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The Mockery of Things: Material Culture and Domestic Ideology in the Detective Fiction of Anna Katharine Green

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The Mockery of Things:
Material Culture and Domestic Ideology in the
Detective Fiction of Anna Katharine Green

by

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The Mockery of Things: Material Culture and Domestic Ideology in the Detective Fiction of Anna Katharine Green examines how a popular genre author like Anna Katharine Green (1846-1935) uses objects to articulate middle-class identity and social constructions in late-nineteenth-century America. During the nineteenth century, the home as both a physical space and an ideological signifier was a central tenet in American middle-class identity. “Home was not just an idea,” Andrea Tange notes, but rather “an idea that was explicitly rooted in a material object: a house that was properly laid out, carefully decorated, meticulously managed, thoroughly cleaned and thoughtfully displayed” (5). Focusing on these domestically situated objects – clothing, household furnishings and domestic architecture – this dissertation considers how such items, which have tended to be read in support of domestic identity, instead function in Green’s detective fiction as a covert critique the period’s prevailing ideologies of gender, class and consumption. Considering these tangible goods in this novel way also serves to illuminate the real-world shifts and social changes that occurred in America over the fifty year period between the end of the American Civil War and its entry into the First World War. It popular fiction like Green’s offers the opportunity to critically trace the consequences of the period’s widespread valorization of domesticity and the home, the changing place of women in society in nineteenth-century America and the implications that new access to material culture offered for social mobility, class identity and criminal culpability.

The first chapter, “Dressing Up: Social Climbers, Wrong-Doing and Fashion,” considers how clothing and dress are used as a means of communicating social status in four of Green’s detective fiction texts: *A Strange Disappearance* (1879), *Behind Closed Doors* (1888), *That Affair Next Door* (1897), and “The Ruby and the Caldron” (1905). It examines how clothing and dress are used by socially ambitious characters in attempts to improve their social standing through the adoption of their aspirational sphere’s sartorial presentation. While wide range of period texts deal with the question of whether the upward social movement of individuals, until recently, little attention has been paid to the figure of the social climber in detective fiction and how issues of social transgression were often linked thematically to the investigation of criminal investigation central to the genre. The focus on clothes – material objects that have an immediate and direct connection to the physical self – redirects the focus from questions of motivation for the social transformation towards an investigation of the means by which particular material objects either facilitate or impede personal trajectories.

In Chapter 2, the focus turns from personal adornment, class climbing and the contributions of objects to the formation of identity towards the domestic space proper. But rather than to continue to focus on women, and explore their depiction either within the nineteenth-century American home, “‘Nature Warped By Solitude’: Male Hoarders, Moral Character and Interior Design” instead considers male patterns of ownership and consumption within the domestic sphere, through the figure of the hoarder and miser and examines the links between domestic disorder and criminality in Green’s detective fiction. In a period which lionized the collection and display of objects and which viewed the home as both proof of moral sanctity and a buttress against moral corruption, the resistance to such socially sanctioned practices which is revealed in *Behind Closed Doors* (1888), *Dr. Izard* (1895) and *The Millionaire Baby* (1902) highlight the unspoken social expectations which typically governed domestic practices in the period. This chapter will also show how Green’s writing communicates a belief in the characterological import of the home and its furnishings and how private spaces are discussed in her fiction within the context of detective fiction norms.

The third and final chapter of this dissertation considers the architecture and constructed spaces that acted as the physical and psychological perimeter of the family home itself. While private and public spaces became increasingly demarcated along gender lines during the nineteenth century, such that this divide was supported by distinctive material cultures that worked to normalize such separation, Chapter 3 will demonstrate that it is too simplistic to say that private domestic spaces are inherently feminine while public spaces are masculine and offers a challenge to the binary social divisions that American society was attempting to maintain in the face of challenges from figures such as the 'New Woman'. Analyzing the physical architecture of the homes that appear in *The Leavenworth Case* (1878), *Dark Hollow* (1914) and the short story "Missing: Page Thirteen" (1915), "Mapping Family Secrets: Spatiality, Trauma and Domestic Architecture" will show the strategies Green employs to obliterate the positive associations normally attributed to private domestic spaces. A comparative analysis of homebuilding guides and these texts will show how Green transforms traditional architectural language to reformulate the private nineteenth-century home from sanctuary to prison, operating as an architectural mask to disguise and contain family secrets. Green's deconstruction of built space functions as a critique of the affluent upper class, who she depicts as morally corrupt. Her exposure of their disguises aligns with the wider fears of the unidentifiable that existed in the modern world and demonstrates how the old world values of money, breeding and reputation no longer function as infallibly as they did within the more deeply stratified societies like that of England. Finally, this chapter will consider how the threats that her characters face manifest themselves architecturally: doors that will not open, or are locked to exclude and hallways that cannot be traversed without being surveilled.

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INTRODUCTION

Fearing I knew not what, I hurried to the room thus indicated, feeling as never before the sumptuousness of the magnificent hall with its antique flooring, carved woods and bronze ornamentations – the mockery of *things* for the first time forcing itself upon me. Laying my hand on the drawing room door, I listened. All was silent.

Green *The Leavenworth Case* 84

There is no doubt that objects have always played a key role within the crime fiction genre. Guns, knives, bullets, even a tuft of orangutan fur. Such ‘things’ are ubiquitous in detective fiction and they serve a central generic purpose, working to allow the fictional detective (and by extension, the reader) to successfully understand the execution of the crime and the identity of the perpetrator. Yet despite the importance of material objects in achieving one of the genre’s primary narrative imperatives – namely the exposure of criminals and resolution of wrong-doing – there has been a longstanding critical tendency to dismiss the objects that appear in detective fiction as nothing more than realist window dressing. For instance, even as Elaine Freedgood acknowledges in *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* that “[t]he detective story is the utopian resting place of the realist thing in its vagrant, mid-Victorian state,” she undercuts this observation by subsequently arguing that these stories are where “the meaning of materiality can attain an ecstatic but generically enclosed plenitude” (152). Freedgood’s contradictory position – the detective story serving in her critique as both the perfect repository of realist objects and while simultaneously relegating those objects to a generic irrelevancy – reveals how traditional realist analyses of detective fiction prioritize narrative over materiality, such that the latter is, in her words, simultaneously ‘ecstatic’ but ‘enclosed,’ entombed in its ‘resting place’ even as its ‘vagrant’ nature resists control. Similar criticism comes from architectural critic Charles Rice, who suggests that the domestic interior should be viewed as “the most intense site of detection” even if the genre itself can be

“discredited as literature” (289). Examples like these show how even as such criticism admits to the centrality of domestic objects within nineteenth-century detective fiction, it simultaneously discounts their critical significance.

But the potential of detective fiction to explore the problematic aspects of Victorian domesticity and middle-class experience has been noted by a philosopher of no less repute than Walter Benjamin. Writing in the shadow of the Victorian era in the mid-1920s, he argued that domestic spaces have “received [their] only adequate description, and analysis, in a certain type of detective novel at the dynamic center of which stands the horror of apartments” (446). His regard for detective fiction as an effective vehicle for social criticism of middle-class values stands in contrast to its typical literary devaluation espoused by later critiques such as Freedland. In fact, Benjamin actually attributes the reason for detective fiction writers as a whole having “been denied the reputation they deserve” as being due in large part to the fact that their fiction trenchantly exposes “the bourgeois pandemonium” that their middle-class peers have worked so assiduously to disguise (447). Writing about the “manorially furnished ten-room apartment” found in so much of the era’s detective fiction, he lists the various ways in which the Victorian homes they depict should be viewed as not a refuge but rather a mausoleum.

The arrangement of the furniture is at the same time the site plan of deadly traps, and the suite of rooms prescribes the path of the fleeing victim... The bourgeois interior of the 1860s to the 1890s—with its gigantic sideboards distended with carvings, the sunless corners where potted palms sit, the balcony embattled behind its balustrade, and the long corridors with their singing gas flames—fittingly houses only the corpse. (447)

His insight into the importance of the home and domestic ideology in detective fiction, as valuable as it is, is amplified further when he lists the authors whose works he considers to best

illustrate the horror of domestic space. Detailing rooms in which “the soulless luxury of the furnishings becomes true comfort only in the presence of a dead body,” he identifies Anna Katharine Green by name as one of the few detective fiction writers to have successfully penetrated “the character of the bourgeois apartment” (447)¹. Insights like Benjamin’s are highly suggestive of new ways of considering the nineteenth-century home outside of, and in contrast to, the better known sentimental fictions of her female peers. Not only does such a position challenge typical perceptions of the home as gendered refuge which has tended to result from an overly narrow consideration of female authored sentimental fiction within the discipline of domesticity, it explicitly highlights the need to consider the objects that appear in nineteenth-century detective as more than as merely backdrop for the narrative, but as valuable avenues in their own right.

Unfortunately, previous critics engaging with the genre have instead focused on areas far removed from depictions of physical objects and have rarely interrogated the the material environment in a sustained fashion. Indeed, “the prejudice against mere things long allowed many scholars to simply ignore commodities and materiality, instead privileging a vast range of other dimensions of human experience and seeing material culture and consumptions as mere accessories of the things that really matter, be they faith, art, politics, textuality, and any other element of culture” (Mullins 177). Working from the largely unexamined assumption that the critical prescriptions applicable to other realist fictions’ depictions of ‘things’ also apply to detective fiction, such critical approaches have had a sizeable impact on the areas of research which have been examined in connection with detective fiction. Most obvious has been the investigation of the genre’s creative lineage and intertextuality. This is especially true of discussions dealing with canonical detective fiction authors like Godwin, Poe and Doyle².

Another common approach considers the gender of sleuths in the Anglo-American tradition, and explores the different types of investigative strategies and cases adopted by male and female sleuths and that impact that gendered norms have on both the investigator and their depiction³. This has been the most common approach taken by feminist critics to date, and includes such notable figures as Kathleen Klein Gregory and Lucy Sussex. Finally, detective fiction has also been adjudicated from a class perspective, considering the intersections of class, race and identity within the realm of popular fiction.⁴

My dissertation, *The Mockery of Things: Material Culture and Domestic Ideology in the Detective Fiction of Anna Katharine Green* aims to address the lack of critical consideration given towards material culture in popular fiction by examining how a widely read author like Anna Katharine Green (1846-1935), in the emerging genre of detective fiction, uses objects to articulate the reality of middle-class identity and social aims in late-nineteenth-century America. Green's texts exploit the generic interrogation of criminal wrong-doing in order to achieve covert criticism of large portions of the era's domestic ideology, including the moral sanctity of the home, the notion of separate spheres, and unconsidered economic practices such as conspicuous consumption. In considering the clothes, household furnishings and architectural design that fill the richly illustrated worlds through which Green's characters circulate, her fiction serves to illuminate the real-world shifts and social changes that occurred in America over the fifty year period between the end of the American Civil War and its entry into the First World War in a way which complicates typical notions of a uniform or coherent domestic ideology.

Born in Brooklyn in 1846, the America that Green was born into, and which she would document in extraordinary detail in her novels during her five decade writing career, was undergoing a period of unprecedented economic and geographic growth. In the first fifty years of

the century, the country's population had already quadrupled to more than twenty-three million; by the end of the nineteenth century, it would stand above seventy-six million. Its relentless program of territorial expansion would see its geographic boundaries balloon in a similar fashion, as America settled, annexed, conquered and purchased colonial territories from a variety of European countries (McPherson, 6). Even as the white, Northern Protestants, amongst whom Green could count herself and her family, enjoyed heretofore unknown economic and social mobility, for others, notably Native and Black Americans, as well as Catholic and non-English speaking immigrants, profound social inequalities not only remained but in many cases deepened as the century drew to a close. It is against this backdrop of social, economic and geographic transformation that Green worked. By studying the "way value is created in specific formations and lodged in specific material forms," it is possible to trace the fraught consequences of the period's valorization of domesticity and the home, the changes remaking gendered performances of masculinity and femininity and the implications that new access to material culture offered for social mobility, class identity and criminal guilt within tumultuous nineteenth-century America (Brown 4). The investigations that the police and amateur detectives undertake also show how a popular fiction form could serve to forward the aims of social critique, function as a vehicle for interrogating an increasingly unfamiliar and suspicious urban society.

My choice to use domesticity as the focal point through which to consider the material culture that appears in Green's writing has several rationales. Firstly, during the period in which Green was writing, the home as both a physical space and an ideological signifier was a central tenet in American middle-class identity. "Home was not just an idea; it was an idea that was explicitly rooted in a material object: a house that was properly laid out, carefully decorated, meticulously managed, thoroughly cleaned and thoughtfully displayed" (Tange 5). Similarly,

Andrew Miller points out that “it is the material culture within our home that appears as both our appropriation of the larger world and often as the representation of that world within our private domain” (*Behind* 1). As culturally responsive texts, Green's writing intersects with the specific historical conditions of domesticity in turn of the century America. In doing so, it offers two parallel critiques of the attendant culture: an overarching critique of domestic ideology as manifest in the "ideal" material culture of the home, as well as a supplemental critique of people whose misuse of materiality and domestic performance to create conditions which cause moral deviation and criminal behaviour. Considering these diverse purposes is important because, as a form of realist writing, “realism was, itself, involved in processes of ‘production’ or ‘incorporation’ of American culture” (Elahi 2). Interrogating the domestically oriented objects that appear in novels such as *The Leavenworth Case* (1878), *Behind Closed Doors* (1888), *That Affair Next Door* (1897) and *Dark Hollow* (1914) and short fiction including “The Ruby and the Caldron” (1906) and shows that Green’s fiction, while outwardly conforming to the precepts of narrative closure that serve to affirm existing ideologies, actually contains a substantive degree of social criticism, which is communicated in large part by and through the physical objects that appear within them.

Thing theory emerges as a result of two deceptively simple questions. A leading theorist in the field, Bill Brown poses these questions thusly: How are objects represented in this text? And how are they made to mean? (*Sense* 12). Attempting to answer these questions, its theoretical purpose is therefore to resituate what Brown terms “object matter” from the symbolic periphery of literary practice and reaffirm its value as an avenue for critical analysis independent of any literary function. At its most basic, its focus is on human-object interactions in literature and culture. It differs from older anthropological and history-based approaches such as those put

forth by Arjun Appadurai in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1984), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (1981) or Asa Briggs's *Victorian Things* (1988) because those texts, and texts like them, generally focus on what John Plotz terms "the *intended* cultural meaning of objects" (110). In contrast, Thing theory is not interested in what an object might disclose symbolically about the wider cultural, political, historical or societal *per se* or how objects function as literary signifiers within realist texts as an epistemological vehicle. Instead, it holds that things should be understood ontologically, by considering what Brown terms "the story of objects asserting themselves as things" which he believes "is the story of a changed relationship to the human subject" (*Inquiry*, 5).

Arguably, many of the nineteenth century's ideological shifts, such as modernism and conspicuous consumption, have happened both as a result, and as a reflection, of the material culture that was consumed and displayed and written about it during the period. It is therefore important to understand fully the role physical objects played in these shifts while still recognizing that material culture is not simply a matter of objects possessing some sort of fixed or innate sociological properties that can be consistently determined and universally applied.

Imagined literally, this idea of the idea in things prompts questions that are inseparable from questions about the modern fate of the object in America, by which [Brown] mean[s] both the history of production, distribution, and consumption, *and* the complex roles that objects have played in American lives. (*Sense* 12)

Answering the question about the fate of the object in Western Culture, as it is depicted in literature, is therefore thing theory's primary purpose. Building on Heidegger's distinction between objects and things, the theory holds that objects become a thing when it no longer serves

its common or intended function but instead exhibits what Brown calls “suspension of habit” that sees it break free of or be repurposed such that it sheds its socially encoded value. Plotz reaches a similar conclusion, arguing that the theory “focuses on this sense of failure, or partial failure, to name or to classify. Thing theory highlights...approaches to the margins – of language, of cognition, of material substance” (110). Such indeterminacy may frustrate unilateral interpretations, but its flexibility and breadth offers a way to consider where how and under what circumstances an object becomes a thing, where or how does one object sit in relation to another and which literary form might best capture that relationship. Using this approach allows for the examination and delineation of the varied roles which physical objects play within detective fiction generally, and Anna Katharine Green’s fiction specifically, and for the consideration of material culture to be undertaken as an analytical question in its own right, as significant beyond their deployment as realist signifier, political totem or metaphorical device.

Previously, when objects were discussed in the context of literature, the tendency has been to treat literary depictions of material culture as secondary, and valuable only insofar as they furthered investigation into such critical questions such as authorial intent, symbolism and literariness, or hermeneutic considerations and reception. This dismissal of objects *as objects* has a longstanding tradition therefore, despite the simultaneous recognition that nineteenth-century realist novels, from Dickens to Henry James to the fiction of Arthur Conan Doyle serve as repositories for goods of all sort and are literally filled with near countless examples of materiality. “The things of realism – the exuberant itemization with which it is so routinely identified – constitute a kind of unsupervised metonymic archive: a nearly infinite catalog of compressed references to social facts that have, in the history of novel reading, remained largely

unread” (Freedgood 84). This point about the relative invisibility has been made by others scholars as well.

The prejudice against mere things long allowed many scholars to simply ignore commodities and materiality, instead privileging a vast range of other dimensions of human experience and seeing material culture and consumptions as mere accessories to the things that really matter, be they faith, art, politics, textuality, or any other element of culture. (Mullins 177)

But despite the previous willingness to overlook commodities and materiality as valuable avenues of scholarly attention, as Mullins, Freedgood, Hack and others all argue, the new critical focus on object matter that has occurred over the past fifteen years or so is significant for several reasons. Not only does it provide a new lens by which to re-examine canonical texts, in the case of detective fiction, it offers an entirely new way of considering popular genres like detective fiction. The work of scholars such as Bill Brown, Christoph Lindner and Catherine Waters has seen their focus directed towards the works of canonical authors like Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Mark Twain, Anthony Trollope and Henry James rather than popular fiction forms like detective fiction. Detective fiction is a genre which relies heavily on the prevalence of physical objects as clues to accomplish its narrative aims of identifying the criminal and making sense of wrong-doing. Elaine Freedgood notes this tendency when she writes that “Sherlock Holmes, for example, inhabits thing culture” (150). Despite this fact, it remains a genre which has not been subject to the same range of critical interventions as its canonical brethren. In light of this fact, my examination of Anna Katharine Green’s fiction by means of thing theory is an example of the way in which a focus on materiality can draw forth new critical patterns.

Bill Brown points out that while “culture studies has helped to put material culture on the critical map, it has generally done so when it relegates literature, or the literariness of the literary, to the periphery.” He goes on to further detail that while the cultural focus undertaken by such critics has been extremely successful in revealing how literary texts work to fashion and exhibit the identities of the subjects who appear within their pages, they have done so at the expense of the physical. Such oversight is problematic. It may also reflect contemporary critics’ discomfort with the Victorian’s enthusiastic practice of material plenitude, as much as it is a dismissal of the objects themselves. “Thing culture, in its profusion, intensity, and heedless variety, displays that appalling lack of irony, of distance, of coolness that we so often cringe at in the worst examples of Victorian middle-class taste” (Freedgood 148). Informed by modernist and post-modernist values, the nineteenth century’s penchant for physical excess and rampant sentimentalism are in many ways foreign to contemporary critical mores and has led to a deep discomfort, as Freedgood notes, with sustained engagement with materiality outside of a narrow range of critical inquiry.

In the case of my research, the patterns revealed by considering how objects perform and are made to mean within the context of a criminal investigation allow for a deeper understanding of domesticity in nineteenth-century America that complicates the normally sentimental understanding of home, gendered spaces and the public/private sphere. But my approach, while novel in this regard, should not be seen as a suggestion that thing theory ought to be limited to only crime fiction and realist literature, and I believe it has the potential to reveal important sentimental fiction and popular fiction, as well. Andrew Miller’s conclusion that “the Victorian novel provides...the most graphic and enduring images of the power of commodities to affect the varied activities and attitudes of individual and social experience” remains valid and central to

my approach (*Glass* 7). Studying the ways in which social identity is communicated and formed by material culture, and the impact that domestic ideology has on these varied performances allows for new understanding of American culture during the era. Unlike traditional critiques of the era's domestic practices, which have tended to rely on literary examples which support existing sentimental and affective norms, the material culture which appears in Green's detective fiction undercuts this stabilizing perspective, revealing ways in which objects may serve to undercut the conservative social norms they were nominally intended to promote.

In this dissertation, I therefore intend to interrogate the physical objects that appear in Green's detective fiction, only some of which would fall within the typical scope of being 'clues'. Instead, I will be approaching these various texts by considering the objects that appears within them by means of what Brown terms the "textual residues" that remain embedded within the literatures'. Arguing that "things are what we encounter, ideas are what we project," I will interrogate the things that are encountered in Green's crime fiction⁵, while also attempting to elucidate the ideas and ideologies that operate in concert with the material world (Brown *Sense* 11). There is little question that the inclusion of objects in detective fiction has a distinctive generic function that both predates and succeeds Green's efforts. For instance, following the carnage of World War One, American hard-boiled fiction writers like Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler relied on objects such as cars, guns and telephones to simultaneously convey a sense of modernity and to explore thematic issues of class, status and corruption. 'Things' also operate more broadly in detective fiction as forensic clues to assist the detective in their quest to resolve the narrative's mystery and aid in the identification of the perpetrators of criminal acts. Discussing the fiction of Gaboriau and Doyle, Tom Gunning notes that

[t]he traces left in personal belongings, which detectives examine, take the form of incriminating clues. Impressions of the human personality and its deeds become absorbed without one's awareness by the nearly animate objects of the intérieur and eventually betray the owner or user." (110)

But as I will show, in addition to their incriminatory function, material objects in detective fiction also serve as a vehicle to teach the popular fiction reader how to interpret embedded class and social cues. This function connects Green's efforts more broadly with the realist tradition, as the performative social display of material culture was also present in much of writing of Green's non-detectival peers, including George Eliot, Henry James and Edith Wharton.

The investigation and mobilization of writing's putative materialities proves central to efforts to establish the boundaries and relations between textual and extratextual phenomena – the word and the world – and to determine in turn the ethical purchase of the novel as a genre and the literary and cultural authority of its producers. (Hack 2)

The focus on material culture helps broaden the interpretative focus typically granted to early detective fiction efforts. Not only does it allow the consideration of a much wider range of characters beyond the typical pairing of detective and criminal, to include by-standers, witnesses and victims, it also highlights a range of potential social responses towards the era's consumer culture and domesticity. This consideration of materiality does not undercut the more overt generic requirements of puzzle-solving and the exposure of wrong-doing, but rather exists in parallel. Exploring how Green uses material culture within the context of the detective fiction genre offers a unique window into American domesticity and its ideological underpinnings during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The patterns that are revealed by the objects

she includes in her writing “allow us to see the ways in which the formal concerns exhibited in literary texts operate at a larger social level” (Miller *Glass* 10).

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCHOLARSHIP

My dissertation's examination of the fictional depictions of the objects that filled the nineteenth American home draws on a wide range of Green's writing from throughout her forty-five year career, and considers both her novels and her short fiction. As was discussed earlier in this introduction, material culture has enjoyed something of a critical renaissance in recent years. Yet it could be argued that given the paucity of critical discussion to which Green has been subject to that a more conservative approach would have been to apply a more traditional critical lens to her writings rather than to employ a materialist approach first off. My rationale for adopting this unconventional approach must therefore be explained more fully. I believe that unlike its literary counterparts, physical culture plays a central and foundational role in detective fiction. Its generic imperative relies on the astute acknowledgement and interpretation of objects to reach its narrative apotheosis – namely the identification of the criminal and the means by which they accomplished their transgression. Undertaking this dissertation therefore from a critical position that emphasizes that physical culture is therefore paramount. As a recent critical approach, thing theory has been employed less commonly as a tool to interrogate literary texts than other more established critical approaches. The novelty of a material focus combines especially effectively considering the wide temporal range of texts under consideration in this dissertation. To date, Green's fiction has never undergone a pan-career analysis and more than two thirds of the primary texts under discussion in this dissertation have never been the recipient of *any* academic attention. Rather than exploring critically depleted territory therefore, the materialist approach which I employ in this study to examine Green's fiction offers a great deal of novel critical potential, while still allowing future scholarship to adopt more traditional literary approaches, if desired. It also resituates Green more centrally within the development of

the genre, and explores how previous critical efforts denigrated female authorship and their contributions to the formation of detective fiction norms. Writing while the genre's hold on the popular imagination was still being cemented, critics including A. E. Murch, Patricia Maida and Catherine Ross Nickerson have shown how Green established many conventions of that would come to define detective fiction in the decades prior to World War One. Certainly, Green drew from a wide range of sources in her own work, including dime novels, roman policiers, true crime essays such as Thomas de Quincey's "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts" (1828), police autobiographies such as those written by Eugène François Vidocq, and Edgar Allan Poe's short stories. But her own influential contributions were subsequently incorporated into the work of many later authors including Arthur Conan Doyle, Mary Roberts Rinehart and Agatha Christie. This had the effect of obscuring the impact and originality of her inventive powers (Maida 29; 51; 54). Green's decades long career also creates critical challenges because the piecemeal scholarship and analysis of a limited number of texts has tended to flatten the changes that occurred in her writing over time as she responded to both changes popular reception and generic trends. Of the more than thirty novels, novellas and short story collections that Green wrote over her career, only four have been discussed in any depth and more than ninety percent of Green's work has received no attention whatsoever, or only been discussed within the context of chronological listings and biographical entries⁶.

To date, there have been a limited number of scholarly interactions with Green's oeuvre and peers such as Doyle, Rinehart and Christie have all received far more critical attention. Some of the most significant scholarship on Green includes Catherine Ross Nickerson's discussion the impact of mutism, the gothic tradition and female investigative strategies in *The Leavenworth Case* and *That Affair Next Door* within the context of domestic

detective fiction; articles by Joan Warthling Roberts and Cheri Ross which discuss Green's contributions to the development of the spinster sleuth trope in *That Affair Next Door* and more recently, Paul Rooney's analysis of *The Mill Mystery* and transatlantic detective fiction practices in the 1880s and Jason Puskar's comparative analysis of *The Woman in the Alcove* as a popular example of early twentieth-century statistical probability. Covering Green's life and the major themes of her writing, Patricia Maida's book, *The Mother of Detective Fiction* (1989) is somewhat broader in its literary scope, but its biographical focus means that any additional books she mentions receive very little individual critical discussion, and are typically discussed in the context of thematic analysis such as the role of parenting or Green's Presbyterian faith. Additionally, since its publication thirty years ago, Maida's book has remained the primary source of information about Anna Katharine Green, which means that her findings have been used repeatedly, without the inclusion of much new knowledge, by the few critics focusing on female detective fiction writers during the period. Lucy Sussex's recent effort discusses ten Anglo-American female writers who contributed to the development of detective fiction over the course of the nineteenth century. Green is among the ten, and is positioned not as the beginning, but as the end point of the book in which Sussex traces the literary efforts of various English and Australian female authors writing crime fiction before Green. In this text, Green's efforts can be seen as representing the culmination of an already existing literary tradition, not its progenitor.

In addition to these peer-reviewed articles and books, more recently Green has been the attention of several comparative analyses at the graduate level. In the work done by Jennifer Weiss, Jennifer Murphy McCollum and Martina Ulrike Jauch, Green's writing is contrasted with that of other British and European nineteenth detective fiction authors, such as Arthur Conan Doyle and Theodor Fontane; discussed as an example of criminal romance; and examined

epistemologically against other American detective fiction authors. All of these studies are valuable because they help to contextualize Green amongst her contemporaries, and draw attention to underserved creative figures. Yet while texts like these do provide valuable insights into the generic and historical development of detective fiction and Green's role within it, there are still gaps in these critical efforts that have not been addressed. This includes any sustained consideration of material culture and social identity in her fiction. Further, the uneven critical attention has meant that while a small number of her books, such as *The Leavenworth Case* and *That Affair Next Door* have been the subject of multiple deep-level analysis and are widely available including in several critical editions, her overall literary output has not received equal attention. By focussing on her writing throughout the entirety of her forty-five year career, and tracing both the stylistic and thematic developments as well as those elements that remained consistent throughout, rather than subdividing it by protagonist type (amateur vs police investigator), length (short story versus novel) or gender, my dissertation provides an unique analysis of material cultural in a the fiction of a seminal nineteenth-century American detective fiction writer. My work is not a comparative analysis; while other writers such as Mary Roberts Rinehart and Arthur Conan Doyle are mentioned in passing in order to provide generic context for Green's writing patterns, Green's texts and my analysis of it are the primary focus of my research, with my intention being to illustrate patterns and themes from across her entire career.

Another important aspect that I will be considering in this dissertation in the question of national identity and how Green's experience as an American shapes the political inflections present within her writing. Detective fiction history has largely elided differences between American and British creative efforts, or seen them as part of an Anglo-American whole, in which regional and political differences are negligible in the face of their generic adherence. One

the most significant factors of Green's narratives is the fact that they are set exclusively in America⁷, depicting an emergent nation from the post-Civil War era through to the early nineteen twenties. Such geographic specificity has interesting ramifications to our understanding of the formation of American national identity during the period. Green was witness to the incredible the changes wrought in her country's social fabric in the wake of urbanization, capitalistic pressures and immigration. Yet the changes that were transforming American society during the latter half of the nineteenth-century occurred largely "on a national and regional level, not the transnational" (White 6). That's not to say that the country was insulated from global affairs or economic challenges and the effects of both economic contractions and were very much in evidence but unlike their European counterparts, America was largely concerned with how such matters impacted their own nation, rather than viewing such events on an empirical scale and that insularity is reflected in Green's novels. The characters, with few exceptions, are American⁸. Her stories occur in explicitly American locales: metropolitan centres such as New York City, Philadelphia and Buffalo and in rural Vermont, Massachusetts, Ohio and New Jersey, to name only a few. Similarly, political matters, when they do make a rare appearance in her writing, are written from an American perspective⁹: *The Bronze Hand* is a short story that deals with Confederate traitors in Baltimore; *Marked 'Personal'* (1893) is set against the backdrop of the American Civil War; the two male suitors in *The Amethyst Box* (1905) discuss their brief military service during the Spanish-American War of 1898; World War One is the reason for a French suspect's flight to America in *The Mystery of the Hasty Arrow* (1917).

In contrast, Europe and Britain, while sharing similar transformations wrought by the Industrial revolution, generally saw their political concerns as outward facing, and used their

popular fiction to address their position as colonial overseers of a diverse and widespread global sphere.

New theories of evolution and new political geographies, the latter produced by continuing expansion of the Empire, transformed thinking about race and nation in mid- to late-Victorian England. Most evolutionary theories rationalized and reinforced Victorians' sense of difference from the 'savages' of their colonies, but the growth of the Empire paradoxically reduced that distance by making these supposed prehistorical peoples, and their places they inhabited, part of Britain's identity. (Lindeborg 383)

The depiction of the "New World" and its democratizing ideals which Green promulgated stands in contrast to the British model of empire present in so many influential British detective fiction writers such as Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle and Grant Allen or the earlier continental *roman policiers* of writers such as Émile Gaboriau. Doyle, in his first Sherlock Holmes novel goes so far as to describe London as "that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained" (7). British empirical politics also figure predominantly in *The Sign of Four*, with the murder of Bartholomew Sholto the result of empirical greed and the killing enacted by vicious Andaman Islander at the behest of his murderous partner, Jonathan Small. As a uniquely American writer, Green's depiction of the domestic realities and attendant social mobility of the 'new' world offer a distinctive contrast to the older social mores of her British and European counterparts. While there are certainly important congruencies between the Anglo-American experience during this period, Green's narratives, "speaking both from and to the middle class," are constructed in such a way that "the view they offer across the lines of class is mediated, shaped, and constrained by the material conditions of authorship and literacy in the nineteenth-century United States" (Lang 8). The geographical and political ramifications of

Green's nationality are discussed in Chapter 1, which considers the concerns of social mobility in American society and again in Chapter 3, when the differences in British and American domestic architecture are discussed. This reveals important evidence of the differences in Anglo-American social ideals, including the tensions between old and new world attitudes towards both social mobility and secrecy and the different ways in which material culture were exploited by two of the era's leading economies.

Critics such as Catherine Ross Nickerson and Patricia Maida have both observed how Green viewed her contemporary society with a deep suspicion. In particular, she repeatedly expressed doubts about the effect that unchecked urban and economic expansion had on both the larger social fabric of communities as well as individual families. A sizeable minority of her stories are set in homes or feature families whose history links them to America's Colonial past, rather than its nineteenth-century present, suggestive of her strong predilection for the idea that America to have 'lost' something in its march to modernity. Her doubts about America therefore speak to the increasing social and economic pressures that Green believed America faced during the nineteenth-century and the ways in which the ever-expanding range of consumer goods contributed to that burden¹⁰. The practice of interpreting detective fiction through the lens of social anxiety is well-established. Hard-boiled fiction has traditionally been read in the context of the anxieties of mid-twentieth-century America, with a great deal of critical attention directed towards the its thematic depiction of corruption and *anomie*¹¹. Similarly, British Classical and Golden Age detective fiction is often seen as a form that obliquely address early twentieth-century anxieties surrounding the decay of a Colonial empire and a class-stratified society. Less attention has been paid to the social criticism inherent in earlier American detective fiction. In her fiction, Green grants exhaustive attention to the functioning of American social systems at

the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth and details the myriad ways that they were obsessed with the physical objects which were used to manifest an individual's social priorities and affiliations. But the exhaustive detail with which she details the material objects in her fiction also reveals her deep concern with the social implications of ostentatious display, depicting how the personal goods that appear in the home are not merely social signifiers but also potentially dangerous screens behind which criminality and emotional harm can lurk.

Straddling two eras – her first novel was published in 1878, only thirteen years after the conclusion of the Civil War, while her last was published in 1923, five years after the end of World War One – her long career means that Green may be seen as changing from recording nineteenth-century American society and its attitudes towards the objects that would come to define it to defending that same society against the encroachment of the modern era. In opposition to the period's belief in home as a moral safe haven, Green's texts also repeatedly present instances where corruption, immorality and venality flourish in domestic spaces. Many of the criminals' who appear in Green's fiction are able to continue their egregious behaviours 'buying' respectability: fathers and husbands who abuse their role as the head of the family in *Cynthia Wakeham's Money* (1892) or "7 to 12: A Detective Story" (1887); mothers and step-mothers who are selfish, covetous or vain, as occurs in *Behind Closed Doors* (1888) or *The House of Clocks* (1915); sons who disappoint and daughters who want more than a mindless social merry-go-round. For Green it is the personal and familial – what her celebrated detective Ebenezer Gryce calls "old family secrets" upon which "present crimes often hang like the final link upon the end of a rusty chain" that serve as both rationale and key to the crimes' resolution (*Behind* 284). It is through the family and the occupants of the domestic spaces she is depicting become the apparatus by which Green interrogates larger societal shortcomings. Discussions of

Green's detective fiction usually centre on her detailed descriptions of the American legal system in the nineteenth century¹². I would argue that while the period's legal system is presented accurately, this focus on jurisprudence has tended to eclipse her equally through interrogation of ethical behaviours that may not meet the burden of criminal action, but which still represent a significant moral threat to social cohesiveness and individual well-being. This interest in the corrupt family structures uses the material objects that appear in the nineteenth-century home and on the bodies of its inhabitants to show the ways the carefully arranged and meticulously stage-managed social facades protected and disguised trauma, criminality and immorality throughout the era.

This is not to suggest that Green was unique in using her characters to act out social dramas; many popular mystery and detective fiction authors used their characters to comment on or reflect current social concerns. But Green's continued and explicit use of material objects is unique and distinguishes her work from her contemporaries. Green's criminals are driven to hide personal transgressions using murder, kidnap and blackmail and see the consequences of potential criminal behaviours as less frightening than any potential social consequences such as expulsion, dishonour and the loss of personal reputation.

It is a reality that most detective fiction histories have tended to elide the social differences between British and American culture during the period, making little distinction between the two countries and treating texts as part of an indistinguishable Anglo-American whole.¹³ While a shared language and interconnected political and cultural history encourage a sense of Anglo-American unity, a universal or pan-Victorian approach that conflates or minimizes the differences between the two countries risks masking subtle but important differences that existed between American and British popular fiction. My work extends the analyses of American

Gilded age detective fiction shows how a specific set of historical conditions – notably the rise of consumer culture and an increase in the valorisation of gendered domestic ideals operated in turn of the century America. At times, I have had to extrapolate from English examples or literary analyses, but whenever possible, I have attempted to utilize American-specific cultural references, literary examples and authorial comparisons. My research shows how popular fiction influenced American perceptions of the unspoken parameters in which their lives were conducted, focusing on objects as a key mediator of social identity, particular those that revolve around domesticity.

Finally, the emphasis on materiality throughout this study brings into focus another underdeveloped theme in Green’s writing, namely how mid-century Protestant America’s concern with character and its formation in the modern age could be infused and disseminated by popular writing other than the sentimental domestic fictions. Green’s social critique is meticulously hidden within the overt sentimental and domestic flourishes that she adorns her fiction with. Inside the carefully delineated and meticulously decorated spaces of her novels – the site of what Walter Benjamin believes are both “prelude to and home for the domestic corpse” – she creates a fascinating and distinct hybrid that undercuts the benign complacency of the domestic refuge. Her writing combines the “puzzle form,” sentimentality and material culture to investigate the ethics and character of American family behaviour at the turn of the century. Aligning with Bill Brown’s observation that nineteenth-century Americans were “possessed by possessions,” this characterological element is not a supernatural interiority like what is exhibited in fantastic fiction of the period, like that of Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper* or Oscar Wilde’s *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, which both assign a malign intent and agency to the titular objects. Although the belief in a distinct moral component to personal

physical objects was most commonly associated with American authors like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Louisa May Alcott, the inclusion of this ideology in Green's crime fiction shows that the social and moral concerns that emerged in the postbellum period in America continued to resonate in popular culture, even as the vehicle for that dissemination was transformed. These authors predate Anna Katharine Green, since their heyday was the 1850s and 1860s, but their widespread popularity points to shared didactic strategies. Just as Stowe and Alcott's sentimental fiction teaches readers to 'feel rightly', Green's fiction shows how the imperative to 'consume rightly' grows out of these earlier worries. As I will discuss in the following chapters, the objects under consideration in my dissertation, which include dress, furniture, knick-knacks and even the homes themselves, all serve to reveal a multitude of moral positions and character, even as they also speak to the period's position with regards to domesticity and the intersections between consumption, character and domestic ideology. In this way, I am responding the theorist Bill Brown's challenge to answer what he terms "two simple questions – How are objects represented in this text? And how are they made to mean?" (18) In answering these questions, I contend that these objects do more than merely offer clues to the resolution of the crime that the texts are centred around, but instead offer a way of considering the self as a unique, subjective being and the individual as a member of a larger interdependent community from a material standpoint.

Finally, any discussion of domesticity must address issues of gender, both through its performance as a social construct and as an ideological signifier. As is the case with many forms of popular fiction, including sentimental and domestic fiction novels as well as melodrama, detective fiction shares many of the same concerns with these literary forms. However, due in part to historical assumptions about the gendered audiences of both sentimental and detective fictions, the former has been seen largely as the preserve of a feminine readership reading texts

by female authors, and the latter a masculine audience who shared their gender with the authors. This assumption has been largely replicated in subsequent criticism by male critics, who have largely ignored crime fictions texts that contain romantic plots or subplots. This occurs frequently, in both early academic critiques like Ian Ousby's *Bloodhounds of Heaven*, which records the creative contributions of a very select coterie of male writers, and ignores texts by authors who contravened very narrow genre precepts that support a traditional view of gender roles and interests. It also occurs more recently in analyses such as those written by Leroy Panek, who roundly rejects categorizing Green's fiction within the scope of detective fiction. Instead, he argues that works like *The Leavenworth Case* and Metta Victoria Fuller's earlier *The Dead Letter* (1868) are "not detective fiction, not by a long shot" (11). Instead, he contemptuously categorizes them as "sensation novels," and denigrates the books' focus on what he terms:

self-less tragic female heroes and palpitating male admirers who witness and describe the tribulations and heroism of the women, but who are almost mostly clueless about discovering the causes or cures for their suffering. (10)

This explicit devaluing of female experience and romantic feeling are symptomatic of a pervasive retrograde distrust for Victorian sentimentality. The misogyny was first espoused by later American detective fiction writers and critics such as Raymond Chandler and Howard Haycraft, who coined the pejorative 'had-I-but-known' to describe Green's imitator, Mary Roberts Rinehart, but it has become naturalized over the subsequent decades, with the male author, male detective and male critic all coming to be seen as the standard by which all others are to be judged. Feminist reclamation efforts of the genre, led by figures such as Patricia Maida, Kathleen Klein Gregory, Catherine Ross Nickerson, have gone a long way to addressing this imbalance, but the paucity of critical scholarship on nineteenth-century female detective fiction

authors continues to exist and is one of the reasons why my dissertation, with its exclusive focus on Green, is so important and makes a significant scholarly contribution.

As to the theoretical framework underpinning my analysis, my dissertation will use the material culture that appears throughout Green's fiction as a lens through which to view some of the key social issues playing out in American society in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century: social identity and class, male privilege and the delineation of the public and private spheres. Using this approach, I uncover important congruencies between a popular form such as detective fiction that has been largely overlooked by domestic and sentimental fiction critics because of its perception as a 'masculine' genre. Despite being previously overlooked, I intend to show how the techniques by which domestic ideology was created actually functions in an identical fashion in both instances, despite the seeming differences in these disparate genres. In this chapter, I show how the shift towards the representational value of objects, rather than its use or exchange value, is important because of how such a shift "enables a fuller understanding of women's participation within nineteenth-century political economy" (Langland 6). This serves as proof that, far from being merely symbolic figures of male economic success or passive and undiscerning consumers, authors like Green were "active in *producing* representations" of the middle-class throughout the period, and that one of the primary ways in which these representations were achieved was through physical objects (Langland 6). This reveals a profound challenge to traditional understandings of domestic ideology, showing how Green's detective fiction writing reveals an American home that is no longer a site of safety and private withdrawal as occurred in sentimental fiction, but rather an unchecked and violent setting, within which the family who lives there face the perpetual threat of criminal danger, emotional trauma and physical harm.

In Chapter 1, I consider how clothing and dress are used as a means of communicating social status in four of Green's detective fiction texts: *A Strange Disappearance* (1879), *Behind Closed Doors* (1888), *That Affair Next Door* (1897), and short story "The Ruby and the Caldron" (1905). This chapter examines how clothing and dress are used by socially ambitious characters in attempts to improve their social standing by adopting 'better' dress. But because of the genre that Green is working in, that improvement is intertwined with the inescapable questions of morality and criminal intent. One of the consequences of the upheavals of the American Civil War, and the pressures exerted by a diverse range of social phenomena such as urbanization, emancipation, immigration and public education, is that "the later nineteenth century was fascinated by repetitive and generic stories about finely calibrated social differences and the arrangements and exercise of social power" (Foote 3). Taken as a whole, these seismic shifts meant that the ability to distinguish between the socially "authentic" and the socially "fraudulent" had never been more difficult or more relevant to Americans. Many period texts, both fiction and non-fiction, deal with the question of whether the upward social movement of individuals – often women, but not exclusively – was possible and under what circumstances it might be either successfully realized or successfully quashed¹⁴. To date, little attention has been paid to the figure of the social climber in detective fiction or considered how issues of social transgression were often linked thematically to the criminal wrong-doing that was so central to the genre. My focus on clothes – material objects that have an immediate and direct connection to the physical self – redirects the focus from questions of motivation for the social transformation towards an investigation of the means by which particular material objects either facilitate or impede personal trajectories.

Fashion has most often been seen as a vehicle for materialist and consumerist display in fiction such as Green's. This is especially true of nineteenth-century American fashion, given clothing's close association with both individual identity and economic display. It has also strained under the sometimes fraught link that many feminist scholars have made between the objectified female figure and the "symbolic displays of male economic and social power" (Sherman 4). Victoria de Grazia points out the problem the gendered nature that underlie many of these arguments to various degrees by noting the widespread focus on the female figure which many of these interpretations depend:

That the female figure should lend itself to such diametrically different interpretations of the meaning of consumption, and of bourgeois society more generally, returns us to the complex problem of relating metaphors and meaning to social change, of linking the imaginary world around consumption with the structural changes giving rise to modern consumer society (21).

These societal changes are at the heart of the tensions being explored in detective fiction like Green's: questions of legitimacy inextricably linked to questions of economic access as expressed by material objects. The criminal investigations undertaken by the detectives thus allows for the simultaneous interrogation of social mores and the culture of consumption that benefits from the defense of these behaviours, even as the individuals themselves are unable to effect the economic and social structures in which they are mired.

