the corner of the house” and that he heard feet retreating in a hurry towards the shrubbery. In Part 4, he tells us that “not the ghost of an Indian came near the house again” (25 Jan. 1868, p. 53) until the jugglers arrive openly to entertain the birthday guests (Part 5, fig. 5). Yet Part 4’s chapter head shows three dark figures within the walled garden, thus intimating a sensational scene of imperialist panic at which the letterpress never actually arrives.

In addition to suggesting sensation and mystery by means of dark smoke and cross-hatched chapter heads, Harper’s illustrators produce sensational effects by locating the novel’s scenes at borders or boundaries: sensational illustrations often contain a window, door, or line of symbolic crossing. In The Moonstone’s letterpress, this boundary is represented primarily by the sea edge and the quicksand, the novel’s central symbols of dangerous,
Figure 5: *The Moonstone*, Harper’s Weekly (Part 5, 1 Feb. 1868): 69.
Figure 6: The Moonstone, Harper’s Weekly (Part 8, 22 Feb. 1868): 117.
repressed, or hidden energies. The American illustrators made full use of the tide line’s visual possibilities, as well as of other thresholds of public and private spaces. The illustrations form repetitive patterns, repeatedly placing characters at tide lines or on the edge of cliffs. They suggest Rosanna’s liminal social position as woman, as disabled person, as criminal, and as servant (Part 2) as well as the way in which Collins’s plot pushes more mainstream characters such as Franklin and Betteredge out of comfortable assumptions and into the liminal spaces of their identities, both social and personal (Part 3).

The *Harper’s* illustrators also repeatedly deploy threshold settings, locating Collins’s characters near doors or windows. These thresholds, we argue, visually suggest the sensation genre’s propensity for disrupting boundaries of gender and class, as well as this particular novel’s violation of barriers between the known and the unknown, white and non-white, England and its foreign others, law and desire, the conscious and the unconscious. The illustrations show Rachel watching the man she loves steal her gemstone (chapter head, Part 25); Rachel watching the investigation and wishing that Franklin might escape (Part 6, fig. 7); and Franklin sleepwalking, midway between conscious and unconscious states (chapter head, Part 30). All of these events place characters in positions where their conscious ethics and their basic drives collide, suggesting how the novel presses beyond the surface of identity, probing its margins. The illustrations contribute, then, to the novel’s status as sensation fiction, suggesting the text’s roiling undercurrents, its deep-set fears of colonial invasion at the heart of England, and its capacity to undermine or cross boundaries fundamental to self and social identities.

**Illustration and Self-Reflexivity**

One of the most striking aspects of Collins’s *Moonstone* is its self-consciousness about acts of reading and investigation. The novel presents multiple narrators, documents, and detectives, highlighting the telling of stories as well as the perspectives from which they are told and heard. The illustrations add to this self-reflexivity, repeatedly representing the investigative work of the novel’s detectives and reiterating scenes of searching and examining by both amateur and professional detectives, men and women, upper- and lower-class characters. To some extent, this is a pragmatic choice by the illustrators: since they aim not to give away the plot, they choose to represent the looker rather than what is seen. However, this strategy also has the marked effect of drawing attention to the hermeneutic activity of serial readers themselves. Cumulatively, the illustrations draw repeated attention to acts of investigation or interpretation, as in Rachel’s surreptitious witnessing of Betteredge and Penelope searching the
Figure 7: The Moonstone, Harper’s Weekly (Part 6, 8 Feb. 1868): 85.
cabinet (fig. 7), and Cuff and Betteredge (Part 9) and others (Part 11) tracing Rachel’s footprints in the Shivering Sands.

Heightening this motif of interpretation, the Harper’s illustrations also call attention to acts of reading. This visual pattern underlines the letterpress’s focus on the interpretation of narrative, the “battle over whose perspective and voice” prevail in the novel. In a series of repetitive images, the illustrations show Cuff, then both Blake and Jennings, all reading (Part 12; Part 28, fig. 8). These scenes of characters immersed in books create self-reflexivity around the reading process itself, reminding us forcefully that The Moonstone requires its characters as well as its readers to become active analysers of narratives, their biases, and visual as well as verbal points of view.

The Moonstone, of course, scrutinizes not only “whodunit” but which power structures and ideological assumptions underlie social acts of investigation. In the letterpress, Rosanna’s hidden letter to Franklin (chained in a metal case and hidden in quicksand) reminds us of the silences in official discourse. The novel’s illustrations similarly remind us of how documents are produced and by whom, repeatedly representing the act of writing and the conditions of producing documents. We see this intense self-reflexivity in the letterpress, when Miss Clack and Franklin exchange a series of letters in which she sends him the first chapter of her narrative and he rebukes her for trying to send him evangelical pamphlets along with her manuscript, an exchange that draws attention to the production and transmission of the novel itself. Similar self-reflexivity appears in the linked illustrations to Part 3, which depict Herncastle making his will and Franklin and Betteredge reading its clauses after his death. It also appears in the deeply self-conscious chapter head to Part 14 (fig. 9), which portrays Miss Clack producing by candlelight her narrative for Franklin, who will in turn assemble it into the chain of evidence for the reader. The visual text is thus highly self-conscious about hermeneutic activity and the reading of verbal and visual texts. If, as Albert Hutter writes, “[d]etective fiction is the peculiarly modern distillation of a general literary experience that makes central the subtle interaction with, and interpretation of, language,” then the American serial of The Moonstone distils a still more modern experience than its British counterpart: that is, the interaction with, and interpretation of, verbal and visual sign systems.

Illustration and Ideology

As well as contributing to the novel’s sensational effects and creating self-reflexivity around acts of interpretation, the Harper’s illustrations heightened the novel’s treatment of gender, disability, and race. In terms of the novel’s treatment of gender, it is noteworthy that the illustrations’ trope of
Figure 8: The Moonstone, Harper's Weekly (Part 28, 11 July 1868): 437.
Figure 9: The Moonstone, Harper's Weekly (Part 14, 4 Apr. 1868): 213.
hermeneutic activity focuses very largely on female characters. As Tamar Heller observes, many of the novel’s most climactic scenes occur when “a male detective penetrates women’s secrets”; the novel, she argues, constitutes a “battle to break women’s silence.” Visually speaking, the American *Moonstone* stresses this theme by foregrounding scenes of men reading women, a theme highlighted by the captions. In a striking series of parallel scenes, we see Cuff reading Rachel, then Cuff reading Rosanna, and finally Cuff reading Lady Verinder. Featuring similar composition (a group of men staring at a single woman), these images highlight what Heller calls the “deviant and defiant women of the novel” (p. 255). Cutting across class, they align the lower-class disabled servant Rosanna (fig. 6) with the privileged characters of Rachel (fig. 10) and Lady Verinder (Part 12) as subject to the investigative activities of the men. As Martha Stoddard Holmes notes, Rosanna and Rachel, “ostensibly worlds apart in terms of class, normative physical beauty, and above all, life prospects—are closely aligned not only by their love for Franklin Blake but by their respective functions in the mystery plot.” Their silence (which in Rachel’s case is defended by Lady Verinder) aligns them with each other, as the parallel illustrations suggest.

Most interesting in this respect are those scenes that intimate women’s fundamental unreadability—scenes in which female characters are subjected to scrutiny but are represented as unreadable, unintelligible, and finally, darkly illegible. Part 11’s chapter head depicting Franklin putting Rachel in the carriage to go to London represents one such scene. Rachel’s silence and refusal to cooperate with the police are incomprehensible to her cousin, as signalled by her blurred outline under her veil. The chapter head visually replicates the narrative perspective of Betteredge who says that “she had rushed into the carriage as if it was a hiding-place,” suturing the reader into his point of view, offering no greater insight or different perspective. Another striking illustration depicting the reading or interpretation of women is the dark chapter head to Part 8 (fig. 10) which shows the blurred outline of Rosanna walking on the moor. This image replicates the perspective of the baker’s man, who declares he saw Rosanna “on the previous afternoon, with a thick veil on, walking toward Frizinghall by the foot-path way over the moor.” Betteredge doubts the account, stating that “Rosanna, as you know, had been all the Thursday afternoon ill up stairs in her room” (15 Feb. 1868, p. 101). The illustration captures Rosanna’s status as enigma. By reducing Rosanna’s veiled person to little more than a dark shape or series of scribbles, this dark chapter head upsets the novel’s primary mode of visual representation (dominantly realist) to veer towards abstraction. Similarly, Rosanna upsets society’s mores: her criminal past, her disabled body, and her avowed love for a man of much higher class status, all disturb normative standards.