In Chapter 2, my focus turns from personal adornment, class climbing and the contributions of objects to the formation of identity towards the domestic space proper. The depiction and role of women within the nineteenth-century American home has already received myriad critical attention¹⁵. This chapter will instead consider *male* patterns of ownership and

consumption within the domestic sphere and how ownership and the decoration of personal space is interrogated within the detective fiction genre. This will be accomplished by considering depictions of characters who have *abnormal* relationships with objects in their personal environment, namely through hoarding, material deprivation and miserly behaviours exhibited by male medical practitioners. These behaviours are considered by examining the behaviour and fate of three characters who appear in Green's mid-career novels: *Behind Closed Doors* (1888), *Dr. Izard* (1895) and *The Millionaire Baby* (1902) and reveal how Green ties material culture to criminal tendencies.. In a period which lionized the collection, cataloguing and display of objects and which viewed the home as both proof of moral sanctity and a buttress against moral corruption, resistance to these socially sanctioned practices of consumption reveals important clues about the unspoken rules which typically governed such relationships and calls into question the underlying assumptions about consumption and ownership within male-owned domestic spaces. Bill Brown notes things can be "objects of self-definition and self-obliteration, sources of safety and threat" at the same time (29). The characters under consideration in this chapter each express this disruption in different ways, but the rejection of domestic norms by Dr. Julius Molesworthy in *Behind Closed Doors*, Dr. Izard in the eponymous 1895 novella and Dr. Poole in *The Millionaire Baby* is a critical step in their descent into criminal behaviour, and ultimately, their deaths. Exploiting the practices of investigation and evaluation inherent in the genre, I will show how Green's writing communicates her belief in the characterological import of the home and its furnishings and how Green links such domestic disorder with moral and criminal disorder. Finally, this chapter will show how Green's inclusion of characterological elements is distinct from her British peers' depictions of domestic objects, suggestive of the differences between American and British expressions of religion and morality during the period.

Not only does this suggest an important difference in the way that national identity and political concerns are expressed in the works of popular writers in the two countries, there is also a difference rooted in gender which alters how domestic spaces and the material culture contained therein are utilized in fictions authored by women versus those authored by men.

The third and final chapter of this dissertation will consider the architecture and built spaces that acted as the physical and psychological perimeter of the family home itself. While private and public spaces became increasingly understood as being demarcated along gender lines during the nineteenth century, I will demonstrate in Chapter 3 that it is too simplistic to say that private domestic spaces are inherently feminine while public spaces are masculine. To prove this, I will analyze how the physical architecture of the homes that appear in *The Leavenworth Case* (1878), *Dark Hollow* (1914) and the short story "Missing: Page Thirteen" (1915) contribute to the obliteration of the positive associations normally attributed to domestic spaces. I will also discuss how Green challenges the rhetoric of the domestic as refuge by giving her readers homes whose primary function is not a sanctuary but a prison, functioning as an architectural mask to disguise and contain family secrets. Building on Catharine Ross Nickerson's work with domestic detective fiction in *The Web of Iniquity: Early Detective Fiction by American Women*, my research will expand on the intersections between detective, sentimental, gothic and domestic fiction by focusing on the domestic architecture that served to frame and contain the displays of wealth and material possessions and how it was used to demarcate public and private spaces. Additionally, I will show how Green destabilizes the typical binary pattern of men in public spaces and women in private spaces by showing how, regardless of gender, the threats that her characters face manifest themselves architecturally: doors that will not open, or are locked to exclude, hallways that cannot be traversed without coming under surveillance or that have been

built over to disguise their very existence and passageways that snake beneath the foundations, allowing for surreptitious explorations.

Ultimately, this dissertation makes three major scholarly contributions. The first is the exploration of the social implications of material culture in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century detective fiction and how individuals in Green's fiction use physical objects to express their social affiliations, aspirations and identities. The second will explore the social implications of physical objects as masks and how social systems obsessed with physical manifestations of priority and status address threats and dangers that are physically embedded within objects and finally, considering the influence of other popular genres including sentimental and domestic fictions, discuss how the detective fiction genre deals with physical spaces and the domestic interior in ways that challenge the normal understanding of the period's domestic ideology.

CHAPTER 1

Dressing Up: Social Climbers, Wrong-Doing and Fashion in

Behind Closed Doors, A Strange Disappearance, That Affair Next Door

and *The Ruby and the Caldron*

Shall I ever forget that moment? The beauty, the brilliance, the cheer of that dainty room. And before me, standing in an attitude that betrayed a perfect familiarity with all these gorgeous surroundings, *myself*, in all but costume and a certain delicacy of breeding which in that one instant of deep emotion, went like a dagger to my heart, so ardently had I longed for just such an air and just such a culture.

Green, *Behind Closed Doors*, 499

This chapter focuses on the figure of the social climber and the materially-dependent strategies they employ in their quest for social betterment. This is a departure from the traditional critical focus, which typically tends towards an analysis on the detective and their social identity, rather than the social identities of the individuals being investigated¹⁶. Yet examining a liminal figure like the social climber, with their focus on the pursuit of social betterment, complicates what is often erroneously assumed to be the normally clear distinctions between victim, suspect and criminal¹⁷. offers advantages that allow for the teasing out of shaded nuances between criminal, social and moral transgressions in a way that a confined consideration of the detective cannot. The texts analyzed in this chapter are therefore not homogeneous. They span Green's career, include both novels and a short story, and while they are all examples of detective fiction, they feature a range of crimes, including kidnapping, murder and theft that preclude straightforward categorization. But what *A Strange Disappearance* (1879), *Behind Closed Doors* (1888), *That Affair Next Door* (1897) and the short story "The Ruby and the Caldron" [sic] (1906) share is that all of them feature characters attempting to improve their social standing

through marriage, while disguising or otherwise obscuring an element of their personal past that would otherwise disqualify them from the class they wish to join. My analysis of the way that these socially ambitious characters use fashion, costuming and dress to individuate themselves is intended to explore how nineteenth-century American society responded to efforts at social movement. “Clothing – both materially and discursively – played a significant role in these processes of cultural assimilation and disciplinary knowledge” (Elahi 33) and Green’s detective fiction depicts how the material objects that the women employ intersect with their socially-oriented knowledge. This materiality operates in parallel with the texts’ depictions of the legal process, the various detectives’ investigative strategies and the criminal justice system. But a drive to secure social betterment is, of course, not in and of itself a criminal act. But presenting such characters within the larger generic framework of detective fiction, with its attendant focus on the narrative resolution of criminal acts, complicates this question, such that even as Green’s notions of class and social identity favour existing social structures and patterns, a materialist lens allows importance nuances to emerge.

The anxieties that engulfed a changing American society during the second half of the nineteenth century can be seen to coalesce in the figure of the social climber. “For those living through the Gilded Age it was an astonishing and frightening period, full of great hopes as well as deep fears” (White 6). The social climber’s ability to intuit and reproduce behaviours and social strategies of a higher class so effectively as to be indistinguishable from its ‘authentic’ inhabitants speaks to the period’s fears about identity, anonymity and urban life. Detective fiction is one of only a number of popular mediums to explore these fears. The tension that existed between the nation’s nominally democratic roots and its corresponding ideology of the potential for any citizen, no matter how humble or inauspicious his or her situation at birth, to

achieve financial success, material comfort and social renown, was at odds with the very real social gradations that existed in nineteenth-century society¹⁸. It is no accident then that so many of the earliest examples of criminality in detective fiction in the nineteenth century were not concerned with murder, as later Golden age mysteries would be, but with crimes of personal misrepresentation like fraud, impersonation, inheritance and familial legitimacy, since all of these crimes threatened to disrupt the orderly distribution of wealth to a select and selective group. In British sensation novels like Wilkie Collins *The Woman in White* (1860) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) or pseudonymous short story collections like *Recollections of a Detective Police Officer* (1856), early detectives were tasked with not one but two duties: to establish the identity of the criminals and more generally, to authenticate the identities and social positions of *all* of the characters that they encountered, be they victim, witness or wrong-doer. Their efforts were part of wider attempts to police and reform the morals of Anglo-American society in the face of what its defenders saw as widespread attack.

The efforts which British detective fiction put forth towards social policing can also be traced to the antebellum domestic novels of American writers, as well. Beginning in the 1850s with writers like Louisa May Alcott and Harriet Beecher Stowe, and continuing until the 1890s, sentimental novelists grappled "the materialistic and secular tendencies" which they, like many other Americans, had come to identify as the period's most worrisome characteristics (Strickland 5). This profound distrust of the rampant acceleration of the capitalist economy was rooted in large part in its potential to disguise or even obliterate an individual's true nature while blunting or subverting the very moral and emotional experiences which authors like Alcott, Stowe and E.D.E.N Southworth believed it was their duty to cultivate. This distrust was also closely linked to the fear that the proliferation of material culture which such an economy enabled would be

exploited by the inauthentic, the insincere or the undeserving and allows them to accrue undue social capital at the expense of a previously select few. Green shares these concerns with her literary forerunners but the expression of those fears is reshaped by the generic demands of the genre she was writing in, such that her narrative focus, as I will show in this chapter, shifts from didactic sentimentalism to criminal investigation.

From the earliest moments of Green's career, then, the question of social access, and the mechanisms which existed in nineteenth-century America to evaluate and subsequently embrace or exclude the individuals seeking to advance their position is at the heart of her novels. But notwithstanding Green's own stated performance of middle-class behaviour, and the benevolent sexism¹⁹ that admittedly permeates her work, Green's fictional engagement with social mobility exhibits a surprising degree of understanding and even latitude for the socially ambitious and the morally ambiguous positions they take during their attempt at social betterment. The range of outcomes, some positive, some negative, also show that Green was well aware of the personal cost of seeking social status: the isolation from both past and present peers; a fractured sense of self; the risk of being perceived not only as a social but a criminal threat; and finally, that after all their efforts, their attempt would not be successful in the long term. Through her writing, she clearly communicates her unease with the ethical choices that many of these women make in pursuit of their goals. These include deceit and dishonesty, fraud, theft, identity theft and the subversion of a criminal investigation, to name only a few. But such condemnation is balanced against the equally unflattering depiction of the society that they aspire to enter. "Her vision of domestic life as plagued by secrecy, betrayal, and greed has to be understood as coming out of the social critique offered by the domestic novel of mid-century" (Nickerson 67). Her texts, while including a perceptive analysis of the barriers such figures faced, thus also contain

trenchant critiques the larger society. Time and again, she finds fault with her peers' obsessions with material display and conspicuous consumption, the hypocritical emphasis placed on the *appearance* of social propriety and the often-scurrilous lengths to which members of the upper- and middle-class would go to maintain their social and economic advantage (Nickerson 67). These contradictory attitudes are therefore important considerations that suggest that uniform readings, or an undue focus on the narratives' resolutions, undermines the potential for understanding the undercurrents of cultural subversiveness that exist beneath superficial textual compliance. Catharine Ross Nickerson has justly pointed out that like many female authors writing during this period, Green's texts exhibit "a certain level of disjunction between the intentions of the novelists and the novels themselves; the texts assert both a conservative argument for female deference and a subversive – and thus self-subverting – critique of masculine culture" (67). I agree with this point, and argue that this is the case with Green, who repeatedly presents a variety of subversively strong and resolute female characters working to secure financial security and personal agency, even as she reinforces the class status quo through narrative patterns that link social mobility with potential criminality²⁰.

Certainly, the domestic novel had peaked as a potent force in popular culture by the time Anna Katharine Green published *The Leavenworth Case* in 1878. As Catherine Ross Nickerson points out, however, "popular genres hybridize and linger within a culture long after their zenith of influence or popularity" and she urges readers "to think of detective fiction as arriving not just in the aftermath of the domestic novel but in answer to the needs of the continuing anxieties over sincerity, self-control, and moral guidance in the middle- and upper-classes" (21; 26). While differing in their approach therefore, both genres share substantial thematic concerns about social authenticity and the threats that they saw contemporary society facing. The consequences of

unguarded access to material culture was something detective fiction continued to wrestle with well into the twentieth century, frequently including depictions of the consequences of unsanctioned social penetration and unfettered access to material goods. Detective fiction from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century should therefore be read not as a rebuttal but rather a continuation or variation of its domestic and sentimental predecessors, grappling with many of the same themes, even as it reframed them through the lens of the criminal puzzle.

Since their first emergence then in the 1840s and 1850s – a date that, not coincidentally, parallels the emergence of the sentimental domestic novel – the detective has come to be seen as a central figure in the complicated discourse around surveillance, self-adjudication and social performance that mark the modern era. In domestic detective fiction like Anna Katharine Green's, the detective's role as "new agents to detect and correct improper behavior in the domestic sphere" was complicated by sweeping social transformation, and achieved an increasing urgency as they century came to a close (Nickerson 26). After the wrenching upheavals of the American Civil War, the pressures exerted by a diverse range of social phenomena only increased, fueled by unprecedented urbanization, emancipation, immigration and public education. Taken as a whole, these seismic shifts meant that the ability to distinguish between the socially "authentic" and the socially "fraudulent" had never been more difficult or more relevant, especially since such discernment relied in large part on being able to read and understanding material goods. One consequence of this is that "the later nineteenth century was fascinated by repetitive and generic stories about finely calibrated social differences and the arrangements and exercise of social power" (Foote 3). A wide range of period texts deal with the question of whether the upward social movement of individuals – often women, but not exclusively – was possible and under what circumstances it might be either successfully realized

or successfully quashed. This tendency has been critiqued frequently in the works of realist authors like Henry James and Edith Wharton,²¹ in pulp publications such as Horatio Alger's rags-to-riches stories and dime novels²² and in non-literary texts that teach what Stephanie Foote terms "social plotting": etiquette manuals, gossip columns, and popular and middle-brow magazine fiction (4). However, until recently, little attention has been paid to the figure of the social climber in detective fiction and how issues of social transgression were often linked thematically to the criminal wrong-doing that was so central to the genre. Detective fiction therefore functions as a counter-narrative to Alger's positivist ideology that linked courage, morality, talent and the American dream in an updated version of the classic "blood will tell" convention. Whereas Ragged Dick's rise celebrates the recognition granted to its naturally noble protagonists, in detective fiction, ambition and social mobility are linked to imposture, with social fraud serving as a metonymic indicator of criminality and wrong-doing. Overlooking this popular form also masks important questions about how genteel performance was tied to the thorny questions of gender, race and class for Americans in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century.

It also limits discussions of how the period's inhabitants understood notions of the 'real' and the 'authentic.' This adjudication related not only to the material culture which they encountered in their day to day lives but to the socially ambitious individuals who utilized these objects in their infiltrations, as well. As Mary McAleer Balkun points out, "'real' and 'authentic' are not necessarily synonymous terms, although they are often used interchangeably. The word 'authentic' always begs the question 'to and for whom?' in ways the word 'real' does not seem to" (8). In this way, the material culture which the socially ambitious used to facilitate their infiltration was itself open to interpretation as to its legitimacy, both as a reflection of class

affiliation but also as a sign of the successful internalization of middle-class norms. This links to larger questions of consumption and conspicuous display since the “emerging ideological norms associated with Victorianism or genteel identity” have “stressed particular forms of material culture as hallmarks of citizenship and identity” by making an explicit three-way connection between consumption, morality and social rank (Mullins 80). In other words, objects were seen as confirmation of your moral values and social status, acted as a form of external influence which could foster moral improvement or speed the degradation of its owners and also acted as visual signposts to other members of the society. This coincides with Bill Brown’s concern with the slippage that he identifies in commodity culture between the possession of objects and the way in which the possessor identifies with the object, such that the object seems to derive its aesthetic, its moral or even its social significance from its own identity as a thing, rather than its possessor’s conception of its object-ness.

The multiple registers within which material practice have meaning also have direct bearing on responses to social climbing, both in real life and in fictional depictions and serve as an example of what Christoph Lidner calls the “social dynamic of consumerism” – an understanding and analysis of objects not as components of an overarching economic process but as a means of cultural and social classification (18). Mildred Farley and Frances Glover, for example, attempt to exploit the association between consumption and social consequence by adopting extraordinarily elaborate fashions in the hope that such adoption will facilitate their entry into a new social strata while in an Alger narrative, better clothes inculcate and encourage their wearer to act staunchly and rightly, in Green’s texts, rich clothes generally serve to disguise a women’s moral shortcomings – their avarice, their cupidity, their dishonesty – at least long enough to permit her initial circulation in the higher class to go undetected and possibly,

although not certainly, to secure their position in it. When Frances Glover for instance is confronted by the detective in *The Ruby and the Cauldron*, she is initially dismissive of the police detective's attempts to attribute the ruby's theft to her. But when it appears that he is going to reveal the truth about her dress, and the fact that she has not paid for it because it is too expensive for her very modest salary – a fact which Jenkins, the detective, believes is her motive for the crime – she is hysterical. “Are you going to tell everybody that? Are you going to state publicly that Miss Glover brought an unpaid bill to the party... I shall die if you do!” (Green *Ruby* 138). It is the social consequences of being unmasked that a character like Frances Glover fears, not the legal consequences. Yet, it is through the process of the criminal investigation that appear in her fiction the period's concerns about social transgression and its link to material culture are repeatedly articulated.

For this chapter, I have made an explicit decision to focus on texts in which the central social climbers are all women. This allows for a balanced comparison of the behaviours and outcomes vis à vis class mobility that might otherwise be distorted by important differences in the expectations and accepted behaviours of male and female characters that supersede their original class positioning²³. This analytical strategy serves to align with Stephanie Foote's findings in *The Parvenu's Plot*. She associates the figure of the nineteenth-century social climber exclusively with women, making the argument that this is because “our experience of class-as-culture is not just the product of women's labour but is itself gendered feminine” (Foote 4). It is worth noting that Green does not follow the gendered patterns of behaviour that Foote identifies completely. She complicates Foote's more narrowly gendered view of social climbing by including examples of both male and female characters who pursue social and economic advancement in many of her stories (4). However, though a number of the female parvenues succeed in their attempts to

improve their standing and accrue economic and material capital, the endorsement of social climbing which Green provisionally gestures towards in terms of female ambition is limited in several important ways²⁴. As discussed above, Green makes sincere, mutual affection the primary hallmark of long-term success in these relationships, undercutting a strictly mercenary or capitalist metric of success²⁵. But even with the shift to a reliance on emotional connection rather than financial wherewithal, only half of the socially ambitious women depicted in the texts discussed in this chapter achieve their goal. And revealingly, none of the social ambitious men who feature in her stories achieve their aim of social improvement. As Green makes clear, this is explicitly related to the fact that the male social climbers are all revealed as unrepentant criminals, who willingly commit crimes including murder, blackmail and thievery during their attempts at the social betterment. In contrast, the women, whether failed or successful social climbers are all vindicated and found innocent of any serious criminal offenses. Indeed, while the women are far more often the focus of the police and the reader's suspicions, their shortcomings are not criminal, but moral failures such as lying to police, committing misdirection, or engaging in a conspiracy to hide their less-than-illustrious past. Their male counterpart's crimes are far more serious and are carried out to further their social goals. For instance, in *That Affair Next Door*, John Randolph's decision to murder his first wife, with whom he is unexpectedly reunited, is done so because her reappearance threatens his plans to marry a wealthy New York heiress. After surviving his attack, his wife's decisions to disrobe and disguise the stabbing victim's true identity, and to flee the scene in the victim's clothing, aren't the result of malicious or criminal intent, but stem from the need to hide from her murderous husband. Overt and wilful harm preclude success in Green's fictional worlds; characters who engage in criminal behaviours do not succeed.

The pattern that therefore emerges in these texts is one that reveals how, for Green, social climbing can only be successful when allied to the notion of emotional sincerity and moral honesty. This sincerity works to mitigate the corrosive effect of moral transgression. The social hypocrisy thus needed to be a success as a parvenu is transmuted into authentic feeling. In this way, Green seems to be suggesting that social climbing is a form of social renewal that works by transplanting the newly sincere into the ethically problematic atmosphere of established society. These are characteristics that she only grants to female social climbers. There are several reasons for this, which will be discussed throughout this chapter, but one of the most important reasons for this tendency lies in the tendencies of the earlier sentimental domestic fiction. In that tradition, like in Green's domestic detective fiction, the limited endorsement of efforts to rise socially is not a function of the characters' desire for improved material conditions. Instead, texts are explicit in arguing that learning to value more than surface appearances is key to an individual's success. Use of material culture is therefore a vehicle for self-improvement, but its consumption is not the successful parvenue's ultimate aim. As Mildred Farley recounts during her final confession, she was initially taken in by "the outside glitter of things." It is only after strenuous moral testing, which occurs in the context of the police investigation into her sister's suicide, that she learns "to look beneath the surface for the real thing" (Green *Behind* 248). This moral penetration is a key component of her ultimately successful assimilation into the upper classes. Likewise, Luttra Schoenmaker in *A Strange Disappearance*, Ruth Oliver in *That Affair Next Door* and Frances Glover in "The Ruby and the Caldron" exhibit the same powers of material discernment, which allows them to see beyond the outside appearances of the objects they encounter or come to possess. Paradoxically, their disinterest proves them to be fitting inhabitants of the higher class to which they aspire, as disinterest in material culture rewards

them with the very material success that they have repudiated. The American Dream is not forgotten, of course, but Green's depiction of it instead suggests the need to balance material achievement with a concomitant emotional maturity that only sincerity can provide. 'Things' must be earned and appreciated, not merely accumulated without reflection.

But Green also shows how difficult the attainment of the requisite social balance actually is. Both Mildred Farley and Frances Glover must endure the indignity of interrogation as well as bear the brunt of police (and readerly) suspicion. This is because during their initial attempts at infiltrating a higher class, they have betrayed their ignorance of important social nuances with regards to their use and display of costume. Frances' expensive dress is gaudy and overdone; Mildred's fraudulent identity is uncovered in part because she breaches several social mores during her Washington honeymoon, behaving in ways that suggest her unfamiliarity with behavioural norms in the new-to-her social circles. But these difficulties do serve a larger purpose in the context of the period's social concerns because they show that classed behaviours aren't innate. They can be learned and naturalized and subsequently displayed, while showing the process by which material culture is employed in this effort. Green's detective process works to show how such transformations may be enacted, as well as the costs such a process exacts from the individuals who pursue it.

The process of self-fashioning is not shown to be wholly negative. Women like Luttra Schoenmaker and Mildred Farley may come from economically and culturally deprived backgrounds, but their ability to learn and to incorporate this new knowledge seamlessly but judiciously shows how social movement can be achieved and the benefits that can accrue from such movements. Green, as we will see, frequently attacks the mindless and empty frivolity of base consumerism that she identifies with the upper classes. Money, by her ethical metric,

encourages thoughtless and often unwarranted pride, a lack of moral development, stemming from a thwarting of self-denial, greed and selfishness. The introduction of newcomers, whose attitude to money and consumer spending is more restrained, encourages the socially established to re-examine their own attitudes towards consumption. The young women who succeed adopt the social behaviours of their adopted class but they retain the moral framework of the less distinguished class from which they came. This social hybridization serves to open up the young women “to a life of culture, purity and honor” while rejuvenating the blunted moral perspectives of their wealthy but jaded spouses with regards to both money and the unconstrained material culture which unchecked wealth allows for (Green *Strange* 258). Green’s parvenues do not blindly follow the motions of propriety as young women brought up within such environments do; instead they evaluate and consider the rationale behind many of the social prescriptions and traditions they encounter. They come to understand the rationale behind the various social prescriptions they encounter. They reject the mindless adoption of fashionable attitudes towards consumption that are toxic to their emotional well-being because they can recognize the harm such practices inflict on those who follow them blindly. Thus, Green’s successful social climbers prove themselves fitting inhabitants of the higher class to which they aspire because of their innate cultural and social discernment, becoming in the process models for both high and low to emulate.

The didactic strategy employed in these texts builds on the earlier sentimental model’s affective strategies, which argued that material culture could only be regulated and assigned its relative value by consumers who possessed the appropriate emotional values. Yet it also explicitly aligns this culture with subsequent bourgeois notions of self-expression and class affiliation through material possessions. Sentimental historical and literary fictions construct

market capitalism and middle-class personal life as mutually dependent spheres, each dependent on the other, and they inscribe sympathy as the spontaneous emotional faculty that enables the flourishing of both (Merish 4). However, as Green's account makes clear, the women in these texts who succeed in improving their social standing do so not by an independent accrual of fortune but by marrying wealthy men with impeccable social pedigrees and lavish financial resources. Dr. Walter Cameron is "a man of taste and the son of a man of taste" whose social and cultural pedigree are unassailable; Holman Blake is "the aristocratic representative of New York's oldest family" (Green *Behind* 2; Green *Strange* 94). The women's success therefore clearly does not hinge on the wholesale repudiation of material comfort or display. Monastic discomfort is not the aim. Instead, it is achieved through a marriage that sanctifies and rewards the women's *authentic* emotions and sincere affection for their spouse with reciprocal sentiments *and* improved material conditions. This is supported by the fact that when ascetic characters do appear in Green's texts – Dr. Julius Molesworth in *Behind Closed Doors*, who is discussed at length in Chapter 2, is an excellent example of this – they are roundly criticized and viewed with marked mistrust and suspicion²⁶. The reasons for these various characters' self-imposed discomfort is often revealed to be a form of atonement for the perpetration of a secret crime or serious moral failing. The importance of emotional sanctity in justifying social climbing cannot be overstated, therefore. The women whose births were initially low or obscure are able to achieve their rise because their innate emotional and moral values are at odds with their initial, lower condition. They feel 'better' than their circumstances would allow and once they are in an appropriately sympathetic social setting, amongst individuals who share the same refined sensibilities and who can recognize the social climber's reciprocal worth, the possibility of personal social movement occurs. This is yet another expression of the older 'blood will tell'

convention embedded within narratives dealing with the American dream, updated to address the concerns of American society in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century.

And just as for Alger's Ragged Dick, whose adoption of a 'good' suit prefigures his improved moral and social standing and permits his rise from poverty and want, the process of social transformation in Green's detective fiction is closely linked to the clothing which the socially ambitious adopt. More than just 'realist' window dressing, costumes function within Green's writing as unique identifiers. Clothes are as distinctive as fingerprints and often more reliable than names, which can be changed; personal histories, which can be obfuscated; and even physical attributes, which in the mysterious settings in which Green's characters circulate, can be veiled, duplicated or misidentified. It is through their clothing then that both a social climber's character – good or bad – and their social potential – high or low – are revealed. Certainty, by the nineteenth century, the human body had "become a medium for the staging of an individualized self through its discipline, cultivation and management" and its adornment served to amplify the embodied self (Tilley 38). As a staging ground, it also challenges the supposed anonymity of mass production, as well as the process' attendant emphasis on uniformity. This is because, whether the clothing that characters inhabit is ultimately proven to be made by wearer themselves, contracted from a fashion house or dressmaker, or purchased from a retail store, its production history is largely irrelevant to Green's exploitation of costume as a vehicle of personal identity.

FASHION AND CHANGING URBAN MORES

During the nineteenth century, the effects of urbanization meant that for the first time, Americans were living in large part amongst strangers. This increased the importance of personal

appearance exponentially because “whenever daily social life is characterized by frequent face to face contact with strangers, the fleeting impressions made by surface appearances became of great importance” (Halttunen *Confidence* 39). But even as clothing became more and more closely aligned with the individual and viewed as an outward expression of interior practices, it was still subject to the pressures of market forces. This meant that paradoxically, access to ‘fashion’ as a means of self-expression was only made possible for ever widening segments of the American population as a result of the very mass production and standardization that its wearers were seeking to distinguish themselves from. From the expansion of the cloth-making industry in the northern states in the 1830s and 1840s to the postbellum surge in ready-made clothing, which saw the military’s need for the mass production of uniform uniforms adapted to the returning civilian population to the ascendancy of urban department stores like Macy’s and Marshall Field’s, the way that Americans dressed themselves was transformed. This shift meant that “the ready-made citizen was part of an emerging expression of urban citizenship beginning to be embodied in popular narratives” (Elahi 18).

But despite some period writers’ claims that such mass production promoted civic unity and represented an important hallmark of the nation’s democratic ideals by means of “the plain dark democracy of broadcloth,” Green’s fictional depictions reveal that *how* clothing was produced was not the key factor in her contemporaries’ understanding of class (Blumin 143). Rather, class was inferred through the small yet visible nuances such as a garment’s relative affordability or expense, signs of wear, repurposing and repair, and secondhandedness, such that “even in the absence of differences in style,” class affiliation could still be distinguished and exploited by individual (Blumin 143).

This nuanced reading of clothes can be observed in *That Affair Next Door*, which recounts the investigation of the murder of an unknown young woman in the empty home of a wealthy New York stockbroker. Late one September evening, Amelia Butterworth, a wealthy spinster, observes a couple entering the Van Burnam's home, which she knows to be empty since the family is travelling in Europe. The next morning, she is present when the body of a young woman is found inside the home. It is impossible to identify the victim conclusively as her face has been crushed and disfigured by a large bookcase but suspicion immediately falls on the homeowner's estranged son, Howard Van Burnam, who has married a young working class woman against his father's wishes. Having been a witness, Amelia Butterworth feels compelled to investigate, despite the disapproval of the police, led by Green's serial detective, Ebenezer Gryce. The police view her involvement as officious and repeatedly denigrate her efforts. But as a member of the class she is investigating, Butterworth has important social knowledge that her less affluent and socially-distinguished police rivals do not. Specifically, she can cost and source the clothing of almost everyone she meets, using it to classify their social position and unravel important identifying details of personal history simply by studying the clothes they are wearing. In contrast, Ebenezer Gryce, her investigative rival, does not possess this facility and struggles to solve the crime. At the crime scene, Miss Butterworth finds her experience of viewing the body of the murdered woman traumatic. Yet she never loses her composure. Even as she acknowledges her shock, she is still able identify the victim's "blue serge" dress as "store-made, but very good." Indeed, she even goes so far as to venture a guess as to its source, suggesting that the garment has come from either "Altman's or Stern's" (*Green Affair* 12). Later in the novel, her supposition is proven correct during the inquest when the order clerk at Altman's testifies that he recognizes "each piece as having come from his establishment" and is able to give the

value of the order, which comprised the dress, hat and undergarments as exactly “seventy-five dollars and fifty-eight cents” (*Green Affair* 101; *Green Affair* 103). Gryce lacks Butterworth’s implicit understanding of dress and as a result, his identification of the murderer is initially incorrect, which complicates the solution to the mystery. It is Butterworth then, with her nuanced understanding of women’s clothing, who is ultimately able to solve the case.

Another excellent example of the difference that Butterworth and Gryce place on dress occurs when the Van Burnam mansion is first searched. Police efforts have uncovered two unworn hats. The first is “a soft felt with one feather or one bow of ribbon”. Miss Butterworth immediately identifies it as having been worn by the woman she saw entering the house the previous night. Not only does it serve as corroboration for her account, it strongly suggests that the murder victim is its late owner and the same woman Butterworth saw entering the home. The second hat is more elaborate, “elegant specimen of millinery...in the latest style” which has “ribbons and flowers and bird wings upon it” (*Green Affair* 28; *Green Affair* 63).



Figure 1 "Autumn Millinery" *The Delineator*, November 1896

When he is shown this hat, Gryce peremptorily dismisses it as a clue. Knowing that two young ladies normally reside in the house, he erroneously believes that since only one woman was seen entering the house, the second hat must belong to one of the absent Van Burmans. But Butterworth understands, as Gryce does not, that the second hat has been crafted to reflect current fall fashions and therefore cannot belong to one of the daughters because the family has been absent since “last spring” (*Green Affair* 64). She quickly realizes that presence of an unboxed hat and gloves is proof that a second, unidentified woman must have been in the house as well, wearing the unclaimed accessories. This would mean that in addition to the murder victim, whose hat has been located and identified, a second woman must have entered and exited the house when Butterworth was not looking. She comes to this conclusion by studying the elaborate hat, which she describes as “cost[ing] twenty dollars, if not thirty” (*Green Affair* 64). Since the only other woman known to have entered the house since the family left of their trip was the charwoman, who could never afford such an elaborate purchase, Butterworth knows that it belongs to someone who was in the house surreptitiously at the time of the killing. This makes them either a witness to the killing or the murderer proper. The hat is a critical clue then in understanding the events both before and after the killing. It also serves as the first link in identifying the unknown woman, even if the object cannot prove whether they were witness, perpetrator or innocent bystander.

It is this intimate familiarity with the nuances of female fashion is what allows Butterworth to finally unravel the crime. She is able to identify the actual victim, whose death occurred as a result of mistaken identity, the motive for the murder, and finally to locate the murderer’s intended victim, Ruth Oliver, as a result of studying their clothes. Her success shows that clothing and accessories convey critical identifying information about the wearer as do an

outfit's fashionability, fabric choices or cost and that clothing and accessories can serve as an important source of clues in detective fiction, alongside more traditional sources such as footprints, ballistics or forensics. Cultural anthropologist Grant McCracken's work has focused on clothing as an "expressive medium," delineating the differences between material culture and language (57). He argues that "clothing serves as a communicative device through which social change is contemplated, proposed, initiated, enforced and denied" and that in performing this function, it "reveals both the themes and the formal relationships which serve a culture as orienting ideas and the real or imagined basis according to which cultural categories are assigned" (McCracken 61; 59). The sartorial hallmarks are therefore part of the costumes themselves, not simply symbolic or metaphorical abstractions, which can be read with efficient skill by the wearers' astute peers. This challenges Babak Elahi's position, wherein which he argues that literary depictions of clothing in realist literature typically become increasingly "more abstract and symbolic" as a result of the transformation of its material value "into exchange value" (50). He views this abstraction as coming at the expense of clothing's material nature, "taking on increasing significance and signification as a marker of identity, rather than a material thing in and of itself" (50). But I would argue that such economic arguments fail to capture the breadth of clothing's cultural significance adequately, especially when considering such garments in the context of class climbing. Green's position on the social and economic ramifications of the socially ambitious evolves over her career and offers contradictory positions on such figures that vary from text to text. They span a wide range, from altruistic and morally untouched figures whose elevation is secured by external forces and whose interest in material culture and economic status is minimal, to the more typical parvenue figure, whose own ambitions are the motivating force for their rise and who use clothing to disguise their actual

social position, and whose involvement in the police's criminal investigations result from, at least tangentially, their efforts at social infiltration. Regardless of the type of social climber that Green depicts however, their use of clothing to signal critical narrative, social and detectival cues remains consistent.

MORALITY, VICTIMIZATION AND SOCIAL REFORM

While the myriad social climbers who appear in *That Affair Next Door* are unusual for their numbers, their mere presence should not be seen as an aberration. Indeed, it is possible to observe the social climber, and the use clothing being used as an expressive medium for social interrogation, throughout Green's career. Her second novel, *A Strange Disappearance*, was published in 1879. It shares a number of similarities with its wildly successful predecessor, *A Leavenworth Case*. In both books, the majority of the narrative takes place in New York City, involves a socially prominent family and features NYPD detective Ebenezer Gryce, as its principal detective. But unlike the earlier novel, the mystery that Gryce is attempting to solve does not concern the murder of a wealthy businessman but the unexplained disappearance of a young and socially irrelevant sewing woman, 'Emily'. Having disappeared from the home of a prominent New York bachelor, the police soon discover that 'Emily' is in fact the alias of a young woman named Luttra Schoenmaker. Unsure of her motives, the police initially suspect her of having criminal motivations for disguising herself with a dark wig and false identity. But this is not the case. 'Emily' is in fact the unacknowledged wife of the wealthy Knickerbocker heir, Holman Blake, in whose house she has been secretly living. The daughter of German immigrants, she spent her formative years in isolated poverty. Her father and brother turned to crime and were arrested for bank robbery. After they escape from prison, they stumble across

Luttra, who has been hiding under her assumed identity, and kidnap her in the hopes of extracting a sizeable ransom from her estranged husband. Blake is finally persuaded to admit to the relationship that exists between himself and Luttra. The police are able to track the men to a nearby boarding house, where they rescue her and she is reconciled with her now penitent husband.

Luttra's social transformation, from rural unknown to urban success, identifies her as one of the earliest examples of a social climber to appear in Green's fiction but like Ruth Oliver, who would appear twenty years later in *That Affair Next Door*, her staunch moral compass immediately marks her out as a different kind of parvenue, whose presence foils the normal efforts of the investigator acting as social protector²⁷. Luttra met Holman Blake, her future husband, when she saved him from a murder plot hatched by her vicious father and brother. This selfless action effects a complete rupture between herself and her family, and connects her to earlier sentimental models, which espoused a model of patiently resigned womanhood. In describing her early life, Luttra is sanguine about both the limited educational opportunities she experienced growing up and the abuse her family meted out to her. She notes frankly that she "was born for hardship" and seems to accept their virulent tirades with equanimity (Green *Strange* 175). It is only when her family crosses the line from petty thievery to attempted murder that she rebels. She staunchly asserts that she was "not [born] for *crime*" and refuses "to cleave to that which will drag me into infamy" (Green *Strange* 175). Blake also notes her unusual moral qualities and admits they were what attracted him to her, despite her poor education and unattractive clothes. He describes her to Gryce as being "a noble girl," whose "invincible will shone from her dark eyes and dignified her slender form; a will gentle as it was strong, elevated as it was unbending" (Green *Strange* 174; 172). This moral elevation is an early signal of

Luttra's potential for social advancement. Blake, who the detectives describe as a "superior gentleman with... refined tastes and proudly reticent manners," recognizes these same elevated qualities in Luttra and it is this recognition that prefigures her future rise (Green *Strange* 94).

Yet Luttra's clothes, which would normally be expected to play a large part in both her social transformation, as well as the police's investigation into her disappearance, are almost non-existent in the text and play nowhere near the same significance as they do in subsequent books like *That Affair Next Door*. During their first encounter in Vermont, for example, Blake notices only that Luttra is wearing generic "a calico frock" (154) yet describes his own "blue flannel suit" in sufficient detail that the reader is able to construct a clear image of its colour, cut and fabric for themselves. (Green *Strange* 154; 157). Likewise, when Luttra is reported missing by Mrs. Blake, her missing clothes are detailed only as "a hat and cloak," and her dress as "the garments of a working-woman rather than a lady" (Green *Strange* 20; 199). The descriptions of cut, fabric or colour are all lacking. This absence of special material detail continues throughout the text. In fact, when she is rescued from the boarding house where she has been held prisoner, her clothes are so nondescript that they serve as a disguise for a male officer. Q borrows Luttra's "skirt and shawl," "taking care to draw the shawl well over [his] head," to disguise his identity as a man and a police officer (Green *Strange* 240). He can only do this because Luttra's shawl is so mutable. In setting the scene, Green omits any of the shawl's distinguishing characteristics – any description of its weave, its decoration or its colour. Yet when Q is alone in the room with the irate criminal, he finds comfort in wearing Luttra's clothes during the masquerade. "With that brave woman's garments drawn about me, something of her dauntless spirit seemed to invade my soul" (Green *Strange* 243). The emphasis on the clothes' sentimental and moral symbolism supersedes both its materiality and its economic value. That Luttra wears clothes is an

unimportant detail in the overall context of the story which is dwarfed by her position as a moral arbiter.

In contrast, the gowns of Evelyn Blake, Luttra's romantic and social rival, are described with great specificity. There is an unmistakable emphasis on the expense and lavishness of her costumes. A typical example occurs during a meeting with her cousin Blake. Evelyn's "whole elegant form" is displayed within "its casing of ruby velvet and ornamentation of lace and diamonds" while she toys with a "richly feathered fan" (*Green Strange* 66). Indeed, Luttra's wedding dress is the only dress which Green describes in sustained detail and Luttra never wears it publicly. Although it is described as a "dress of dark blue silk, to all appearance elegantly made" and "beside it a collar of exquisite lace...pricked through by a gold breast-pin of a strange and unique pattern," it is hidden away and Gryce must search to uncover it (*Green Strange* 37). Clearly the dress is distinctive and lavish; Gryce's junior colleague, Q, reports that he "know[s] enough of such matters to be a judge" – and it is the clue that ultimately allows Gryce to prove conclusively that 'Emily' and Luttra are the same person because the dress in the bureau and the dress of the woman displayed on the secret painting in Holman Blake's private rooms are identical (*Green Strange* 37). But when Gryce attempts to study the dress itself, Mrs. Daniels, the housekeeper, objects to its examination on the grounds that "a modest woman such as this girl was, would hardly like to have her clothing displayed before the eyes of strangers" (*Green Strange* 36). Such public display is of course one of the key functions of costume in the period. Its cut, material and design were all constructed to maximize the potential for social and economic display. Luttra's repudiation of that display is highly unusual.

But such restraint aligns with the larger moral critique that Green embeds into her narrative. In a story that deals so extensively with social climbing and the consequences of

marrying outside one's class, Green's most overt criticism is not directed at the social climber, as is typical in the realist fictions of Edith Wharton or Henry James, but at her socially prominent lover. Luttra's unassailable values stand in stark contrast to her husband's self-indulgent and mercenary impulses. Blake's admission that prior to his marriage he was "a careless fellow" who was willing to repay Luttra's saving him only because "it was so easy; merely the signing of a check from time to time" is typical of the criticism that Green directs towards the affluent characters who appear in the novel (Green *Strange* 177). Blake's disregard for the value of money, and his willingness to buy his way out of moral or personal obligations, is a symptom of his – and by extension, his class's – larger laxity. Green believes that money represses the development of an individual's character because it allows for empty materiality to substitute for it, and to undercut the personal effort that she believes is necessary to develop into a moral person²⁸. The possession of enormous wealth is detrimental for characters like Holman Blake and his cousin Evelyn because it impedes their moral growth. This defect effects many of his peers and he is only able to overcome it, and recognize "the worth of her I so recklessly threw from me on my wedding day", after "long months of loneliness and suffering" (Green *Strange* 254; Green *Strange* 183). When Luttra is finally rescued from her criminal family, Blake expresses the hope that she will accept "a pardon that will restore me to my manhood and that place in your esteem which I covet above every other earthly good" (Green *Strange* 254). This makes Luttra's moral value explicit. Prior to their marriage, Blake was happy to avoid difficult or emotionally taxing tasks in favour of monetary shortcuts. Now, Luttra's "esteem" is the thing he covets most and as has been proven over the course of the novel, it cannot be purchased for any amount of money or social consequence. The criminal investigation undertaken by Gryce

and Q therefore serves to reveal Luttra's moral worth alongside her innocence, even as it proves Holman Blake's own ethical ambiguity.

Luttra's repeated and explicit rejections of the economic benefits which would accrue to her as Mrs. Blake Holman makes her the antithesis of normal representations of the female social climber in the period. Luttra is not naïve. She allows Blake to pay for her education because she recognizes "the advantage which it would give her in her struggle with the world" (Green *Strange* 176). But there's no attempt by Luttra to leverage this initial aid for further comforts or even to achieve social notoriety. She earns the money to purchase a new wardrobe by working in very menial domestic conditions, rather than asking Blake to provide one for her gratis. And unlike Ruth Oliver or Louisa Van Burnam in *That Affair Next Door*, her self-improvement is not the first step in a calculated plan of advancement. Instead, Luttra continues to view work as necessary and intrinsic to her self-worth. The discipline of work, of earning a living honestly and independently, gives her purpose. When her brother and father break into the Blake family mansion on Second Avenue with the intent to rob it, they experience "great astonishment" when she refuses to help blackmail Holman Blake over her "secret connection" because they cannot "realize [her] desiring anything above money" (Green *Strange* 268). What Luttra does desire cannot be valued monetarily. This is absolute proof of her 'failure' as a social climber. She wants to live with Blake, regardless of his wealth or social status, in a loving relationship.

Blake initially enters into marriage with Luttra in order to secure his dying father's sizeable inheritance. His father insists on his son being married before he dies, yet Holman is repulsed by the economic quid pro quo that he knows is inherent in most society marriages. Although admittedly cavalier and selfish, he intuits that the "fashionable belles" who inhabit New York's upper class demand "something in return for the honor they conferred upon a man

by marrying him” that he does not believe he can give (*Green Strange* 179). Their demands are, of course, both monetary and social. Yet he lacks the moral fortitude to break with social norms entirely. When his father refuses him permission to marry his cousin, the glamorous Evelyn Blake, he balks at substituting one society woman for another. He hits upon Luttra as an alternative, believing that she would agree to his request because she will feel obligated to repay his support of her education since she left Vermont. But in an ironic reversal of the criminal Schoenmaker’s plan, which is stymied when Luttra refuses to go along with their blackmail scheme, Blake is likewise thwarted in his goal of a marriage of convenience. This is because, unlike the society women he normally interacts with, Luttra cannot be won “by holding up [his] wealth and position before her” (*Green Strange* 182). Luttra fell in love with Blake almost immediately, and she mistakes his self-interested proposal for a sincere one. When she overhears her husband admitting the mercenary motives behind their new marriage, she is the one to leave, believing that her presence is unwanted and intrusive. She does so without claiming any of the resources or money that she is legally entitled to, preferring to support herself secretly, working as a servant in his home rather than be beholden any further to Blake.

The unconventionality of Luttra’s decision highlights the differences Green draws between the working-class Luttra and society doyenne Evelyn Blake, who serves as the former’s social and romantic foil in the novel. The use of such a comparative figure is a continuation of Green’s acknowledged pattern of using doubles in her texts, which draw explicit contrasts for the reader between the varied choices the two women make, and the outcome that arise as a result of those choices and underlying attitudes towards material culture. For instance, when Q decides to investigate Evelyn, he chooses to disguise himself as an antique dealer, and presents himself to Evelyn in the guise of offering a choice and unusual collectible for her consideration. This close

association with consumption continues throughout the novel. As a member of the extended Blake family, Evelyn already enjoyed a tremendous degree of social consequence and wealth before her marriage. But possessing a “side of her nature which demanded as her right the luxury of great wealth,” she enters into a loveless, and ultimately unhappy, marriage with an elderly roué, the Count of Mirac. In doing so, Evelyn reveals herself to be the true social climber. Her “manifest surrendering ... to the power of wealth and show at the price of all that women are believed to hold dear” reveals Green’s concern with the corrosive moral influence of wealth and material comfort (Green *Strange* 192). This concern is one that Green shares with other American authors of the period, including Louisa May Alcott and Edith Wharton, whose texts all “grapple with problems raised by an increasingly secular society in which identity and self-respect seem less dependent on God than on the accident of social standing or the power of materialistic display” (Sherman Way 4). Evelyn’s marriage is an example of the emptiness of conspicuous luxury and Green takes pains to depict how “hollow” the charms of society and “the prospect of wealth and position” have become for Evelyn (*Strange* 66-67).

This hollowness captures Green’s position explicitly – any marriage, whatever the initial standing of the two partners, must fail, no matter the couple’s material possessions or wealth, if they do not also share a sincere emotional bond. Like her character Blake Holman, Green locates the source of this corruption within the ranks of “fashionable womanhood,” because the emphasis on empty social behaviours distorts and ultimately undermines the moral standing of any individual who is in its thrall (*Strange* 193). When Luttra is first reported missing, Gryce delegates his subordinate, Q, to investigate. Q initially believes that Luttra has left of her own accord, fleeing with a lover. But the housekeeper, Mrs. Daniel, is aghast at his suggestion. Ashamed of his “too communicative face,” which has revealed his doubts about ‘Emily’s’

morality, Q soothes her by saying “we will take it for granted she is as good as gold” (Green *Strange* 11). But this platitude in fact summarizes the novel’s theme. Luttra is indeed as “good as gold”. She possesses neither economic nor social capital but her role as moral benchmark is what rejuvenates the morally depleted Blake family and restores their character. She personifies the superiority that Green believes the female sex possesses, and which Evelyn Blake, in her naked opportunism, has squandered. Luttra’s altruism is what secures Blake his inheritance after it is revealed that her father-in-law has written a second, secret will which has left the entirety of his fortune to her, not his son. She asks her husband whether he believes:

[A] thing like this with its suggestions of mercenary interests...shall bridge the gulf that separates you and me? Shall the giving or the gaining of a fortune make necessary the unital of lives over which holier influences have beamed and loftier hopes shone? (Green *Strange* 278).

She rips the revised will apart, and in doing so, grants Blake the inheritance he had originally expected. The physical obliteration of the economic incentive that the secret will represents is the means by which her true moral worth is conclusively proven and her status as social interloper is put to rest once and for all. Her good, in this narrative, is indeed gold.

Evelyn Blake is not the only pairing that Green develops in the story to suggest a different outcome to Luttra’s social rise and the consequences facing women who are unsuccessful in their attempts to raise, or even maintain, their existing status. During the initial missing person investigation, the police notice that Blake is regularly going to some of the poorest and most dangerous areas in Manhattan. They are struck by the incongruity of such a polished man travelling through “the narrowest and most disreputable streets of the city; halting at the shops of pawnbrokers; peering into the back-rooms of liquor shops; mixing with the crowds that infest the

corner groceries at nightfall” and they tail him (*Green Strange* 71). One evening, when Blake travels to “the lower end of the Bowery,” he stops to speak with an impoverished young girl walking along the sidewalk (*Green Strange* 76). Q is too far to overhear their conversation but notes that “her garments” mark her as the potential “the daughter or wife of any of the shiftless, drinking wretches lounging about on the four corners” (*Green Strange* 77). Although not explicit, Q’s reaction makes it clear that Green is suggesting prostitution as a likely motive for the incongruous interaction between the apparently single Holman and the economically disadvantaged but attractive young woman. Of course, this is yet another example of economic exchange in which male economic power buys physical access to women. It also recalls Evelyn’s nakedly opportunistic marriage to the Count de Mirac.

The incongruity of Blake’s own social position against such social and economic deprivations is another way for Green to highlight the social gulf that exists between Luttra and her husband. Standing in for the reader, the police officer who is trailing Blake is mystified by the wealthy man’s interest in such an anonymous figure. He admits that if Blake had stopped “a girl wherever seen, clad in a black alpaca frock, a striped shawl and a Bowery hat trimmed with feathers” – the typical costume of a prostitute in the era – he “could easily understand; but that this creature with her faded calico dress, dingy cape thrown carelessly over her head, and a ragged basket, should arrest his attention, was a riddle to [him]” (*Green Strange* 78). Intent on deciphering the rationale for Blake’s unusual behaviour, Q studies “her dress to its minutest details,” surprised at “how ragged and uncouth it was” (*Green Strange* 78). The dress clearly announces the young girl’s marginal social status and economic limitations, but the fact that the officer describes her costume in detail, but not her physical appearance, is significant. He loses sight of the girl but finds “a bit of rag easily recognized as a piece of the old calico frock of

nameless color” that she was wearing, snagged on a garbage bin (*Green Strange* 79). Later, when a body is recovered from the East River, Gryce and Q proceed to the waterfront to determine whether or not may be the ‘Emily’ they have been searching for. While speaking with the coroner, Q realizes that the body in the morgue is that of the girl he saw Blake speaking with in the Bowery several days earlier. “I remember her clothes if nothing more,” he says. Despite the fact that the victim’s “features are not...preserved,” the police officer is able to make a conclusive identification by means of the girl’s clothing (*Green Strange* 120). He opens “[his] pocketbook” and takes “out the morsel of cloth [he] had plucked that day from the ash barrel.” He compares “the discolored rags that hung about the body” with the dress the corpse is dressed in and determines that “[t]he pattern, texture and color were the same” (*Green Strange* 121). The inference is clear: the police do not need to know what someone looks like to identify them. Their clothes, even in a state of ruin, are enough to identify an individual.

The unnamed murder victim, who had been “battered to death” is never identified in the story, nor does the text recount any further investigation into her death (*Green Strange* 121). She disappears from the text, her only function to mislead Mrs. Daniels into betraying the truth about her role in helping Luttra hide in plain sight during the year since the Blakes’ abortive marriage. Yet the anonymous victim remains an important foil for Luttra. The women share the same distinctive hair and the same anonymous calico fabric is used to construct dresses for both women. As the “daughter or wife of any of the shiftless drunks,” she embodies Luttra’s likely fate, had she not rejected her family’s criminal undertakings. The dead girl also serves as a rebuke to Blake and a warning to the reader by “showing from what heights to what depths a woman can fall” (*Green Strange* 200). This use of fabric to identify an individual also shows the way that fabrics can be used to include or exclude its wearer in the criminal surveillance of the

police, whose role it is to identify and legitimize the individuals they encounter during their investigations. The poor Bowery woman is excluded from Gryce's investigation just as Luttra fears she will be excluded from the rarified circles in which her husband moves. She is never identified by name. But in the same way that the police fashion her identity and social reality by means of nothing more than the clothes on her body, so too can the society which stands in judgement of socially mobile figures like Luttra Schoenmaker create a similar identity for interlopers. Like the "nameless" calico that serves to both individuate and categorize, the social climber becomes a nameless figure of disruption and misdirection, in the same way that the Bowery victim temporarily misdirects the police's efforts.

But the anonymity of class works both way. Just as Blake and Q see the crowds of impoverished urban residents as a collective, rather than individuals, and judge them by the external qualities of their clothing and mannerisms, the same judgement occurs upwards as well. At one point in the investigation, Fanny, Blake's maidservant, is persuaded to tell Q about a conversation she has overheard between the housekeeper, Mrs. Daniels, and an "elegant lady" (*Green Strange* 106). Fanny's account focuses on the details of the visiting woman's clothing and the police officer grows impatient. "Tell me what her name was and let the fol-de-rols go," he urges. Fanny is piqued, exclaiming "with some sharpness" that she does not know the visitor's name. "How should I know her name; she did'nt [sic] come to see me" (*Green Strange* 107). As Q and the reader quickly intuit, the visitor is Blake's cousin, the elegant and recently widowed Evelyn Blake. But it is equally clear from Fanny's words that the social doyenne is as much a 'type' to the maid, as the maid would be to her. Fanny has no interest in Evelyn as an individual, yet Fanny can still describe with a high degree of accuracy all of the behaviours and accessories that conclusively establish the stranger as an upper-class lady. It is "her velvet dress

sweeping over the floor” and “her diamonds as big as –” that announce Evelyn’s status first, before they are confirmed by what the maid terms her “fine” ways (Green *Strange* 107). Evelyn Blake’s ambition and her desire for the lavish material comfort which great wealth can confer show her to be the victim of the “fashionable womanhood” that Green deplors. Openly opportunistic, Evelyn in fact is a far more traditional example of the social climber than the selfless Luttra. There is a tendency, as Stephanie Foote’s analysis has shown, to view the parvenue as someone who comes from outside ‘society.’ She argues that because texts that feature parvenues are “about aspirants attempting to move into a social world perceived to be not ‘naturally’ their own,” there is a tendency to view such figures as interlopers whose temporary intrusion into middle- and upper-class society is a transient event (Foote 4). But this displacement is disingenuous. While there is no doubt that the presence of social climbers “offered narrative space for readers to interpret class as a culture as well as a distinguishing individual attribute, a matter of group fitness as well as individual fitness,” in figures like Evelyn Blake, Green shows such naked ambition exists at all levels of society. The act of ‘climbing’ wasn’t therefore exclusive to the lower classes and that as much as social climbers attempted to mimic dress and mannerisms, they also emulated the cut-throat marital brinkmanship of upper class women, as well. The cultural mechanisms and material displays which allowed women to secure greater wealth, whatever their initial class, social position or economic means cannot be assigned exclusively to members of the lower classes therefore, and must be read more broadly as part of the social and cultural strategy that low *and* high, arriviste and established, used. The material objects which these women wear serve to both signal their ambition and reward it. They need to clothes to enter their milieu; their reward for successfully infiltrating it is to keep them.

COSTUME, CRIME AND INVESTIGATIVE STRATEGY

Subsequent social climbing protagonists like Mildred Farley in *Behind Closed Doors* (1888) and Frances Glover in “The Ruby and the Caldron” (1905) are much less self-denying than Luttra Schoenmaker. Both of these women make explicit and purposeful use of clothing as part of their wilful attempts to improve their social standing. For both of these woman, and to a lesser but still important degree, Ruth Oliver in *That Affair Next Door* (1897), the allure of unfettered social capital and the potential display of luxurious material possessions fight for dominance with the otherwise sincere and authentic emotions that they have for their spouses. This desire for personal acquisition represents the dangerous allure of fashionable womanhood that Green shows characters like Evelyn Blake and Mary Leavenworth succumbing to. It also deepens the detectival elements in these texts, as the social climber’s role within these mysteries shifts from the victimhood experience by Luttra Schoenmaker to suspect and potential criminal. The importance of the police being able to understand their identities and their motivations is therefore amplified, and the potential exists for their exploitation of their clothes to further not only unethical but overtly criminal acts.

This shift from social interrogation to criminal pursuit is evident in *Behind Closed Doors* (1887). The narrative begins by recounting Ebenezer Gryce’s investigation into the disappearance of Genevieve Gretorex, a wealthy New York heiress, days before her wedding. Desperate to avoid the scandal of her daughter jilting her eligible fiancé before hundreds of the city’s most prominent guests, her mother hires Ebenezer Gryce to locate her. In the company of the bridegroom, he tracks a young woman matching Genevieve’s description to a non-descript hotel. Observing her in secret, Dr. Cameron readily confirms the woman’s identity as his erstwhile fiancée but Gryce is confused by incongruities in the woman’s garb, which is far less

elaborate than he had expected. Cameron dismisses Gryce's concerns as irrelevant. The two men return to the Gretorex house expecting to have to call off the wedding, only to learn that Genevieve has returned and is upstairs preparing for the ceremony. The return of the missing heiress would seem to signal an end to Gryce's involvement, as well as provide concrete proof that the woman in the hotel was not Genevieve, since despite the uncanny physical resemblance, she had been observed in the hotel after Genevieve had returned home. However, the bride's return does not signal the end of the case. In the hours after the wedding, the young woman from the hotel is found dead, the victim of poison. The dead girl is identified as Mildred Farley, a poor dressmaker and Gryce's initial suspicions lead him to believe that Mildred Farley had been blackmailing Genevieve and been killed by the heiress to prevent the release of a shameful secret. But as his queries progress, he learns the truth behind the remarkable resemblance between the two women. Mildred and Genevieve were twins who were separated at birth. They had agreed to swap places in order to escape their unhappy social circumstances. But when her lover jilted her, Genevieve attempts to go back on her promise, expecting to reclaim her position from her newly elevated sister. When Mildred refuses, Genevieve kills herself in despair. Frantic to maintain her newly acquired position, and facing the problem of how to dispose of her sister's body in a mansion filled with wedding guests, Mildred enlists her sister's lover, Dr. Molesworth, to help her move the body and disguise the site of her sister's death by arranging for the body to be found on the street instead. This her allows her to go ahead with the fraudulent marriage to Dr. Cameron and continue to masquerade as the dead heiress.

Given that the two women exchange clothes to take up each other's identities, the role of costume in this book is paramount. Mildred Farley, after all, works as a dressmaker. But clothing is also critical to the investigative efforts and it is clothing that allows Gryce to unravel the

unacknowledged connections between the women and the truth of Genevieve's suicide. Indeed, Ebenezer Gryce had quite astutely noticed several incongruities in the women's dress even before he is charged with investigating the murder. Mildred Farley is vocal about the resentment she feels towards her sister and the better situation that Genevieve experiences with her adoptive family, as well as the arbitrary nature of her twin's promotion. Born to an impoverished widow, from the moment of their birth, the Farley twins are the object of trade, "transferred from the real parent to [a] rich but childless lady from New York" in a secret exchange kept even from Philo Gretorex himself (Green *Behind* 296). In her confession at the end of the novel, Mildred relates that she "grew to feel that my sister was a usurper", and resented that Mrs. Gretorex "instead of taking me had leaned over and picked up my sister, though that sister was no prettier, no larger and no more promising than myself" (Green *Behind* 496). She details the differences which the sisters faced as a result of that arbitrary choice: Mildred has "to work, and work hard" to support herself and her chronically ill mother and was "prevented by poverty from indulging in any of [her] numerous aspirations" while Genevieve "had wealth, had leisure, she had accomplishment, she had love" (Green *Behind* 496; 495; 496). Mildred covets not only her sister's lifestyle, which she views as existing in "an atmosphere of wealth and fashion" but also the emotional stability which she associates with economic security (Green *Behind* 302). As Mary McAleer Balkun points out, "the construction of a new self (or a refusal to accept the self-imposed by society) is akin to the creation of an object, with all that term implies (the self can now be sold, traded, owned, copied, and even collected" (12). The notion of selfhood as a fungible good secures its worth in a society whose values reflect those of the marketplace. However, it also acts as a means of distance the individual from their own self, because their 'self' is a commodity that can be taken from them at any time by anyone with the means to secure it. It is a form of precarity

that leads, Green would argue, to many of the acts of wrong-doing which her social climbers commit. Having constructed this new self, and recognizing its potential, but as of yet unrealized value, they will lie, cheat and even, on occasion, commit murder to secure it. This is why Mildred remakes her own undesirable identity and ultimately obliterates the ‘original’ version which her twin sister performed first and which she desires to copy.

In keeping with her pattern of using doubles, Green creates a series of pairings that offer alternatives and which test social reasoning by exposing the arbitrary nature of many of the norms governing society. But it is taken much further in this novel than it is in *A Strange Disappearance*, with the pairings between Luttra and Evelyn. Not only are there two mothers (Mrs. Farley and Mrs. Gretorex) and two suitors (Dr. Walter Cameron and Dr. Julius Molesworth), but the sisters are also identical twins who, like Mark Twain’s *The Prince and the Pauper*²⁹, intend to exchange lives. This is yet another example of Green’s continued use of doubles. But unlike in *A Strange Disappearance*, where Luttra shares a few distinctive characteristics such as her fine golden hair with her Bowery counterpart but is otherwise distinguishable, Genevieve and Mildred are truly identical. As “*facsimile*,” as one character in the novel terms them, they are fascinating examples of biological mass production, if twins can be considered such (Green *Behind* 290). At the sisters’ first meeting, Mildred feels as though she is meeting “a reproduction of herself in living flesh and blood” who is “myself, in all but costume and a certain delicacy of breeding” (Green *Behind* 499). Mildred attributes the difference in mannerisms to their differing experiences, but it also serves to prove how the behaviours that signaled social status were learned, and not innate. Genevieve is “a lady, high-bred to her very finger-ends, while [Mildred] was simply well-bred and full of ambition” (Green *Behind* 499). Coming from the same background and family history, it is acculturation that sets

them apart. When Dr. Cameron meets Mildred performing as Genevieve prior to their wedding, he notices no differences in her dress or appearance that would alert him to the fraud which the sisters have perpetuated.

Yet it is not the assumption of each other's mannerisms which allow Mildred and Genevieve to exchange lives but rather their incredible physical resemblance. It is this which allows them to wear each other's clothes and thus mislead most of the people they encounter into believing they are the other. The two women share such "an amazing similarity in details" that "when [Genevieve] had put upon me one of her hats," Mildred admits that she "did not know whether it was she or myself who smiled upon me from the glass" (Green *Behind* 502). The hat transforms Mildred into Genevieve and it is so effective that Mildred herself loses sight of her own self. She becomes the clothes. This is why, when her sister proposes that they switch roles, Mildred does not hesitate. Anxious to improve her situation and jealous of her sister's opportunities, she sees her impoverished reality as something external to herself, something that can be jettisoned and exchanged and improved upon, if only the chance should presents itself.

I only asked for the moment to come when I might throw aside the garb and habits of poor dreaming Mildred Farley forever and be in truth what I had so often seen myself in fancy, the elegant and gracious lady (Green *Behind* 507).

Mildred sees herself transformed through "garb," with the casting aside of her old clothes an important – and almost instantaneous – step in her transformation from itinerant dressmaker into the Gretorex's wealthy and accomplished daughter and the future wife of Dr. Cameron.

When Mildred puts on the wedding dress that she herself constructed, she is reluctant to look at herself in the mirror but a "glimpse" calms her. "It was not Mildred Farley that I saw, but Genevieve Gretorex – only Genevieve Gretorex" (Green *Behind* 511). The wedding dress

cements her identity. It also temporarily obliterates her past, veiling it, as she is veiled. When Dr. Cameron encounters her moments before their wedding, he does not question her identity as his bride-to-be. Even Dr. Moleworth, who is the only character to penetrate the sisters' exchange and who knows "the rich woman from the poor girl, no matter in what garb she was arrayed," is momentarily confused when he encounters Mildred dressed in Genevieve's wedding gown after the ceremony (Green *Behind* 505). This reinforces the symbolic power contained in such ceremonial garb because it can confuse and mislead even characters who normally reject such trappings.

In assuming Genevieve's identity, Mildred also seems to assume the moral equivocations of her new class, as well. Unlike the male social climber like John Randolph Stone in *That Affair Next Door*, who dispassionately commits a murder to ensure his social deception continues, Mildred perjures herself and disposes of her sister's body after the fact. Such actions are ethical breaches to be sure, but she also sincerely loves Dr. Cameron. But his wealth, taste and lifestyle are equally compelling motivations that drive her to continue her deception to the point where she is suspect of the police and her new husband's affections are threatened. Even when she is caught in a lie, as she is on numerous occasions, she does not come clean. It is only when Gryce has secured incontrovertible physical evidence in the form of letters, personal effects and clothing that conclusively prove Cameron has unwittingly married Mildred and the dead body is that of Genevieve, that she finally gives a full confession. "Complicity," Stephanie Foote notes, "is not a popular model, for it does not merely assume a decidedly unheroic social actor, it assumes a cowardly, self-interested social actor." But as she goes on to observe, "it is in complicity that we can see the compromises people deliberately made with the forces that shaped then, for complicity, far more than transgression, is a privileged vantage point for understanding

historical and social complexity”(9). After Genevieve poisons herself, Mildred resolutely “hide[s] this awful picture of myself” beneath “a heap of clothing [she] had torn down from the closet-pegs in [her] hurry in dressing” and goes through with the fraudulent wedding (Green *Behind* 515). Just as putting on the new clothes helped to obliterate her impoverished past and allow her to assume the mantle of the Gretorex heiress, here they literally serve to “bury [Genevieve]” (Green *Behind* 515). The dead body of her sister also contains an implicit warning about her own fate should the fraud she has perpetrated on the Gretorexes and Dr. Cameron be revealed. She hides the body and later enlists Molesworth’s aid to carrying the body from the home, because its very presence reaffirms the falseness of her own performance. Dr. Molesworth encourages her to confess but Mildred refuses.

I have married [Walter Cameron] and I mean to live with him. He would wish it if he knew. He loves me and there is no Genevieve now. I hurt no one by my action and I save everybody from deep and lasting pain. (Green *Behind* 519)

This spurious logic is a distortion of the natural selflessness that she exhibited with her mother, and does not ring true. She knows that Walter Cameron expects to marry “the daughter of one of the richest and most influential citizens of New York” who will bring him “valuable connections in the present, and a large and unencumbered fortune in the future” (Green *Behind* 1). Her claim of saving him, and her parents “pain” is disingenuous. Instead, she perpetuates the fraud because her unmasking will cost her her newly secured social consequence, as well as a comfortable life with a wealthy man of taste and breeding. The love she feels for her husband serves to heighten her resolve but does not absolve her of her guilt.

The novel also contains a fascinating and rare example of reverse class-climbing³⁰— class dismounting, if you will – in Genevieve Gretorex’s romantic pursuit of Julius Molesworth³¹.

Mildred's ambition and envy of her sister's privileged condition are reciprocated by Genevieve's envy of the physical freedom and social obscurity which she believes Mildred enjoys. She describes her twin's "lot" as "a free one" and writes in her diary of the jealousy she endures towards Mildred as a result (Green *Behind* 504). Genevieve suspects that the "latent energy of [her] soul have been stunted because she has "never known a want" (Green *Behind* 314). She resents the unceasing and onerous social obligations which her position exacts, and chafes under "her mother's over-exacting code of etiquette" (Green *Behind* 4). Unlike Mildred, who dreams of escaping the drudgery of her working class life, Genevieve resents her "monotonous life of ease" and views "the splendours and luxuries" that she lives amongst as "clogs to be shaken off without a pang" (Green *Behind* 314). She pities Mildred and sees her as a "poor, mistaken uneasy souled girl" who has been misled into believing that wealth will soothe her ambitions and satisfy her need for affection and recognition (Green *Behind* 315). Genevieve's rebellion against the role and behaviours of her social class provides a fascinating commentary on how a middle-class writer like Anna Katharine Green viewed the experiences of upper-class women.

The situation contains a strong element of social criticism that suggests that for Green, overt decorativeness and rampant, unthinking material consumption damage an individual's moral complexion in a way that equals, or even exceeds, the rigours of poverty. This criticism further complicates of the earlier sentimental literature's broad mistrust of material culture. Whereas domestic sentimentalists like Alcott viewed consumerism as bad for men and women because of its potential to blunt the development of sympathy and weaken familial bonds, Green seems to be suggesting a further gendered aspect to her criticism with regards to wealth. Blake Holman's character, and his unseemly interest in securing his family's wealth as his own, is only tempered after his marriage to the wholly unmaterialistic Luttra. But characters like Evelyn

Blake and Genevieve Gretorex suffer because of the economic practices of the Gilded Age that women of their class were expected to follow. Predicated on the women of the middle- and upper-classes securing their economic security by serving as “symbolic displays of male economic and social power,” their emotional register is damaged by the social behaviours demanded by their peers as prerequisite of their participation within such elevated circles (Sherman 4). Their ability to sympathize and act morally are repressed by their continued participation in the fashionable, consumer-driven display by which their performance is judged. Their selfishness is therefore unlikely to be tempered as Blake Holman’s was, because their opportunities for meeting, let alone marrying, a self-made or working class man were far less³². Genevieve remarks on the expressive differences between herself, who has been raised in the cold, restrained and socially-conscious Gretorex household, and her sister, who has experienced suffering and sacrifice with their widowed mother. “[H]ow generous she is! how noble and devoted! She makes me feel small sometimes, there is such a sweep to her nature” (Green *Behind* 315). But when Genevieve assumes Mildred’s identity, she maintains the same sense of entitlement that she enjoyed as an heiress. When Molesworth spurns her in her assumed identity, she returns home, expecting Mildred to “give [her] back [herself]” without opposition (Green *Behind* 512). When Mildred protests, Genevieve tries to bribe her by promising to acknowledge her as her sister “when [she is] married and [her] own mistress” and to share her wealth (Green *Behind* 512). Thus, like her adoptive mother, who is able to purchase the daughter that she cannot conceive herself, Genevieve expects to re-purchase the identity she has discarded by means of her money, too, slipping in and out of it like it is simply one more of her incredible dresses. This is perhaps the most concrete example of Balkun’s commodification of the self;

Genevieve lays aside and picks up her identity as though it was an object that could be exchanged for money just like the elaborate dresses that she had Mildred construct.

As an example of detective fiction, the novel explores the question of identity and its intrinsic qualities. Of all the characters in *Behind Closed Doors*, Ebenezer Gryce is the most effective at unravelling the complex relations between the individual characters and seeing Genevieve and Mildred's assumed identities. In keeping with hiring practices at the time, which saw rank and file police officers drawn largely from the working classes, Gryce is a social outsider³³. As Dr. Cameron notes when they are introduced, he is "not what you would perhaps call a gentleman" (Green *Behind* 5). Yet his professional standing does afford him an understanding of the pressures that motivate Mildred, as well as the strictures under which families like the Gretorex and the Camerons operate. Early in the narrative, Gryce is frustrated in his attempts to locate Genevieve Gretorex. She has gone missing a week before her wedding. He traces a woman matching her description to a non-descript hotel but is frustrated by discrepancies between the expected dress and behaviour of the millionaire's daughter that he'd expected to find and the woman he is observing. "[H]er face was that of the missing heiress, but her clothing while answering in a general way to the description... still shows points of difference which an old hand like myself cannot but take note of" (Green *Behind* 23). Later in the novel, Gryce questions the Gretorex's butler and footman, trying to establish the identity of the dead dressmaker who had visited the Gretorex mansion just prior to the wedding. He has learned of the uncanny resemblance between her and the society bride he had been tasked with finding. The sisters were diligent in disguising their faces, in order to prevent anyone from noticing the incredible physical resemblance they shared. Yet even though she was veiled, Peter the footman is still able to place Genevieve-as-Mildred in the mansion at the time of the wedding because of

the clothes she is wearing. Her face plays no part in his identification. The servant has seen the dressmaker wearing the same clothes on previous visits. "I'm tellin ye I wouldn't have known her at all, at all, but for her ould [sic] brown veil and little hand-bag," he confesses to the detective. Like a calling card, the brown veil and embroidered handbag are distinctive marks that Genevieve unwittingly displays despite her attempts at disguise.

Gryce is finally able to unravel the fraught relationship between the dead dressmaker and the New York socialite when he visits the couple during their honeymoon in Washington and recognizes the "strip of passementerie" on the disguised Mildred-as-Genevieve's "silken skirts" as one he has seen previously in the dressmaker's workbasket (Green *Behind* 177). He does not immediately realize that the women have exchanged places, but the distinctive trim serves as the first concrete connection between the two women, who seem to lead entirely disparate lives. As part of his investigative strategy, Gryce sends an undercover female detective to the Cameron's home³⁴. Armed with "bit and pieces" of the fabric and trims, she "compare[s] them on the sly". Mildred-as-Genevieve immediately recognizes the risk which this surreptitious examination raises. "Are you sure the pieces you saw were exactly like the dresses she compared them with?" she demands of the maid who had unknowingly permitted Gryce's agent to enter. The girl says so, and lists all of the unique dresses that the woman examined. She points:

to a superb dinner-dress of grey velvet, "and a piece of trimming such as is on that one,"

[she says] indicating this time a lovely tea gown of light-brown silk. "And I saw her look

very particularly at the white dress...and at the buttons on this coat" (Green *Behind* 178).

When Gryce questions Mildred-as-Genevieve about the likelihood that Genevieve "was in all probability the lady who had profited by this poor girl's handiwork," she tries to downplay his findings. She calls them "the conclusion of a man" and argues about its irrelevance because she

would “suppose there are in this city to-day, twenty ladies with just that trimming on their gowns” (Green *Behind* 182). But it is the specific fabrics which were used to construct the dresses which finally proves Gryce’s point – taken as a whole, the materials used to make the dresses are undeniable hallmarks that prove first that Mildred Farley did sew Genevieve Gretorex’s wedding trousseau and that she has subsequently assumed her identity. And while Mildred-as-Genevieve tries to suggest that the mass marketed nature of the clothes she wears is unimportant, it is her distinctive clothes that ultimately identify both her original and her fraudulent selves.

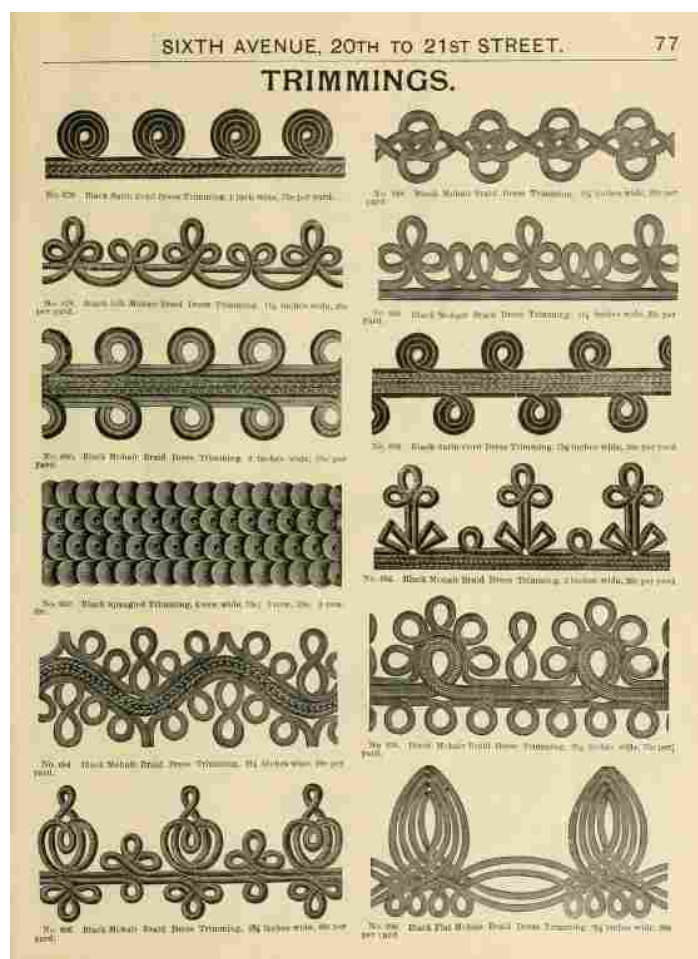


Figure 2 "Trimmings" H. O'Neill Spring/Summer Catalogue 1898

Genevieve and Mildred's transformations are therefore the result of a society transformed by material goods. Acting as hallmarks of social belonging, dress becomes a means of both affirming and transferring identity. But in inhabiting those identities, the sisters' moral outlooks are transformed, too. Awash in commodity culture, they lose the ability to act sympathetically. The unintended consequences which both endure as a result of their social exchange – suicide and police interrogation, respectively – reveal how society, through its deputized agents, the police, work to enforce the worryingly permeable boundaries of class and identity in the nineteenth century. Yet as Green shows, there cannot be two Gretorex heiresses. This is because “[i]n a consumer culture, a copy can itself become a valued commodity, one that can have a direct impact on the value of the original. Not only can the copy call the provenance of the original into question, but it can also redirect capital away from the original when people are able to purchase a facsimile” (McAleer Balkun 3). The “false Genevieve” is thus transformed into an authentic Mildred Cameron, who can live in society but resist its rampant consumerism. Able to unite the faculties of genuine emotion and sincerity with her newly naturalized class behaviour, Mildred's new identity suggests that while identities cannot be mass produced successfully, under the correct sequence of events, they can be transformed into fitting inhabitants of their new milieu.

SOCIAL DECEPTION AND WRONG DOING IN ‘THE RUBY AND THE CALDRON’

For Americans in the nineteenth century, class was coming to be understood “as a culture, as part of who a person ‘really’ was on the inside” as much as it was about the material culture which adorned the individual's outside³⁵. Clothing complicated this understanding because it could be exchanged, remade, purchased, stolen or borrowed. Yet however it was secured, once

on the body, its economic history was largely effaced. In “The Ruby and the Caldron”, the police detective’s investigation into the disappearance of an important jewel is initially stymied when his prime suspect’s dress does not align with his expectations of who would have a motive to steal the valuable jewel he has been tasked with recovering. A valuable ruby owned by an American senator’s wife is lost at a football game. It is recovered by Mr. Deane, poor university student. He is promised a lavish reward of five hundred dollars for his efforts and invited, along with his fiancée and their friend, Miss Glover, to attend a ball being hosted by the wealthy Ashley family. But as the guests begin to arrive, a horse has a fit and the jewel is once again lost. Both the Ashleys and ‘Jennings,’ the detective assigned to the case, believe it stolen³⁶. Suspicion quickly falls on Frances Glover, who was seen stooping to pick something up from the snow in the chaotic aftermath of the carriage incident. Having already met her companions— companions who were both dressed very simply – the detective has already begun to form a theory about the ruby’s theft, predicated on the suspect being “a girl of humble means, willing to sacrifice certain scruples to obtain a little extra money” (*Green Ruby* 126). But his first glimpse of her shows him an “imposing figure [who] might be that of a millionaire's daughter” and he cannot reconcile such a display with criminality (*Green Ruby* 125). Unable to make out Miss Glover’s face, ‘Jennings’ is “obliged...to confine [himself] to a study of her dress and attitude” (*Green Ruby* 125). He discounts any special sartorial knowledge, saying that while he is not “an authority on feminine toilets,” yet in looking at her clothes, he also claims to possess “experience enough to know that such a gown represented not only the best efforts of the dressmaker’s art, but very considerable means on the part of the woman wearing it” (*Green Ruby* 125). Seeing how expensively dressed she is “instantly altered the complexion of [his] thoughts” and makes him back away from his initial theory of her guilt because “how, then, could I associate her, even in

my own mind, with theft? (Green *Ruby* 125). Rather than confront her directly, he returns to the crime scene to search for clues and studies the guests' outerwear. He does not find the missing ruby; instead, he discovers the bill for France Glover's elaborate dress "crumpled, soiled, and tear-stained" (Green *Ruby* 130). This revives his belief in her guilt. The elegant dress that had so baffled him has a price of four hundred and fifty dollars. Jennings categorizes the amount as "enormous" for a "self-supporting girl" whose "father is not called very well off" (Green *Ruby* 130; Green *Ruby* 123). He is certain that worry over how to settle the bill is the motive for what he deems Miss Glover's uncharacteristic theft. Having a daughter roughly the same age, he orchestrates an elaborate ruse that he believes will allow her return the jewel without public shame. He collects and melts the snow from the ground where the jewel disappeared in a large cauldron, and allows the lights to be briefly extinguished. But when the jewel does not emerge as he expects, his forbearance evaporates and he accuses her directly. Her humiliation when she realizes that Jennings knows the truth about her dress and her inability to pay for it overwhelms her. But it is his threat that he will have the hostess, Mrs. Ashley, search her that frightens her even more, since it would irrevocably expose her as a social fraud³⁷.

"Are you going to tell everybody that? Are you going to state publicly that Miss Glover brought an unpaid bill to the party, and that because Mr. Deane was unfortunate enough, or careless enough, to drop and lose the jewel he was bringing to Mrs. Burton she is to be looked upon as a thief, because she stooped to pick up this bill which had slipped inadvertently from its hiding-place? I shall die if you do!" (Green *Ruby* 138).

As Frances Glover points out, the case against her is entirely circumstantial. Yet despite her disavowals, Jennings continues to believe that he has identified the thief. The disjunction between her actual social and economic status and the misrepresentation which he perceives her

as having committed by wearing a “dress whose elegance had so surprised her friends and made [him] for a short time regard her as the daughter of wealthy parents” to a social event like the Ashley’s ball overwhelms the lack of any physical proof (Green *Ruby* 130) Jennings’ conflation of social ambition and criminality leads him to believe that Miss Groves’ willingness to use clothing to perpetuate her social misrepresentation is a clear signal of both her personal culpability and the opportunistic nature of her morals. This is because “to Victorian Americans, hypocrisy was not merely a personal sin, it was a social offense that threatened to dissolve the ties of mutual confidence binding men together” (Halttunen *Confidence* 34). The moral implications of using physical objects like dress in this way are what consolidate sentimentalists’ fears of both the seductive distraction of secular goods, as well as their ability to lead to erroneous social recognition.

Despite the unnamed detective’s certainty, the conclusion of the story reveals the detective’s mistake in making the connection between the problematic acquisition of goods and criminality. Frances was never a thief. Her mistake was a social transgression, not a criminal transgression. Having met the Ashley’s son, Harrison, previously, and developing an interest in him, she had bought the costly dress in an attempt to attract his attention romantically. But such efforts have been entirely misguided. Her status as a social climber is announced by her clothes. Her dress is unbecoming, despite its expense, because it is so overwrought. By wearing it, she has marked herself as an outsider because she has not internalized the performative aspects of the class she is seeking to enter. She lacks the disciplinary knowledge that a ‘natural’ citizen of the upper classes would have in choosing their clothes. “Class was, therefore, signified by more than mere display, economics or style; to move up the social ladder required more than mere imitation of the ‘best’ people. Class was the successful integration of style, money, and social intelligence

into a seamless, never-ending performance” (Foote 25). Frances Glover’s experience reveals the difficulties inherent in any attempt to use material culture for social advancement. When Jennings first saw her, he found her in tears, a circumstance he attributes to her guilt. In reality, it stems from her humiliation. After expending so much effort to secure what she believed to be an appropriately elegant dress, she had inadvertently overheard Harrison Ashley discussing the appearance of “a young girl...dressed in a simple muslin gown” with another guest (Green *Ruby* 146). Initially, Miss Glover had preened, “inwardly contrasting it with her own splendour” (Green *Ruby* 146). But Ashley, as a discerning and ‘naturalized’ member of the upper classes, does not value empty display. This is because he perceives it as pointless ostentation that it signals the wearer’s ignorance of important unspoken nuances of class. “How much better young girls look in simple white than in the elaborate silks suited only to their mothers!” (Green *Ruby* 146) His preference for simplicity reveals to Miss Glover that the social gulf between them cannot be bridged through mere expenditure. Her emotional distress is the result of her recognizing the futility of attempting to use dress as a means of disguising the social gulf between herself and Harrison Ashley.

The truth about the commission of the ‘crime’ is finally revealed by Harrison Ashley, whose burgeoning interest in Frances spurs him to continue searching. Despite his elaborate investigative strategies and interrogation techniques, Jennings cannot solve the case. This is an inversion of the pattern established in *The Leavenworth Case*, when the socially excluded Gryce penetrates the social depths of the upper classes while its naturalized inhabitant, Everett Raymond cannot. It is Harrison Ashley, the amateur – a word that takes on an interesting resonance given his palpable romantic interest in Frances Glover – who ultimately uncovers the ruby’s fate: namely that when Mr. Deane dropped it in the snow, it had been trampled on by one

of the horses and lodged in its hoof. Frances Glover has sacrificed her scruples but not in order to commit theft. Instead, she has mortgaged her future earnings, outstripping her financial means in a futile attempt to impress Harrison Ashley, whose “thoughtless words” have served to highlight the social gulf between them (*Green Ruby* 146). She calls the dress “hateful” and even more than the economic burden it represents, she loathes it because it “has failed to bring” her Harrison Ashley’s affection or notice (*Green Ruby* 139). Once her innocence has been established, she proves that she has learned the futility of emulating the material practices of the upper classes. She returns the dress, offering Madame Dupré the entirety of her savings – one hundred dollars – “if she would take the garment back...she did, and I shall never have to wear that dreadful satin again!” (*Green Ruby* 144) Clearly, the lesson she has learned about the falsity of material culture has come at a considerable financial cost. And it’s no coincidence that the reward offered for the return of Mrs. Burton’s ruby and the outstanding bill for the dress have approximately the same value. Given the genre’s conventions, such symmetry acts as a clue which directs the reader’s attention towards Frances Glover. When Frances tells Detective Jennings that she will be attending the rescheduled ball, he inquires after her plans. She tells him, “I have an old spotted muslin which, with a few natural flowers, will make me look festive enough. One does not need fine clothes when one is happy” (*Green Ruby* 144). Much like “the dreamy far-off smile” with which she delivers these words, the message to a socially ambitious reader is also “more eloquent than words.” Neither the reader nor Jennings is “surprised when some time later I read of her engagement to Mr. Ashley” (*Green Ruby* 144). Frances Glover’s experience, like Mildred Farley’s, has taught her the futility of emulating the expansive materialism of the upper classes and the importance of emotional authenticity.

SOCIAL CLIMBING, MATERIAL CULTURE AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF EXPOSURE

Not all of Green's social climbers meet with such success or are able to overcome their moral shortcomings. Unlike Luttra Schoenmaker, whose unassailable character serves as a catalyst for moral transformation; Mildred Farley, who comes to see through the emptiness of consumerism and develop into a resolute character of discernment; or Frances Glover, who learns the futility of emulating the sartorial practices of the upper classes when she does not understand the subtle nuances expressed therein, the failed class climbers that are encountered in Green's novels continue to view the acquisition and display of material culture as the sole purpose of their efforts. There are two important examples of a failed social climber in *That Affair Next Door*. Louise Van Burnam is the first; Ruth Oliver is the second. Both women fail to secure their aims for different reasons, but in both instances, their relationship to material culture plays a large part. Although Louise does not descend to the level of either Harwell Trueman or Randolph Stone, who each commit murder in pursuit of their class climbing goals, Green draws a clear connection between Louise's avarice and her untimely accidental death. In the novel, her character is described as "sly as well as passionate," and her marriage is one of explicit material convenience (Green *Affair* 290). Louisa, who worked as a nursery maid prior to her marriage, frequently chides her husband about their straightened circumstances. Despite the vast improvement which this situation represents for a woman who had previously supported herself on the negligible salary of a domestic servant, she now views living in rented accommodations far from New York as beneath her. Her unflattering association with unthinking consumption is emphasised when Gryce describes her as being "made up of mean materials" (Green *Affair* 291). Her lack of love for her husband is emphasized by the revelation that "she was not so much in

love with Howard as he was with her” (*Green Affair* 290). Her reason for entering into the marriage is therefore not love but acquisitiveness. Her decision to marry Howard “for what he could give her or what she thought he could give her” mark her as an opportunist, whose ambitions are untampered by either moral restraint or naturally refined taste (*Green Affair* 291).

During the initial investigation, there is a great deal of confusion over the identity of the body found in the Van Burnam home and much of the early investigation is occupied with attempting to resolve this question. Louise openly disdained American made clothes. Eager to be accepted into the Van Burnam family, she chose expensive and elaborate French made fashions in an attempt to fit in with her husband’s family. But like Frances Glover, her attempts are in vain because Louise lacks the appropriate taste to select the clothes because she bases her decisions solely on price. This marks her immediately as an social outsider. To a character like Miss Butterworth, who was born into the upper classes and is intimately familiar with its rarified and exclusive traditions, Louise’s clothes appear “grotesque and absurd” and something which immediately marks the wearer as an outsider (*Green Affair* 64). And unlike Mildred Farley, who copies her sister’s behaviour as well as her dress, Louise’s desire to be recognized socially leads her to commit serious social transgressions. Not only does this alienate her husband but her decision to hide inside the Van Burnam mansion is what leads to her death. In the dark house, late at night, Randolph Stone cannot distinguish between his wife and Louise, and mistakenly stabs the latter.