Chapter XI

And now, for the moment, let us retrace our steps a little and consider the position of the key to the mystery. We have seen the key for a few moments. Perhaps we can make out a little more of it.

Notably, Rosanna’s narrative is subject to the greatest amount of visual analepsis in the entire text, meaning that we attempt to read this enigmatic woman long after her death. As already mentioned, Collins structured the novel after a criminal trial, with multiple narrators telling different stories (récits) from disparate points of view, narratives that the reader must try to resolve (in narratological terms, producing the histoire). At the heart of this hermeneutic exercise lies the fact that Franklin, the editor and main narrator, is also unknowingly the thief. Collins holds back this revelation by three means: 1) the delay created by Rosanna’s undelivered letter, which means that the nightgown remains hidden; 2) the love between Rachel and Franklin, which means that Rachel for a long time does not tell anyone that she saw Franklin steal the diamond; and 3) the illness of Mr Candy, which delays his confession that he gave Franklin opium. These delays allow Collins to offer the story to the reader with significant gaps that are subsequently filled by analeptic chunks of narrative. The most shocking of these analeptic revelations is Rosanna’s letter, hidden in quicksand alongside the paint-stained nightgown, both potent symbols of her cross-class desire for Franklin. Many of the novel’s most provocative themes (gender, disability, and class) thus cluster around the character of Rosanna, to which the illustrators return near the text’s end.

A chapter head depicting Rosanna sewing Franklin’s nightgown appears in Part 23 (6 June 1868), fully twelve weeks after Rosanna’s suicide in Part 11 (14 March 1868). Harper’s illustrators portray her sewing at night, her thin frame illuminated by a single candle, her eyes shadowy in her gaunt face. This boldly analeptic illustration invites enormous sympathy for Rosanna by means of its rich interpictorial references. To Victorian viewers, it would have resonated with the many other images of night work by worn seamstresses, a pathetic theme made famous by Thomas Hood’s “The Song of the Shirt” (published in Punch’s Christmas 1843 issue) and taken up by numerous painters and illustrators. Interestingly, then, the visual material surrounding Rosanna in the American text de-emphasizes her disability in favour of pathos surrounding her class status.

Just as the illustrations create sympathy for Rosanna (arguably more so than the letterpress), they do so too for the Indians’ quest to return the diamond to its cultural home. However, in other ways they are extremely negative in their depiction of the Indians. The relevant illustrations divide into two main categories: 1) the depiction of the Indians in the early and late part of the text, which focus positively on their claim to the diamond as cultural and religious artefact; and 2) depictions of the Indians in the middle of the text, which focus negatively on their invasion of British homes and institutions. As we have already shown, the illustrations to Part 1 depict the diamond in the shrine at Benares (fig. 1). In this context, Hencastle’s murder of the Indian guard and theft of the Moonstone are clearly
depicted as imperial violence, cultural appropriation, and disruption of legitimate religious activity. The sequence of illustrations between Part 1 and Part 5 shows the diamond first in the forehead of the god, then in the pommel of a dagger wielded against an Indian by a white man (both figure 1), then in the breast of an Englishwoman’s dress (fig. 5), each time highlighted by white space but never as markedly as in the first illustration, this glow symbolically marking its right place in Indian religious and cultural life. Perhaps the most memorable visual image of the novel confirms this reading: the chapter head to Part 6 depicts a wholly extradiegetic scene, a huge diamond in a night landscape (fig. 7). Here, the stone is aligned with the religious order of the Moon God (represented by the symbol of the crescent moon) and with Indian culture (represented by the Taj Mahal-like dome in the right corner of the otherwise deserted landscape). This extradiegetic visual scene strongly naturalizes the rightness of the Indians’ quest to return the diamond to its cultural and religious home.