Even before her death, Louise Van Burnam’s self-interest, her aggressive infiltration of a social sphere that does not accept her advances and her untrammelled consumerism mark her out as an unsympathetic class climber. During their investigation, the police show Howard Van Burnam a number of physical clues, including a small scar on the victim’s ankle, the colour of

her hair and the shape of her hands which they believe support the conclusion that the body found in the family's mansion is Louise Van Burnam. But her husband "absolutely refuse[s] to acknowledge" the body as that of his wife (*Green Affair* 52). Howard bases his claim on two facts.

I have examined the clothing on this body you have shown me, and not one article of it came from my wife's wardrobe; nor would my wife go, as you have informed me this woman did, into a dark house at night with any other man than her husband (*Green Affair* 52)

He persists in this position, arguing again under cross-examination at the inquest that the murder victim cannot be his wife because his "wife would never wear the clothes I saw on the girl whose dead body was shown to me" (128). But when he is shown "the multi-colored hat" that Miss Butterworth had discovered in the closet, he is appalled.

"Is it your wife's hat?" persist[s] the Coroner with very little mercy. "Do you recognize it for the one in which she left Haddam?"

"Would to God I did not!" (*Green Affair* 139)

For Howard Van Burnam, his wife's body is generic, and the similarities which the police point towards are invalid as a result. But her clothes are unique. When she is stripped of her clothing, her identity evaporates. Made, as Gryce has said, of mean materials, without the gaudy trappings of consumerism, she ceases to be an identifiable individual. Instead, she becomes a collection of disparate clothing: a tasteless hat, a handful of rings, a striped silk blouse. Without these items, she cannot be known, either by police or by the society she hoped to enter.

But if Louise Van Burnam courts notoriety, using fashion to unsuccessfully infiltrate the social sphere she aspires to, the other socially ambitious figure in *That Affair Next Door* does

exactly the opposite. Like Louise Van Burnam and Luttra Schoenmaker in *A Strange Disappearance*, Olive Randolph's true identity is obscured by a false name for the majority of the novel. But Olive's anonymity extends further than merely adopting a new name. She also tries to obliterate her identity by discarding her clothes. Narrowly surviving her estranged husband's attempt to murder her, Ruth quickly realizes that her continued survival depends on convincing him of his success. To this end, she exchanges her unremarkable, mass-produced blue serge dress for the tasteless black and white silk worn by with the dead Louise. She hopes that because "the woman lying before [her] was sufficiently like [her]self," it would help in "preserving [her] secret and keeping from [her] would-be slayer the knowledge of [her] having escaped" (*Green Affair* 388). Stripping the body, she "dragged down the cabinet upon [Louise] so that her face might lose its traits and her identification become impossible" (*Green Affair* 390). Ruth's efforts are certainly done from a sense of self-preservation, but like Mildred's compulsive burial of her sister beneath the mounds of clothing in *Behind Closed Doors*, they are also a form of self-murder. Although Randolph Stone's actions were directed at the wrong woman, he had intended to kill Ruth. His immorality sounds the death knell for her love and faith in him because "[b]y killing [her] love and faith in him he had murdered the better part of myself" (*Green Affair* 388). She recovers her sense of self by publicly asserting *his* guilt, both as a murderer and as a bigamist but she is unsuccessful as a social climber. Indeed, none of the socially ambitious figures in this novel achieve their goals: Louise Van Burnam is the victim of a violent crime; Randolph Stone is exposed as a murderer and bigamist and denied his lucrative marriage to Miss Althorpe; and Ruth Oliver suffers through a long-term abandonment, and endures bodily threat, social humiliation and severe emotional trauma as a result of her husband's actions. She does not secure a prosperous marriage and lacking the financial resources

enjoyed by Miss Althorpe, her future is filled with a large degree of economic uncertainty. As Miss Butterworth recounts at the conclusion of the novel, her “feeling for me and her gratitude to Miss Althorpe are the only treasures left her out of the wreck of her life” (Green *Affair* 399). This again underlines the importance that Green places on emotional sincerity, with Butterworth’s use of the word ‘treasure’ emphasising their lucrative and central importance to her survival. Miss Butterworth’s decision to allow Olive to take up residence in her home is done because she recognizes Olive’s innate moral character, and she promises the reader that despite the trauma the young woman has endured, “it shall be [her] business to make [Olive’s affection] lasting ones” (Green *Affair* 399).

As clever as Olive Randolph or Ruth Oliver’s attempts to mislead Randolph Stone are about her continued survival, her efforts to disavow her past are ultimately futile. This is because her identity is ultimately inscribed into the very clothes she has worn. In planning his wife’s murder, Randolph Stone took a number of precautions which he hoped would ensure that his wife’s body would be unidentifiable. He clips the store label from the gossamer veil that he forces his wife to drape across herself while they are in public or riding in the cab, purchases her a new suit of mass produced clothes from Altman’s department store and discards her old underclothes because they are marked with her initials. But he does not understand how less overt labels may be read by a discerning social participant like Miss Butterworth. This is because, like Louise’s ostentatious hat or Luttra’s simple calico frock, Olive’s true identity has been worn into her clothes, even as she has worn the clothes. These physical traces are now part of the clothes: where she has been, how she cares for her clothes, the expense or cheapness of the material, all speak to her personal experiences. When Miss Butterworth traces the bundle that Randolph and Ruth carried prior to their arrival at the Van Burnam mansion on the night of the

murder, she confidently anticipates that “by means of the quality of the articles...the question which had been agitating [her] for hours could be definitely decided” (*Green Affair* 215).

Although Butterworth’s initial theory about romantic rivals proves to be incorrect, the young woman’s identity is still discernible to a socially penetrating eye like Miss Butterworth. Studying “the two or three garments” left at the Chinese laundry, Butterworth describes how “the articles thus revealed told their story in a moment” (*Green Affair* 215). The clothes are marked with “two letters stamped in indelible ink on the band of a skirt.” When she makes out the initials “O.R.,” Butterworth is convinced she has determined “the minx’s initials” (*Green Affair* 215). Yet even as she uncovers this important clue, she is surprised by the simple underclothes. “They were far from fine, and had even less embroidery on them than I expected” (*Green Affair* 215). Showing themselves to be the clothes of a woman of modest means, whose money and efforts aren’t directed to needless show, but to practical longevity, the garments Miss Butterworth uncovers begin to hint at the true nature of Ruth’s character, just as they begin the process of pointing to her true identity as well.

Like Mildred Farley, Ruth’s account of her early life shows her longstanding interest in social climbing. “Before I was old enough to know the difference between poverty and riches, I began to lose all interest in my simple home duties, and to cast longing looks at the great school buildings, where girls like myself learned to speak like ladies and play piano” (*Green Affair* 369). Here, Ruth, and Green, are making yet another clear point about the learned, rather than inherent, nature of social performance. The musical skills and elocution that Ruth hopes to learn are examples of what Mullins terms “other-directed” social performance, the learning of which could grant her potential entry into a higher social class (28). Ruth’s experiences also show how much effort was required to effect such a transformation and that such skills are not innate and

require years of sustained effort to achieve. Shortly after their marriage, she and John Randolph encounter “a lady who had known Mr. Randolph elsewhere,” and Ruth is struck both by “how attractive she looked in quiet colors and with only a simple ribbon on her hat” and her “way of speaking which made my tones sound harsh”(Green *Affair* 372). When the woman meets Ruth, she is visibly surprised Ruth’s costume, which marks her as a woman of the lower classes. Humiliated, Randolph rips a spray of flowers from Ruth’s hat and insists she remove a “silk neckerchief which [she] had regarded as the glory of [her] bridal costume” (Green *Affair* 372). She immediately realizes that “he was trying to make [her] look more like the lady [they] had passed” and attempts to argue with him, pointing out that it is not “these things that make the difference...but [her] voice and way of walking and speaking” (Green *Affair* 372). She implores him to “give [her] money and let me be educated” (Green *Affair* 372). She recognizes the gap that exists between them but argues that her love for him will be the source of her transformation “and from such a heart you ought to expect a lady to grow, and there will. Only give me the chance, John; only let me learn to read and write” (Green *Affair* 373). But Randolph refuses, sneering that “You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear” and soon leaves, “without making any arrangements for [her] education” (Green *Affair* 373). His reaction serves as proof of the precariousness of his own social standing as well as his ruthless, selfish nature. It stands in evident contrast to the paternal and emotional acceptance of the social shortcomings of their wives exhibited by Walter Cameron and Holman Blake. Their impeccable social credentials allow them to extend and mitigate their spouses’ lack of social capital.

Ruth Oliver’s determination to make her own way in the world after Randolph abandons her is another important distinction between herself and Louise Van Burnam. The former exploits Howard’s passion for her own ends. While Ruth is initially misled by passion, she

ultimately learns from her experience. Her efforts at improvement are internally directed. She spends two years educating herself. When her husband's letters finally cease, she believes she will "pass the remainder of [her] days in widowhood and desolation" (*Green Affair* 374). But critically, her efforts at self-improvement do not cease when he abandons her. She did not

lose [her] old ambition of making [herself] as worth of him as circumstances would permit.

I read only the best books and I allowed myself to become acquainted with only the best people, and as I saw myself liked by such the awkwardness of my manner gradually disappeared, and I began to feel that the day would come when I should be universally recognized as a lady. (*Green Affair* 374)

The recognition she seeks is external and while, by the conclusion of the novel, she has internalized many of the values of the upper classes. But "the notion that taste is a part of one's inheritance rather than something one can learn is located as eloquently in the gaps...as it is in what they say," and her internalization can only be considered a success if it is judged acceptable by those who have already naturalized the behaviours she is emulating (Tange 18).

After being located under her assumed name at Miss Althorpe's, where she has been hired as the socialite's private secretary, Ruth agrees to help to identify Louise Van Burnam's murderer for the NYPD. But she resists their attempts to have her simply name the murderer. Instead, she solicits Miss Butterworth's assistance to buy "a handsome dress" which she intends to wear as a wedding gown (*Green Affair* 353). The importance of a wedding dress is underlined by how frequently Green uses it in stories that feature social climbers: Luttra Schoenmaker's blue silk dress, with its fine lace collar, is used to confirm her identity as Blake Holman's wife; Mildred Farley's wedding marks her social transformation into both Dr. Cameron's wife and the Gretorex heiress. It also conveys a new marital identity, separate from a young woman's paternal

one. But Ruth has no paternal figure who is willing or able to make such a purchase. Her father is dead, and her husband has abandoned her. She spends her own money, earned as a typist and secretary, on her wedding dress. Miss Butterworth, knowing Ruth's limited financial means, is reluctant to participate in the process. As an individual who rarely participates in conspicuous consumption, she finds watching the young woman her "expend her hoarded savings on such frivolities...absolutely painful" (*Green Affair* 355). But Ruth insists that everything she purchases "must all be rich and handsome." Miss Butterworth reassures her that "If you have money enough, there will be no trouble about that." Speaking "like a millionaire's daughter," she replies "Oh, I have money." (*Green Affair* 353; 355). This determination, and her use of clothing to convey a change in her status, would seem, on its surface, to mark Ruth as yet another socially ambitious figure like Frances Glover who intends to use her purchased finery to secure further status.

In contrast, Ruth's resolute independence, and her determination to be economically self-sufficient distinguish her from the other social climbers in the novel. When she puts on the elaborate wedding gown, she is not using it to further her own social aims. Instead, the costume is used to expose the perfidy of her bigamous husband. She wears it as a material rebuke to his own faithless behaviour. The "white satin [evening dress]" is entirely appropriate attire; Ruth is already married to Randolph Stone and has been for five years. Unlike Louise Van Burnam, Ruth does not make any claim to understanding the social nuances of fashionable dress. She accepts her position outside of the inner circles. She defers entirely to Miss Butterworth, who has previously been mocked by the more fashionable Caroline and Isabella Van Burnam for her old-fashioned choices, saying, "You know what a young girl requires to make her look like a lady. I want to look so well that most critical eye will detect no fault in my appearance" (*Green Affair*

354). Critically, unlike Louise Van Burnam's showy exultation and illogical refusal to wear American fashion, when the wedding costume arrives, Ruth regards the richly adorned dress with "a look of passionate abhorrence" (*Green Affair* 362). She views her pending entry into "great society" with distaste and she confides in her landlady that she is "neither happy nor well, if I do go to weddings, and have new dresses, and --" (*Green Affair* 362). She does not wear the elaborate dress to disguise her past or as an attempt to infiltrate a new, higher class on a permanent basis. Instead, her wedding dress is a means to an end that allows her to meet her husband and condemn him publicly.

In a society where fashion was used to evaluate and validate claims of class membership, and to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate claimants, the fact that Ruth Oliver, a poor, undereducated young woman, and Ella Althorpe, a rich and socially distinguished heiress, cannot be distinguished because of their gowns is incredibly important. By using Miss Butterworth as a social mentor, Ruth Oliver evades the judgement and exclusion meted out to Louise Van Burnam. Ruth's own efforts at improvement and her recognition that her understanding of the social nuance is incomplete contradict the normal patterns of social climbing. In situations where "the authentic – and by extension the inauthentic – is associated with the visual... , it can be seen and identified by specific markings, traits and characteristics" that distinction is obliterated here because the authentic and inauthentic bride cannot be told apart (McAleer Balkun 2). Indeed, Ruth has taken meticulous care to make such distinctions impossible, urging Miss Butterworth to make her choices as if they were to be worn by "Mr. Van Burnam's daughter" – in other words, a wealthy, socially prominent young woman exactly like Althorpe (*Green Affair* 354). Because Ruth's interruption of the wedding between Randolph Stone and Ella Althorpe occurs at the altar in "the spot reserved for Miss Althorpe," the question

of legitimacy – marital *and* social – is immediately complicated (*Green Affair* 365). This is because in this case, and despite her flawless social credentials, Ella Althorpe is the inadvertent transgressor, tricked by Randolph Stone into usurping Ruth Oliver’s position as his legal wife. Ruth uses the wedding veil “which completely hid her face” to surprise her husband and ensure that he does not escape her public denunciation (*Green Affair* 365). The veil allows her to continue to obscure her identity, in the same way that her redressing of the body allowed her to escape the Van Burnam mansion, while allowing her to enact her vengeance on her murderous husband in the very rarified circles that he had so assiduously plotted to enter. Her plan reveals not only his criminality but also his fraudulent identity as a social climber willing to commit murder to achieve his goals.

Finally, it is interesting that in a novel that pays such minute attention to female dress, repeatedly describing, cataloging and pricing the clothes worn by characters at all levels of society, from the immigrant scrubwoman to the New York incomparable, that the same attention is not paid to perhaps the most shocking example of a social climber, Randolph Stone. For instance, the clothing Randolph wears is not detailed at all, either at the wedding or during any of Miss Butterworth’s earlier meetings at the inquest or at Miss Althorpe’s home. Instead, Green focuses on “his depravity” and his physical reactions to his ‘dead’ wife’s revelations (*Green Affair* 366). The only instance where his clothes are discussed in detail during Ruth’s final summary of events at the conclusion of the novel. Conscious of his fine clothes and fearful of ruining them in an impending rainstorm, Stone had borrowed an “old duster” that hung in the basement of the Van Burnam offices (*Green Affair* 379). But in a moment that recalls his panic at Ruth’s inappropriate clothes, his vanity leads him to fear meeting anyone who might recognize him dressed while so shabbily. This leads him to take a circuitous route through a less

fashionable portion of the city. When he is accidentally reunited with his wife on the streets of New York, he is “the idol of society...on the verge of unity himself to a woman...who would make him the envied possessor of millions,” and her return threatens everything (*Green Affair* 375). His greed and his self-interest lead him to plot his wife’s murder, feigning their reconciliation in order to lull her into complacency and make her murder more straightforward.

The importance of dress in this case also extends to the way the murder was committed and the difficulties which the police encountered in trying to identify the man who had accompanied Ruth Oliver to the hotel and purchased her new clothes. The anonymity offered by the “shabby but protecting garment” serves as the means which allow the now-distinguishable Randolph to hide in plain sight and permit him to undertake the plot to murder his first wife. Randolph’s own more modest roots were already known and so his decision to hide from his peers is illogical, and wholly driven by his own insecurities. At the beginning of the novel, while watching him testify at the inquest, Miss Butterworth described Stone’s improved social consequence openly. She notes “how he had raised himself to his present enviable position in society in the short space of five years” before describing him as “elegantly made” and exhibiting characteristics that spoke of “great cultivation and a deliberate intent to please” (*Green Affair* 156). It is clear from this description and others, that Randolph Stone devotes a great of attention to maintaining his standing amongst his adopted milieu. But the stolen duster does not just hide him from the notice of those he would hope to consider his peers. It also allows him to become anonymous and avoid being recognized in the second-rate hotel to which he takes his wife to at the outset of his plans to murder her. As Ruth herself recounts,

It was only in such an unfashionable house as this he would be likely to pass unrecognized.

How with his markedly handsome features and distinguished bearing he managed so to

carry himself as to look like a man of inferior breeding, I can no more explain than I can the singular change which took place in him when once he found himself in the midst of the crowd which lounged about this office. From a man to attract all eyes he became at once a man to attract none, and slouched and looked so ordinary that I stared at him in astonishment, little thinking that he had assumed this manner as a disguise (*Green Affair* 380).

The shabby coat allows Stone to transform himself, disguising the very characteristics he has worked so assiduously to acquire. He is any man in the duster, his average height and hair colouring making him one of many, indistinguishable and forgettable, able to disappear in public and to discard his identity as a husband as readily as he discards the coat he wore to commit it. Indeed, Ruth Oliver ultimately lays the blame for “John Randolph’s temptation to murder” on this very coat.

Had he gone out without it, he would have taken his usual course up Broadway ...he would never have dared, in his ordinary fine dress, conspicuous as it made him, to have entered upon those measures, which,...lead to disgrace, if they do not end in a felon’s cell.” (*Green Affair* 379)

Already aware of his moral shortcomings, since he abandoned her ruthlessly to achieve his own advancement, Ruth still sees her husband’s murderous act as an extraordinary outcome. It is also important to note that Green’s position is not a classist one. She is not arguing that upper class people, in their upper-class clothing, are morally superior to individuals in shabby garb. In Green’s fiction, the wealthy commit crimes as readily, if not more so, than the poor³⁸. Instead, the duster becomes a tool for Randolph. In his expensive clothing he is distinct and memorable because his clothes are distinct and memorable; in the worn coat he is anonymous and

forgettable because his clothes are anonymous and forgettable. *That Affair Next Door* thus becomes the ultimate inversion of Alger's rags-to-riches myth. Like those stories, "a change in clothing usually precedes or serves a catalyst for, rather than following and expressing the transformation of self" (Elahi 33). But unlike those reassuring tales, Stone's change of clothing is the catalyst for his degradation, not his redemption.

CONCLUSION

In the end, fashion has been understood most often as a vehicle for materialist and consumerist display in fiction such as Green's. This is especially true of nineteenth-century American fashion, with its close association with conspicuous consumption and gendered performance that arose in this period. The women in Green's fiction who used clothing in their attempt to improve their social standing and material experience make choices that implicate them in the genre's larger investigative process. Their moral fitness is scrutinized as part of the narrative's inquiry, just as their costumes are scrutinized by those who would deny their social efforts. The concern which feminist scholars have expressed about the objectified female figure and the "symbolic displays of male economic and social power" is also complicated by the fact that it is largely women who are engaging in these behaviours, not men (Sherman 4).

Anthropologists and social scientists like Arjun Appadurai and Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood have interpreted such displays as a form of social exchange that make "visible a particular set of judgments in the fluid process of classifying persons and events" (Douglas and Isherwood 67). Political and economic critics contest this, and argue that "fictional objects become exchangeable figures used in the novel's symbolic system to make a point about the mechanicalness, one-dimensionality, and deadness of industrialized people" (Freedgood 141).

But there are limitations with all of these approaches. Victoria de Grazia points out the problem the gendered nature that underlie many of these arguments to various degrees:

That the female figure should lend itself to such diametrically different interpretations of the meaning of consumption, and of bourgeois society more generally, returns us to the complex problem of relating metaphors and meaning to social change, of linking the imaginary world around consumption with the structural changes giving rise to modern consumer society (21).

I agree with de Grazia. Certainly, such approaches are valid but these positions ignore the objects themselves, and insist on viewing such objects metaphorically rather than representationally. In this chapter, I have tried to depict how the shift towards the representational value of objects, rather than its use or exchange value in Anna Katharine Green's work is important because it "enables a fuller understanding of women's participation within nineteenth-century political economy" (Langland 6). This serves to acknowledge that, far from being merely symbolic figures of male economic success or passive and undiscerning consumers, authors like Green were "active in *producing* representations" of the middle-class throughout the period, even if such production must be recognized as fluid and multidimensional (Langland 6). By focusing attention on the clothing that socially ambitious characters like Mildred Farley, Ruth Oliver, Frances Glover and Luttra Schoenmaker wear as they navigate the fictional reflections of complex real-life realities, it suggests important, and sometimes contradictory, ways in which social status, criminality and moral performances were understood by nineteenth and early twentieth-century Americans in the context of material culture. Some of the social climbers encountered in Green's texts undertake acts that are unquestionably criminal: Randolph Stone is a murderer and a bigamist. Mildred Farley is an imposter who hid her sister's suicide and lied to

the police about the body and her own identity. But Ruth Oliver, Luttra Schoenmaker and Frances Glover are not. They are instead victims of circumstance, attempting to circumvent the situation of their birth, their economic power or their upbringing to improve their circumstance and marry the man they love by adopting clothing that signals a different social station than the one they currently occupy. The clothing they wear to accomplish this is not something merely external, to be put on or off at a whim, nor is it an empty or symbolically inert practice. It is both a clue to the resolution of the mystery that the text challenges the reader to solve *and* a vehicle by which their transformation into their new identity can be forged. The way that these garments function both on and off the bodies has, in Green's fiction, a direct and overt relationship to the characters' varied successes and failures to socially integrate. The clothes and textiles that that socially ambitious characters wear are transgressive by virtue of their very existence. They challenge the period's social security by proving the unreliability of relying on visible signals of material culture to deduce social standing. Ultimately, "clothing – or in the more evocative term of the period, costume – has a central place in the crime and its investigation" in these texts because they abound with "elaborate proliferations of mistaken identity and concern about social climbing" (Nickerson 105). In their attempts to naturalize their position, social climbers adopted or consume many of the same objects as the group which they aspired to enter, even as the latter group attempted to elude their emulation by the continually moving target of what was considered fashionable or worthy of reproduction. Expressions of material culture like fashion were used both as an entry point and an exclusionary device, such that any one "who succeeded in crossing the fashion barrier...could then use fashion to exclude applicants who followed" (Halttunen *Confidence* 39). In their attempts to naturalize their position, social climbers adopted or consume many of the same objects as the group which they aspired to enter, even as the latter

group attempted to elude their emulation by the continually moving target of what was considered fashionable or worthy of reproduction.

CHAPTER 2

“Nature Warped By Solitude”: Male Hoarders, Moral Character and Interior Design

in *Behind Closed Doors*, *Dr. Izard* and *The Millionaire Baby*

It was not their agreeableness that won me, but the fact that Mr. Barrows' personal belongings had not yet been moved, and that for a short time at least I should find myself in possession of his library, and face to face with the same articles of taste and study which had surrounded him in his lifetime, and helped to mould, if not to make, the man. I should thus obtain a knowledge of his character... there being in every little object that marked his taste a certain individuality and purpose... but which, in ways like this, must speak, and speak loudly too, of its own inward promptings and tendency.

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As much as the dress and clothing discussed in Chapter 1 allowed for the possibility of material culture serving to assist the surreptitious efforts of individuals seeking to improve their social standing, the clothes that they adopted in such efforts still offer a limited depiction of a person's relationship with physical objects. Clothes are an intimate and personal form of material self-expression. Even within the burgeoning era of mass production, what someone chooses to wear, regardless of the method of production, reveals how they have internalized the values embodied by clothing. Moving from the individual body towards its place within the domestic sphere, “it is the material culture within our home,” Andrew Miller writes, “that appears as both our appropriation of the larger world and often as the representation of that world within our private domain” (*Behind* 1). Like the clothes used to adjudicate social status, a home's décor was a critical aspect of social performativity during the era but that performance is necessarily based on reciprocal social interactions that are absent from costume because of the home's explicit other-directed nature. The contents of a home are a critical site of investigation within the mystery genre itself: the room of a victim may be searched for clues to the identity of their

killer, or the space that a criminal inhabits for proof of their wrong-doing. The architectural aspects of the American home will be discussed in Chapter 3. In this chapter, I will focus on the acquisition, display and maintenance of the male-owned home.

The decoration of the home was a veritable mania for Anglo-American homeowners in the period and as a result, makes the consideration of material culture's intersection with the domestic sphere a necessity. The internalization of the social protocols that governed the decoration of the home function differently than those of clothing versus those governing the furniture and personal objects on display in the nineteenth-century home.

Within realist literature, of which detective fiction is generally classed, the focus has typically been constrained to examples of successful, aesthetically pleasing design, while excluding examples of disorder and disarray³⁹. Honoré de Balzac's collector, Sylvain Pons, and Henry James' Mrs. Gereth, whose carefully curated art objects in *The Spoils of Poynton* (1896) are discussed in exhaustive detail within the narrative, are only two of the best known of these. Yet the focus on purposeful collection, motivated by aesthetic discernment and curatorial intent, sidelines the wide range of trinkets, knick-knacks and bric-à-brac that also appeared in realist novels. These objects, while lacking the qualities of rarity or economic value, constitute a far larger portion of the material world, even though they are discussed critically with far less frequency.⁴⁰ Elaine Freedgood believes that such cultural practices belong not to consumer culture but to an earlier, intermediary stage which she terms 'thing culture'. She believes that "thing culture survives in those marginal or debased cultural forms and practices in which apparently mundane or meaningless objects can suddenly take on or be assigned value and meaning: the flea market, the detective story, the lottery, the romantic comedy" (8). Using this definition, Green's use of material culture aligns with Freedgood's argument very closely, and it

is the random accumulation of goods, rather than the curated or domestically-oriented counterpart, which appears in the majority of Green's mid-career novels. Although her best known novels such as *The Leavenworth Case* (1878) and *That Affair Next Door* (1897) are both set in New York City's most luxurious homes and peopled by an elevated social circle, by the late 1880s, another important thematic element was emerging in Green's work: the presence of hoarding and hoarders. This newly emergent theme saw the investigations exploring disordered spaces and uncontrolled displays of material objects, alongside the ethical implications of such spaces. The chaotic disregard for objects and domestic norms that her hoarders and misers exhibit towards their own possessions is a distinct counterpoint to the intentional collection and aesthetically informed display that appear in the realist literature of both her American and British counterparts, as well as her own better known domestic detective fiction.

This thematic pattern has been overlooked by critics until now despite the close association between hoarding and unconstrained acquisition of material objects, it is highly relevant within the context of my dissertation. The more common approach has been instead to consider characters whose attitudes and display of material goods showcase what Stephanie Foote terms "the internalization of social protocols" rather than those who reject them. Attempting to rebalance this inequity, this chapter will therefore discuss characters in the novels and short fiction of Anna Katharine Green who have *abnormal* relationships with domestic objects, namely through hoarding, material deprivation and miserly behaviours (23). Within the context of American social change during the era, the depiction of homes that failed to adhere to middle-class norms of cleanliness, order and taste were, I argue, as potentially disruptive as the social climbers' attempts to adopt the dress and behaviours of those they saw as their social superiors. In the latter, there is no doubt that the parvenue admires and acknowledges the

potential power inherent in adopting these social norms, even if they may not enjoy uniform success in internalizing the attendant social messages contained therein. But hoarders and misers are potentially more disruptive than social climbers because they are proof writ large that it is possible to live without adhering to their peers norms. That their life may be unpleasant or uncomfortable when considered against the norms they are rejecting is also subjective and culturally determined. Individuals who expressed resistance to the socially sanctioned practices of ‘typical’ home occupancy also reveals important information about the unspoken conventions and scope of the rules which normally governed such relationships and the consequences which they faced if they were to eschew them. The repudiation of the earlier consumptive norms that emerges in these fictions therefore suggests a critical social shift is being documented through Green’s fiction, as America moves gradually from the post-civil War society of ‘things’ to a modern society of formless economic exchange.

Linked to this unusual disruption of the collection and display of physical objects that occurs in the hoarder’s home there is also the juxtaposition of gender that occurs in this chapter to consider further. While the social climbers in the first chapter were women, here the characters under discussion are professional, middle-class men. If the home, as Miller says, is a stage on which the curatorial choices of its inhabitants play a large role in fostering the reciprocal social exchanges that cement social practice and norms, then a stage without the appropriate props, or worse, with no props at all, represents a serious disruptive force. Nineteenth-century Americans lionized the collection, cataloguing and display of objects, tasteful and otherwise, within their home⁴¹. Such collections, as well as the decoration and care of the home, have typically been coded feminine—the exceptions were generally classical art and scientific collections by amateur scientists, and certain spaces that were considered male preserves such as

the office, the dining room and the billiard parlour. The close association of the domestic space, including its decoration, with middle- and upper-class women is typical of much of the critical work on domesticity done to date and the focus on male interactions of the domestic space offers an important development in thinking about the design and display of domestically-purposed material objects. Yet the normative male identity of the period, relies even more so, I would argue, on the juxtaposition of public and private spaces. “The doctrines of separate spheres, which has been more dogmatically asserted by modern scholars than it ever was by the Victorians themselves, is particularly misleading here because it loses sight of the distinctively masculine privilege of enjoying access to both the public and the private sphere” (Tosh 77). The bachelors who appear in Green’s texts, with their homes in disarray, and living without the defining influence of a wife and children, are anathema to the larger society. In a world reliant on the seemingly stable binary of public and private space, their professional identities are unmoored by a concomitant anchor within the domestic sphere. Their reluctance to participate in the domestic demarcation inherent in home ownership and ritual therefore represent an insidious threat and a potentially destabilizing influence on their obedient male peers.

Each of the characters under consideration in this chapter each express domestic disruption in different ways, but Dr. Julius Molesworth in *Behind Closed Doors* (1888), Dr. Izard in the eponymous 1895 novella and Dr. Poole in *The Millionaire Baby* (1902) all reject the norms of their peers’ domestic arrangements in favour of living in barren, uncomfortable and decrepit spaces. Linking such medical practitioners to the domestic space seems, on its surface, counterintuitive. Doctors, especially doctors in detective fiction, are most often viewed as the acme of logical, scientific masculinity. But Green’s choice to explore disruptive domesticity through the figure of the doctor actually makes sense when considered from the standpoint of

material culture and domesticity. Doctors and ministers were one of the few male professions who continued to work from the home in large numbers after the advent of the industrial revolution and the increasing specialization of professional occupation in the capitalist economies of America and England⁴². Exploiting the practices of investigation and evaluation inherent in the genre, Green's writing throws into relief the underlying opinion that the domestic disorder that these men endure is not merely a matter of their class or social standing, a lack of funds, or even lack of a female influence within their respective homes, but rather a manifestation of significant ethical shortcomings within each man's character. These shortcomings are amplified and reflected in the objects they choose to surround themselves with within their homes, too. The medical profession has espoused moral probity as being among its highest virtues since Galen. The exhibition of repeated and sustained ethical and criminal behaviours that occur within these three novels is also of interest within the context of detective fiction norms because medical practitioners were among the earliest fictional protagonists used in many notebook cases from the 1830s and 1840s⁴³, and the example set by Dr. John Watson, the narrator of the Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes series, would seem to suggest a high degree of trust and respect towards doctors exists within detective fiction as a whole⁴⁴. In Green's fiction however, members of the medical profession generally fulfil very minor roles, providing routine forensic or medical evidence to the police detectives or assessing a suspect's sanity rather than actually being involved in the investigation itself. Only one, an unnamed *female* doctor who appears in the 1890 short story *A Mysterious Case*, works as a detective⁴⁵. Narrating the mystery in the first person, the doctor is finally able to identify the individual who is poisoning her patient and bring her to justice. Otherwise, doctors who appear in anything beyond a background role act as criminals, committing a range of crimes including blackmail,

manslaughter, theft of a body and treason. Doctors, as a result of their professional abilities, were granted unusual access to both the normally private middle-class home and the bodies housed within the home, too. The betrayal engendered by their actions in Green's novels, both from a medical and a domestic standpoint, is therefore even sharper and more acute.

Medical practitioners close association with domestic space also makes the shocking "material incongruity" of their own homes that much more unexpected. As I will show in my analysis, their domestic spaces exhibit therefore reflect Green's lifelong belief in the characterological morality of these characters' possessions (Shears and Harrison 5). Throughout her career, her fiction details the rooms of hoarders, millionaires and the working class in exhaustive detail, conveys the same subliminal characterological warnings that are inherent in the period's ubiquitous decorating guides, which hastened to reassure and guide the nervous consumer. Even as Americans reveled in their newfound ability to purchase consume an almost dizzying plethora of goods, worry about the moral impact of such excess seeped into their irrational consumptive exuberance. One could quite simply declare, as one anonymous contributor to *Atlantic Monthly* did, that Americans lived in an "age of things" that "stifled" and "possessed" the purchasers who had once so glibly thought that their purchasing power granted them limitless control over the objects in their lives (Brown *Sense* 5). As Brown goes on to point out:

The tale of that possession—of being possessed by possessions—is something stranger than the history of a culture of consumption. It is a tale not just of accumulating bric-a-brac, but also of fashioning an object-based historiography and anthropology, and a tale not just of thinking with things but also of trying to render thought thing-like. (*Sense*, 5)

This sense of unease might seem well buried in the newspaper's popular decorating columns and newly popular magazines such as *House Beautiful*, but it was nonetheless present. And like Green's domestic detective fiction, situated within fictional homes that were decorated in good taste and bad, these disparate genres would be motivated by identical cultural concerns speaks to the way that that popular fiction interacted with the norms and societal outlooks of the era in which it was created.

TASTE, 'GOOD' CHARACTER AND DOMESTIC DESIGN

One of the key characteristics of novels in the nineteenth century is their unrestrained depiction of things, with many works, Green's included, exhibiting "the exuberant itemization with which it is so routinely identified" (Freedgood 84). As the number of goods available to consumers proliferated, the challenges attendant in displaying those goods in a way that maximized their social capital also increased. Like the social climbers discussed previously, wrestling with the challenges of internalizing the unspoken codes of dress and behaviour of their new social milieu, decorating the home was an exercise in intricate social plotting, intended to communicate through the tasteful accumulation and display of a home's furnishings, a family's status and character. Prior to the mid-1850s, taste, whether directed towards décor, art, or literary choices, had been viewed as something that was largely, if not wholly, innate and part of an unspoken class inheritance. It was not considered a matter of conscious choice; an individual had taste by virtue of their birth or they did not. But as the century progressed, middle-class homeowners in the nineteenth century, led by design reformers like Charles Eastlake and Edward Bok, came to see taste differently. Not only did they believe that taste could be taught, they also held that tasteful domestic design contained an important moral component, too, such that

“instruction in taste,” like that offered by books and magazines, was “a moral necessity precisely because things had the power to influence people for good or for ill” (Cohen 19).

Facilitated by the increasingly cheap and plentiful goods made possible by the efficiencies of the industrial revolution, the obsession with home decoration was also fanned by a wide range of print materials that touted the benefits of an appropriately appointed domestic space. The wave of guides, advice manuals and other instructive texts⁴⁶ designed to steer the amateur decorator away from the dangers of bad taste took full advantage of improvements in lithographic technology and later, photography and colour printing, to communicate the norms which a fashionable middle and upper-class home were expected to adopt. Although initially primarily architectural, and intended for a largely upper-class male readership as home building guides, by the turn of the century such publications had broadened both their scope and their marketing efforts. By the 1890s, design publications had assumed formats that would be easily recognizable to twenty-first century readers, including recommendations for fashionable furniture and accessories and where to purchase them, photographic profiles of praiseworthy homes, advice columns offering suggestions to address readers’ personal design challenges, and cost-effective renovation tips. Taken as a whole, such manuals reflected an important shift both in how nineteenth-century people viewed their homes as repositories for the goods that they purchased, made and collected as well as their function as a performative setting for social identity.

The urgency that drove designers and their followers stemmed, as critics like Lori Merish, Julia Prewitt Brown and Deborah Cohen relate, from the increasingly widespread belief that the design of a home was believed to manifest the moral qualities of its inhabitants, good or bad. While, as Deborah Cohen argues, “before the mid-nineteenth century, bad taste was rarely

viewed as evidence of moral turpitude”, as acceptance of the link between the domestic interior and personal character grew, the home began to take on a distinctively moral role (19). As the anonymous author of *The Science of Taste* (1876) promised, a properly decorated home would “exercise a salutary effect in elevating the character” while a badly decorated one would not only reinforce existing flaws, but could even undermine a previously staunch household (246). This shift towards viewing personal possessions as arbiters of moral suasion is especially significant in detective fiction because one of its central narrative goals is, of course, the determination of wrong-doing and rectitude.

For Green, the domestic spaces of individuals living in squalor, forfeiting mundane comforts as heating, a safe living space or even a bed and nominal furnishings, are not only a reflection of both the inhabitants’ own individual immoral nature but also of a wider cultural malaise wrought by industrialization. The nature of the wrong-doing that precipitates their domestic decline varies in each of the stories featured in this chapter. But range of immoral behaviour does prove the centrality of her belief in a clear link between domestic disorder and moral disorder. Most importantly, the malaise is not identified as emerging from a lack of taste or of class affiliation but of moral choice. In fact, Green rarely condemns the era’s decorating choices, which by modern standards could be highly idiosyncratic. Instead, individuals with poor or uninformed taste may be mocked or spoken of disparagingly by more informed consumers, but their lack of taste or material refinement is not presented in the texts as proof of their criminality, but only of their class. Likewise, homes whose occupants fail to exhibit the typical decorative touches are also subject to criticism.⁴⁷ Photographs of her own home show how Green and her husband Charles Rohlf, enthusiastically endorsed the mantra purposefully cluttered design⁴⁸. Rohlf built many of the pieces that appeared in the couple’s homes after their

marriage. His employment as an industrial designer in a series of stove factories offers an explicit counterpoint to his insistence on unique and personalized furniture. Green's involvement in the design process is also well documented, and there are a number of sketches which feature both their hands.



Figure 3 Rohlfs Home at 156 Park St. Buffalo c. 1922 (Cunningham 225)

The deep need for domestic comfort that Green expressed in her personal life also carries over into her fiction. Yet as my close reading will show, it is only the homes of individuals who repudiate domestic order and participation in the process of social display wilfully that are depicted as potential criminals. A lack of taste does not draw the same connection. The latter's disavowal of domestic norms is therefore both proof and symptom of their characterological flaws. The objects in their homes betrays them, with wordless intent.

Her belief in the ethical connection between domestic design and an inhabitant's character was also a reflection of the evangelical revivalist movement that occurred concurrently with Green's early life and career. Starting in the late 1830s, Protestant efforts to effect political and social change within American society were widespread, addressing issues such as abolition and temperance, among others. As a result of its spiritual influence, the characterological viewpoint of household goods that underpins Green's own domestic ideology owes much to the evangelical ideology of the 1860s and 1870s. These religious precepts were an attempt to reign in the abundance of goods made possible by new manufacturing processes⁴⁹. Their roots lay in what Cohen describes as "the dilemmas of affluent Puritanism" and the unresolved tension between sanctified self-denial and appropriately curated comfort (xvi). Biblically sourced warnings, like that of Luke 12:15, which urged dutiful Christians to "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions," faced daily secular challenges from unprecedented industrial abundance. Mail order catalogues, department stores, and attractive print advertisements all encouraged Americans to buy more for themselves, for their homes and for their families. Being able to view such purchases as part of a shoring up of both their social identity and their family's moral well-being went a long way in assuaging the consciences of Gilded Age consumers.

While design reformers and popular ministers like Henry Ward Beecher⁵⁰ encouraged their audiences to consider the salutary effects of the goods they had in their home, Green's fiction works somewhat differently, warning instead about the potential for false complacency which might occur with an unthinking acceptance that 'good' design was an impenetrable bulwark against immorality. Like earlier English Sensationalist novelists, Green makes it abundantly clear that immoral people *could* live lives of outward domestic respectability. For

instance, Mrs. Pollard, *The Mill Mystery's* central antagonist, engages in truly evil behaviours, without any sign of remorse or equivocation. Her crimes include blackmail, attempted murder, kidnapping and extortion, among others. Yet her house is decorated in a “rich and awe-inspiring” fashion that signals her material and economic success. Only Constance Sterling, the novel’s selfless amateur detective, finds its “cold and haughty grandeur” off-putting (*Green Mill* 35). Likewise, in *The Millionaire Baby*, Mrs. Carew, the emotionally manipulative kidnapper, lives in a beautiful home on the banks of the Hudson River. The detective investigating Gwendolyn Ocumpaugh’s disappearance describes the mansion as “exquisitely furnished” and its interior displaying a “full complement of ornaments and pictures” (*Green Millionaire* 136).

Even as Green acknowledges the potential for hypocrisy in domestic display, the practice of evaluating domestic space in order to understand the moral attitudes of the individuals living there is a critical investigative device in Green’s detective fiction narratives. Her detectives assess the living spaces of both the victims and the suspects in exhaustive detail, to assess not only their sincerity but their moral qualities as well. In doing so, they are able to determine important information about the suspects’ inner lives by studying the objects and their disposition within their personal spaces. Material culture then is not simply a passive receptacle for clues, reduced to set dressing for the investigation but rather a critical and embodied reflection of an individual’s inner psychology and character. This use of objects is something I believe is one of the most incisive differences between Green’s detective fiction and that of her male peers. Sergeant Cuff studies the painted walls so that he can establish a timeline of entry into Rachel Verinder’s room; he does not study either Franklin Blake’s bedroom or the objects he has left scattered about to gain insight into his character. When Sherlock Holmes visits Stoke Moran, Doyle describes the contents of the rooms in the manor in a perfunctory manner. The

bellpull above Helen Stoner's bolted-down bed serves is described only in so far as it serves to elucidate Grimesby Roylott's murderous plot, showing how the man introduced the poisonous snake into his step-daughter's room but otherwise making little mention of the room's decoration or the disposition of the objects within it. There is also no attempt on Holmes' part to conduct a characterological analysis of the material culture contained therein.

The difference between these male British author's depictions of domestic décor and Green's is evident in an exemplary passage which appears in *The Mill Mystery* (1886). This novel is the first novel that Green wrote that did not feature police detective Ebenezer Gryce and it exemplifies the characterological impulse of the era, demonstrating the way in which domestic ideology was relevant to detective fiction⁵¹. In the novel, amateur detective Constance Sterling is young, poor and socially irrelevant, and she lacks both the professional gravitas and the gendered authority of Gryce. But her investigation is thorough and determined, exploiting her ability to 'read' domestic spaces for clues about the morals and outlooks of the various inhabitants who are potential suspects in the suspicious death of the local minister, Mr. Barrow. His drowning in an abandoned mill has ignited rampant speculation his death was an act of suicide rather than murder. Such an act would of course be seen as contrary to his own professions of Christian faith. Hoping to uncover the truth regarding the circumstances of his death, Constance Sterling, begins to investigate. One of the first acts that she undertakes is a visit to Barrow's rented rooms. As she studies the many books, pictures, and personal mementos that adorn the space, she notes:

It was not their agreeableness that won me, but the fact that Mr. Barrows' personal belongings had not yet been moved, and that for a short time at least I should find myself in possession of his library, and face to face with the same articles of taste and study which had surrounded him in his lifetime, and helped to mould, if not to make, the man. I should

thus obtain a knowledge of his character... there being in every little object that marked his taste a certain individuality and purpose that betrayed a stern and mystic soul; one that could hide itself, perhaps, beneath a practical exterior, but which, in ways like this, must speak, and speak loudly too, of its own inward promptings and tendency. (*Green Mill Mystery* 212)

In this passage, Green articulates her viewpoint on the role of objects in a manner that captures in miniature the characterological argument of which Merish and Cohen speak. It reveals how important objects are in Green's fiction to understanding a character's motivation and outlook, and to the investigative process itself. Barrows' possessions have "helped mould" him into an individual and they "speak loudly" to Sterling. Through them, Barrow's nature – his "individuality and purpose" – is revealed to the searcher (*Mill* 213). Even though he himself has ceased to exist, and cannot be questioned as to his motivations or viewpoint, the possessions he left behind continue to speak for him and reveal his personality, because "unlike character, personality was constantly on display" (Cohen 125). Cohen expands on this point again when she writes that:

Possessions did not just speak to the outside world...From its origins in the 1890s, the idea of 'personality' was fundamentally intertwined with the domestic interior.

Character, an older conception of self, connoted a moral state. Personality, by contrast, was about earned distinctiveness, performance, and display" (xii)

Thus, Green not only suggests that the objects with which people choose to surround themselves reflect their individuality⁵², but also that the objects themselves mould the individual in a reciprocal, mutually constituent process.

This distinction between personality and morality is critical to understanding Green's emphasis on domestic regularity as a form of moral expression. Her deeply felt Presbyterian faith underlies Green's adherence to the older understanding of character as matter of morality, rather than of performative display. The message conveyed by Green is that while badly chosen possessions and domestic disorder do not *cause* criminal behaviour directly, domestic design and personal possessions do amplify pre-existing moral weaknesses. The role of domestic objects to exacerbate moral flaws and criminal tendencies is clearly observable in Green's detective fiction novel, *Behind Closed Doors*. Written in 1888, the novel recounts Ebenezer Gryce's investigation into the death of an impoverished seamstress, Mildred Farley, and her questionable involvement with a New York heiress, Genevieve Gretorex. In the course of the narrative, Green discusses the domestic arrangements of the women's suitors, Drs. Cameron and Molesworth. The two men serve as binary opposites, a symbolic strategy that is common in many of Green's novels. They also shed light on Green's opinions on the ethical implications of domestic design and the role which material culture can play in either bettering or damaging the character of the individuals who inhabit such spaces. Dr. Cameron, as was touched upon in Chapter 1, is a classic example of the notion of transmissibility of taste. He is described in the opening pages of the book as "a man of taste and the son of a man of taste" (Green *Behind* 2). This positions Cameron as an example of the older iteration of taste, when taste was conceived of as "a part of one's inheritance rather than something one can learn" (Tange 18). Indeed, it is Cameron's refinement as much as his wealth that attracts Mildred and causes her to fall in love with him. In contrast, Molesworth enjoys none of Cameron's refinements or attractive qualities. Indeed, he seems to actively undermine any attempts to cultivate them and he is neither heroic nor sympathetic. His cold, off-

putting manner elicits little sympathy from either the characters or the reader and his decision to help Mildred Farley dispose of her twin's body is cowardly and self-interested.

It was during the nineteenth century that explicitly modern notions of the private and public spheres first emerged and it has become one of the key components in any consideration of the nineteenth-century Anglo-American mindset. Feminist critics in particular have devoted a great deal of critical effort to understanding the impact of domestic ideology and the separation of the familial and the professional, but their work has been largely from the vantage point of the female consumer and feminine experience, rather than the male consumer. There are limitations to following such a strict demarcation since “the production of social identities in novelistic (or political) discourse may nonetheless give precedence to one vocabulary of representation over another in the interest of achieving particular ideological ends – and likewise in literary critical discourse” (Lang 7). This suggests that there are nuances with regards to the masculine practices of domestic material culture that have not been sufficiently interrogated. As John Tosh points out, the domestic space was an important marker of middle-class male success and adult achievement during the nineteenth century (4). Although domestic concerns are often assumed to be female, the characters who display the most sustained and problematic behaviours with regards to their domestic circumstances are all men. Indeed, they all belong to a profession which would normally grant them automatic social and economic credence, since they are nominally single, well-educated and professionally successful men. The professional qualifications of men like Reverend Barrows, Dr. Molesworth and Dr. Izard, would seem predicated on their conformity to domestic norms. That their successful professional actions are not reflected in their domestic spaces then suggests that this disjunction between their public and private lives is a central cause of their descent into criminality and immorality. The lack of

balance between the public and private spheres is also relevant. Green takes great pains to describe his combined home and office in explicit detail, with the elaborate description covering several pages. This extended description serves as yet another example of the centrality of character and the domestic interior in Green's worldview. Indeed, Molesworth's rented rooms receive far greater attention than the man himself.

A square, dull looking room with two dim windows facing a high brick wall; a large table covered with phials, boxes of instruments, writing materials and a few books; a black hair-cloth sofa and two chairs; a dingy carpet and a ceiling which has been unwhitened for years; at the table and confronting the only bright thing in the room, a hard coal fire, the stern, immovable figure of a man...Such is Julius Molesworth's office and such the appearance of Julius Molesworth himself (Green *Behind* 135)

Considering the description of the hard, uncomfortable furniture, the darkened ceiling and the lack of decorative objects, the adjectives used to describe the physical objects in the room include 'dim', 'dull', 'black' and 'dingy'. The only thing described in even moderately positive terms is the coal fire; it is the only bright thing in the room, yet even it is described as 'hard'. Of course, this simply describes the type of coal being used, but I would argue its inclusion is not accidental. Green makes an explicit connection between the space's appearance and that of Molesworth's character when she says "such is Julius Molesworth's office and such is the appearance of Julius Molesworth himself" (135). Space and the individual who occupies it are not synonymous, but they are clearly and inextricably linked. Molesworth is a hard, unfeeling man whose interests lie solely in the resolution of medical mystery—and his rooms reflect this.

The narrator then urges the reader to undertake a closer examination of the space and the description includes not only the placement of the objects but Molesworth's feelings towards them.

Let us examine this dull interior a little closer. It is the reception-room, the home, the all of this sombre and inscrutable man. The folding-bed drawn up against the further wall shows this. Yet within the space of its four bare walls not an article of beauty nor an object of taste is to be seen. He did not care for such, he had not the money to buy such if he had wished, and as for the mementos from grateful patients or the tokens of affection from admiring friends, chiefly ladies, which he sometimes received, he would thank the giver for them with cool but careful politeness, and then at the first opportunity toss them into the fire where he would not even linger long enough to see them burn (*Behind* 136)

Contemptuous of the gifts and small mementos that are given to him by his grateful patients, these objects are, to him, "token[s] of woman's weakness." That attention to domestic comfort, signalled by the giving and display of small object is considered by Molesworth to be a feminine frailty is revealing. It serves as evidence of Molesworth's own fears of personal comfort as an emasculating force. Throughout the novel, Molesworth evinces little evidence of either romantic or sexual interest in his fiancée, Genvieve Gretorex, although she repeatedly offers evidence of her passion for him. When he learns of her suicide after he has jilted her, his is unmoved. In contrast, his interest in Walter Cameron is pervasive and overtly emotional. During Gryce's investigation for instance, his landlady recounts how she accidentally read a letter written by Molesworth to Cameron that is so intense and heartfelt that she initially mistook it for a love letter. Thus, Molesworth appears to consider such knick-knacks as emblematic, or perhaps, in medical terms, symptomatic, of a soft, feminized domestic ideology that he sees as a

threat to both his medical prowess and his notions of masculine self-control. On the surface, this seems to align him with the view that saw female collections – or more specifically, the crafting of such objects⁵³—as amateurish and without value while male collecting was viewed more favourably as “part of a broader scientific enterprise engaged in making sense of the world at large” (Dolin 186). But Molesworth, whose profession as a doctor would seem to provide him with the perfect opportunity to pursue collecting as an amateur naturalist, botanist or geologist, does not just reject womanly clutter, he even rejects those activities that would typically be deemed acceptable forms of accumulation granted to men, as well. The space is “his all” and yet its barren nature reveals the profound deficits of self and personality that Molesworth labours under.

Nina Baym defines the purpose of domesticity “as a value scheme for ordering all of life, in competition with the ethos of money and exploitation that is perceived to prevail in American society” (qtd Brown *Self* 6). Whereas a character like Luttra Schoenmaker in *A Strange Disappearance* brokers this economic and moral divide, reconciling the Holman family’s wealth with its underdeveloped domestic side, Molesworth actively avoids such reconciliation⁵⁴. When he learns that Genevieve intends to marry under her assumed identity, rather than risk the social disapprobation that would come from her breaking off her engagement to the eligible Dr. Cameron, he rejects her outright because he has lost all respect for her, and sees her as hopelessly compromised by her ongoing interest in domestic displays and material culture. Molesworth’s mother, who would typically serve to personify the “Angel in the House” trope, is another a force *against* domestic normalcy. Although physically absent from the narrative, her presence is announced through a symbolically critical object—the family Bible. It is the only volume, the reader is told, that Molesworth has in his home that is not strictly “medical in its

character.” Her stricture, written on the flyleaf, implores her son to consider any and all deprivations – a daunting list which includes hunger, poverty, privation and discomfort – as secondary to professional success and “first excellence” (Green *Behind* 136). Molesworth ignores the religious object, rejecting any potential religious solace it could offer in favour of his professional, secular goals. His mother’s stricture exhorting him to endure privation and discomfort is a distortion of the same suffering that saints undergo, and the fact that the Bible’s message has been subverted to support this secular aim lends credence to the moral and ethical danger Molesworth’s choices represent. Unlike the social climbers in the first chapter, who are willing to go to incredibly extreme lengths in their attempts to emulate the social behaviours of the peers they wish to join, Molesworth’s repudiation of both the domestic and religious values that Green believes underlie a successful existence is depicted as being far more socially corrosive than the social climbers’ efforts. The latter value the social norms they aspire to, even if they cannot always achieve them while Molesworth’s behaviour reveals how little he values society’s domestic and religious strictures. He believes that neither the rules of the society in which he lives, nor the values which such rules are meant to enforce, are worth following and indeed, impede his medical practice because they act as distractions from his scientific inquiries.

Molesworth’s inability – or perhaps, more accurately, his disinterest—in decorating his domestic space in a way that accords with domestic norms reveals his emotional and affective short-comings as much as it speaks to Molesworth’s renunciation of typical social display. It also foreshadows his descent into criminality because Molesworth’s home is not prepared to serve as a family space. When he rejects Genevieve, refusing to marry her under false pretenses, it initiates the series of events that lead to Genevieve’s suicide and Mildred’s illegal conspiracy to dispose of the body and hide the sisters’ exchange of identities. Although not a miser in the

traditional sense like Dr. Poole or Dr. Izard, Molesworth's rejection of domestic comfort is still problematic and inextricably linked to his disregard for a 'good' life, both in the sense of the personal comfort offered by material culture as well as from a moral standpoint.

Green makes consequences of Molesworth's domestic repudiation in *Behind Closed Doors* even clearer by establishing an explicit counterpart in the figure of Dr. Walter Cameron. Describing his comfortable and luxurious home in detail, the decorative choices in Cameron's office are couched in overtly moral terms that celebrate the strength of the latter's soul and character even as they establish his qualifications as a man of breeding, professional ability and taste.

Dr. Cameron's office offered a great contrast to that of Dr. Molesworth. Instead of gloom there was cheer; instead of bareness there was a tasteful display of rich furniture and valuable works of art. Yet the man sitting there possessed as strong a soul and held as firm a grip on his profession as his less self-indulgent and less prosperous rival. His prospects of success were brighter too, for not only had he every advantage of wealth and station to assist him, but he also had that genius for plunging at a glance to the bottom of things, which Molesworth lacked (*Behind* 229)

Molesworth abilities are thus starved and distorted by the barren interior that he inhabits. The "genius" he lacks is not linked to either the improved "wealth and station" that his peer enjoys, nor an ability for detectival penetration but rather the design and lack of appropriate material comforts with which he is surrounded. This is why the "tasteful display of rich furniture and valuable works of art" strengthen Cameron's moral core and support his "genius". The characterological import of the decisions undertaken by the two men is absolutely clear. Green's decision to connect Molesworth's lack of prosperity to his lack of self-indulgence suggests that

while hedonistic decadence is a vice which Green would have her readers avoid at all costs, stifling self-expression within the domestic setting entirely is also dangerous because such renunciation emphasizes selfishness and self-interest, rather than communal feeling, empathy and social participation. Following this view, Green believes then that criminals are not born, but that they can be slowly transformed into law breakers and moral disruptors and that that transformation beings and is strengthened by the assiduous repudiation of their fellow citizens and the social collective's norms. Molesworth's death of pneumonia two-thirds of the way through the novel serves as providential sentence which is the direct result of his immoral attempts to subvert the criminal investigation. Green makes his participation in the conspiracy to discard Genevieve's body the inciting incident that leads to his reckless flight from the police and ultimately, his fatal illness, after he suffers from exposure during a snowstorm. While he had not embarked purposefully on a life of crime, his willingness to act unethically in service of his own interests is what leads to his unhappy fate: alone and friendless, with his public reputation immolated.

While Molesworth repudiates domestic comfort from a desire for professional success, subsequent misers like Dr. Izard, the central character in the eponymous short story, shows that the link between criminal behaviour and domestic disorder which Green gestures towards in *Behind Closed Doors* is developed even further in the gothic-tinged *Dr. Izard*. Like Molesworth, Izard is driven by professional hubris, and his misplaced confidence in his own infallibility is what leads to his criminal acts. But greed also factors in. The novella opens in Chicago charity hospital, where two patients lay dying. A stranger arrives on the ward and asks one of the men to leave a large sum of money in his will to a young woman named Polly Earle whom he has never met. If the dying man does this, the stranger promises to ensure that the man's own family will

receive a smaller, but still significant, sum of money, too. The dying man agrees and a will giving \$20,000 to Earle is written and witnessed. The patient in the next bed has heard the entire transaction, and despite his illness, seems to have an unnatural interest in the matter.

The narrative then shifts to a small Massachusetts town, speculating on Polly's newly announced inheritance. She is a *de facto* orphan, whose mother died when she was a toddler. Her father, a hot-tempered inventor, is believed to have abandoned his daughter after his wife's death. Neither he, nor the \$20,000 he had received just prior to his disappearance, have been heard from for nearly fifteen years. When a man claiming to be Polly's father appears, only Dr. Izard seems to doubt his identity. Yet the man is able to speak knowledgably about his old home and former neighbours, reciting details that only the true Ephraim Earle could know. Soon, the man is living large in the town, and insisting that his daughter use her new-found wealth to support him and pay off his debts. This jeopardizes Polly's own hopes of marriage. Her fiancé has been offered a lucrative partnership which would allow the couple to marry. But the buy-in is significant, and without Polly's help, he cannot raise the required capital. But Polly is torn. She is a dutiful daughter, despite her reservations about her father's often problematic behaviours. When her father announces that he will be arrested for embezzlement unless Polly pays back the money using the last of her inheritance, Polly must choose between the two men. It is then, in order to secure Polly's future, that Dr. Izard announces that he can prove the man claiming to be Ephraim Earle is a fraud. He does this by excavating Heuldah Earle's grave, and revealing the actual body of Ephraim Earle inside the coffin. He knew that the body was there because he was the one responsible for Earle's death fifteen years earlier. Fourteen years earlier, on the verge of widespread professional renown, he was the doctor treating Polly Earle's mother during her long and ultimately fatal illness. Stymied in his diagnosis, he demands to be allowed to conduct an

autopsy on Heuldah, but her husband refused permission. In the grip of an “overmastering passion,” Izard decided to go ahead with the post-mortem, “determined that [he] would know the truth” even if he “had to resort to illegal and perhaps unjustifiable means” (Green *Izard* 263). When Earle catches the ambitious young doctor in the act of disinterring his wife, the two men fight and Izard kills Earle. Terrified of discovery, Izard hides the dead man’s body in his wife’s grave, and reburies Heuldah in the cellar of his home. Izard’s guilt only intensifies when he realizes that Earle’s young daughter, Polly, has been left a destitute orphan as a result of his actions. Izard seems to believe that the secret economic compensation he has arranged for Polly will be sufficient to alleviate his guilt, but as the situation with the imposter claiming to be the newly returned Earle escalates, it becomes apparent that nothing but a public revelation of his role in Ephraim Earle’s death will provide the appropriate degree of mitigation. After admitting his culpability in the real Earle’s death, and proving that the man currently claiming to be Polly’s father is a fraud, Izard commits suicide in the river.

The melodramatic narrative is not a detective novel because it lacks a central investigative figure. Thus, while mysterious and replete with crime, including characters who commit fraud, identity theft, embezzlement and manslaughter, it bears a greater affinity to earlier sensation novels like those of Braddon and of Gothic fictions than it does to Green’s earlier police novels. Yet despite these differences, Green still uses the narrative to explore the role that domestic possessions play in demonstrating the criminal potential of inhabitants of willfully disordered spaces, as she did in her earlier text, even though she has eliminated the detective’s investigative process from the text. Izard’s own conscience is responsible for his unmasking. He recognizes that his continued silence will condemn Polly, who he cares for as a daughter, to a life of poverty and exploitation by her false father. But despite the generic differences between

detective fiction and sensation fiction, there are strong thematic connections between *Dr. Izard* and *Behind Closed Doors*. Both texts centre explore criminal acts in the context of personal responsibility within domestic spaces notable for their repudiation and devaluation of typical material cultural practices. Like Molesworth, Dr. Izard is shown to be a highly talented physician. He is regularly called to consult on difficult medical cases in New York, Chicago and Boston. He also receives approbation from his neighbours for his commitment to treating everyone regardless of their ability to pay. Despite these professional laurels, his personal life is a barren and isolated one as a result of his secret act of manslaughter. He lives alone, without a wife or children, and repudiates even the most elementary domestic comfort.

This domestic isolation is a form of self-inflicted penance which Izard has undertaken in a secret attempt to overcome his past criminal actions. As the reader then learns, the mysterious visitor who visited the dying man in the hospital is revealed to be Dr. Izard and the money he has given to Polly is his attempt to assuage his guilt for his role in her father's manslaughter. Not only did his criminal act deprive Polly of her father but it also forced her to live in poverty, reliant on charity for her upbringing. He has earned the money to pay back Polly by living as a miser, saving every penny of his professional fees while living in squalor and neglecting the comfortable home he inherited following his father's death. He lives alone in a single room, constructed from the converted porch attached to the large ancestral home he now refuses to inhabit. The house to which his living quarters are attached is elaborate, and contains a myriad of well-appointed rooms yet he refuses to occupy them. Its dilapidated state speaks "of its long disuse as a dwelling" while Izard himself likens the furniture and decorations to being "relics of [his] parents" (Green *Izard* 69; 59). His unusual way of life is commented by multiple characters, with the consensus being that his repudiation of all forms of domestic comfort, coupled with his

reluctance to spend money on anything but the bare necessities of life, he is, in the eyes of his neighbours, “a perfect miser in his way of living” (Green *Izard* 34). Yet his exemplary professional reputation and his willingness to dispense medical aid and advice regardless of the status of the patient mitigates the most overt criticism, at least initially. Gossiping about him in the local tavern, his neighbours advance the theory that he has “good cause” for his peculiar behaviour, even if they do not know what it is, and attributing benign, if opaque, reasons to his unusual actions. “Men like him don’t shut themselves up in a cage for nothing,” one patron opines (Green *Izard* 33). When one of the listeners deigns to criticize Izard, the response is swift and decisive.

I won’t hear such talk about a neighbour, let alone a man who has more than once saved the lives of all of us. He’s queer; but who isn’t queer? He lives alone, and cooks and sleeps and doctors all in one room, like the miser he undoubtedly is, and won’t have anything to do with chick or child or man or woman who is not sick, unless you except the village’s protégée, Polly Earle...But all this does not make him wicked or dangerous or uncanny even. That is, to those who used to know him when he was young.” (Green *Izard* 32)

This sense of Izard as a tragic figure, whose “queer” lifestyle has been forced upon him by circumstance rather than character distinguishes him from both his predecessor Molesworth as well as the subsequent medical miser discussed in this chapter, Dr. Poole. In those cases, both of those men have made an active choice to live as they do. Their uncomfortable domestic situations are the result of their hubris and greed, respectively. Izard, in contrast, previously enjoyed a lifestyle of comfort and taste in keeping with societal norms and only adopted his miserly lifestyle after he kills Earle. But Izard’s personality, like that of Barrow’s and of Molesworth’s, is was already morally suspect before he commits his crime. His is a “sternly

contained soul” that has “awed his fellow-men for years...., as if his nature lacked sympathy for anything weak or small” and these flaws are exacerbated by his inhumane living conditions (Green *Izard* 252). Green seems to suggest that while it is this lack of sympathy that allows Izard to survive the arid domestic arrangements that he has fashioned, it is also the circumstance that allows him to the killing itself. His rejection of society and domestic design is both a cause of his moral decay as well as a harbinger.

Considering the narrative as a whole, *Dr. Izard* is replete with disordered, domestically disrupted homes which lack any of the typical domestic objects or display that would normally be seen in a middle-class American home. Firstly, there is Izard’s formerly elaborate but now abandoned home. He lives on its margins, in a converted porch. Secondly, there is the Earle family’s abandoned and decaying home, which is surrounded by a “deserted garden and where burdock and thistles grew instead of the homely vegetables and old-fashioned flowers of years ago” and slowly succumbing to pernicious mould⁵⁵ (Green *Izard* 81). Finally, there is even a cave on the outskirts of town where a hermit has lived alone but for the company of his dog⁵⁶. Notably, all of these irregular homes are occupied by men who do not participate in ‘normal’ social practices such as marriage or family and who lack all of the attendant domestic objects which would normally signal their participation in such activities. Izard’s home is described by Polly’s false father, who has disguised himself as a tramp in order to spy on Izard and lay the groundwork for ‘Ephraim Earle’s’ return. Like the secrets Izard guards, the reader’s view of the space is also surreptitious.

The first thing [the tramp] saw was the room with its shelves upon shelves of books, piled high to the ceiling. As it answered the triple purpose of doctor’s office, student’s study, and a misanthrope’s all, it naturally presented an anomalous appearance, which was anything

but attractive at first sight. Afterward, certain details stood out, and it became apparent that those curious dangling things which disfigured the upper portion of the room belonged entirely to the medical side of the occupant's calling, while the mixture of articles on the walls, some beautiful, but many grotesque if not repellent, bespoke the man of taste whose nature has been warped by solitude. (Green *Izard* 49)

In a manner that recalls her approach to Molesworth's character and domestic interior, Green makes the connection between Izard's home and his character explicit. But unlike Molesworth, whose lack of taste signals his lack of genius, here Izard is revealed to be a "man of taste" whose outlook has been "warped by the solitude" both imposed by and exacerbated by his ignoble living conditions. The "curious dangling things" that "disfigure" the room are linked to his professional calling. While normally such objects would signify his abilities as a doctor, in this instance, they are transformed into indicators of his domestic disorder and the way that his professional hubris, like that of Molesworth's, has been mutated into something characterologically crippling. The words that Green uses to describe both the space and the "articles" and "things" that fill it all – 'disfigured', 'grotesque', 'repellent' and 'warped' – all suggest a physical deformity, born of Izard's moral quandary, that manifests itself not in the inhabitant himself but which is instead displaced into the cramped space he occupies. This is not a magical slight of hand à la Dorian Grey. There is no picture of Izard slowly transforming into a monstrous figure. Izard is a man, immured in an actual physical space and he carries the burden of his guilt within him. But Green exploits figurative language to heighten the grotesque imagery. For instance, the reader learns that the Izard home is situated next to the town's graveyard. Izard admits that the unpleasant location "has become a necessity" and Polly Earle, one of the few visitors who seems unmoved by the unpleasant locale, agrees. She admits that she

“could not imagine [Dr. Izzard] in a trim office with a gig at the door and a man to drive it...enjoying life like other folks” and that despite its unpleasant appearance, the “solitary room, with its dangling skulls and queer old images, its secrecy and darkness, and the graves pressing up almost to [his] window seems a part of Dr. Izzard” (Green *Izzard* 54). That this disturbing and constrained space is now “a part” of the man who lives there again shows the reciprocity between possessions and character that informed so much of the design ethos of the period.

Izzard’s lifestyle and domestic arrangements within his miserly space – the single bed, the cluttered and unappetizing adornments, the lack of seating for visitors –precludes his participation in most of the social interactions that a man of his professional and social background would normally participate in. It is worth noting that his criminal behaviours – namely grave robbery and manslaughter – were undertaken to further his professional success, rather than to disguise a personal secret or social shortcomings. The latter occurred in texts with the female social climbers discussed in the first chapter but in Izzard’s case, he does not rely on any socially-signified objects such as dress during the commission of his crime. Instead, his warped and “grotesque” living conditions and the domestic objects within it mark his slow transformation from social participant to guilty hermit, but they do not precipitate it. Such symbolism problematizes Bill Brown’s attempts to “evacuate objects of their insides and to arrest their doubleness, their vertiginous capacity to be both things and signs (symbols, metonyms, or metaphors) of something else” (*Sense* 11). The ongoing reliance on an object’s doubled nature, serving both the plot’s realist narrative demands and its symbolism of characterological insight, is especially relevant to detective fiction. Things are clues about both the crime and the people who possess them. Brown recognizes the prismatic qualities of objects and things, of their capacity to do and represent simultaneously. In his wholesale repudiation of

domestic norms, this is the plenitude that Izard is trying to escape from. He But he is, despite his best efforts, unsuccessful. Izard cannot evacuate objects' doubled nature because such doubleness is an inherent property, which emerges whenever an object is elevated into a thing. The objects he has avoided are as resonant then as the objects he now collects about himself.

In a similar critical observation, Elaine Freedgood denotes “a loss” when objects “are removed from the work of producing the text’s referential illusion and are promoted to metaphors” (10). But even if Green intended the objects to be read through a metaphorical register, I would argue that their doubleness, as Brown terms it, does not in fact negate the thingness of the objects themselves, nor does the potential for their being read as a metaphor involve the object losing its ineffable material qualities by mere virtue of additional hermeneutic possibilities. Izard’s home *is* filled with skulls and medical implements and objects of taste that have been warped or transformed by their impoverished surroundings. The material qualities of the items can and should be considered when considering Izard’s actions. The mere possibility of metaphor, communicated through a literary register, should not dissuade from the simultaneous or parallel consideration of an object’s physical reality.

For all three men discussed in this chapter, it is clear that their attitude towards material culture is, to varying degrees, broken and neither their class nor their professional affiliations are sufficient to over it. Izard is tied irrevocably to his chaotic home because of his need to protect his secret, even as he is excluded from it because of the secret. When he is finally forced to reveal what he has done, he excavates Heuldah’s grave and exposes the body of her husband to the gathered crowd of townspeople. His confession proves conclusively that the man claiming to be Ephraim Earle is in fact an impostor, thus freeing Polly from any further familial obligations to a man who has bilked her out of thousands of dollars by preying on her feelings of duty. Yet

during his confession, Izard's justification for his actions is repeatedly couched in monetary terms; he focuses on the deprivations *he* has endured to make financial remediation rather than discussing the emotional costs his actions have had on Polly. Domestic goods – in both the physical sense as well as the moral sense – have been sacrificed to placate his mercenary nature. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood make this point about the often-unconsidered economic potential of material objects, noting that “In the protracted dialogue about value that is embedded in consumption, goods in their assemblage present a set of meanings, more or less coherent, more or less intentional” (5) Izard is clearly aware of the meanings inherent in the goods he foregoes, choosing to exchange the domestic home's ‘goods,’ and the value attendant within them, for an explicitly economic end. In foregoing the purchase of chairs and tables and linens and art and silverware, Izard hopes to buy peace for himself instead. He admits that “to recompense [Polly Earle] for this loss, which was involuntary on my part...has always been to me the most unendurable feature of my crime” (Green *Izard* 266). As a miser, his financial obligations are ultimately more painful to him than either the murder he committed all those years ago or the discomfort which he has endured during his attempts to compensate for it. It is this pecuniary focus, more than anything, which links him with Molesworth and Poole. And while Izard's miserly tendencies are, on the surface, mitigated by the fact that both the money he has accumulated and his skills as a doctor have been used for the benefit of others, his denial of domestic comfort serves as a false justification, allowing Izard to delude himself into thinking that he is not obligated to reveal his role in Earle's death publicly, because he has suffered privately⁵⁷. The public and private spheres are therefore shown not as separated for economic purposes, but for moral ones. It is only within the domestic sphere that Izard's secret can be maintained. His professional reputation remains intact until the very end of the narrative. Only

when he is forced to act to protect Polly from financial extortion do the two aspects of his life – his professional curiosity and his private shame – finally emerge in concert. Yet to the end, Izard’s motivation, while partially based on his affection for Polly, is ultimately driven not by his private guilt but is rather precipitated by the knowledge that the money he has earned in the public sphere, and which he has given to her, is being squandered. His reputation as a miser does not discomfit him; rather it is the wilful waste of money that troubles him so deeply that he is finally willing to expose his own criminal past than allow his money to be squandered. He would rather be known as a murderer than allow for the wilful waste of money.

Ultimately, Izard’s connection with the domestic, and the comforts which an ‘appropriately’ furnished home could potentially offer him, is severed because of Izard’s unrelenting focus on money rather than physical goods. His ancestral home is shown to contain within it the typical furnishings of a house of its size and renown, as well as valuable art and collectibles and it is notable how Izard chooses to remove himself entirely from the scope of these objects, going so far as to lock the door between his solitary room and the rest of the house. His decision to reinter Heuldah’s body in his own home carries with it a macabre echo of a marriage ritual, Izard having “carried her poor remains into the house and buried them beneath the cellar floor” (Green *Izard* 264). For the doctor, bringing a woman into his home is the same act that drives him from it – an ironic inversion of the ‘angel in the house’ trope. Heuldah is not an angel; she is a ghost. As a result of her posthumous installation, the doctor comes to view himself as irreconcilably estranged from both the domestic space and the objects within it. The transformed porch that he has inhabited since the killing is a liminal space that would normally serve not as a destination, but as a threshold. Yet Izard has physically barred the door that would allow him to penetrate further into the house. His continued focus on Polly’s monetary loss, which he

describes as ‘involuntary’, rather either manslaughter itself or the emotional suffering which his actions have inflicted upon Polly, suggests that even prior to the killing, Izard’s attitude towards money and material culture were skewed and that Earle’s death and cover-up only hastened the development of miserly characteristics already present in his personality.

After his confession, Izard slips away from the crowd and walks towards the river where, it is implied by the narrator, he will kill himself. He is seen only by Grace Unwin, his former fiancée. Of course, if the murder had never taken place, Grace would have come to live in the Izard family’s ancestral home and would have provided all of the domestic comforts which he has denied himself. Indeed, her very name has unmistakable religious overtones, suggestive of salvation and the bestowal of blessings. But Izard broke off their engagement after he killed Earle, and he has refused any further contact since he committed manslaughter. Watching his progress from beside the open grave, Grace thinks she sees “his slight form pass between her and the dismal banks of the river; but she never rightly knew...this vision of his bowed head and shrunken form may have been, like the rest, a phantom of her own creation” (*Izard* 268). Irrevocably expelled from even the margins of his home by his confession, his “bowed head” and “shrunken form” again recall the earlier description of the articles which adorned his solitary room. “[S]ome beautiful, but many grotesque if not repellent,” and owned by “a man of taste whose nature has been warped by solitude,” the hoard serves as an indictment of both his possessions and his character (*Green Izard* 54). His guilt precludes a life within the domestic sphere; he cannot participate or enjoy his home any more because he feels his character no longer reflects the moral value of his inherited possessions. The final moments of Izard’s life emphasize his deformities and create a link between his moral failings, his physical body and his expulsion from the domestic sphere.

A HOUSE DIVIDED: MONETARY CORRUPTION OF THE DOMESTIC SPHERE

As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the ways that sentimentalists hoped to create a bulwark against what they saw as the increasingly problematic lure of trade and economic pursuit was to position the domestic sphere as its moral counterweight. One of the central strategies they employed was the ideological and gendered divisions: public and private, home and business. As John Tosh argues, in his book *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, Anglo-American society underwent astonishingly rapid changes throughout the second half of the century. As a result of these tectonic shifts:

hierarchy and community, ultimately even faith itself, seemed at risk. In this alarming scenario the home, notwithstanding the significant shift in its own structure and function, was cast in the role of “traditional” bulwark, the last remnant of a vanishing social order.

(31)

This view of the home as a bastion against the dangerous influence of public life was supported by many period literary works, including Green’s detective fiction. In these texts, authors typically extolled the virtues of domesticity and its ‘natural’ role of the home as a refuge from the morally corrupting influence of trade, business and base monetary considerations, even as such enterprise were acknowledged as serving a necessary proving ground for the Protestant character traits of industry and self-denial. Henry Ward Beecher, who reached the height of his influence in the 1850s and 1860s, was one of the foremost ministers of the period. From the pulpit, he regularly warned his parishioners to guard against the corrupting influence of wealth and the distractions from the Christian path which it could cause. It was not that wealth or the objects that might be purchased with it were inherently wicked. Indeed, he hastened to reassure his congregation, which was made up of some of the most successful New York magnates and

businessmen of the era, “Wealth slowly earned by fair labor, by skill, by thought, by integrity, is a crown of honor” (Beecher *Love* 176). But the distractions such wealth offered could quickly submerge finer Christian feeling. “It does not require then, that a man should be a criminal in order to destroy himself. Nay, it does not require that a man should be immoral, nor that he should acquire his possessions by avaricious wrong-doing...But because he is rich only towards himself; he is not rich toward God” (Beecher *Rich Fool* 434). Such reassurances were necessary in an age that offered material opportunities unimaginable even a generation previously.

In the first two texts discussed in this chapter, a concern with achieving a balance between economic success and domestic regularity is certainly in evidence. Even as the characters who hoard devalue domestic practice and its material culture on an individual level, their behaviour is viewed by their peers as aberrant. This is because “while there may never have been an utterly well defined ‘normality,’ most consumers certainly could recognize their peers who broke from dominant behaviors and material patterns” (Mullins 93). It is in this context that both Dr. Izard and Dr. Molesworth ultimately operate, with their deaths at the end of the narratives a signal of the providential consequences of their domestic irregularity and the personal and professional consequences of their rejection of domestic objects. Their fate inversely supports domestic norms of material culture by ensuring that those who violate face significant consequences. But if Green’s earlier texts depict the devaluation of domestic material culture on an individual level, her 1902 novel *The Millionaire Baby* expands on that devaluation by presenting the social and moral consequences of a society-wide repudiation of domesticity and any underlying belief in an object’s value or role in characterological moral development. The novel, which deals with the search made by a private detective following the disappearance of the young daughter of a wealthy society family, reveals that by the beginning of the twentieth century, Green’s previous

confidence in the characterological and moral impact of the home's material culture had eroded almost entirely. A home, no matter how appropriately decorated, could no longer serve as either a moral haven or a repository for 'good' domestic design and neither furniture nor décor could hope to have any influence on the inhabitants of American homes any longer. Instead, whether the characters are suspects, criminals or even the detective himself, money and its acquisition are shown to be their primary goal, negating the decoration of the domestic sphere and its purported moral influence entirely⁵⁸. The nineteenth-century hoarder of things has become the twentieth-century's economic miser. Everything, from an unwanted child to a reluctant detective, has a price⁵⁹. Anything that cannot be quantified in dollars and cents, and this includes the domestic objects which would normally be celebrated as part of domestic performance, are viewed as worthless, with material culture only valuable insofar as its exchange value was able to be calculated. "At its heart," Mullins would argue, "consumption revolves around the acquisition of things to confirm, display, accent, mask, and imagine who we are and whom we wish to be" (2). The repudiation of consumptive practices and the corresponding confirmation and display suggests a critical social shift is being documented through Green's fiction, from a society of 'things', to a society of formless economic exchange.

Dr. Poole is the main antagonist in the novel. Unlike both Dr. Molesworth and Dr. Izard, whose criminal behaviours are, at least in part, the result of unhappy circumstances, Dr. Poole has no such scruples. He actively undertakes to blackmail Marion Ocumpaugh, the adoptive mother of the missing girl, six years after he facilitated an illegal adoption between Marion and Mrs. Carew, the girl's biological parent. Described as a "miser incarnate" with a "greedy and devouring passion" for "glittering coins" and "bank-notes," he is "willing to take risks from which most men shrink from fear if not from conscience" (Green *Millionaire* 76; 75).

The reader is also told that he is “capable of forgetting his honor as a physician under a sufficiently strong temptation” (Green *Millionaire* 69). This is a significant departure from the earlier doctors, who, while admittedly behaving immorally, are without reproach professionally. Dr. Molesworth’s experiments save the life of a poor Irish patient and Dr. Izard is renowned for his generous treatment of patients, regardless of their ability to pay. Poole’s miserly nature is reflected in his large, decaying home in the wilds of Yonkers, which offers abundant proof of his devaluation of domesticity and the material objects which Mullins identifies as part of normal patterns of consumption. So while Dr. Izard lives on the margins of his family home because he cannot bring himself to pollute it after he has committed manslaughter, Poole evinces no concern whatsoever for the state of his home and his domestic arrangements are wholly irrelevant to him. His aversion to social niceties even sees him remove the front porch and steps that would normally allow visitors to reach his front door and to disguise the actual entrance to his home by means of an overgrown and circuitous path. His predatory focus on money eclipses any concern or effort that might normally have been directed towards his personal environment or its decoration. This devaluation of domestic consumption shows the shift that has occurred in the society that Green is writing about, and suggests a break with the patterns of consumption and acquisition that Mullins, Isherwood Baron and Appadurai among others have identified as being central to nineteenth-century America. Instead of being part of a process of confirmation and display, material objects are now shown as a hindrance, not only the previous characterological purchase of goods is depicted as useless from a moral standpoint but because the very process of acquisition serves to undermine Poole’s miserly economic goals by diverting funds from their liquid state into things proper.

Poole's behaviour in this regard stands in sharp contrast to the other men considered earlier in this chapter. Despite Molesworth's moral shortcomings, his domestic space, while plain and uninviting, is still well ordered and organized and he eschews money in favour of professional success, and his work amongst the poor costs him both potential income and reputation. His avoidance of material excess speaks to his disinterest in financial affairs, rather than an unsavoury interest in monetary success to the exclusion of all else. There is virtue, albeit thwarted virtue, in his denial. Izard has more in common with Poole, since like the latter, he is consumed with the idea of money and sees domestic objects as an unwarranted drain on his miserly economizing. But it is clear that had he not found himself labouring under the moral necessity of compensating Polly Earle, he would have lived in his family home with Grace Unwin and seen his earnings converted into typical domestic pathways. Despite this obsession with paying Polly back, he is still respected for his medical prowess and his willingness to provide assistance to anyone who is ill, regardless of their ability to pay. The domestic deprivations Izard endures serve as a form of penance, and the twenty thousand dollars that he gives Polly show the sizeable financial outlay that the decoration and maintenance which domestic spaces normally incurred. The enormous compensatory sum could have been exchanged for all manner of goods—furniture, art, soft furnishings, decorative objects—had his life followed a typical pattern of marriage and the establishment of a 'typical' home. But as a result of his criminal actions, Izard no longer feels morally fit to participate in such normal domestic practices as the accumulation and display of goods within a home.

The progression of domestic disorder and the repudiation of its corresponding material culture reaches its nadir with Poole. Home is nothing to him; money is everything. This, more than anything else, reveals how problematic his relationship to both money and domestic

material culture are. Unlike a typical homeowner, whose consideration for their home would normally lead them to spend money on it and to utilize the domestic sphere as both a repository for their consumption and a site to display it, Poole makes a conscious decision to spend nothing on his home. As a result, both his characterological and moral deficits are on display in his cramped, decaying basement warren. This is because, unlike Izard, whose earnings are earmarked for his redemptive efforts, Poole's money remains his sole priority. For Poole, money *is* the object he craves and he has a tactile, even sensuous relationship with it that has an overtly sexual overtone. "He loved money, not as the spender loves it, openly and with luxurious instincts, but secretly and with a knavish dread of discovery which spoke of treasure ill acquired" (Green *Millionaire* 77). The detective, Robert Trevitt, recounts how, when he "had worked in [Poole's] office when a lad", he had hidden outside the doctor's counting room, watching surreptitiously as the doctor had spent hours stroking and arranging his "innumerable gold pieces" and luxuriating not in their economic potential but in their aural quality, listening to the sound the pieces make against the green baize counting table (Green *Millionaire* 69; 75). The doctor, Trevitt further confesses, exhibited a "greedy and devouring passion" as he "pushed the glittering coins about and handled the banknotes and gloated over the pile it all made when drawn together by his hooked fingers" (Green *Millionaire* 76). This aligns with Bill Brown's contention that the ritualistic aspect of Poole's relationship with his hoard depicts a fetish that has "ceased to name an economic relation and has come to name a psychological one" (*Sense* 31). But Trevitt's account indirectly implicates himself, because as he watches Poole from his hiding place he "recognize[s]" his employer's passion and his own feelings are divided between "mingled fear and awe" – that is, even as he fears being found out, Trevitt envies the "mint of money" larger than any he has ever seen and desires it for himself. In *The Millionaire Baby*, it becomes clear

that Poole's immorality and his unconstrained focus on wealth allow Green to make a pointed critique about the deleterious effects of money, which she shows to have superseded material concerns. It is not about the consumption of physical goods, conspicuous or otherwise, but of economic gain above all else.

Yet the doctor, for all of his abundant crimes, is only the most extreme example of the devaluation of domestic practice, not its sole one. This is evident when comparing Poole against the novel's detective and narrator Robert Trevitt. The binary pairing between detective and criminal is a long-standing generic tradition, inaugurated by E.A Poe in *The Purloined Letter* (1845). But typically, the connection is used to highlight the moral differences between the two characters. This does not occur in *The Millionaire Baby*, and the detective is instead shown to be as problematically consumed with financial matters as his criminal counterpart. The investigative figure in classic detective fiction is assumed to represent the dominant social outlook and serve in its defense against its potential dissolution by the criminal element. But while the link between Poole and Trevitt is yet another example of Green's tendency towards contrasting pairings, Trevitt's investigation never succeeds in establishing either the home as moral haven or of a characterological perspective on the male home. Instead, Robert Trevitt's moral sense is worryingly pliable. He is motivated to investigate Gwendolyn's disappearance not because of any empathy or moral suasion but rather by the same feelings of avarice and greed that motivate Poole. Green's earliest detectives such as Ebenezer Gryce are morally upright and invite the reader's identification by possessing admirable moral qualities. In Gryce's case, this allows him to overcome the social limitations of his lower-class background and repudiate the NYPD's real-life reputation for corruption and brutality. In contrast to Gryce's unimpeachable reputation, Trevitt's greed and self-interest serve to alienate the reader and undermine his own work as a

private detective. Rather than beginning the narrative by discussing the circumstances of Gwendolyn Ocumpaugh's disappearance, Trevitt embarks on his narration by discussing the financial limitation he is currently facing and the unimaginable wealth enjoyed by the family of the missing girl. He admits that despite his employment with "a private detective agency of some note," over the past two months he has "had a run of bad luck" – a phrase suggestive of gambling debts or stock market speculation— which has resulted in a "great financial embarrassment" (*Green Millionaire* 1). Although he feels sympathy for the missing child and her frantic parents, his decision to investigate is unquestionably motivated by the large reward being offered for her safe return. Trevitt believes that his success in finding the missing heiress will help him "rise by one bold stroke from threatened bankruptcy to immediate independence" (*Green Millionaire* 1). While Gryce's ownership of the modest brick described in *The Leavenworth Case* serves to reassure the reader of that man's probity, Trevitt is never shown amongst his family or their home. Indeed, Trevitt's domestic obligations – he reports resentfully that he has "a mother and two sisters to support" – are as far from serving as the moral safe haven as the mid-century sentimentalists could imagine (1). The detective feels burdened by his female family members' dependency, and views the expenditures he must make to support them as an unwarranted encumbrance. Like Poole, the home has no value for the private investigator because it keeps him from his ultimate goal of economic independence. The home, from both a practical as well as a symbolic standpoint, has become a financial drain, rather than a moral restorative.

Trevitt's obsession with his financial well-being is why he is ultimately unable to solve the case. His narrow-minded focus on money—both as motive for the kidnapping and as the grounds for his own involvement— blinds him to the non-economic motives that actually underly the case. His avarice is also intensified by his rootlessness. In contrast with Ebenezer

Gryce, whose domestic arrangements are detailed extensively in both *The Leavenworth Case* and subsequent books in which he appears, Trevitt is never seen in his own home. Beyond a brief mention of a mother and sisters who he supports financially, Trevitt is always depicted in other people's homes: the Ocumpaugh's luxurious mansion, which he covets; Mrs. Carew's exquisite home, which she has secured by serving as an elderly man's mistress; and Dr. Poole's decrepit Yonkers home. In all of these various environments, the detrimental effect of Trevitt's ambiguous morality has on his detectival skills is very clear. After learning about Poole's involvement by questioning Gwendolen's nursemaid, he hastily confronts the doctor. Trevitt is convinced that he is on the verge of recovering the child and that the reward will soon be his. Poole is openly contemptuous of Trevitt's theory that Gwendolen is being held captive in the doctor's decrepit home in order to extort a lucrative ransom. "You are after the reward, I observe," Poole remarks scornfully. "Well, you won't get it. Like many others of your class you can follow a trail, but the insight to start right and to end in triumphant success is given only to a genius, and you are not a genius" (*Green Millionaire* 87). When Trevitt persists in his suspicions, Poole forestalls his accusations. "It is not a matter of money... Those who think to reap dollars from the distress which has come upon the Ocumpaugh family will eat ashes for their pains. Money will be spent, but none of it earned, unless you, or such as you, are hired at so much an hour—to follow trails" (*Green Millionaire* 87). Poole is unquestionably a repulsive character, both physically and morally, but he is the only character who understands the self-interested Trevitt's motivations. "You are but the messenger of your own cupidity; and cupidity leads by the straightest of roads directly down to hell" (*Green Millionaire* 89). Just as Dupin is able to thwart the Minister's blackmail scheme through his understanding of the politician's thoughts, here it is the criminal who can see through the detective. Poole knows that Trevitt will be unable

to solve the case because he understands, as the detective cannot, that the motivation behind Gwendolen's disappearance aren't economically motivated. Instead, the mothers, biological and adoptive, who have arranged for Gwendolen's disappearance are acting to prevent social ruin, not financial destruction. Money does not figure into it.