However, the serial novel reverses this sympathetic attitude to the Indians in the illustrations for the central section. The tone switches with the darkly extradiegetic chapter head to Part 4 (fig. 4), which depicts them in the darkness, their exaggerated shadows forming black unreadable shapes, resembling Rosanna in their challenge to the novel’s hermeneutic scheme. However, this illegibility does not last. In the novel’s central section, the Indians are for the most part depicted as legibly and unmistakably evil. Very notably, the visual text departs from the verbal in this respect. Whereas, for example, Godfrey Ablewhite finds the attack in Northumberland Street largely unreadable in the verbal text, merely describing through synecdoche the “tawny-brown” (4 April 1868, p. 213) arm that grasps him from behind, the illustration to Part 14 gives the American reader a very full view of no less than three hostile characters attacking Ablewhite (fig. 9). He may not see his assailants, but the illustration substitutes a point of view that allows readers to do so, and the Indians are very clearly vilified, with gaunt bodies, wraithlike faces, and unheroic postures. Even the illustration of the Indian man who goes to ask Luker about the terms of the diamond’s pledge comes off negatively in the novel’s iconography, with his gaunt frame and closed, avaricious posture (Part 20). The Indians in these illustrations are gaunt, grasping, apparently worthy of loathing—utterly different from their depiction in Part 1 or indeed from the depiction of their return to India at the novel’s end. It is, then, for their cultural boundary crossing that they are vilified—and we suggest that the novel’s illustrations indict them far more strongly than does the letterpress. We note too that the text’s illustrations do not condemn similar boundary crossing by Murthwaite, who (in the extradiegetic chapter head to Part 21) appears calmly smoking a hookah in an Asian scene.
The tone of the illustrations, however, shifts markedly at the end of the *Harper’s* serial, when Ablewhite dies and the Moonstone is returned to India. First, as we have seen, Ablewhite is portrayed as cultural thief, his lonely figure disguised in a dark beard, make-up, and wig (fig. 3). As the novel’s hypocritical “do-gooder,” the figure of Ablewhite points in mockery to the “White Man’s Burden”: “[a]s Godfrey pillages his ward’s funds, so, too, does the British Empire plunder the property of those over whom they rule.” In turn, the negative portrayal of the Indians changes in favour of positive iconography: even more than in the unillustrated novel, they are depicted as “committed, religious figures” who stand as “morally superior” to the British diamond hunters. Their cultural aspirations are implicitly legitimized and naturalized, and the novel demonstrates a “serious treatment of the Hindu faith.” As Free notes, the novel’s letterpress starts with a mass of white bodies in a frenzied assault on brown bodies and ends with a mass of brown bodies calmly making their way to the “unveiling of the Moonstone in its sacred shrine.” The final illustration supports and strengthens this positive depiction of the “civility, ethics, and devotion” of those witnessing the Moonstone’s return to Somnauth. No longer portrayed as grasping or gaunt, the Indians form a heroic triangle of selflessness in the large central illustration to Part 32 as they take their leave of the religious rededication scene (fig. 11). Their triangle significantly echoes and positively recasts the composition of their earlier scene of deception on the Verinder estate (fig. 5). Interestingly, the text does not provide an image of the diamond shining in the forehead of the Moon God at Somnauth, an illustration that could have book-ended the first chapter head showing it at Benares (fig. 1). Instead, the final illustration alludes to the natural iconography (stars and moon) of the night sky, naturalizing the moonstone’s place in the Indian landscape. The illustrators’ decision not to replicate some version of the headpiece has an interesting ideological effect: visually, the novel achieves closure not so much by restoring the diamond to the Moon God but the Indians to India; it is not so much about the repatriation of the stone but about reconstituting the cultural borders that were disturbed when the Indians left the subcontinent.

A challenge to this visual suggestion of racial division is Ezra Jennings, “freakish outcast” and solver of the mystery. As the letterpress indicates, Ezra was raised in a British colony and is of mixed birth: as he tells Franklin, “My father was an Englishman, but my mother—.” A “bastard child of the British Empire,” he embodies, as Heller notes, “the ideological and generic contradictions of *The Moonstone*”: his piebald hair (black and white with no intervening grey) “signals simultaneously the outcast status he shares with [Rosanna] and the way he will become the male detective who will lead Blake from the darkness into the light.” A “liminal” char-
Figure 11: The Moonstone, Harper's Weekly (Part 32, 8 Aug. 1868): 501.
acter who literally embodies the novel’s obsession with borderlines, he also represents Franklin’s subconscious, his “dreamy eyes” guiding Franklin into his own dreams and sleep to find the mystery’s solution.\(^5\)