As a result of his own self-interest, Trevitt's naked financial ambition frequently supersedes both his investigation and his moral obligations. His concern with expenses and compensation are constantly at odds with his better judgement and his professional status seems to grant him little benefit from an investigative perspective. Unlike an amateur detective such as Constance Sterling in *The Mill Mystery*, who investigates despite "having in her pocket only seventy-five cents in change" and persists in identifying the cause of Barrow's death despite a lucrative offer of marriage that would see her life transformed, or Amelia Butterworth, whose foray into detection is a matter of pride and personal satisfaction, Trevitt is driven by his own self-interest, seeking compensation even more diligently than he seeks the truth (*Green Mill* 1). He is repeatedly deceived by the true natures and motivations of both Marion Ocumpaugh and Valerie Carew because he cannot conceive of a plot that does not rely on securing a lucrative ransom for Gwendolen's return – a reflection on his own interest in securing the enormous reward offered by the little girl's wealthy father. In actuality, the women's "blundering efforts to make the child appear dead" are designed protect their reputations from the threat of social disgrace that Poole has threatened them with, rather than "extort money". Their plot to hide the child at Carew's home under a disguise, while pretending she has drowned, is clumsy and amateur (*Green Millionaire* 49). But despite the raft of clues that they fail to account for, Trevitt does not realize what role the women have played or their motivations for entering into the conspiracy at all until Poole, the architect of the original plot – Gwendolen's illegal adoption –

spells it out to him explicitly. As a result, Trevitt is viewed with disgust and even fear by many of the characters he encounters. If the detective is indeed tasked with serving as the reader's doppelganger within the fictional world, then unlike the reassurance conveyed by the morally incorruptible and socially inconsequential Ebenezer Gryce, Trevitt's avarice and ambiguous morality serve as disruptive social critiques because they foreground negative characters and force the reader to confront the possibility that they share these undesirable characteristics. The

In the same fashion, Trevitt is unable to contend with the truths revealed by the suspects' domestic spaces and feels out-classed and ill-prepared to interpret what he finds there. Confronting Poole, Trevitt admits that even now, as a grown man, he "never could make any meaning" of the random collection of bottles, books and other discarded items that cover the "musty walls" (*Green Millionaire* 83). Similarly, when crossing the lawn of Homewood, the Ocumpaugh's mansion, he is struck by the sight of the "great house" which he feels looms above him.

I felt impressed as never before both by the beauty and magnificence of the noble pile, and shrank with something like shame from the presumption which had led me to pit my wits against a mystery having its birth in so much grandeur and material power. The prestige of great wealth as embodied in this superb structure well-nigh awed me from my task (*Green Millionaire* 114)

Although Ebenezer Gryce laments the difficulties that his lack of breeding presents in his day-to-day life, when presented with a crime, he never shirks from his duties, even when it brings him into contact with incredibly wealthy or socially prominent families like the Leavenworths, the Holmans or the Gretorexes. Yet Trevitt feels such "shame" at confronting a mystery born in a site replete with "material power" that he is overawed and ultimately dissuaded from his task.

The question of Trevitt's moral duty is also muddled by his assiduous pursuit of compensation. When Mrs. Ocumpaugh offers him a bribe to keep silent after he has uncovered her role in Gwendolen's illegal adoption and subsequent disappearance, Trevitt confesses that it is "the hardest question which had ever been put me...I did not see my way; I did not see my duty. Then the fifty thousand dollars!" (Green *Millionaire* 312). He knows that telling Mr. Ocumpaugh will ensure that he receives the promised reward while damning Mrs. Ocumpaugh to shame and the very real possibility of divorce. However, if he accepts the proffered bribe, and allows Valerie Carew to continue with her plan to spirit her daughter away, Philo Ocumpaugh will spend the remainder of his life mourning a daughter he believes is both dead biologically his own. Desperate to avoid the shame of having their roles in the kidnapping publicly revealed, Mrs. Carew and Mrs. Ocumpaugh both hope the bribe will lead Trevitt to "take the credit of having found Gwendolen...and that would insure him the reward and them his silence" (356). Ultimately, he chooses to reject the women's offer but he is seriously tempted by the lucrative offer the women put forth and he takes no steps to bring Mrs. Carew to account for her role in the staged kidnapping. Although he counsels Mrs. Ocumpaugh to confess to her husband, promising her that "no mercenary motive prompts" his advice, his ambivalence serves to embroil him in the very cover-up he had pledged himself to unravel (Green *Millionaire* 314). Mrs. Carew refuses to return the child and there is a distinct possibility that Philo Ocumpaugh, when he learns of his wife's actions, will forsake her. Trevitt's inability to secure justice for Gwendolen is the final proof of the significant change that has occurred in Green's attitude vis a vis her detective's morality. Fatally compromised by his economic desires, Trevitt no longer represents society's moral interests. He is no longer society's agent, he is his own agent, self-interested and self-involved. In rejecting the notions of domesticity and its attendant moral and

characterological roles, the mercenary interests of characters like Dr. Poole and Robert Trevitt signal a larger social movement away from the performative use of material objects to establish social precedent. Economic prowess appears to have trumped the former compulsion to consume rightly. Material culture has been proven largely, if not wholly, irrelevant. Whereas the earlier misers and hoarders who are discussed in this chapter served as prophetic warnings, embodying the risks of rejecting the norms governing their society's material cultural practices, by the time *The Millionaire Baby* is written, any warning that Green might have wished to communicate has been transformed into fatalistic resignation.

CONCLUSION

The change in how Green depicts the male hoarders and misers over the course of her career shows how individual economic self-interest has triumphed over the earlier performative social values communicated by the domestic display of the home's material culture. The material culture that had previously signalled explicit class affiliations had been eclipsed by straightforward economic imperatives. Similarly, the reassurance that the décor that filled these private domestic spaces has dissipated, as has the certainty that objects could serve as a source of moral reinforcement for their possessors. Instead, Green shows a society in which material culture has become a distraction from the new goal of unfettered economic gain. In the first text discussed in this chapter, Dr. Molesworth rejects domestic practices because he believes they distract him from his professional aims. He has no interest in materially sourced domestic display but to his credit he is also equally disinterested in monetary power. He rejects Genevieve Gretorex because she will not renounce her own economic identity as heiress but at the same time, he does not see her as a vehicle for his own economic progress. His interest, while

misguided, is at least disinterested. His actions are condemned by his peers, who see his mistrust of domestic practice as suspect but his professional efforts, especially amongst the poor, are sincere and devout. A decade later, Dr. Izard's irregular behaviour is not a matter of disinterest in material culture but an attempt to remedy his own moral and criminal actions through the repudiation of domestic comfort. Money may not buy him 'things' in any traditional sense, but he certainly intends for it to make up for his secret act of manslaughter. It is a form of indulgence, in the Catholic sense of the word, allowing him to purchase his salvation. He sacrifices any potential domestic comfort that objects might afford him in a vain attempt to compensate Polly, and the money he hoards comes at the expense of his home and its decoration. Décor and the display of objects in his cramped quarters is not therefore a matter of rejection these norms wholesale, as it was with Molesworth, but rather of moral priority.

Dr. Poole continues this inextricable movement away from the moral potential of décor to its complete irrelevance. For the characters who appear in *The Millionaire Baby*, home – its presentation, its maintenance, its decoration – no longer serves as a moral counterweight to the public sphere and the raw persuasive allure of economic power. Dr. Poole's criminal actions are the logical conclusion of a society in which the power which accrues from amassing wealth exceeds the power that comes from expending it on the collection and display of material goods. Poole worships money, not God. No table, no chair, no piece of art can save his avaricious soul. Indeed, Mrs. Carew, Marion Ocumpaugh and Robert Trevitt all see money in the same way: as a means in and of itself so that money is what is collected, coveted and confirmed, rather than physical goods. Money provides power and access—social, bodily and familial—that eclipses the material world and the domestic sphere entirely. Poole's ruined, inaccessible home, and the dank cellar suite he occupies are filled with the only collection he cares for: his gold and

securities. From a genre standpoint, this novel calls into question the very purpose of the investigative process. Trevitt's loyalties are divided between the truth and his own personal greed. Envious of the material success of others, he cannot reveal either Poole or Mrs. Carew's guilt without exposing his own. His financial vulnerability suborns his moral effectiveness, resulting in a detective fiction in which justice is circumvented not by the criminal but by the detective himself⁶⁰.

In the end, the homes of the misers and hoarders in Green's fiction serve as a warning to her readers about the dangerous attitudes and behaviours which can develop in a society which has come to rely on consumer goods as both a substitute for and a reassurance of moral character. Disconnected from the physical nature of the objects they live with, Green's focus on hoarding, rather than on the aesthetic collecting that has been the focus of much critical attention in realist literature, sets her apart from literary contemporaries like Henry James or Edith Wharton but they stem from the same impulse to catalogue and ascribe meaning to spaces both fictional and real. The homes of the misers, such as they are, are the material end point of wrong paths taken. Yet neither the houses that the men live in, as decrepit, chaotic and uninviting as they all are, nor the goods they fill them with, set them on the path of wrong-doing. Such external determination is not, I believe, Green's point in depicting characters like Izard, Molesworth or Poole and their descent into criminal behaviour. These are middle-class professionals, and on the surface, their profession would seem to serve as proof of their inclusion within the precepts of American society. But as the three narratives discussed in this chapter reveal, their public identities do not align with their private spaces in any way. Instead, the men's fate should be read as a counterpoint to the more typical models of domestic behaviour and decoration that existed in the periods' decorating magazines, religious sermons and domestic

fiction. Ultimately, the doctors in *Behind Closed Doors*, *Doctor Izard* and *The Millionaire Baby* illustrate the moral and emotional vulnerability of individuals who oppose the norms of nineteenth-century American material culture and live in domestic arrangements that challenge those of their socially performative peers. Their deaths, of illness, suicide and accident, serve as conclusive warnings to Green's readers about the pernicious economic forces working to undermine traditional domestic values. It also speaks to the important role space and personal possessions can play in reinforcing or alleviating existing character flaws like hubris, greed and curiosity. Characters like Molesworth, Izard and Poole demand that the reader consider what their own decorating choices say about their own character and whether the domestic arrangements lauded by sentimentalists and design magazines alike are as secure as they might believe.

CHAPTER 3

Mapping Family Secrets: Spatiality and Domestic Architecture

in *The Leavenworth Case, Dark Hollow* and *Missing: Page Thirteen*

I longed to break this silence as we shiver glass by shouting ...through those gilded rooms and satin-draped vestibules. I felt an insane impulse to tear up the very floors and rend the walls, as if they could tell me, if they would, what I so yearned to know.

(Green *The Leavenworth Case* 122)

Of all the concepts associated with nineteenth-century material culture, none remains as resonant as that of the Victorian home. More than a century later, its invocation conjures images of a specific physical space, filled with myriad objects: knick-knacks and ferns under glass, swags of fussy draperies and mahogany sideboards crammed with gold-edged china. In a culture awash with conspicuous consumption, the private home was one of the central venues to display an ever-expanding range of decorative domestic goods. But even as cultural and economic forces saw the home transformed into a repository for a seemingly endless stream of mass produced goods, the Victorian home also came to be seen as the physical embodiment of the desires and aspirations of the century's middle class: a means of both safe-guarding as well as announcing the inhabitants' social position. The previous chapter considered the role that décor played for middle-class men, and the moral and criminal consequences when they abjured the societal norms governing the purchase, display and use of domestic objects. This chapter expands outwards to consider the built spaces in which those objects were housed by exploring how the physical architecture of the homes which appear in early American detective fiction texts like Green's function to obliterate the positive emotions normally attributed to period's domestic spaces, working to contain unacknowledged family discord and hidden trauma even as they

functioned as society's most public symbol of conformity. Green belongs to an informal group of mid-nineteenth and early twentieth-century female writers, including Harriet Beecher Stowe, Metta Victoria Fuller and Mary Roberts Rinehart, who employed "the gothic mode as social criticism", using the genre's symbolic potential to convey a variety of critiques towards social and moral shortcomings⁶¹. These included capitalism, slavery and the women's rights, to name only the most common (Nickerson 18). There have been frequent connections made between detective fiction and the gothic tradition, and the focus on this chapter does continue this pattern with its focus on the home⁶². The most significant of these is Catherine Ross Nickerson's *The Web of Iniquity: Early Detective Fictions by American Women*. Nickerson has played a crucial role in the critical understanding of the connections between domestic detective fiction and its reliance on Gothic symbolism as a vehicle for its subversive critiques. However, while I agree that the gothic mode frequently allows these writers to "say something more truthful than genteel forms" like the earlier domestic novels of writers like Louisa May Alcott did, I believe also believe that many of the previous analyses that have discussed the gothic behaviours in early detective fiction have not considered the physical aspects of the gothic space adequately. This chapter will therefore consider the Gothic influence through material means, focusing on the important role which physical structures and their architectural properties play in domestic detective fiction such as Green's.

Over the past several decades, a sizeable number of scholars of Victorian domesticity have chosen to focus "their efforts on exploring ideological issues surrounding the creation of a home" (Tange 5). As a result, domestic ideology and the meaning ascribed to nineteenth-century homes have been evaluated using a range of critical approaches. These critical analyses address many by now familiar topics: representations of the masculine and feminine within the home,

such as the parlor and dining room being viewed as feminine and masculine spaces, or by class, with the insistence on containing servants to the physical periphery in the basement, the attics and the kitchens and the demarcation of public and private space and articulations of class through architecture and geography are only some of the issues that Victorian scholars have addressed⁶³. But perhaps the most salient division that many scholars have focused on is the Victorian cult of domesticity and its unflagging emphasis on the private family sphere and a belief in the supremacy of the gendered private/public divide that attributes the former to women and the latter to men. This dichotomy has become something of an axiom and a fundamental ideological structure underpinning a large percentage of critical interactions with popular American and British literature of the period. This is especially the case for female writers.

A typical example which is predicated around the focus on the private/public divide is Charles Strickland's analysis of families in Louisa May Alcott's writing. In *Victorian Domesticity: Families in the Life and Art of Louisa May Alcott* (1985), he argues that for Alcott and her contemporaries, home "was a way of marking boundaries between the nuclear family and the world outside it" and presents her experiences as typical of mid and late-century Americans generally (6). Strickland also views the physical demarcation between public and private spaces that he observes in her writing as proof that, typical of their middle-class peers, both Alcott and her readers saw the greatest threats to their way of life as coming from outside of the family. He details the sentimentalists' concerted efforts to inculcate and normalize the existence of emotionally close-knit and socially interwoven nuclear families as a means of countering what they saw as the emotionally stultifying processes of the new economic models and their attendant materialism. But the new image of home as a bulwark against a spiritually deadening economic and public sphere also reflected a material change, a gendered disentangling

of the economic and the domestic. These domestically-oriented texts were seen as a reflection of “an emerging economic reality” for many middle-class families in urban settings, who saw that “the economic production was leaving the household for the office or the factory” (Strickland 9). Whereas the home had previously been a site of economic production under an agrarian and craft economy, now industrialization and production moved to external sites that were entirely separate from the family dwelling. Nominally, this freed the bourgeois home from economic complicity, thus allowing sentimentalists to refashion the domestic space as a spiritual safe haven. No longer was the middle-class home the site of both the family’s shelter and its financial well-being⁶⁴. As a result, the economic model which the middle and upper classes aimed to perpetuate saw work and family as antithetical activities.

As critics like Milette Shamir and John Tosh point out, views like Strickland’s have not only resulted in an overemphasis on the ideological split between public and private spaces but have also tended to reinforce critical positions which discounts, or deemphasizes, the materiality of actual physical, architectural spaces in which the Anglo-American middle-class experience occurred. It also ignores the less positive emotional aspects of these new familial norms: the patriarchal control, the lack of privacy and the increasingly codified ‘decorativeness’ of female family members. Rather than viewing the home as a fixed site, Shamir and Tosh offer an alternative version to the more simplistic binary model put forth by Strickland, Gillian Brown or Amy Sherman Way. They do this by repositioning the white, middle-class home as a site of constant contention, attempting to accommodate “disparate and antithetical values, categories of selfhood, and modes of representation” that preclude a single dominant approach (Shamir 25). I agree with this since I believe the home is not a monolithic fixture, unchanged by social pressure, nor is it an intrinsically gendered space, as writers like Strickland, Gillian Brown or Sherman

Way have proposed. That it has been viewed as such, and that its inevitability should only be intermittently opposed, especially in discourses concerning gender and class, speaks to the long shadow cast by the private home over our own notions of self, family and the patterns of consumption with which we are engaged in the twenty-first century, rather than a monolithic reflection of nineteenth-century practice and outlook.

The ideological issues embedded in the nineteenth-century American home should therefore not be divorced from their innate physical nature. For all that the home expresses its inhabitants' participation in their society's systems of values through a symbolic register, these expressions have their roots in an explicitly physical domain. The way that these homes are constructed and designed are therefore central to the very nature of the crimes committed within them because they are not, as Andrea Tange argues in *Architectural Identities: Domesticity, Literature and the Victorian Middle Classes*, that "home was not just an idea; it was an idea that was explicitly rooted in a material object" (5). To understand how considering material culture and the physical properties of the nineteenth-century home changes our understanding of domestic ideology, this chapter explores how the physical architecture of the homes that appear in Anna Katharine Green's detective fiction obliterates the positive associations normally associated with the American home. Throughout her long career, from her first publication *The Leavenworth Case* (1878), through to the late-career works *Dark Hollow* (1914) and her short story "Missing: Page Thirteen" (1915), Green depicts homes whose primary function is not as a refuge but as a prison, and which function as an architectural mask to disguise and contain family secrets⁶⁵. As a result of their physical and architectural properties, these domestic prisons allow the family living within to bury their personal transgressions and continue to present a façade of normality, even probity, in public. Even more significantly, Green extends the earlier,

familiar pattern of domestically situated threats being directed against young women – something that the Gothic tradition has long focused on –and depicts male suffering in domestic spaces as frequently as she does women’s. This is only one of the complications which she introduces into the typically separate gendered critique of domestic space such that, regardless of their gender, the threats that her characters face manifest themselves architecturally: doors that will not open, or are locked to exclude, hallways that cannot be traversed without coming under surveillance or that have been built over to disguise their very existence and passageways that snake beneath the foundations, allowing for surreptitious explorations. Significantly, it is Green’s generic innovation that saw her include maps of the crime scenes – an innovation that would become omnipresent in the decades to follow – which makes an analysis of the physical space especially relevant. The secrets that threaten the family’s respectability, social standing, and even their physical liberty, are built into the very structure of the home, poisoning the wholesomeness of the domestic interior, with the structural threat made visible by the maps that accompany the texts and illustrate the layout of the dangerous homes the inhabitants occupy.

As a careful reading of Anna Katharine Green’s work shows, there were a number of important themes present in her fiction which challenge the gendered “public-as-danger, private-as-good” pattern that critics like Strickland espouse. This chapter will explore some of those challenges to the “‘expressive’ values of love, warmth, and intimacy” pattern by considering how she transforms the sentimental domestic sphere into a site of contention, criminality and deception in her detective fiction through her use of architectural space (Strickland 9). Such transformations undoubtedly owe a debt to genre expectation around detective fiction, which certainly plays a role in how homes and private domestic spaces appear. Earlier sensation novelists like Wilkie Collins frequently set their narratives, including *The Woman in White*

(1860), in isolated ancestral homes, as did French author, Émile Gaboriau. Subsequently, setting a detective fiction narrative in ‘old manor’ would become almost a cliché during the Golden Age, with writers including A.A. Milne, Agatha Christie and Mary Roberts Rinehart perpetuating Green’s example and regularly organizing narratives within such settings. The continuing reliance on such ambiguous spaces is a signal that detective fiction is engaging with the same ideological model as the earlier sentimental conventions, but its engagement is inverted due to the generic differences between sentimental fiction and detective fiction, such that it shows the ‘dark shadow’ of domesticity, rather than its utopian ideal.

Certainly, Green was not the first to suggest that the benign façade of the nineteenth-century home could in fact be a humbug, or a smokescreen. As critics including Catherine Ross Nickerson and Lucy Sussex point out, her novels continue an older pattern established by American writers like Metta Victoria Fuller as well as English sensation authors like Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Wilkie Collins and Ellen Wood. This pattern worked to expose the hypocrisy and criminality that could occur within the private home and the gulf that frequently existed between idealized depictions of domesticity and real-life experiences⁶⁶. These genre writers all explore the dichotomy between public respectability and private vice in their writing and their “books tore away the comforting notion that scandal and melodrama belonged only to Gothic settings; sensation writers brought violent events and family secrets out of haunted castles and into drawing rooms” (Sims xv). Catherine Ross Nickerson also notes this tendency in her discussions of the work of a number of other American detective fiction writers, including Metta Victoria Fuller Victor, whose work preceded Green’s and Mary Roberts Rinehart, which followed. Nickerson argues that “In domestic detective fiction, the middle- or upper-class domestic interior is still the stage for the most significant activities, but it is now understood as a

realm of high anxiety and deep flaws” (22). However, while it is clear that Green’s writing relies in important ways on the generic tropes established by her predecessors, Green goes further, explicitly complicating the question of domestic sanctity through her engagement with material culture.

As a result of her exploration of the negative consequences of the era’s prevailing domestic ideology, her texts also exude a persistent anxiety about secrecy and truth-telling in the domestic sphere. This anxiety shapes Green’s work and thematic approaches she employs within them in profound ways.⁶⁷ In an era that rallied around the reassuring belief that the home was a respite from the fraught undertakings of business and public responsibility, Green works to dismantle this comforting notion, exposing the threats that the well-appointed middle-class home worked so hard to disguise. Instead, Green shows how the domestic home’s masking effect is often achieved at horrific personal cost, including both its inhabitants’ physical liberty and psychological well-being. At times, deviations from normal domestic pattern *do* reveal a connection between family trauma and criminality⁶⁸. For instance, in *Dark Hollow* (1914), Green makes an explicit distinction between the publicly conducted civic activities of Judge Archibald Ostrander as a member of the legal community and the domestic chaos within which he lives privately. But as Chapter 2’s discussion of the domestic interiors of hoarders and misers revealed, equating domestic disorder with criminality is too simplistic. Examining Green’s writing across the span of her career shows that in her fiction, disorder is not always synonymous with familial breakdown or threat. Rather, she complicates normal associations between domestic disorder as a symptom of wrong-doing. She portrays a significant number of families whose luxurious and comfortable homes are seeming blueprints for middle-class consumption, but which are actually beset with antagonism, malice, greed and even overt criminality and that

these threats are the result of the material culture they surround themselves with⁶⁹. This disruption of the domestic disorder/moral disorder binary is one of Green's most trenchant acts of social critique and as I will show in this chapter, it serves to complicate the view of domestic spaces as intrinsically 'safe' by instead showing how these same values could be corrupted to traumatic ends.

Therefore, while Green does employ a range of gothic-inspired tropes and themes in her writing, she uses those which address domesticity differently than her early gothic counterparts. Notably, the "home as mask" trope that is so ubiquitous in Green's writing is something that did not occur in earlier sentimental or Gothic fiction and it relies almost exclusively on the exploitation and interrogation of the middle-class home's architecture. The ideological shift towards domestic middle-class spaces functioning as social and emotional masks marks one of the most important contributions to the formation of detective fiction in its modern form. Its presence, linked as it is to the material architecture of the home, marks a key shift away from its sensationalist predecessors in several fundamental ways. It is possible to observe this masking effect in Green's first novel, *The Leavenworth Case* (1878). One of the founding texts of the genre's locked room tradition, the book is an investigation into the murder of the wealthy New York tea merchant, Horatio Leavenworth, who is found dead in his locked second story library, fatally shot by his own revolver. Very quickly, the physical evidence, including the trajectory of the bullet, the fact that Leavenworth did not react to the killer's entry, and time when the butler locked up the exterior entrances against intrusion the night before, shows that the culprit must be one of a small group of family members and servants who lived in the luxurious mansion alongside the victim, rather than an outside actor. The central suspects are in fact, Leavenworth's two nieces: Mary, who stands to inherit the bulk of the dead man's sizeable fortune, and

Eleanore, who refuses to cooperate with investigators and is found to have disposed of several important pieces of evidence.

Early in the novel, Mary Leavenworth is questioned at the public inquest as to the possibility of a motive to explain her uncle's death. Despite having argued with her uncle only days previous to her death, she claims to have no idea of any possible threat or ill-will that could have precipitated her uncle's death. She insists despite evidence to the contrary that the family lives "the most methodical and domestic of lives" within the opulent Fifth Avenue mansion which they occupy, and lays the blame resolutely on "one of a gang who make their living by breaking into houses" (Green *Leavenworth* 67). Yet despite Mary's attempts to incriminate someone from outside the family sphere, it is clear to both Ebenezer Gryce, the New York Police department detective tasked with investigating the death, and Everett Raymond, the newly minted lawyer who is called to the house in the absence of the firm's senior partner to represent the family's interests, that the Leavenworth family's purported regularity actually masks a profound and toxic secret, and that it was this secret which led Horatio Leavenworth's violent death. Raymond soon finds himself caught up in the home's tumultuous atmosphere and he quickly comes to regret his decision to become involved in the matter. "Would to God I had never entered this house!" he laments bitterly, before giving serious consideration to abandoning the cousins and letting his boss take up the task upon his return from Washington (Green *Leavenworth* 44). Yet even as he contemplates his own escape, he is grateful "that [he], and not another, was the one to break in upon their privacy" (*Leavenworth* 44). As a gentleman, Raymond understands the importance of maintaining the family's reputation in the face of the public scrutiny that must follow such a shocking crime. This shows the function that such domestic façades serve. Even as Raymond admits to his personal discomfort with the family in

light of their dysfunction, he continues to support their efforts to present a sympathetic domestic arrangement to the police, the press and the even Raymond himself. Despite the myriad examples that prove the Leavenworths' good relationships to be fictitious, the lawyer still finds himself working in support of their efforts in perpetuating the fiction of the family's adherence to the sentimental domestic norms of a close and emotionally connected family. The family exploits material culture in order to continue the façade of normalcy.

If The home's décor presents a physical distraction designed to direct attention away from the true state of their feelings towards each other but the home's architecture undercuts its masking effect and reveals the true state of the true feelings. The revelatory effect of architecture occurs throughout the novel. One of the earliest occurs during the inquest, when Raymond is directed to the "third floor, rear room, first door at the head of the stairs" to fetch Mary and Eleanore so that they can testify before the coroner (Green *Leavenworth* 40) Outside their room, through the closed door, he overhears one of cousins make an "ominous" accusation that staggers him. As the narrator, and unfamiliar with either woman's voice, Raymond does not know which of the two women are speaking, the door serves to mask their identity. As a result, his account communicates only the words to the reader, but the accusation encapsulates the disjunction between public conformity and secret culpability that Green's writing so trenchantly explores.

I do not accuse your hand, though I know of none other which would or could have done this; but your heart, your head, your will, those I do and must accuse in my secret mind at least, and it is well that you should know it. (Green *Leavenworth* 41)

Although he cannot distinguish the speaker, Raymond is "struck as if by a blow" on hearing this unequivocal accusation and he is immediately overcome with revulsion at the "depths of horror

and depravity [that] were about to open before [him]!” (Green *Leavenworth* 41). The door that prevents him from knowing who the speaker is must open, yet it is clear that the lawyer wishes that it could remain closed. Indeed, Raymond wishes frantically that he could continue to deceive himself into believing that such overt ill-intent cannot exist in such a home, amongst such a family. Yet the emphasis that the speaker puts on the guilty party’s “heart”, “head” and “will” all speak to the psychological aspects of guilt and make any continued denial on Raymond’s part impossible. In contrast to the lawyer’s hesitancy, Gryce is undeterred by either the presence of the closed door nor the fact that the motive for Leavenworth’s death clearly resides amongst the family’s private interactions. Instead, he rallies the young lawyer, even as he acknowledges that Raymond, despite being a lawyer, does not “begin to know what kind of a world you have got into” (Green *Leavenworth* 41). The irony, of course, is that Gryce, the police officer who is socially excluded by virtue of his working-class roots, has a better understanding of the veiled depravities possible in this world than one of its naturalized inhabitants. This is because as an outsider, he can easily pierce the domestic façade of normalcy that the family project and see their efforts for what they truly are: a disguise intended to preserve the Leavenworth’s “family credit” (Green *Leavenworth* 67). It is Detective Gryce and not Raymond the lawyer then, who strikes “his hand against the door, and [flings] it wide open,” and exposes the young women arguing within (Green *Leavenworth* 41). In his role as an officer of the law, Gryce is not dissuaded by the physical barriers that the home presents and he does not view the domestic space as sacrosanct. Determined to expose the truth and unawed by the social prominence of the family he is tasked with investigating, Gryce does not scruple to open doors, inspect rooms and track the movements of the various suspects, both within the Leavenworth home and abroad. In doing so, he comes to represent a profound threat to the continued existence of the domestic

mask by which upper and middle-class families like the Leavenworths operate because unlike their peers, who are willing to respect the conventions communicated by their décor, and not press for information which would disrupt their social performance, Gryce refuses to conform to these behaviours. Raymond, their social peer, does. Material culture then, which serves to insulate members of the upper- and middle-classes from each other's unpleasant emotional truths, cannot protect them from inquiries across class lines.

The willingness to expose these normally sacrosanct social conventions is what distinguishes Gryce from Raymond. As a member of the class which Gryce is working to disrupt, Raymond expresses qualms about playing "the part of a spy" and balks at suggestions that he use his familiarity with the class' social norms to inveigle the truth from the Leavenworth cousins (Green *Leavenworth* 106) Yet despite Raymond's latent mistrust of disguise, he is at heart, an honest man, and he cannot ignore the evidence that the home itself presents to him, as much as he would like to. Observing the cousins' torturous interactions and listening to the servants' accounts of the household's abnormal routines, Raymond is forced to admit, if only to himself, that the household is shielding a secret so profoundly entrenched that it has come to permeates the very structure of the building, and that the family's trauma is built into its walls. Although initially dazzled by the superficial elegance of "the gorgeous house [and] its elaborate furnishing," he reiterates his suspicions about the family's toxic interactions as he paces the floor of the reception-room, listening to the muffled sounds of yet another disagreement between the estranged cousins.

What was the secret of this home? What had given rise to the deadly mistrust continually manifested between these cousins fitted by Nature for the completest companionship and the most cordial friendship? It was not a thing of today or yesterday. No sudden flame

could awake such concentrated heat of emotion as that of which I had just been the unwilling witness. One must go further back than this murder to find the root of a mistrust so great, that the struggle it caused made itself felt even where I stood, though nothing but the faintest murmur came to my ears through the closed doors (*Leavenworth* 91)

His query introduces clearly one of the themes that is so central to Green's writing, namely that in her detective fiction, the home is not a retreat from the outside world, but rather an inescapable and poisonous repository for a family's most profound secrets and wrong-doing. This theme is a literary strand that critics including Catherine Ross Nickerson and Lisa Dresner have identified as common in many other female detective fiction authors' works, especially American authors like Metta Victoria Fuller and Mary Wilkins Freeman. But I believe that Green's positioning of the home as a threat differs because it is complicated by her simultaneous interrogation of social mobility within American society, and that interrogation is facilitated explicitly by the homes' physical structures. The secrecy and shame that arises from repressing this private and socially corrosive knowledge is endemic to the era's domestic space, I would therefore argue. The affective impact which architectural design has on a home's inhabitants is inescapable compared to mobile and transitory material objects like furnishings and décor. The way that the *Leavenworth* home, and the homes of the readers' experiencing is, are constructed shapes both inhabitants' pattern of living and their emotional experiences, as well.

Frustrated by his repeated attempts to elicit an explanation from either of the reticent *Leavenworth* cousins, Raymond confesses that:

I longed to break this silence as we shiver glass by shouting the name of Eleanore through those gilded rooms and satin-draped vestibules. I felt an insane impulse to tear

up the very floors and rend the walls, as if they could tell me, if they would, what I so yearned to know. (Green *Leavenworth* 122)

The physical structure that houses the Leavenworth patriarch and his adopted family seems, at this moment then, to be potentially more forthcoming than the inhabitants who live within it. Yet equally important is that even as Raymond longs to overcome the problematic silence that envelops the family home, he views this potential destruction as an “insane impulse” that is discounted as entirely unworkable. The physical structure which serves to house the objects that permit the mutually reinforcing charade of social obedience and emotional sincerity is utterly indifferent to its inhabitants’ turmoil. The physical space can therefore not be relied upon to keep its inhabitants’ secrets. Individuals with the appropriate awareness of the mute testimony offered up by the architecture, and a willingness to disregard social norms, can in fact intuit the truth.

The inscrutability of the Leavenworth home is profound and has a significant impact on the narrative progression as a whole. In light of this, I agree with Catherine Ross Nickerson’s contention that such domestic secrecy is one of Green’s key contributions to detective fiction. That said, I disagree with her subsequent assertion that such enigmatic spaces stand for and reflect the mutism of the various female characters who exist in the novel (84). This narrow gendered focus is the result of an analysis which only considers of the impact of domestic secrecy as it relates to the female characters. Furthermore, she views the physical spaces in which the traumatic silence occurs as metaphorical vehicles for gothic symbolism, rather than considering their materiality in any meaningful way. While there is little doubt about the influence the Gothic had on Green’s work, its influence is significantly altered when the entirety of her writing is considered. As a result of this, Nickerson’s position is put under further strained

when the gothic-inspired theme of female silence is considered in the context of Green's entire output, rather than selectively focusing on her most celebrated work in isolation. I would argue instead that the silence that she sees as behaviour expressed solely by female characters such as Mary and Eleanore is also shared by several of the male characters, as well. For instance, Henry Clavering is unwilling to name Mary as his wife when he discusses the legality of their marriage with Everett Raymond and gives a false name when he calls at the house on the night of the murder. Finally, the fact that Nickerson incorrectly identifies the site of the murderer's confession as taking place within the Leavenworth mansion (91), when it is in fact Detective Gryce's much more modest home to which the various suspects have all been invited. Green explicitly identifies the "lugubrious" garret where Trueman Harwell confesses to being the murderer as being within Gryce's home three times in the final volume: at the end of its second chapter, "Fine Work", again at the beginning of Chapter Three and finally, at the conclusion of Chapter Four. (*Leavenworth* 295). Although her observations about the Gothic are incredibly important to understanding Green's use of its symbolism, Nickerson's misattribution weakens her conclusions about gothic disclosure in Green's first novel because it erroneously conflates the site of the crime with the separate site of its solution. It also puts an unwarranted emphasis on Harwell's spoken confession by ignoring similar confessional acts expressed by Amy Belden, Mary Leavenworth and Eleanore Leavenworth during the course of the investigation. I would argue that the new thematic elements better reflect the worries and concerns of nineteenth-century America. Gone are the threatening Italian monks and desolate ruins; in their place are the recognizable homes of middle America, decorated and laid out in a manner identical to the very rooms in which Green's writing was being read.

But even more than her act of bringing the threat within the home – an action that identifiable precedents amongst both her American and English predecessors – the most important challenge which Green offers towards our understanding of domestic space is her inclusion of maps along side the written texts. Not only does her presentation of the domestic space as an emotional mask disrupt sentimental norms of the home as ‘retreat,’ Green’s inclusion of the maps which depict these domestic spaces fundamentally alters the reader’s interaction with and understanding of the spaces she is writing about. Moving beyond mere literary descriptions of the fictional world, these maps suggest a ‘preferred’ mode of navigating the illustrated spaces that recognizes their material significance beyond the merely literary and gives them width and depth and presence. At their most functional level, such metatextual materials⁷⁰ allow the reader to visualize the site where the criminal act has taken place and invoke the participatory competition between the author, detective and reader that so typifies the genre. But they do more than merely help the reader win a generic competition. In “From the Locked Room to the Globe : Space in Crime Fiction,” David Schmid considers the role which space has played in crime fiction since its inception. Notably, he argues that despite crime fiction being, at its core, “profoundly spatial,” crime fiction critics have “tended to treat the genre primarily in terms of narrative structure and temporality, rather than in terms of spatiality, mostly because of the teleological bent given to that criticism by its emphasis on the solution to the crime” (7). He goes on to argue that “a concentration on space in crime fiction...de-centres a critical emphasis on the solution of the crime *per se* and instead focuses on the movements (both literal and metaphorical) that lead to that solution” (Schmid 11). The focus on the identification of the guilty party as the means of achieving narrative closure – the colloquial ‘whodunnit’ – thus supersedes what I would argue are equally important questions of ‘wheredunnit’ by ignoring the

very germane influence which place and space can and do exert on criminal acts. Schmid continues his critique by noting that one of the most common shortcomings of existing narratively-focused criticism has been that it treats space in crime fiction passively with “the houses, suburbs and cities” depicted as mere “background or setting rather than as determinative forces” (8).

Building on these observations, I would argue that the maps continue the pattern of Green’s disruption of domestic rhetoric by forcing a confrontation with the material. In utilizing these maps within her detective fiction, they transcend narrative function. They come to embody the ‘worst’ practices of domestic space, then, by emphasizing division and physical distance rather than the communal well-being or familial togetherness which the architectural plans that appeared in the catalogues, decorating guides and homebuilding manuals of the period normally conveyed. Much like the sentimental and gothic traditions which she builds upon and then refashions, because they too drew on the disjunction between appearance and reality, Green is initially reliant on existing architectural practices which developed in the service of building and designing middle- and upper-middle class. However, as the space itself comes under investigation, she takes these practices and repurposes them as a vehicle for social critique which goes further than her predecessors by inextricably linking her criticism to the material world of the built spaces she depicts. The emphasis on the barriers to entrance and egress, as signified by the two-dimensional representations of walls, doors, hallways and secret passages that the maps make visually apparent forces the theme of secrecy that is so characteristic not only of Green’s work, but of detective fiction as a whole to the forefront.

The strong visual similarities between the maps of the crime scenes depicted by Green and the architectural blueprints which proliferated after the mid-nineteenth century are

unmistakeable. They also suggest an important but previously unconsidered interplay between two genres that on their surface have little in common save their shared concerns with domesticity and material culture. But it is exactly that concern which links them so inextricably and highlights important details about the era's understanding of domestic ideology and Green's interactions with it. Subsequently, the practice of depicting the crime scene visually would become an "omnipresent" generic practice but it is worthwhile noting that Green was the first to include maps in English-language detective fiction (Bargainnier 25). Her inaugural visual and stylistic choices would go on to have an outsized influence on subsequent Golden Age writers including Christie and Sayers⁷¹. However innovative Green's inclusion of these drawings in detective fiction were with regards to readerly participation, printed floorplans themselves were not a new innovation and appeared regularly in non-detectival sources in both America and Britain throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. It is impossible to know which specific sources Green may have been familiar with when the maps that appear in *The Leavenworth Case* were drawn, but it is possible to trace the similarities between the maps that appear in her crime-centred texts and those that were printed in the popular home-building guides she could have encountered in the 1860s and 1870s. Some of the most influential examples of these architectural blueprint books include Robert Kerr's *The Gentleman's House* (1864) and several books by American architect Gervase Wheeler, including his *Rural Homes: Or Sketches of Houses Suited to American Life* (1851) and *The Choice of a Dwelling: A Practical Handbook* (1871). Both of these authors' works, and others like Charles Eastlake's *Hints on Household Taste* (1868), which also provided advice on furniture design and room layouts, enjoyed wide circulation during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and were reprinted for many years. As a comparison between the plans for "a spacious New York house"

in Wheeler's handbook to the map of the Leavenworth mansion highlights, there are important ideological intersections between architectural designs like Wheelers' and Green's use of the same in her detective fiction that speak to not only their shared visual roots but also the way in which both detective fiction and architectural guides embodied nineteenth-century domestic ideology, with both sets of maps grounded in real physical space.

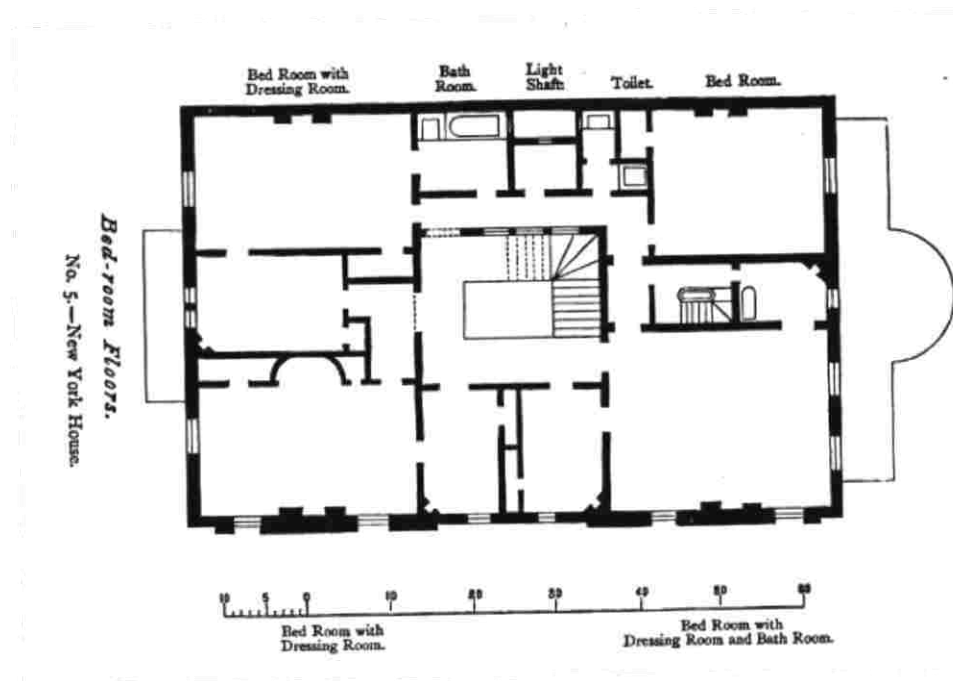


Figure 4 "A Spacious New York House" from Gervase Wheeler's *The Choice of a Dwelling* (1871)

Wheeler's written description of this design describes it a large private dwelling situated "on the corner of two wide streets", occupying a footprint of "about 50 by 80 feet," behind which are located private gardens and a sizeable stable (139). This aligns very closely with the fictional Leavenworth mansion, which Raymond describes in very similar terms. It is "a corner dwelling of unusual depth as well as width" on Fifth Avenue in New York City (Green *Leavenworth* 5). Subsequently, the blueprints that accompany Wheeler's description show the layout of the home in two separate maps: the "Principal floor" and the "Bed-room Floors". The map that Green includes in her novel depicting Horatio Leavenworth's private library, bedroom and the

connecting corridor bears marked affinities with Wheeler's own architectural practices. Michael Cook describes this "line drawing" as:

a precise, draughtsman-like way of delimiting the scope of the inquiry; given Green's capacity for detail and its interpretation, the assumption is, of course, that reading the script with the sketch is the key to solving the mystery, so the problem automatically becomes realized in another dimension. The sketch plan is also a constituent part of the way in which Green seeks to give the impression of authenticity by providing pictorial evidence. The diagram, therefore, allows the text to operate at two levels of understanding, emphasizing that no matter where the narrative leads, no doubt should remain as to the central focus of the mystery (178-179).

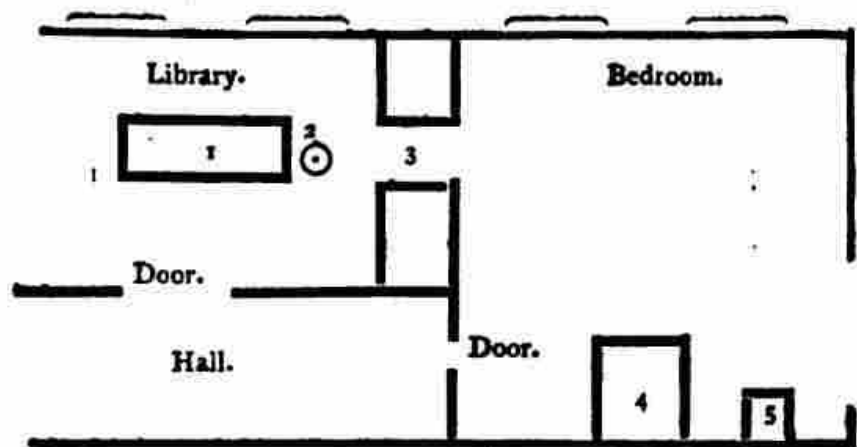
This participation has, of course, become a hallmark of the genre. As the reader's surrogate, Everett Raymond is guided through the space by Ebenezer Gryce, whose analysis reinforces the way that the architectural space imposes restrictions on its inhabitants' knowledge of that same space. Hoping that the lawyer's "absolutely uninitiated mind" might intuit some vital clue to the evil "genius" who has killed Leavenworth, Gryce's tour includes both forensic speculation as well as descriptions of the rooms' layout. His actions also force the reader to refer back to the map to see if his conclusions are supported by the diagram of the space (Green *Leavenworth* 7). This reinforces Cook's point about the map's centrality to the mystery plot, even as it buttresses the space's physicality.

"It was here that he was found," said [Gryce]; "in this room and upon this very spot."
And advancing he laid his hand on the end of a large, baise-covered table that, together with its attendant chairs, occupied the center of the room. "You see for yourself that it is directly opposite this door," and, crossing the floor, he paused in front of the threshold of

a narrow passageway, opening into the room beyond*” (*Leavenworth* 8).

The asterisk which follows Gryce’s description acts to direct the reader to a small footnote appended to the map, informing them that “this diagram is for those who are interested in the details of this affair” (Green *Leavenworth* 8).

* For those who are interested in the details of this affair, the following diagram is given:—



1. Library Table. 2. Chair. 3. Passage-way. 4. Bed. 5. Shaving Stand.

Figure 5 Map detailing Horatio Leavenworth’s private suite in *The Leavenworth Case* (1878)

Of course, the narrative *raison d’être* of the novel is achieving a solution to Horatio Leavenworth’s murder but the map situates the killing within a material, physically embodied space in a way that the written description alone cannot. As he listens to the police officer’s succinct and dispassionate description of Leavenworth’s last moments, Raymond tries to interject, expressing doubt about Gryce’s certainty. “There is no room for but,” [Gryce] crie[s]. “We have studied the situation” (Green *Leavenworth* 9). The use of the word ‘room’ in this sentence creates an interesting resonance. It is intended first as colloquial reassurance to the doubtful lawyer that the police have made a detailed study of the crime site itself. But such assurance has only been achieved by studying the room itself. It suggests that if the reader is to

understand the crime, such knowledge can only come through ‘knowing’ the room directly. Similarly, Gryce’s directive that “you see for yourself” is technically directed at Raymond, but it also implicates the reader, who, without the diagram, cannot, in fact ‘see’ the location of the table and chairs within the library. It reinforces the written description which is given as Gryce and Raymond move through the room while also providing information that cannot be conveyed verbally. In this way, the room’s architectural features – its windows, doors and connecting passageways – as well as the disposition of the key pieces of furniture are marked in a manner that emphasizes the intrinsic physicality of the space and its furnishings even as it highlights the site of the killing within the ‘typical’ domestic space it depicts. In both of Wheeler’s two-dimensional examples, as the well as the examples that appear in Green’s novel, some of the restrictions imposed by material physical spaces are eliminated. The space is seen from above, and each room is carefully labelled, its function cemented to a specific purpose. This allows the space to be read *through*, rather than sequentially, so that despite architectural features such as the walls and stairwells being demarcated by the thick black lines, the reader is presented with the space in its totality. In contrast, a physical home can only be experienced in stages and physical barriers like walls cannot be seen through. But the blueprints and maps that Green and Wheeler both exploit are not restricted by such spatial concerns. As a result, the reader is able to grasp the architectural interactions holistically, while the characters themselves must experience the space piecemeal.

Yet even as the map serves to remind the reader of the similarities between the fictional site and that of the ideal domestic spaces that Wheeler and Kerr design, the physical layout of the fictional home also permits the key question – the identity of the murderer – to remain a secret. The means by which the murder was committed is intelligible through forensics but their identity

is not. Noticing the second door that leads from the bedroom into the hall, Raymond cannot “help wondering if it was through there the assassin had come on his roundabout course to the library” (Green *Leavenworth* 9). Unlike the body of the victim, which has been transformed into a “horrible blood-curdling it,” and which is now an inanimate object just like the wash-stand, the towel rack or the wine close, and whose position in the room can be drawn on the diagram in the same way that all of these objects are, the still living murderer’s actions are far more difficult to track. Gryce tells Raymond that the door to the bedroom was “found locked on the inside; [the killer] may have come that way and may not: we don’t pretend to say” (Green *Leavenworth* 9). The architecture of the home thus permits the killer to arrive in the room, execute the killing and leave again, entirely unseen.

The facility for secrecy that the built space engenders reveals very real concerns about the precarious nature of the domestic ideology that gave birth to it. During the inquest, one of the police officers describes the layout of the room to the jury:

One might enter that door, pass directly round the foot of the bed to the stand, procure the pistol, and cross half-way over to the passage-way, without being seen by anyone sitting or standing in the library beyond (*Leavenworth* 37)

In *The Leavenworth Case*, the actions that are done “without being seen” are, of course, murder. But given how closely the fictional space aligns with real life spaces, for the reader, the implied threat can be extrapolated into their own home: threats such as the mingling of classes, for instance, the potential for secret rendezvous or personal betrayals like infidelity. Thus the features of “Mr. Leavenworth’s private apartments,” which are intended to mark such rooms as especially desirable domestic space, distinct from quasi-public spaces like the parlour, the dining room or the drawing room of the main floor, are the very properties that make it possible for the

killing to be perpetrated in secret: namely, the private and self-contained nature of the space (Leavenworth 9). The architecture of the private American home is therefore simultaneously built to communicate its inhabitants domestic adherence while secretly facilitating familial betrayal and emotional harm. The bifurcation of public and private spaces, should not therefore be the one that only considers this divide within the context of eternal economic actions and interior domestic performance. Instead, I believe there is in fact a second salient division within the family home that is inaugurated and maintained by its built spaces. If, as Elizabeth Langland believes, the home is indeed a stage on which social performance occurs, then it would behoove us to remember that all homes, just like theatres, also have a backstage, without which the public performance cannot be enacted.

CLASS, PRIVACY AND FAMILY SECRETS

Often overlooked in discussions of *The Leavenworth Case*'s contributions to generic practice and the practice of including diagrams of the crime scene is the fact that the Leavenworth map is not the only map that appears in the novel. In fact, there are two: the map of Horatio Leavenworth's private rooms, which was discussed above, and a second map, which shows the upper story of Mrs. Amy Belden's modest home in an unidentified resort town outside of New York City. Each map details a different crime scene, although they do share superficial visual similarities. However, the fact that Leavenworth's murder has taken critical and narrative precedence can be attributed to several factors. The novel bears the victim's name in its title, signally his central position within the novel. Secondly, the Leavenworth map appears in the first chapter, in the opening pages of the book, whereas Amy Belden, and the map of her home, is only introduced in the third book, nearly two-thirds of the way through the narrative. Finally, the

murder that takes place in Belden's home is the result of the killer's attempts to silence a witness to the earlier crime and therefore is related causally to the first, rather than being a unique or stand-alone event. Finally, the social status of the victims (wealthy industrialist versus Irish immigrant servant) also contributes to the varied attention which both have received. But moving beyond the elements of narrative prominence, I believe that examining the differences in the two maps is useful for a number of other reasons as well, not least of which are the implications relating to class and gender and their impact on the period's understanding of privacy and private space within architectural spaces.

As was discussed in both the first and second chapters, Green's use of binaries and contrasting pairs is a hallmark of her writing. Even in this, her first work, that tendency is unmistakable. Whereas the first murder is enacted in the urban home of a wealthy, socially prominent businessman, the site of the second murder takes place in a semi-rural setting, and the home is owned by a poor, lower class widow, who takes in boarders to supplement a meager income. Yet despite her constrained circumstances, and in sharp contrast to the oppressive feelings roused by the Leavenworth mansion's stark grandeur, Mrs. Belden's house elicits strong admiration during Raymond's visit. Located in the unnamed resort town of R—, it is one of three family homes in the novel whose architecture, décor and disposition of objects are described in extended detail⁷². When Raymond arrives, he spends a great deal of time detailing the home's contents and establishing the home's domestic credentials. "For all its simplicity," he immediately notices that it has a "warm coloring and general air of cosiness" and exudes "a general air of welcome and home likeness" (Green *Leavenworth* 205; 207). As with the Leavenworth mansion and its stylistic alignment with the designs of architects like Wheeler, it is clear that here too Green is depicting a very specific space that would have resonated with

contemporary readers, rather than a fantastic castle or improbable rural estate as was common in Gothic and Sensational fiction. The detailed descriptions of farmhouse align with uncanny ways with the descriptions afforded American readers of an ideal ‘Christian’ home that first appeared a decade or so earlier in Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *American Woman’s Home* (1869)⁷³. This manual, which covered everything from how to best inculcate Christian religion in family members to avoiding dangerous drafts, was a perennial best seller during the period and it “came closest to being a bible of domestic topics of anything published up to that time” (Van Why 18).

In the chapter on “Home Decoration”, Beecher and Beecher Stowe explain how a prudent family might decorate their parlour on a modest budget of eighty dollars. “White muslin curtains,” the reader is assured, “create a room out of nothing” and give “an air of grace and elegance to a room” while the walls should be decorated with “admirable pictures of some of our best American artists” (88; 91). They also suggest a table “well concealed beneath the folds of handsome drapery, of a color corresponding to the general hue of the room, will look well” and is “capable of entertaining a generous allowance of books and knick-knacks (Beecher and Beecher Stowe 89; 90) The sisters also spend a great deal of time showing how residents could reclaim the natural world and bring it indoors. They extoll the virtues of “beautiful ferns and mosses”, “tremulous grasses” and “ivy” as cheap, yet effective ways at vanquishing barren interior walls (94; 94; 96). Significantly, the characteristics of this economical yet tasteful parlor which are outlined in such meticulous detail – the authors assign prices to each item, and in some cases suggest specific mail order services where goods like the chromolithographs can be purchased – aligns in every particular with Amy Belden’s own parlor. When Raymond circles the room, he notes “these things” which he encounters are all objects “which [he] had seen

repeated in so many other country homes” and to the period’s readers then, the room would have been immediately recognizable and familiar (Green *Leavenworth* 207).

On the floor was crimson carpet, on the walls several pictures, at the windows cheerful curtains of white, tastefully ornamented with ferns and autumn leaves, in one corner an old melodeon, and in the center of the room a table draped with a bright cloth, on which were various little knick-knacks which, without being rich or expensive, were both pretty, and to a certain extent, ornamental (Green *Leavenworth* 207)

Raymond’s detailed description of the room’s contents – its “crimson carpet”, the tasteful natural floral arrangements, and the “little knick-knacks” which he knows at a glance to be inexpensive, but which are redeemed in his eyes by being “pretty” and “ornamental” – all coincide point for point with the description offered in *American Woman’s Home*. The fact that Mrs. Belden’s home is not a Gothic castle or an ancestral European manse but rather a readily identifiable to Green’s readers as American home belonging to a member of the lower-middle classes, has the effect of foregrounding the worrisome possibility of criminous activities happening within the reader’s home, too. Even as Beecher and Beecher Stowe’s promise that if their instructions are followed to the letter, a moral and sanctified Christian home will result, the fact that Mrs. Belden’s home has become host to criminal actions is proof that all the white muslin curtains and fresh ivy in the world cannot protect her. That this destabilizing realization is couched in explicitly characterological terms makes the threat even more pervasive.

Raymond’s survey of the room is “the first thing” he does upon being left alone and that fact reiterates the import characterological role interior design plays in understanding an inhabitant’s personality and morality, in a fashion that recalls the examination given to the hoarders’ domestic arrangements in Chapter 2. In this case, the inspection is motivated by a

criminal investigation, but the same interrogation would normally be undertaken in a social setting (Green *Leavenworth* 207). “The practical organisation of the interior mapped social interaction in microcosmic form. Yet the domestic interior was also a sphere of self-expression, of emotional and psychological states” (Bryden and Floyd 10). In studying Mrs. Belden’s home in this way, he hopes “to find, not only in the general aspect of the whole, but in each trivial object itself, of the character, disposition, and history” of her, and learn material truths that he cannot secure from her in other, more interrogatory ways (Green *Leavenworth* 207).

The contrast between the intensely suffocating public propriety that envelops the Leavenworth mansion and the seeming openness of Mrs. Belden’s home extends to her willingness to accept strangers as temporary boarders. In New York City, the Leavenworth family live lives designed to protect their privacy, and that protection is secured with a near-paranoid intensity that exploits material culture to effect this mask. Eleanor refuses to testify at the inquest because she fears the social ramifications which unconstrained speech would have on the family’s public reputation more than the possibility that the police will consider her a suspect. Likewise, when asked about the possibility someone from within their home being responsible for the crime, Mary Leavenworth is quick to blame a gang of professional thieves for her uncle’s murder. Amy Belden exhibits no such worry.

“You live in this house alone, without fear?” [Raymond] asked...“Have you no marauders in this town, no tramps, of whom a solitary woman like you might reasonably be afraid?”

“No one will hurt me,” said she, “and no one ever came here for food or shelter, but got it.” (Green *Leavenworth* 209)

Mrs. Belden's selflessness and generosity initially appear to offer a rebuke to the hypocritical secrecy and self-interest that infects her New York counterparts and their homes. Her willingness to share, despite her obviously straitened circumstances, recalls the Biblical example of the widow's mite. Examples of this including her feeding of an undercover police officer when he is dressed as a tramp and allowing him to sleep in her kitchen and immediately answering a neighbour's plea for nursing aid when his young son comes to the door.

Yet Mrs. Belden's seeming openness is also a façade, albeit stemming from different motivations than those that animate the Leavenworths, and her selflessness does not mitigate the secrecy infecting her home, either. As we learn over the course of Raymond's inquiry, the widow's most salient flaw is her emotional pliability. As a result of this shortcoming, when she is "requested to do anything by a person [she] love[s], [she] cannot refuse," even if the request is illogical or even potentially criminal (Green *Leavenworth* 234). In awe of the beautiful but manipulative Mary, "who had stooped from her lofty position to make use of [her] and to love [her]," Mrs. Belden facilitated the secret romance between Henry Clavering and Mary Leavenworth, and agreed to keep their all-important marriage certificate hidden until Mary calls for it (Green *Leavenworth* 234). Likewise, despite knowing that Hannah Chester, the Leavenworth's maid, has fled New York City under mysterious circumstances, and that police are seeking her as a witness to the killing at the Leavenworth mansion, she immediately agrees to Mary's request that she "secrete" Hannah in her home "without asking her any questions or demanding any explanations" (Green *Leavenworth* 234). Her complicity indicts her in the cover-up of the secret marriage and its aftermath. But unlike Mary, who continually seeks to preserve her social position and her wealth by repeatedly lying, destroying evidence and conspiring to hide the motive that makes her one of the prime suspects in her uncle's death, Amy Belden's part

in the conspiracy only extends to protection, not destruction. When Mary sends her a letter, begging her to “destroy what you have, today, instantly, without question or hesitation,” Mrs. Belden cannot bring herself to do so, because she has promised Eleanore that such a step would only be taken when both women had agreed to it. Instead, she takes the incriminating love letters and the marriage certificate that proves Mary and Henry Clavering are man and wife from their hiding place in her home and relocates them to a decrepit barn some distance from her house. She cannot bring herself to implicate Mary directly in the murder, but she will not destroy the proof that she holds either. It is only later, when Hannah is found dead, that Amy Belden finally admits what she knows, tearfully confessing that she has had “enough of secrecy for my whole life” (Green *Leavenworth* 233). Eager to understand the circumstances surrounding the death of the witness whom he had sought so assiduously, Raymond extracts the whole history of her relationship with Mary, Hannah Chester and Henry Clavering in detail⁷⁴. As she relates her involvement, the lawyer notes that Hannah’s death had her “so thoroughly frightened, that if a police-officer had come into the house and asked her to reveal secrets compromising the good name of her own son, she would have done so without cavil or question” (Green *Leavenworth* 233). Raymond’s observations, which contrast so strongly with the implacable silence maintained by both Leavenworth cousins in the face of interrogation and suspicion, suggests that the state of secrecy has been imposed upon Amy Belden due to her “weakness and inconsistencies of character” rather than an entrenched need to hide her emotional turmoil behind a façade of public respectability, and that it is her misguided love, rather than the need to disguise a personal trauma that causes her to act in this way (Green *Leavenworth* 233).

This tension between openness and secrecy is reflected in the physical architecture of her home, which makes it nearly impossible to maintain secrecy. On the main floor of the Belden

house, the only rooms are the parlour, the kitchen, the bedroom where Raymond sleeps and “a little room, long and narrow, which seemed...to run cross-wise of the house” (Green *Leavenworth* 209). As a result of its simple layout, Mrs. Belden’s attempts to disguise Hannah’s presence in her home are repeatedly thwarted. Given its small size and its frame construction, Raymond can hear “a board creak overhead” when the “restless” maid paces above them while he sits with Mrs. Belden after supper (Green *Leavenworth* 209; 228). The transparency of the Belden home extends to its exterior, as well. Watching from outside the home, Q, the young police officer sent to aid Raymond and act as a go-between between the lawyer and Gryce, is easily able to see Hannah as she moves about in her room by watching her actions through the large upper story windows. The windows in the Belden home are only guarded by light shades, rather than heavy, impenetrable draperies that decorate the Leavenworth home’s windows.

The material differences in the two homes are reflected in the maps themselves, too. Unlike the diagram of the Leavenworth home, which displays both the floor plan and the furnishings of the space, the map of Amy Belden’s second story is far less detailed. The intended recipient of the second map is also not explicitly the reader, as was the case in the first map. It is drawn instead by Gryce’s undercover agent, Q, who has accompanied Raymond as covert backup. The + that marks the smallest of the four upper rooms serves to demarcate Hannah’s location and serves as proof that their suspicions about the destination of Hannah following her flight from New York City are correct. But when the map is drawn, the Irish servant is still alive. Unlike the map detailing Horatio Leavenworth’s killing, this map is intended to locate a living witness; that Hannah, while still alive, could be reduced to a simple mark on a paper, while it requires Leavenworth’s death to accomplish the transformation from individual to ‘it’ is another example of classist functioning.

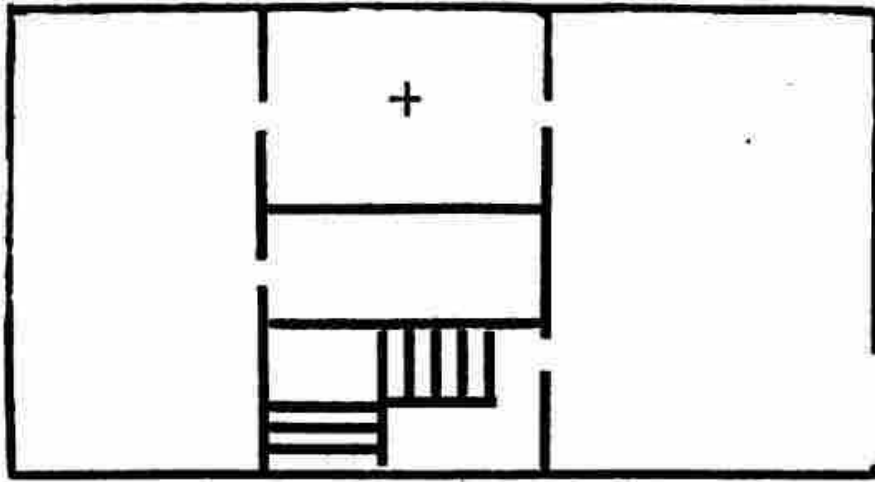


Figure 6 Plan of Amy Belden's Upper Floor *The Leavenworth Case*, 218

Yet it is notable that while she keeps Hannah's presence in the home a secret from Raymond while he is there – Hannah remains in the locked bedroom, and Mrs. Belden takes her meals up to her surreptitiously – there are no truly private rooms in Amy Belden's home.

If the parlour or drawing-room was designed as a stage, the potential for surprise entrances and exits was heightened and what occurred 'off-stage' could be concealed within the topography of 'secret' spaces. Passages and stairways, emblematic of the potential for encounter, meant that space could always surprise in terms of human contact, which might be across class, gender or racial 'divides'" (Bryden and Floyd 9).

Access to the bedrooms in Amy Belden's home is sequential because there are no corridors or hallways. The lack of passageways also means that opportunities for the 'surprise' encounters that Bryden and Floyd identify as emblematic of secret spaces are far less likely to occur in the Belden home. Whereas in the Leavenworth home, Trueman Harwell can enter and exit his employer's bedroom unseen, in Mrs. Belden's house, unobserved physical access is nearly impossible. Thus, when the secretary decides that Hannah's knowledge of his movements on the

night of the killing have become an unwarranted liability, it accounts for the marked difference in methods that Harwell chooses for the murders. The first is committed by a physically proximate pistol shot while the latter killing is achieved with poison, disguised as a ‘love potion’ and sent through the mail.

The inability to move unobserved through the home is also why Raymond must wait until Mrs. Belden leaves him alone in the house before confronting Hannah Chester. He hopes that such a confrontation will help force her to admit what she knows about the first murder and the reasons behind her precipitous flight from New York. In contrast with his timidity in the Leavenworth home, where he could not even bring himself to open the door to the cousins’ private rooms before leading them down to testify at the inquest, in Mrs. Belden’s home he is “possessed instead [with] a sort of combative curiosity that led [him] to throw open the door which [he] saw at the top with a certain fierceness new to [his] nature” (Green *Leavenworth* 220). Climbing to the upper story, he finds that he must first cross a “large bedroom, evidently the one occupied by Mrs. Belden the night before” before he can reach the room where Hannah Chester is hiding. And while the first “diagram” in *The Leavenworth Case* is explicitly included “for those who are interested in the details of this affair,” the intended reader of the second map is less clear (Green 8). The map is drawn *for* Raymond by the undercover officer who is helping with the inquiry, and Hannah’s room is “marked with a cross in the plan drawn for me by Q” (Green *Leavenworth* 220). Raymond uses it to locate Hannah’s room but he does so unaware that a murder has been committed, and only that the witness he seeks is hiding there. And like the room where Horatio Leavenworth’s body was found, Hannah’s room also has two doors, both of which are latched and locked. This is the second example of the generic ‘locked room’ phenomenon which began with the Leavenworth’s killing. But in this case, Raymond refuses to

allow the physical barrier that stand in the way of his knowing to stand. After listening and peering through the keyhole, he breaks down the door by throwing his “whole weight against the door. It creaked ominously but still resisted” (Green *Leavenworth* 221). He throws himself against it once more before the hinges break and he falls into the room. There, in the “stifling, chill, and dark” he is witness to the Irish servant’s “many evidences of careless life” including “the tumbled clothes of a bed,” “clothes left just as she had stepped from them in a circle on the floor, the liberal plate of food placed in waiting for her on the chair by the door” (*Leavenworth* 221). He goes far as to tear back the patchwork quilt that Hannah lies under and lay his “hand upon her heart” to see if he can feel a pulse but finds that she is “icy cold and stiff” (*Leavenworth* 222). The intimacy of his actions following his entry into these sleeping spaces contrasts even more strongly with the lawyer’s reticent behaviour during his encounters with Mary and Eleanore. For instance, when he unexpectedly encounters the latter at the Veeley house in a darkened rear parlour, his first instinct is to retreat. Eleanore encourages him to leave, saying “Mrs. Veeley is coming back and you would scarcely wish to be found here by her” (*Leavenworth* 173). Both of them are visitors in the home, but the intimacy suggested by a room unlit by anything but a fire supersedes the normally public nature of the parlour. In Mrs. Belden’s home, Raymond’s forced entry into Hannah rooms is an even greater intrusion yet he seems comfortable with his actions and the trespass that they represent.

In Mrs. Belden’s house then, privacy is revealed as an explicit construction of class, rather than of gender and the objects that would normally support the construction of private spaces are either absent (ie hallways and corridors) or simply disregarded (ie a locked room). “The ideology of domestic femininity is built not only on notions of gender difference but also on a class position that locates a woman in a specific kind of house” (Tange 11). Beecher and

Beecher Stowe's decorating guidelines do not address this underlying classism, instead presenting the norms they present as universal. Their purported purpose in describing the home and showing their readers how to establish and maintain a home which promulgates specific Protestant values of thrift and economy is only effective when it functions in opposition to the unstated but still present space which the lower classes are imagined to inhabit. The moral home is explicitly an economic construction. The price lists include in *American Woman's Home* are proof of this.

Similarly, privacy is shown to also be a concept that relies on a specific understanding of class for its operation. The Leavenworth mansion, with its opulent domestic arrangements, is the kind of house where privacy is deemed by Raymond and his social peers to be sacrosanct; Mrs. Belden's home is not. Indeed, Raymond terms his entry into Amy Belden's home in explicitly political terms, saying "her premises [were] thus invaded by a sort of French *coup d'état* (Green Leavenworth 204). Despite his vociferous resistance to spying on his social equals, any qualms he might have had about doing the same to the impoverished Mrs. Belden are quickly overcome. When Raymond confronts Mrs. Belden after Hannah's death, she bursts "violently into tears. "I knew it, I knew it!...I always said it would be impossible to keep it a secret if I let anybody into the house" (Green *Leavenworth* 228). Ultimately, the only way in which Mrs. Belden could hope to keep the presence of her boarder a secret is to keep everyone out, because otherwise the home itself makes it impossible to hide Hannah and the secret that Amy Belden is keeping on Mary's behalf must come out. Amy Belden's home is therefore the key to unravelling the mystery of both Horatio Leavenworth and Hannah's killings. It is in her home that Raymond learns conclusively about the marriage between Henry Clavering and Mary Leavenworth; of Harwell's plot to ensure Hannah's silence with his false promise to marry her; and of Harwell himself as a

potential suspect. The stifling drapes and oppressive architecture of the Leavenworth mansion acts to protect its secrets, even at the cost and reputations of its inhabitants, while Mrs. Belden's working-class home lacks those same physical protections. Its careful decoration and neat interior are unable to contain the secrets its owner has been tasked with keeping because the home, with its simple architecture and permissive floor plan, was never constructed to do so.

DARK HOLLOW AND MALE SELF-IMPRISONMENT

But if the homes that Green depicts in *The Leavenworth Case* conceal their secret traumas behind a façade of domestic normalcy, attempting to deny the trauma within by means of outwardly respectable floorplans, this pattern takes a much darker turn in one of her late career novels, *Dark Hollow* (1914). In this late career novel, Green extends the question of secrecy and architectural containment even further, examining the negative implications of familial trauma and secrecy on a group normally considered immune from domestic strife: the family's male head. Subsequent British Golden Age authors like Agatha Christie would depict such individuals in a poor light, such that their peremptory, unreasoned or immoral behaviour would serve as grounds for their timely murder. But in the American, pre-World War One context that Green was writing in, Archibald's fall from grace occurs not as the victim of a crime, but as its perpetrator. This transforms the moral imperative inherent in a works like Christie's *Why Didn't They Ask Evans?* (1934), where the father is killed by his estranged children in revenge for his own immoral actions, to that of an internal struggle. Judge Archibald Ostrander, an esteemed judge and property owner, must wrestle with the personal knowledge of his own moral shortcomings, while also trying to maintain his public reputation for probity. That this internal interrogation takes place within the family home, a site that has traditionally been

read as a symbol *par excellence* of masculine, paternal authority, speaks to Green's transformative powers, with the home's typically stabilizing effect is undercut entirely.

Briefly, the novel depicts the efforts of Deborah Scoville, who returns to the town of Shelby, to prove the innocence of her late husband, who hanged twelve years earlier after being found guilty of the murder of a prominent local educator, Algernon Etheridge. Despite a reputation as a wastrel and a brawler, Scoville maintained he was innocent and that the wealth of physical evidence that seems to point to his guilt was entirely circumstantial. Unable to bear the shame, his wife, Deborah, fled to Detroit after and lived under an assumed name with her daughter, Reuther. Although initially convinced of her husband's involvement in the crime, over the intervening decade, she has come to harbour doubts about the validity of the verdict. But as the opening pages of the novel relate, the Scoville family are not the only one whose life has been upended by the murder. Following the trial, the judge who presided over the trial, Archibald Ostrander, withdrew completely from local society, building a nearly impenetrable wall around the entirety of his large home, and emerging only when required by his duties on the bench. A revered jurist and a close personal friend of the victim, the town attributes his odd behaviour to his grief. When Reuther Scoville falls in love with Judge Ostrander's estranged son, Oliver, Deborah determines she must return to Shelby and discover whether he husband's claims to innocence are true or not. She hopes that an investigation may clear her husband's name and allow the young couple to marry.

Like nearly all of Green's novels, the majority of the narrative occurs within private homes. Typically, nineteenth and early twentieth-century male heads of household like Ostrander have typically been depicted by critics of domesticity⁷⁵ as not only immune to the repressive forces that were seen to work against female occupants, but to actually have their position as

men and as members of the middle and upper classes bolstered by their ownership and inhabitation of private homes. The tendency to view the home as the bastion of individual private ownership and a repository for male authority does predate the Victorian era⁷⁶ but it is fair to say that it reached its nadir during this era. But while the large Colonial-era home that Archibald Ostrander occupies would normally signify both his economic achievement and his family's social status, by embodying a physical connection to an authentic American lineage that predates the Revolution, this does not occur in *Dark Hollow*. Instead, Green takes the normally positive 'fortress' mentality which saw "a man's home is his castle" and inverts it. In doing so, she transforms the private home from a defensive position that works in support of masculine power into an oppressive and imprisoning space that contains and punishes its male occupant. This is shown in the novel through the clear demarcation Green makes between Ostrander's public and private existences. In the decade since the trial, Ostrander has continued to serve as judge in Shelby "from ten in the morning till five in the afternoon" while "fulfilling his judicial duties" with "scrupulous care" (Green *Dark* 7). But in private, he has transformed his domestic space into an actual prison and inflicted upon himself the same deprivations which a murderer would endure. His house is ringed with two tall, impenetrable fences which preclude any physical egress or visual surveillance, and he spends his nights locked in "a convict's bed" suffering "a convict's isolation". Yet like the Leavenworths, who are willing to endure almost difficulty so long as it does not jeopardize their public repute, Ostrander cannot bring himself to admit his guilt publicly and he resists "bringing down upon [himself] the full consequences" of having killed his former friend, Etheridge (Green *Dark* 372). It is only when Ostrander's son, Oliver, is named as a suspect that he finally confesses "Now that my wickedness is known," he says to Oliver from his deathbed, "the whole page of my life defaced, content has come again" (Green

Dark 376). As Milette Shamir points out, his fear of exposure and his use of a private space to simultaneously punish himself while protecting his reputation is a very modern view of privacy. She likes the modern notion of privacy to “a form of violence: if the self is metaphorized as an enclosed shelter, then any crossing of its boundaries becomes a form of attack or transgression, a threat of exposure” (50). Ostrander can only maintain his sense of self by isolating his public and private selves into two distinct physical realities. When that reality is breached, and his private shame bleeds into his public responsibilities, it marks the beginning of the end for him. His dying injunction to his son Oliver reiterates this when he warns him to “never have a secret; never hide within your bosom a thought you fear the world to know” (Green *Dark* 376).

The historic Ostrander estate would, in most domestic fiction, be a potent symbol that explicitly confirms Archibald Ostrander’s economic and social success. “A house metonymically stood for its inhabitants. Its location positioned people within a social hierarchy and within their communities, the work of maintaining it shaped the rhythms of their lives, and its walls managed their daily interactions” (Tange 6). In Green’s earlier texts, while homes like the Leavenworth mansion are sites that inflict emotionally damaging secrets, they are still open to the outside world, and their inhabitants continue to participate, more or less normally, in the expected acts of social performance within semi-public spaces like the parlour and drawing rooms. Elizabeth Langland terms such behaviours “physical theatre” and identifies them as a critical backdrop to their inhabitants’ performances of social ritual and identity (41). Green makes the performative aspect of the parlour explicit in her first novel when she describes Eleanore Leavenworth’s reaction to being called to testify before the jury.

Advancing upon the arm of the detective, whose suddenly assumed air of persuasion in the presence of the jury was anything but reassuring, she stood for an instance

gazing calmly upon the scene before her. Then bowing to the coroner with a grace and condescension that seemed at once to place him on the footing of a politely endured intruder in this home of elegance, she took her seat which her own servants hastened to procure for her with an ease and dignity that rather recalled the triumphs of the drawing room than the self-consciousness of a scene such as that in which we were. (Green *Leavenworth* 45)

That the drawing room is twice described as “a scene” speaks to its performative nature, but despite describing Eleanore’s actions as “[p]alpable acting,” watching Eleanore’s testimony, Raymond is forced to concede that it is “not without its effect” on both the jury and the various onlookers who witness it. (Green *Leavenworth* 45).

The accessible, albeit staged, nature of the Leavenworth home contrasts sharply with the Ostrander home, which has been rendered both invisible and inviolate to all of the residents of Shelby thanks to the enormous fences which encircle it. After Algernon Etheridge’s murder, Ostrander takes “down the picket-fence which had hitherto been considered sufficient protection to his simple grounds” and builds an impenetrable enclosure that cuts off the house from both visual surveillance as well as physical entrance. The “carefully joined boards” that make up the fence have only one entrance and since the murder, Ostrander’s home “has not opened its doors to any outsider, man or woman, for over a dozen years” (Green *Dark* 3). This phrasing grants a degree of sentience and even autonomy to the home, suggesting that it is the building itself and not its occupant who grants entrance. The paired gates are perpetually locked, except for the except for the brief moments when Bela, Ostrander’s African-American manservant, enters or exits on the way to market. The board fence serves to disrupt the typical social staging which a prestigious and historic family home like the judge’s would normally occupy and serving to cut

of both the home and the family within from the larger social hierarchy. Before the murder, the home's participation in this type of staging was announced by the small white picket fence that surrounded the property. It could be easily crossed by both invitation as well as physical determination and symbolized the Ostrander family's conformity to social norms. It also served as a reminder, announcing the mutual and socially constructed expectation that their domestic space would be respected. It was less an actual barrier than a symbolic one. The fences erected after the murder do not do this. Now, when the townspeople pass the "grey, monotonous exterior" of the fence, they are prevented from gaining any knowledge of the state of the home or about Ostrander's life within it (*Green Dark 3*).

There were rumours (no one ever knew how they originated) of another fence, a second barrier, standing a few feet inside the first and similar to it in all respects, even to the gates which corresponded exactly with these outer and visible ones and probably were just as fully provided with bolts and bars. (*Green Dark 6*)

Ostrander's public performance as a judge continues without disruption after the murder, but any corresponding private performance has been discontinued and he is now forced to reinforce his demand for privacy by extraordinary physical means. The fact that the second fence is a secret serves to emphasize the degree to which privacy, previously seen as inviolate and immutable for the upper middle classes, is beginning to face challenges not only from within the domestic space, as was the case at the beginning of Green's career, but now, as she was reaching the end of her career, from outside forces as well. The slanderous accusation of murder against the judge's son, Oliver, is not brought by a fellow lawyer but by an itinerant sign paster, who plasters advertisements on public surfaces. Deborah Scoville is the novel's central investigator. She is an amateur and as the wife of a former innkeeper, from the working classes. She

investigates the family from inside the house itself, working as its housekeeper whereas three decades earlier, Everett Raymond is perpetually an outsider. Such disruptions of the norms of domestic privacy are firstly a sign that the Ostrander family is labouring under a secret so monumental that it cannot be contained within the normal physical parameters of a middle-class home and makes it impossible for them to uphold the normal social contracts and secondly that the American postbellum expectations of privacy that had coalesced in the latter half of the nineteenth century were being to come under increasing pressure.

This pressure is clear in the opening chapters of the book, when the veiled and still anonymous Deborah Scoville returns to Shelby hoping to force a confrontation with the judge about what he may know about her late husband's innocence. She is able to trick Ostrander's servant Bela into briefly leaving the gate open. When the judge's neighbour's discover this shocking anomaly, the temptation to enter into the long-restricted space overwhelms his neighbours and they rush uninvited through the unlocked gates. "[B]ursting without further ceremony into the house", the "curious invaders" are initially thwarted in their attempts to discover the home's secret by the pervasive gloom of the house (*Green Dark* 14; 13). The windows are so overgrown with shrubbery that the daylight has "too faint a character to reach the corners or even to make the furniture about the distinguishable" (*Green Dark* 15). A few of the townsfolk are "not quite impervious to a sense of their own presumption" in entering uninvited, but their hesitation is quickly overcome, first by the unusual disorder which they encounter inside the home, and subsequently by their encounter with a door "made not of wood but of iron" (*Green Dark* 15; 16). One of the intruders marvels at the impressive barrier, awed by how "great must be the treasure or terrible the secret to make necessary such extraordinary precautions" inside a private home and she shrinks from opening it (*Green Dark* 16). When the judge is found

unconscious, the victim of a cataplectic attack, one of the bystanders suggests that the crowd ought to act to satisfy its curiosity before the judge can object. “If we are ever to know this wonderful secret, now is the time, before he wakes and turns us out of the house” (Green *Dark* 27). The door occupies a dual role, as both secret keeper and signal of trauma. His neighbours can only know the secret if they penetrate the home’s physical structure. Having burst through the unlocked gate, the barred iron door contains the specific nature of Ostrander’s secret, even as its mere presence confirms its existence.

Having already transgressed by entering this private domestic space, the individuals in the crowd quickly persuade themselves that learning Ostrander’s secret is a matter of “vital importance” which they dare not miss “when only a door lay between it and them – a door which they might not even have to unlock?” (Green *Dark* 28). But Ostrander recovers his faculties before they can carry out their plan. Abashed, the crowd flees, but the judge’s solitude is quickly imperilled again when the police, who have been called on as a result of Bela being fatally struck by a car, arrive at the home. The judge requests that Sergeant Doolittle, the investigating officer, assign three men to patrol the perimeter of his home overnight. The officer considers this request as “verging on the ridiculous” but agrees to the stipulation (Green *Dark* 38). When Ostrander demands that Doolittle promise that his men “won’t yield to the temptation of their position and climb the fences they are detailed to guard,” the police officer is taken aback. “Would this be so fatal to your peace?” he asks. The judge replies, “I want to feel that these men of yours would no more climb my fence than they would burst into my house without a warrant” (Green *Dark* 38). The judge’s comparison makes an equivalency between his personal privacy and the sanctity of his home with that of an illegal act of police surveillance that breaches his fundamental rights. For him, public knowledge of his domestic arrangements are tantamount to criminal trespass.

Ultimately, the revelation that Ostrander himself is the murderer of his best friend provides the rationale for the man's self-imposed isolation. He has spent the past twelve years, being locked every night into the cell hidden in his bedroom, in an attempt to serve penance for his crime, while still maintaining his public reputation for probity and uprightness. But even as Ostrander hides within his home, and builds barriers that he hopes will preclude his identification as a murderer, the architectural changes that he effects on his house can only hide the specifics nature of his secret, not that he has a secret. In fact, the modifications that he undertakes – the dual fences, the high overgrown bushes that are such an “indistinguishable mass” that creates an impression of “studied secrecy and concealment”, the heavy iron door concealed behind heavy draperies – all of these physical barriers magnify the gravity of the secret and broadcast its undeniable existence. Unlike *The Leavenworth Case*, in which the victim is murdered inside a locked room within his resolutely locked New York mansion, pointing to an internal, familial source of the criminal's identity, the locked rooms in *Dark Hollow* do not identify the location of the murder but rather act to contain the murderer after the fact. Ostrander is locked away; Leavenworth's killer is locked in, in other words.

Yet Ostrander's attempts at containing his guilt and making amends for his criminal act are ultimately proven futile. His downfall is accelerated by his invitation to the disgraced Deborah Scoville live in his house with her daughter Reuther, and for her to work as his housekeeper. The steps he has taken to ensure his secret remains hidden are effective at keeping out intruders, but are utterly ineffective against those who reside within the home. The night before she arrives, Ostrander nails up boards over the entrance to his cell to disguise the space. Deborah overhears him hammering and the sound convinces her that “there was something in this house which it behooved the judge to secrete from sight” (Green *Dark* 125).

The differences in the maps which appear in *Dark Hollow* and *The Leavenworth Case* speak to the varied means by which the Leavenworth and Ostrander families attempt to maintain control over their respective secrets and how their physical homes information about the different emotional traumas inherent in the built space. Unlike the earlier novel, whose maps are both wholly architectural, the map in the later novel is geographic. Its map situates the Ostrander home *within* the community, rather than focusing on its interior layout or any specific rooms inside the house. This coincides with the nature of the murder, as well. Etheridge was killed outside, in a ravine near the Ostrander home, and not inside a locked room. Studying the map shows how the judge's home is located in relation to his neighbours. The network of roads are marked, showing how passage through the town is possible but all of the routes are far more permeable than a hallway or a staircase. As the narrative proves, many of the characters chose to step off the prescribed routes, seeking shortcuts by means of unmarked paths. Their motives, such as hoping to avoid detection, or saving time in transit, vary, but their movement through these open, public spaces occur in ways that are not possible from within the four walls of a private home. Instead of the detailed blueprints typified by Wheeler, only four homes are marked on the map, and they are only shown in outline: the Ostrander's house, with its double fences and sizeable outbuildings, Miss Week's minute home on the main highway, Deborah Scoville's former home, the Claymore Inn, and the ruin that juts out over the gully. All of the other homes are indicated by the generic identifier 'HOUSES'.

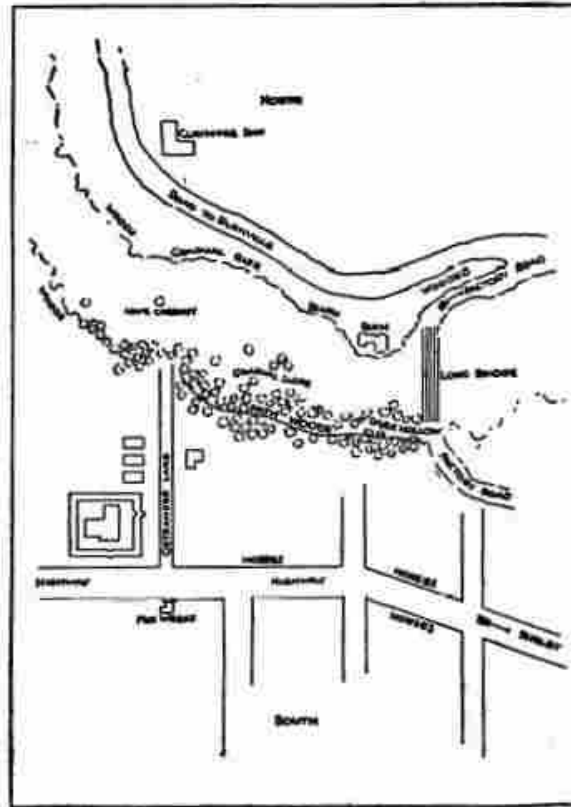


Figure 7 Map from *Dark Hollow* (1914), 185

In this case, the map reveals the impact Ostrander's actions have had on his standing within the larger community. The double fences that divide his home from the surrounding community are clear in the aerial diagram. What *Dark Hollow* offers then is an extension of the locked room trope, magnified from a single inaccessible space into the entirety of a locked home, but rather than locking the victim in, it locks any potential investigator out.

Ostrander's decision to immure himself inside his home seems, on its surface, a perplexing one. But as both John Tosh and Elizabeth Langland point out, even though domesticity and domestic architecture came to be associated with Anglo-American women during the nineteenth century, "the celebrated domesticity of nineteenth-century women tends to conceal the increasing domesticity of men" as well. (Langland 39) For instance, on the first page

of *The Leavenworth Case*, Raymond's shock at learning of Leavenworth's death and his affection for him are conveyed through an anecdote about their interactions a week before his death. Raymond recalls that he had been "twitting me about my bachelorhood and asking me in the same breath to come to his house and see what he had there to show me!" (Green *Leavenworth* 3). Raymond of course comes to marry Eleanore, who resided in Leavenworth's home, and while the interaction is fleeting between the lawyer and the victim is fleeting, it establishes a very clear pattern, normalizing a desire for its male characters to possess a home of their own. Indeed, of the five principal male characters who appear in that novel – Everett Raymond, Henry Clavering, Trueman Harwell, Ebenezer Gryce and Horatio Leavenworth – the first three are all bachelors, who strive in various ways, from exculpatory investigation, to a secret marriage, to murder, to achieve what Gryce and Leavenworth have: their own domestic spaces. "The domestic sphere, then, is integral to masculinity." (Tosh 4) Raymond describes his sojourn in his "lonely" bachelor accommodations as "solitary and sad" while Clavering's plans for receiving Mary in England after their secret marriage had included preparations of his Portland Place home "fitted up ... as for a lady" (Green *Leavenworth* 173; 159).