One of the novel’s most sympathetic characters, Ezra was also potentially the most controversial in post-bellum America, as his mixed black and white hair signals, in Franklin’s words, “the mixture of some foreign race in his English blood” (4 July 1868, p. 421). Although the term “miscegenation” had not been coined until 1864, “amalgamation” (the “common term in ante-bellum America for black/white sexual unions”) had been regulated by individual English colonies since the mid-1600s in order to control the dangers of “‘mixt’, ‘spurious’ and ‘mongrel’ offspring.”\(^6\) As Daniel Aaron observes, the enforcement of these laws varied according to time and place; however, the number of “mulattoes” in the American South continued to increase until the Civil War. (The term “mulatto” is etymologically related to “mule” and speaks to the perception that, like the mule, the “mulatto was considered the product of an unnatural union.”)\(^7\) Until the 1850s, free “mulattoes” in the lower South provided a buffer between the slave and white populations; they owned property and frequently “passed . . . into the white community.”\(^8\) In the upper South, the North, and the West, however, the “slightest percentage of blackness made the mulatto irrevocably ‘negro.’” After the Civil War, tolerance for racial mixing markedly diminished, especially in the South where defeated Confederates perceived that God had judged them for “the criminal mingling of races.”\(^9\)

In a culture and era in which the problems of governance and culture on the Indian subcontinent were far less pressing than issues of miscegenation and racial identity, Ezra’s mixed race must have posed an ideological problem for Harper’s. In the years immediately following the Civil War and prior to the serialization of *The Moonstone* (1865–68), Harper’s ran a number of articles on the fraught topic of miscegenation. On 4 November 1865, an article on the labour shortage in the South noted that while Montgomery Blair feared “amalgamation” and spoke of the “insuperable” antipathy between the races, fully “three-fourths of the lately emancipated population are composed of mulattoes, quadroons, sexteroons, octoroons, and still lighter mixtures.”\(^10\) The article noted that a heckler had interrupted Blair’s argument about the impossibility of the races living together by asking, “What did Jefferson’s mulatto son say about that?” (691). On 23 March 1867, a Louisiana correspondent reported anxiety about mixed marriages: “[W]e don’t want our daughters to marry the ‘nigs.’”\(^11\) The correspondent advised “treating [‘the negro’] simply as a man—not a possible son-in-law” (179c). These represent two examples among many references to miscegenation, amalgamation, and “Anglo-African” identity in Harper’s in the period between the Civil War’s conclusion and *The Moonstone’s*
serialization, which in turn frame the particular tensions surrounding the character of Ezra Jennings.\textsuperscript{65}

On 1 September 1866, Harper’s had run an article on “mulatto nurses” caring for wounded African Americans after a New Orleans riot.\textsuperscript{66} In line with Aaron’s observation that in the North, the slightest percentage of black blood rendered “the mulatto irrevocably ‘negro,’” the illustration for the article showed no discernable difference between the “negro” patients and the “mulatto” nurses.\textsuperscript{67} In The Moonstone’s letterpress, Collins’s particular physical description of Ezra precluded such flattening of difference, foregrounding instead the issue of racial mixing or amalgamation. Ezra’s piebald hair with its black-white divide prevents the visual “passing” of the character as either white or black. As Collins insists, he is radically both.

The Harper’s illustrations communicate the instability of this character’s racial identity. In post-bellum America, Ezra literally defies categorization. His piebald hair (which in the letterpress symbolizes his mixed-race status) is visible, but this is not the most striking feature of his visual representation in the American serial. Rather, the Harper’s illustrators repeatedly show him with incompatible and inconsistent skin pigments, his hands white and his face darkly cross-hatched (fig. 12), his hands white and his face white (fig. 8) or his hands and face dark (Part 23), in seemingly random combinations. This disparity of hands and face seems to symbolize the impossibility of reading race on the body, the underlying fear being that categorization will fail. Interestingly, the Harper’s artists elide Ezra’s “piebald” (Part 23, 358) hair by manipulating light: sunbeams stream across his face, helping to naturalize the black-white divide in his hair, and to de-emphasize this British sign of marked racial “amalgamation” (fig. 12). As well, this use of light emphasizes the sympathetic characteristics of cognition and knowledge. We note, however, that racial and gothic markers haunt the borders of the illustration of Jennings in Mr. Candy’s surgery (fig. 8): the skull on the bookcase, the anatomical drawing, and the dancing tribal figures suggest exoticism and the grotesque, stressing the fear of racial hybridity in the post-war period.

In reading the Harper’s serial, we find, then, that the American Moonstone differed markedly from its British counterpart in All the Year Round. The illustrations heighten the text’s sensationalism and complicate its narrative scheme with iterative patterns, analeptic scenes, extradiegetic and alternative points of view, as well as with rich interpictorial relationships. They also de-emphasize disability, heighten the novel’s sympathetic treatment of class and gender differences, and underline the text’s treatment of racial divisions and its emphasis on miscegenation. Collins thus unleashed in America a notably different version of his novel, one that through its layout and visual material created markedly different ideological effects.
MARY ELIZABETH LEIGHTON and LISA SURRIDGE

Chapter IX


Fig. 12: The Moonstone, Harper's Weekly (Part 27, 4 July 1868): 421.
We should no longer speak of *The Moonstone* but of *The Moonstones*: American and British cousins with very different faces.

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NOTES

1. The authors gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance of our research assistant, Emily Murphy, as well as the astute and helpful commentary by the anonymous reviewers for VPR.


10. As Harper Brothers wrote to Collins, “We gratefully avail ourselves of your kind and confidential intimation that no slight difference between the proposals you may receive from us and from others will prevent your personal preference in our favor. . . . [S]hould the offer we make . . . not seem to you enough, and should you receive a greater one from any responsible house, from whom you are sure of getting your money, we would increase this offer to an amount which would correspond with the offer of any other responsible party” (J. Henry Harper, The House of Harper: A Century of Publishing in Franklin Square, 280). On Harper’s catalogues and Collins’s visit to America, see Eugene Exman, The House of Harper: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Publishing (New York: Harper, 1967), 61.


12. Recent scholarship on nineteenth-century transatlanticism has drawn scholars’ attention to the fruitful interchange between British and American authors, editors, and publishers. Studies by Paul Giles, Lance Newman, and Richard Gravil have established the transatlantic connections and oppositions that underpinned the Romantic movement, such as those between Blake and Whitman, Emerson and Carlyle, and Hawthorne and Burns. The Victorians also enjoyed fruitful reciprocal relationships, as Jennifer Cognard-Black, Christine Doyle, and Sarah Meer have shown, with Harriet Stowe corresponding warmly with George Eliot; Louisa May Alcott drawing on Charlotte Brontë; and stage versions of Uncle Tom’s Cabin playing to London audiences. These critics have demonstrated that the academic division of British and American national traditions obscures the rich cultural crossings, mirrorings, and oppositions that characterize the interplay between these literatures. Wilkie Collins’s popularity with Harper’s readers and his mutually beneficial relationship with Harpers’ Weekly form, then, part of a web of exchanges across the Atlantic.


15. Collins allowed for ten days’ transmission time and estimated that this gave the New York publishers one month with the manuscript before publication. Wilkie Collins, The Moonstone. Ed. Steve Farmer (Peterborough: Broadview, 1999), 595–96.


17. Ibid., 597.

18. Ibid., 599.

19. Ibid., 599.


22. Kemp, xxv.


29. Free 341.

30. Notably, the *Harper’s Weekly* illustrators would not have known that the diamond ends up back in an Indian shrine—as mentioned above, they had only the first seven parts to work with at this point.


32. While visual prolepsis is common in Victorian illustrated serials, it is unusual for such prolepsis to extend beyond the end of the instalment.


37. *Mokeanna* contained parodic illustrations by leading illustrators such as George du Maurier, John Millais, and Sir John Gilbert.

38. A chapter head opened each instalment before Part 15.


43. This exchange also no doubt parodies Collins’s own exchanges with Har- per’s and *All the Year Round*.


46. Martha Stoddard Holmes, “‘Bolder with Her Lover in the Dark’: Collins and Disabled Women’s Sexuality,” 70.


48. Interestingly, Harper’s illustrators did not focus on Rosanna’s disability (her deformed shoulder and back) as a source of sensational or gothic effect. Instead, they relied on suggestions of female mystery and unreadability. The one thing that is fully readable here is the semi-circular upper border of this image, which imitates the outline of a grave marker, and thus foretells Rosanna’s death.

49. See, for example, Richard Redgrave’s The Sempstress (1846) and Anna Elizabeth Blunden’s The Seamstress (“A Song of the Shirt”) (1854).

50. Melissa Free, “‘Dirty Linen’: Legacies of Empire in Wilkie Collins’s The Moonstone,” 361.

51. Ibid. 357.


54. Ibid. 362.


60. Aaron 173

61. Ibid.


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