Yet as Green's pattern in her later novels shows, their seemingly straightforward desire for a home of their own is more complicated than it initially appears to bachelors tired of rented rooms and itinerant domesticity. For male characters like Judge Ostrander in *Dark Hollow* – and as will be seen, Leonard Van Broecklyn in the 1915 short story "Missing: Page Thirteen" – the domestic space has become a place of containment and suffering for men as well as women. These men, who enjoy public renown and reputations for professional ability, immerse themselves inside the very symbol of their masculine achievement and power. Instead of the family home serving as a social signal of their patriarchal mastery, it is transformed into a site of

personal imprisonment, used to contain the evidence of personal and familial guilt, cutting themselves off from a wider social intercourse, marriage or even the presence of women inside the home. In their attempts to guard their various secrets, they erect physical barriers between themselves and the outside world. They also become socially reclusive and are criticized by their peers for what they perceive to be the characters' failure to adhere to critical norms of social interaction. Because they are tied to the home, they become unable to participate fully in their respective societies. The divide between public and private has become an insurmountable chasm. During the day, Judge Ostrander participates in the execution of his civic and public duties without undue consequence or fear. But his home has become a wholly private place, rather than a place in which normal, semi-public class performances can be held. What Ostrander fears is any unsanctioned penetration of his home and subsequently, the uncontrolled release of his secret. This fear is literalized through the architectural and spatial design of the house and the extraordinary measures he takes to secure it. Outside, the "white picket fence" which had previously allowed for visual intrusion and which had acted as symbolic barrier, is replaced by which results in the extraordinary measures he takes to secure it – two tall fences, a plethora of locks and the regimented routine that sees his black manservant enter and exit the home only at precise and pre-arranged times. His home contains his secret and announces it simultaneously. The physical structure's departure from his peers' norms disrupts the performative role assigned to the private home, but cannot evade it entirely, no matter how hard its occupant might wish it to.

MISSING: PAGE THIRTEEN & ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS TO KNOWLEDGE

A final example of the home as a repository for secret trauma occurs in the short story “Missing: Page Thirteen”, which appears in Green’s 1915 short story collection, *The Golden Slipper and Other Problems for Violet Strange*. The story begins when Violet Strange, Green’s debutante detective, is summoned to the colonial-era home of a wealthy recluse, Leonard Van Broecklyn. Despite his reluctance to leave his home, Van Broecklyn is a successful investor, interested in new technology, and he has invited a number of distinguished guests to a dinner party. One of his guests has just created a valuable new chemical formula which he is on the verge of selling for an enormous sum. After dinner, the formula, which was written on a single sheet of paper, is discovered missing from the man’s pocket. The chemist fell asleep in a small room after supper and only one person – a professional rival who was also invited as a dinner guest – was seen to have entered subsequently. The formula’s owner is scheduled to depart for Europe the next morning; the rival chemist appears to have the strongest motive for stealing it but maintains his innocence. When Violet Strange arrives at the Van Broecklyn home, Van Broecklyn expresses the hope that she will be able to locate the page without the need to involve the police or incur negative publicity.

After her arrival, Violet is taken to the den where the page disappeared and studies the room meticulously. The guests are perplexed because the “adjoining small room offered no facilities for hiding a cigar-end, much less a square of shining white paper. Bare walls, a bare floor, and a single chair for furniture, comprised all that was to be seen” (Green *Missing* 351). Violet is more astute and quickly notices “a portion of the wainscoting so exactly like the rest that only the most experienced eye could detect the line of deeper colour which marked an opening.” When she asks after the hidden entryway, Van Broecklyn admits “There was a door

there once; but it has been permanently closed. With cement” (Green *Missing* 364). When Violet questions him further about the possibility of opening the door, he specifies the means with which the door has been closed, saying that “the cement in which that door is embedded is thick as any wall; it would take men with pickaxes, possibly with dynamite, to make a breach there wide enough for any one [sic] to reach in” (Green *Missing* 367). The specificity and durability of the closure speak to its architectural nature. It also speaks to Van Broecklyn’s determination not to open a door which hasn’t merely been locked or disguised temporarily by means of furniture or a tapestry but whose closure has been irrevocably assured by means of the material itself.

Yet Violet persists, even though the secret door would seem wholly unrelated to her present task of recovering the missing formula. She assures her host that “I am discreet...I have heard the history of that door – how it was against the tradition of the family to have it opened...and [I] will not trouble myself about anything but the recovery of this paper” (Green *Missing* 370). This comment shows that Violet has been aware of the Van Broecklyn family’s having a secret and that it is connected to the blocked room, even if she does not know the specifics. The home’s notoriety, she tells him, has “made the house unique in the country’s annals.” It is only when she assures him that she does not know the “very dreadful reason” behind the room being declared off-limits that he comes to believe that she will respect his need to continue to respect the secrecy that he has imposed by closing the room off as he has to protect his family’s honour (Green *Missing* 350; 370). Finally, Van Broecklyn leads Violet into the cellars where he reveals the sole means of entry to the hidden room: “a door impossible to enter, impossible to enlarge – a barrier to all help” and so small that only a child, or an incredibly slight woman like Violet Strange, could fit (Green *Missing* 377). The dark, secret tunnel through which Violet must crawl functions very differently than the well-defined corridors which are

delineated by maps in earlier books like *The Leavenworth Case*. “Homes with corridors...enable privacy, gender-based segregation of space, and control of servant/family interaction by managing access to spaces” (Tange 39). But such corridors, while intended to preserve the sanctity of the private family spaces and to reiterate architecturally the social chasm between employers and employees, are very different from the wholly secret, and functionally inaccessible, passageway by which Strange achieves her investigative goal – namely recovering the misplaced thirteenth page. The tunnel undermines the physical barriers erected to contain the Van Broecklyn family’s secrets, since it provides the only way in or out and it is by means of this tunnel that the truth does in fact emerge.

In the process of recovering the formula, Violet inevitably uncovers the astonishing secret which Van Broecklyn has kept hidden for the past forty years, which is that the bodies of his parents lie within the secret room. Consumed by mutual loathing, they cannot countenance divorce, because they would still have to endure the knowledge that their former spouse lives on, they entered into a macabre murder-suicide pact. A childish witness to their final fatal argument, Van Broecklyn has done everything in his power to bury the truth about their fate and the hidden resting place of their bodies. This includes having the small den renovated to hide any sign of the original entrance. But Violet’s subsequent decision to conceal her knowledge of the murder and suicide is a significant inversion of the typical detective fiction narrative. It suggests that the preservation of the Van Broecklyn family’s reputation should supersede, in this case at least, any public revelation of their criminal actions. After she recovers the paper, and despite having discovered the bodies of murdered couple in the hidden room, Violet refuses to tell guests what she now knows about the Van Broecklyn family’s history. When asked about her experience recovering the paper, she insists that she has found “nothing” and refuses to share “a

word of her adventure” (Green *Missing* 380). Van Broecklyn seems masochistically determined to force a confession. “[I]f she has anything to tell worthy of so marked a curiosity, she will tell it now,” [he says]. “Have you anything to tell, Miss Strange?” Once again, Violet again refuses to reveal what she has seen in the hidden colonial room. “Mr. Van Broecklyn knows his own house, and doubtless can relate its histories if he will. I am a busy little body who having finished my work am now ready to return home” (Green *Missing* 381).

Unable to continue harbouring the secret which he has borne alone for more than four decades, Van Broecklyn finally relents, fearful that if his “self-imposed solitude...continues, he will go mad” (Green *Missing* 381). Gathering the dinner guests to listen to his confession, he attempts to explain what he calls “the family tradition,” likening it to an inheritance.

This is not the only house, even in America, which contains a room shut away from intrusion. In England there are many. But there is this difference between most of them and ours. No bars or locks forcibly held shut the door we were forbidden to open. The command was enough...I know no more than you do why some early ancestor laid his band upon this room. But from my earliest years I was given to understand that there was one latch in the house which was never to be lifted; that any fault would be forgiven sooner than that; that the honour of the whole family stood in the way of disobedience, and that I was to preserve that honour to my dying day. (Green *Missing* 382)

Intergenerational, the fear which this instruction generates is as much his inheritance as the home and the wealth which have also been handed down to him. His off-handed comment that rooms “shut away from intrusion” do exist in America acknowledges that both the fictional dinner party guests and the reader more readily associate such secretive spaces with historic English homes. But the inclusion of such a space in an American home – a home with explicit connections to the

nation's revolutionary history, in fact –suggests that despite the nation's desire for new or uncorrupted spaces, some familial traditions cannot be so easily set aside and that the corruption Americans may perceive as weakening British identity also exists within nineteenth-century American family homes, too. In a novel like *Dark Hollow*, Deborah Scoville and her daughter Reuther are successful in establishing new lives in Detroit, but they are only able to accomplish this because they do not have domestic or familial connections that prevent their relocation. In contrast, Van Broecklyn, is unable to leave his home and start anew as long as the family home is in existent. It is only when his home 'accidentally' burns to the ground that he feels free of the burden imposed by his home's secret.

His grandfather's brusque command in childhood that Van Broecklyn never enter the secret space is another example of the inheritability of family secrecy, too. The injunction is enough to prevent his grandson from ever challenging it, even though Van Broecklyn, unlike Archibald Ostrander, is completely innocent of any crime. His only act of wrong-doing is when he served as unwilling witness to his parents' to-the-death duel as a young boy. He neither planned their mutual attack nor had any foreknowledge of it. Yet he agonizes over the possibility of exposure, even as his adult self ponders the possibility that if he had "disclosed instead of concealed [his] adventure", one or both of his parents might have been saved (*Green Missing* 396). He subsequently relates how his instinct was "never to tell; never to let anyone least of all my grandfather—know what that forbidden room now contained. I felt in an irresistible sort of way that my father's and mother's honour was at stake" (*Green Missing* 395). This instinct distills the nature of familial trauma and the role that architecture played in promulgating it. The room contains the secret even as it serves to allow the trauma to continue.

The epilogue to the story suggests that the Van Broecklyn home is so irretrievably tainted by intergenerational trauma that it must be destroyed because any possible value as an architectural and historical landmark is overwhelmed by its tragic nature. After recounting his tragic childhood experience to his guests, Van Broecklyn asks Violet “What sequel do you see to this story, Miss Strange?” She suggestively replies that, “If some morning in the news column there should appear an account of the ancient and historic home of the Van Broecklyns having burned to the ground in the night, the whole country would mourn, and the city feel defrauded of one of its treasures. But there are five persons who would see in it the sequel for which you ask for” (Green *Missing* 398). The omniscient narrator then recounts how, when in fact the house does burn, “the discovery [is] made that no insurance [has] been put upon this house.” Friends are amazed that rather than mourning the loss of his valuable and historic home, “Van Broecklyn seems to renew his youth” (Green *Missing* 399). This is a direct inversion of the typical pattern for a bachelor established in *The Leavenworth Case*. Rather than seeking a home to announce his maturity, it is the destruction of his ancestral home that allows Van Broecklyn to regain his personal freedom. Tied to the very symbol of his family’s secrecy, and the remains contained therein, he cannot achieve peace because he cannot escape the physical structure without its obliteration.

By assuming the duty of family secret-keeper, Van Broecklyn has had to endure an enforced domesticity which precludes any normal participation in the business world and which has also irreparably damaged his chances at enjoying achieving a family life, a wife and children. He lives “absolutely alone save for a large entourage of servants, all men and elderly” (Green *Missing* 357). Van Broecklyn entertains rarely, “never visited” and declines “every invitation for himself, avoiding even, with equal strictness, all evening amusements of whatever kind, which

would detain him in the city after ten at night” (*Green Slipper* 357). Obligated by an overdeveloped sense of family duty, he never contradicts the public’s erroneous assumption that his parents abandoned their disastrous marriage. This is because he believes that as shameful as their supposed abandonment is, it is still less damaging to the family’s public reputation than conclusive proof of their murderous intentions towards each other. He is immured within the home, so much so that he has only spent two nights away from it in his adult life. Van Broecklyn and Ostrander thus represent truncated visions of late nineteenth-century masculinity: the former maintains the necessary domestic accomplishments, but falls short in his professional interactions, while the latter achieves the requisite civic responsibilities at the cost of domestic normalcy. All of the typical social indices of middle-class manhood – owning a home, entering into matrimony, supporting a wife and children – “are predicated on a notion of maleness defined either within or against domesticity” (Tange 22). Their disruption in texts like *Dark Hollow* and “Missing: Page Thirteen” reveals that just like the women in her books, male characters in detective fiction are equally vulnerable to domestic disarray. There is a continual narrowing of the private space within the home. In the case of the Leavenworths, they participate in social intercourse with their peers. The home disguises their wrong-doing, but is still penetrable by outsiders like the police, reporters and their peers. In contrast, Ostrander’s home, is cut off by means of the dual fences. He has ceased to participate in social performance yet maintains only his civic responsibilities. More restrictive yet again, is Van Broecklyn’s home. Psychologically traumatized, he cannot leave his home for more than a few hours at a time. Yet even when he is immured within it, there remain significant portions of the space that remain impenetrable to him; there are rooms which he physically cannot enter. He is both bound and excluded simultaneously. In depicting the emotional trauma which Van Broecklyn and Ostrander undergo

in relation to their homes, Green is therefore arguing for a healthy and transparent balance between privacy and publicity. Either, taken to extreme, disrupts the balance that Green believes is essential for the proper functioning of the individual and their participation in both social, familial and professional spheres. The individuality suffers when they cut themselves off from social exchange. Familial secrets, which are the root cause behind the disruptions discussed in this chapter, are therefore intrinsically damaging; the profound and often paralyzing need that these characters feel and which compels them to such extremes are a way for Green to implore a more transparent social structure, one free from the damaging effects of hypocrisy and based not on appearances, but on truth-telling. But given that even as she argues for the possibility of social change, the secrecy that is built into the homes that her characters, and by extension, her readers in habit, proves that hope a naïve one.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the tortured families who live in the elaborate mansions and ancestral homes observed in Green's novels and short stories suggest that unlike the sentimental authors, who buttressed their call for familial rejuvenation firmly within the domestic space, detective fiction located the most salient and immediate threats to both individual and collective well-being as coming from within those self-same homes and that the preservation of social capital came at the expense of the social performers. The criminal acts that are exposed by the various detectives' investigations prove the vulnerability of the American home, and that far from being built to keep out threats, the nineteenth-century home was actually built to facilitate their occurrence. For all of its walls and doors and locks and secret hallways, for all of the ways that its habitants attempt to secure their secrets within its perimeter, the home cannot contain them. Domestic

detective fiction is rooted in the interrogation of American private life. It is not that there are different crimes committed in public spaces versus private spaces. Murder, as Green shows, can and readily is committed in both. But the value placed upon privacy in the era lends to the private crimes a significantly different weight. Crimes are committed inside the home *because* they afford the criminal privacy; the home then, is far better suited to criminal behaviour than public spaces. Domesticity and criminality both thrive in the private sphere because it is privacy, and its cousin, secrecy, that allow wrong doing to flourish unchecked.

The ideological issues embedded in the nineteenth-century American home should not be divorced from their innate physical nature. For all that the home expresses its inhabitants' participation in their society's systems of values symbolically, I would argue that these expressions have their roots in an explicitly physical domain and should not be reduced to mere metaphor. The way that these homes are constructed and designed are therefore central to the very nature of the crimes committed within them. Andrea Tange's contention that "home was not just an idea; it was an idea that was explicitly rooted in a material object: a house that was properly laid out, carefully decorated, meticulously managed, thoroughly cleaned and thoughtfully displayed" is certainly one I agree with (5). But Tange astutely points out, much of the domestic ideology which lay beneath both the physical structure and its material furnishings was so closely aligned with the home as to be nearly indistinguishable from it, with the architectural space read symbolically, with little consideration of its material reality.

As Green repeatedly shows, even as domesticity was reaching its nadir, families were rarely simple. She challenges the notions of the home's privacy as refuge by inverting the typical values of each. She suggests that it is only in the public sphere of cities and other urban environments that true anonymity and privacy can be achieved because the crowds will obliterate

distinction, and that the only way a home can achieve domestic unity and happiness is by living openly and transparently, without privacy. Thus, the Leavenworth mansion is transformed at the end of the novel from a private home, locked and immured from the world into a “charitable institution, of magnitude sufficient to be a recognized benefit to the city and its unfortunate poor” because the “property is so stained by guilt” that Mary and Eleanore believe it cannot be redeemed (Green *Leavenworth* 326). In *Dark Hollow*, Ostrander dies, and the novel suggests that his son and future daughter-in-law will abandon the family’s home in favour of a new life, and a new home, in Detroit, where they can be anonymous transplants in a new city. Similarly, in “Missing: Page Thirteen”, the house is “signalized from its foundation by such a series of tragic events” that Violet Strange, the society detective, expects to be able to see these tragedies inscribed on the very walls which greet her on her first entrance into the house and when it burns to the ground, its owner rejoices (Green *Missing* 343). Her focus on American identity, and the abandonment of old world identity, is a unique aspect of Green’s detective fiction that sets it apart from the writing of her British counterparts and their depiction of that country’s empirical interests. But it is her destabilization of the domestic space as refuge trope which I believe is the most salient generic difference in her writing. Not only can characters like Ostrander and Van Broecklyn not wall themselves off from the outside world, their attempts to do so actually exacerbate the effects of the poisonous domestic space that they inhabit. The social performance enacted by the homes’ inhabitants in fact enabled the secrets and wrong-doing to fester beneath a façade of domestic adherence because it disguised the repressive nature of their homes and transforms the walls behind which Victorians lived from a place of refuge to an environment which encouraged criminality and moral failings, and which were designed to exploit these failings and to be transformed into domestic prisons.

CONCLUSION

In the end, the most notable element of Anna Katharine Green's detective fiction is way that it inverts the normally positive values of the nineteenth-century American home and transforms it into a subversive critique of domestic hegemony. As one of the genre's most significant early innovators, Anna Katharine Green's texts worked to transform the sentimental model of domesticity, which argued for the home as an emotional and physical safe haven, into a venue which could safely interrogate problematic social and domestic practices from within a framework of popular expression. The view of the home as the centre of Victorian identity and social practice must be viewed as part of a larger strategy of social conservatism that worked to reinforce the status quo. Domestic ideology's insistence on adherence to public performance rituals, a rigorous separation of public and private lives, and gendered imbalance are all part of that effort. For Americans in the nineteenth-century, working to establish a cohesive national identity, the home was the site of what "became the beating heart of an expansive political program...Home embodied all the gendered and racialized assumptions of American republicanism and the American economy. It contained manly men and womanly women united in monogamous marriage to reproduce families. It originally provided a site of production as well as reproduction. The threat to the home—from industrialization, great wealth, and urbanization—became a threat to the entire society" (White 5). But as Green's fiction shows, the most potent threat to this 'beating heart' was not situated outside the home but within it. That she should choose to communicate her critique of her society's domestic values through the seemingly innocuous vehicle of popular fiction notable. Often regarded as a vehicle to promote the status quo, Green instead transforms detective fiction's concerns with social identity and criminality into a sustained examination of its material culture and the underlying values of her

age. As the proceeding chapters have shown, throughout her long career, Green's detective fiction exposes the myriad ways in which the material culture which individuals used to advance and affirm their social identities actually worked to undercut the very hegemonic practices they were intended to support. Her texts show how the domestic practices of her era could and did veer from the ideal of wholesome private homes and enduring romantic relationships into the traumatic and threatening instead by showing the various ways in which these private spaces and the objects within them could cause their inhabitants to suffer as a result of the social mores placed upon them. She also reveals how the objects within these homes served to intensify those pressures. This includes the social climbers who use costume to obliterate their own identities in a desperate attempt to secure a place within the longed-for middle- and upper-class home. The bachelors and unmarried men who experience know professional success but whose homes are filled with such chaotic detritus that they experience their homes as a site of moral contagion, disorder and criminality. Families whose lives play out within homes that seem to signal slavish conformity to the visible symbols of middle-class identity but which actually work to enable toxic secrets to flourish. These are the characters and objects that Green uses in her detective fiction to prove the falsity of the era's pervasive domestic rhetoric. This ideology promised a physical and emotional refuge from the increasingly dispassionate economic order of the public sphere but in actuality, it instead extracted a vicious personal and emotional toll on those who blindly aspired to fulfil its impossible demands. Throughout this dissertation, my focus on how material culture shows how objects can undercut the outward signs of social compliance. The issues that Green explores in her novels and short stories also challenge the outwardly benign resolutions that she frequently employed in the resolution of the criminal investigations around which her narratives are outwardly centred. As a result, while her stories serve to nominally

restore social equilibrium at the resolution of the mystery her detectives investigate, the continual emphasis on how personal and domestic objects reinforce the nineteenth-century American home's negative potential. Studying material culture also showcases the home as a site of deep-seated emotional trauma and criminal behaviour within her texts that destabilizes her conservative resolutions and overt support of hegemonic norms. In Green's hands the American home is fit to "hous[e] only the corpse," as Benjamin so astutely put it (447). The homes are meticulously stuffed and decorated, to be sure, but still a coffin.

Of course, Green is not the first to explore the hypocrisy embedded in the domestic sphere. As I discussed in both Chapters 1 and 3, much of her writing, both the detective fiction and non-detective fiction, shares important links to both the Gothic and sensationalist traditions, as authors like Catherine Ross Nickerson, Lucy Sussex and Patricia Maida have noted. Like detective fiction, these genres also explore the effects of difficult emotions and the gulf between outward appearance and inner truth and anger, guilt, shame, secrecy, resentment and greed are only some of the more potent emotions Green explores. But detective fiction changes the way that the reader responds to questions of moral culpability and emotional response, since unlike earlier genre fictions, within detective fiction, the question of 'guilt' is most often understood within a framework of socially determined jurisprudence, not individual morality. Additionally, the Gothic and sensationalist emphasis on securing an affective reaction from its readership differs from the rationality demanded by detective fiction. The sensationalists' distrust of material culture and its secularizing influence has meant that objects have received very little consideration. Using personally significant objects such as dress, architectural design and the collection and display domestic goods as an entry point, as I have done in this dissertation, illuminates facets that have not been previously considered by scholars studying both nineteenth-

century literature and popular fiction. Within Anna Katharine Green's detective fiction, the homes and families who appear them communicate a very different ideological message than those of earlier sentimental domestic fictions of authors like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Louisa May Alcott. Whereas the latter homes can be read as aspirational and saturated with positive emotional and familial associations, homes in Green's writing are imbued with violence, secrecy and family trauma. This dissertation has shown how the genre actually inverts and defamiliarizes the normal domestic tropes and the underlying ideology of its predecessor in important ways, and exposing the fallacies that existed within its affective rhetoric. Family, their history and their experiences, are still central to Green's concern – they are the “rusty links” that her detective Ebenezer Gryce believes lie at the centre of every criminal investigation, after all – but her texts strips away much of the sentimental pretense, offering in exhaustive detail all of the ways in which the family can transgress against its member within homes that enclose rather than embrace.

The inclusion of detective fiction within realism has also had an influence on the consideration of material culture. Despite the ubiquity of material objects in the genre – fingerprints, bullet casings, hair, fiber and even the human body are all inescapably material objects, after all – their materiality has been rendered functionally invisible within most critical frameworks that have previously engaged with the genre. Instead, the genre's critics have duplicated the realist patterns of detective fiction criticism that saw narrative, plot and character development as paramount. This focus on a narrow range of narratological considerations has led, I believe, to the problematic ‘reading through’ of the things contained within Green's fictional worlds. As a result of this critical bias, nearly all of the dress, décor and homes that appears not only in Green's detective fiction but in nineteenth and early twentieth-century

detective fiction generally, have been demoted to serving as little more than realist backdrops, in front of which the valued psychological and political plot could unfold without interruption.

Even as detective fiction was hailed as “the utopian resting place of the realist thing,” the social and ideological significance of the genre’s materiality has not received the necessary consideration in my opinion (Freedgood 152). Freedgood’s position is supported by other scholars. Daniel Hack argues that the need to delineate object matter as ‘things’ and not as set dressing or symbol is an important one because “the investigation and mobilization of writing’s putative materialities proves central to efforts to establish the boundaries and relations between textual and extratextual phenomena – the word and the world – and to determine in turn the ethical purchase of the novel as a genre and the literary and cultural authority of its producers.”

(2) The connection that Hack identifies suggests important ethical questions inherent in the realist novel are more readily accessed using this method. Given the unarguable importance which both questions of ethics and morality play within the genre of detective fiction, such considerations are central to any understanding of Green’s purpose.

But this dissertation has also attempted to convey critical innovation through its use of Thing Theory. Using Thing Theory offers a way of recognizing the multiple, overlapping ways in which objects and humans interact and mutually transform each other. This is not about ascribing agency to physical culture. If, as Bill Brown posits, objects are transparent examples of material culture, which can be seen through as a result of their utilitarian value, then the question of how objects are transformed into things or things may arise from objects is one of central importance. By offering a critical pattern of analysis that considers the role played by material culture within the detective fiction genre, rather than viewing the objects which appear in texts like Green’s as merely an adjunct to realist narrative, or as transparent symbols by which

cultural, political or social ideologies can be glimpsed, the genre's fundamental reliance on things serves to prove "the capacity of things to retain some mystery, some opacity" even as they illuminate the narratives they occur within. Anthropology, as John Plotz points out, has spent decades decoding the *intended* cultural meaning of objects (110). But detective fiction relies on the ability to decipher the *unintended* meanings that adhere to specific things because the things that appear in detective fiction achieve their relevance accidentally. So while the purpose of a knife is to cut or slice, at the scene of a murder, the knife's purpose expands from simply being a tool for cutting into a thing that serves as physical link between the killer and their, with the blood on the blade or the fingerprints on the handle making it unique, not utilitarian. Or an envelope is intended to serve as a physical barrier to protect the privileged communication inside and serve as a repository to identify both the recipient and the sender but it becomes a thing when it is used as a vehicle to secretly convey poison. Likewise, a coat is intended to shield its wearer from the elements or to announce their economic means. But when it is worn in the commission of a crime, as John Randolph does when he attempts to murder his wife, Ruth Oliver, while wearing an old, worn coat, its purpose is to shield its wearer from identification. So for the detective, these objects are clues and things simultaneously. It is in their slippage or repurposing, first by the criminal and then by the detective, that objects become things. A thing, perhaps, to prove intent. Or presence. Or malice. But fundamentally, a thing that is a thing because it has deviated from its intended, socially apportioned role. And it is the exposure of its unintended role, of the focus that the reader and the detective both bring to their epistemological task that makes material culture so central to the genre. In focusing on the things that appear in Green's fiction, I have attempted to illustrate how the materiality and the physicality of things should be understood as more than of symbolic or socio-cultural metaphor. Over the preceding

three chapters of this dissertation, one of the key contributions that this study makes, not only to the study of crime fiction but to realist literary criticism more broadly, is the recognition “that humans, objects and environments exist in multiple, overlapping assemblages that need not always be pried apart and studied for their parts” (Wasserman, para 5). Thing theory’s critical breadth allows objects to be understood in relation not only to the human experience but to other objects as well and that the meaning of ‘things’ is achieved as much, if not more so, through an object’s failure to conform to its intended purpose as it is through its blind obedience to socio-cultural precepts.

The detective genre has traditionally been read functioning in support of existing social structures and values. But the close study of material culture that has been conducted in my research shows an unrelieved tension between Green’s nominal acceptance of social norms which runs contrary to establishment values of patriarchal control, economic proliferation and class identity. Given the promulgation of American identity in the period, and of a new self-conscious middle class identity, acknowledging that “realism was, itself, involved in processes of ‘production’ or ‘incorporation’ of American culture” is critical to any understanding of the era’s ideology (Elahi 2). Green’s texts actively disrupt the reassuring and publicly traded notions about family behaviour in the period, revealing myriad instances when fathers and heads of household are selfish and threatening, rather than benign and selfless, women whose ambitions centre on public acclaim and monetary wealth rather than achieving satisfaction as caretakers and mothers and individuals whose domestic life is disrupted or even ended by their abnormal relationship with things. I believe that popular fiction creates an important venue for exploring such social dichotomies. Although a conclusive resolution to the complex social issues that she touches on in

her fiction is not possible, the alternative visions that Green is able to communicate in these crime-oriented fictions are, as I have shown here, worthy of sustained critical examination.

Each of the elements considered in the three previous chapters reveals the role different types of material culture play within nineteenth-century American society. In the first chapter, the question of dress and social performance are complicated in detective fiction like Green's by the overlap that occurs between social imposture and criminal fraud. However, previous scholarly consideration of fashion has tended to focus on the question of gender and economics and the relationship between the objectified female figure and the "symbolic displays of male economic and social power" (Sherman 4). Yet as I have shown in my analysis of *A Strange Disappearance*, *Behind Closed Doors*, *That Affair Next Door*, and "The Ruby and the Caldron", such a focus on the economic symbolism of costume masks important details of the clothes themselves, not as symbols, but as physical objects to be worn, constructed and maintained. My first chapter, while acknowledging these earlier interpretations, relocates the analysis of clothing into the material realm by considering the role clothing plays in social performance and criminal investigation, rather than their symbolic function or their significance within a system of economic exchange. Whether it is a selfless and inadvertent social climber, like Luttra Schoenmaker, or more overt and purposeful social climbers like Ruth Oliver and Mildred Farley, social climbers' use of clothing to further their social reinvention serves to underscore the important role that physical objects play in defending social boundaries against intrusion, as well as facilitating its circumvention. The narratives' investigative strategies therefore do more than simply resolve the criminal threat. In their attempts to naturalize their position, social climbers adopted or consumed many of the same objects as the group which they aspired to enter, even as the latter group attempted to elude their emulation by the continually moving target of what was

considered fashionable or worthy of reproduction. This is why expressions of material culture like fashion were used both as an entry point and an exclusionary device, such that any one “who succeeded in crossing the fashion barrier...could then use fashion to exclude applicants who followed” (Halttunen *Confidence* 39). In their attempts to naturalize their position, social climbers adopted or consume many of the same objects as the group which they aspired to enter, even as the latter group attempted to elude their emulation by the continually moving target of what was considered fashionable or worthy of reproduction. Green’s detective fiction combines criminal interrogation with social criticism, repurposing the genre into a vehicle for social critique by using objects of personal costume as vehicles for potential social transformation. Her depictions of the social, emotional and potentially criminal consequences of the parvenues’ attempts highlight important issues about female representation and agency, as well. Women like Green, who both record and interpret their society in and through popular fiction, were “active in *producing* representations” of the middle-class throughout the period and that production entailed more than passive, unthinking consumption (Langland 6). Clothing, which must be considered one element of that production, is therefore not an empty or symbolically inert practice in Green’s detective fiction. Instead, the way that the garments function both on and off the bodies – the fabric they are made from, the trims that adorn them, the techniques the dressmakers employ to construct them – has an overt connection to the outcomes which the socially ambitious characters in Green’s novels faced.

The second chapter continues the theme of social evaluation, balancing the moral implications of domestic disorder against the potential for criminal behaviour. If the home is indeed a central pillar of the masculine concept of ‘self’ to individuals in the period – having, making and maintaining a home as part of the necessary process of being a socially recognized

individual – then the mismanagement of the home that Drs. Izard, Molesworth and Poole display in *Dr. Izard, Behind Closed Doors* and *The Millionaire Baby* suggests that social performance, far from being a universal experience, could in fact face challenges from the individuals operating within its sphere. Refusing to participate in the rituals that normally govern the decoration of private homes is an act of significant disruption, and once again illustrates the ways in which Green's detective fiction uses material culture to confront the typical patterns of domestic order presented in other realist fiction. Bleak and unhealthy, these male-occupied spaces are the material manifestation of wrong paths taken. The objects in the homes that these men inhabit not only reflect their problematic relationship with their society's material culture, they also encouraged the development of behaviours that were antithetical to the well-being of the community. These objects also reveal how, over the course of the late nineteenth-century materialism had been overtaken and that by the early twentieth century, economic agency was eclipsing material collection. If, as Elaine Freedgood argues, the detective fiction story is the utopian resting place of the Victorian thing, then by the end of the era that Green wrote about in such detail, a new ideology was beginning to emerge that valued the symbolism of money, and its amorphous powers of consumption, over the actual possession of real goods. Green's reservations about unfettered monetary gain were well established from her earliest novels, and certainly predate a novel like *The Millionaire Baby*, but it speaks to the social transformation at work in American society as it entered into the global age at the beginning of the twentieth century. The chaotic domestic circumstances of the medical professionals who are examined in Chapter 2 show how the lives and deaths of the middle-class male professionals can be read as warnings not only about the characterological impact of the home on its inhabitants, but also on the need for thoughtful consumption. Green's focus on hoarding, rather than on the aesthetic

collecting that has been the focus of much critical attention in realist literature, stands in clear contrast to the more typical models of domestic behaviour and decoration that existed in the periods' decorating magazines, religious sermons and domestic fiction. It also sets Green apart from literary contemporaries like Henry James or Edith Wharton because rather than focusing on successful collectors, she engages with those who are dispossessed, disinclined or materially disenfranchised. These men who live in these chaotic homes serve to illustrate the moral and emotional vulnerability of individuals who live in domestic disorder. Their deaths – of illness, suicide and accident, respectively – serve as conclusive warnings to Green's readers about the need for domestic conformity and the importance that space and personal possessions can have in reinforcing or alleviating existing character flaws like hubris, greed and curiosity. Characters like Molesworth, Izard and Poole also ask the reader to consider what their own decorating choices say about their own character and whether the domestic arrangements lauded by sentimentalists and design magazines alike are as secure as they might believe. This moral uncertainty is a hallmark of Green's fiction and while the resolution of the stories may nominally support a return to the status quo, the challenge offered by such disorder cannot be easily dismissed.

Lastly, the final chapter in this dissertation examined the ways in which architecture, and the use of built space, contributes to the generic process of investigation inherent in detective fiction, specifically the trope of the 'locked room'. The impressive mansions and ancestral homes that Green's fictional families inhabit ought to be the ultimate architectural proof of the sanctity of the home and the success of the affective reformation so ardently sought by the period's sentimental authors and moral reformers. Yet as I show in this chapter, this is not the case. Green's detective fiction specifically rejects any notion of the home as a site of emotional

well-being and safety. Instead, in novels like *The Leavenworth Case*, *Dark Hollow* and “Missing: Page Thirteen”, the most salient and immediate threats to both individual and collective well-being come are contained within the homes themselves and the homes’ architecture amplifies its toxic effect. The home can only be redeemed, and reclaimed as a site of familial good, if the old home is destroyed or set aside entirely. The Leavenworth mansion is transformed into a public charity; Oliver Ostrander and Reuther Scoville leave his family home and begin again in Detroit; Leonard Van Broecklyn is released from his bondage by the immolation of his colonial mansion. These outcomes show why, for the same reasons I reached about dress and social identity, I believe that the ideological issues embedded in the nineteenth-century American home should not be divorced from their innate physical nature. For all that the home expresses its inhabitants’ participation in their society’s systems of values and belief, I believe that any examination of these ideological expressions must be rooted in an explicitly physical domain and should not be reduced to the state of metaphor. This is because any study of the underlying domestic ideology of the American home that ignores its materiality risks missing significant patterns of meaning. Detective fiction’s locked rooms are a site in which interrogation of the criminal act and interrogation of the family unit proceed in unison. The detectives must traverse the spaces where wrong-doing has occurred. They must understand the disposition of the chairs and the windows and the walls as much as they must the forensic or psychological evidence. The maps that Green includes in these fictions are yet another connection to the physical realm, with their stylistic connections to the homebuilding guides of the periods. These maps, which make visible the home from above, are visual reminders of Green’s call to live transparently, without secrets. This inverts typical notions of privacy. For Green then, the crowded cities and urban environments which were the nexus of American societal change were not a threat but an opportunity because

they served to balance the secrecy and emotional harm that occurred within the private sphere. This faith in an urban environment which encouraged communal feeling which was so often shown to be irredeemably dangerous.

Green's focus on American identity and on the nation's potential to make and remake both the family, the individual and the home that sheltered them must be read in opposition to the old world identity and colonial interests of her better known European and British counterparts. Unlike Wilkie Collins or Arthur Conan Doyle, who both imbued their detective fiction with explicit approbation of their country's empirical interests, Green eschews the politics of nationhood in favour of exploring the political import of the home. Considering this focus, it is therefore readily apparent that Green is uneasy with many of the inequities and hypocrisies that exist as part of 'normal' society. Green is all too aware of its shortcomings: its tendency to social and material hypocrisy; its exploitation of existing and trenchantly unequal domestic norms that perpetuate gender inequity; and class barriers that encourage self-interest and competition. Green then is both a product of her time, as well as a critic of it. As an individual excluded from participating in many aspects American society by virtue of her gender, she came to see American society as one in which the individual's potential for personal growth and moral improvement is only possible if their relationship with the physical world is balanced and fair. But even as she makes gestures towards the ways in which the society she lived in could improve, the potential improvements she envisions must be balanced against the inequities that she could not see or could not see the need to change.

Ultimately, I have shown domesticity should not be seen as a panacea that applies solely to female experience or that arbitrarily divides experiences into those that are public and those that are private. Social performance depends on the mask offered by socially created goods like

dress, home design and architecture. These things are in turn what allow secrets and wrong-doing to fester because adherence to external domestic norms disguises the repressive nature of the nineteenth-century American home. If, as Bill Brown posits, “things are what we encounter, ideas are what we project,” then the things that are encountered in Green’s crime fiction reveal a world attempting to assuage its fears and its existential terrors of moral decay and social irrelevance by means of a futile frenzy of consumption (*Sense* 11). Green’s detective fiction exposes that rupture, and shows how such spaces could be decorated faultlessly while still serving as inescapable domestic prisons. Thus, it is as Green says “the *mockery* of things”, with their link to the material world, that allows us to the better understand the both the fiction that contains it and the society that created it (84). Green’s characters carve a place for themselves in her fictional worlds using things, and as readers, we come to understand the historical world and its real things better, as well.

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹ Benjamin likely encountered Green's fiction in translation as her detective fiction was very popular in Germany. Her longstanding publishing relationship with the Stuttgart publisher Robert Lutz resulted in almost all of Green's books being translated into German. These translations were also widely serialized in German-language newspapers throughout Austria and Germany. In fact, during the family's only visit to Europe in 1890, Green wrote a letter to the London magazine *The Critic*, lambasting the ubiquity of pirated editions of her work in that country and complaining about the lack of respect German newspapers paid towards international copyright conventions.

² Notable examples include A.E. Murch's *The Development of the Detective Novel* (1958), Ian Ousby *Bloodhounds of Heaven: The Detective in English Fiction from Godwin to Doyle* (1976) and Stephen Knight *Crime Fiction 1800-2000 Detection, Death, Diversity* (2006) and Leroy Panek's *The Origins of the American Detective Story* (2006)

³ Widely cited examples, the majority of which focus on British literary examples, include Joseph Kestner's *Sherlock's Sisters: The British Female Detective, 1864-1913* (2003); Carla Kungl's *Creating the Fictional Female Detective: The Sleuth Heroines of British Women Writers, 1890-1940* (2006) and Melissa Schaub's *Middlebrow Feminism in Classic British Detective Fiction: The Female Gentleman* (2013). A rare example of critical work with a multi-national focus is Lucy Sussex's *Women Writers and Detectives in Nineteenth-Century Fiction: The Mothers of the Mystery Genre* (2010), which considers female detective fiction writers from the U.K, the U.S and Australia. One of the only examples to exclusively consider American

female detective fiction writers is Catherine Ross Nickerson's *The Web of Iniquity: Early Detective Fiction by American Women*

⁴ Denning (1998) and Bedore (2013) both discuss the issue of class and popular fiction in the context of dime novels; Gruesser (2013) addresses the issues of race and national identity through an analysis that is largely centred on twentieth-century pulp and hard-boiled texts and publishing practices. Little attention has been given towards the publishers of popular fictions geared toward the middle-classes in the nineteenth century, like those of Green's long-time publisher G.P. Putnam's Sons.

⁵ Not all of Green's fiction can be classified as detective fiction. While all contain criminous elements, texts such as *Cynthia Wakeham's Money* (1892), *Miss Hurd: An Enigma* (1894) or *The Old Stone House* (1891) are better classed as psychological thrillers, sensation fiction or Gothic narratives. Limiting my focus to those texts which have a central detectival figure allows for a more consistent examination of objects throughout her career, as generic strictures can impact the role which objects play within texts.

⁶ See Murch (1968), Bargainnier (1980); Knight (2006); Panek (2006) and Rollyson (2008) for typical examples of Green's inclusion in historical overviews of the genre's development.

⁷ By contrast, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories include events set in a variety of countries including the United States, Switzerland, India, the Andaman Islands and several unidentified European countries, in addition to a variety of English districts including Dartmoor, East Sussex, Cornwall and Hampshire.

⁸ On the rare occasions when European characters appear in Green's fiction, they are almost always villains. The Schoenmakers are German immigrants in *A Strange Disappearance* and commit bank robbery and kidnapping; the adulterous couple in *The Forbidden Inn* (1890) flee to

Europe and live in France after they murder the man's wife; the poisonous jewel in *The Amethyst Box* (1905) was crafted by Venetians as a result of what Green describes as that nation state's predilection to murder; Horatio Leavenworth's distrust of the English is based on an Englishman's abuse of his late wife. A rare exception is *The Woman in the Alcove* (1906). In that story, the Englishman gentleman is the victim of the robbery, and it is an American businessman who committed the crime.

⁹ The only story Green wrote that is set entirely in Europe is her very early short story, *One Hour More* (1887). It takes place in 1870s Paris, following the unsuccessful Paris Commune uprising. Given the story's stylistic details, the historical backdrop and the fact that it is a romance, not detective fiction, the story was almost certainly written prior to *The Leavenworth Case* in 1878. However, it wasn't published until 1887, when it appeared in a collection of three of Green's short stories.

¹⁰ For excellent historical summaries of the changes and challenges faced by America during the nineteenth century, see James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988) for a succinct overview of the country's political and social realities leading up to the Civil War. Richard White's *The Republic for Which it Stands* (2017) discusses the country during Reconstruction and the Gilded Age. For a city-specific history, Mike Wallace and Edwin Burroughs's *Gotham* (2000) is an exhaustive history of New York City which discusses that city's history from its Dutch founding until its incorporation in 1898. Thomas Schlereth's *Victorian America* (1991) depicts changes to the physical spaces and material objects from the period.

¹¹ See Gunning (2003), Gruesser (2013)

¹² See Maida (1988)

¹³ See Murch (1968); Ousby (1976); Worthington (2005); Panek (2006); Knight (2006) and Worthington (2008)

¹⁴ Social climbing can be readily observed in many American nineteenth-century texts, including those by realist authors like Henry James and Edith Wharton, in pulp publications such as Horatio Alger's rags-to-riches stories and in non-literary texts such as etiquette manuals, gossip columns, and popular and middle-brow magazine fiction.

¹⁵ Klimasmith (2005); Merish (2000); Langland (1995); Hamlett (2009); Kleinberg (1999); Strickland (1985), Brown, G. (1990)

CHAPTER ONE

¹⁶ Examples of critical texts that position the detective as an instrument of social surveillance include Ian Ousby's *The Bloodhounds of Heaven: The Detective in English Fiction from Godwin to Doyle* (1976), Peter Thom's *Detection and its Designs: Narrative & Power in 19th Century Detective Fiction* (1998) and more recently, Heather Worthington's *The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction* (2005)

¹⁷ Early detective fiction offered a more fluid sense of gender and class than later Golden Age and hard-boiled fiction. See Bedore (2014) and Gunning (2003) for examples of dandies and female cross dressing in dime novels.

¹⁸ Scholarship on the nature and parameters of social mobility in nineteenth-century America includes Mary McAleer Balkun's *The American Counterfeit: Authenticity and Identity in American Literature and Culture* (2006); Gillian Brown's *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth Century America* (1990) and Stephanie Foote's *The Parvenu's Plot: Gender, Culture, and Class in the Age of Realism* (2014).

¹⁹ Benevolent sexism is a belief system predicated on stereotypical expectations of gendered behaviour that naturalizes certain behaviours as intrinsic to each sex. Throughout her fiction, Green makes repeated reference to the emotional and spiritual influence which her female characters could exert as a means of improving the morality and lives of both the women and the men whose lives they shared. This is not to say that she wasn't aware of or concerned by the inequities which women faced. Men certainly did abuse women (see *The Mayor's Wife* (1908), *The Gray Madam* (1898) or *A Difficult Problem* (1901) of examples of male violence towards women) and her work also explores the implications of female economic dependence in novels such as *The Mill Mystery* (1886) but Green did not believe that women could effect a solution through suffrage. Instead, she supported improved moral education for both men and women as a solution to the problem of gender inequality.

²⁰ Examples of this pattern include not only Amelia Butterworth in *That Affair Next Door* (1897), *Lost Man's Lane* (1898) and *The Circular Study* (1900) and Violet Strange in *The Golden Slipper and Other Problems for Violet Strange* (1915), both of whom have received previous critical attention, but also Constance Sterling in *The Mill Mystery* (1886), Hermione Cavanaugh in *Cynthia Wakeham's Money* (1892), Miss Saunders in *The Mayor's Wife* (1907) and Deborah Scoville in *Dark Hollow* (1914)

²¹ Amy Sherman Way's analysis of Edith Wharton's response to materialism occurs *Sacramental Shopping: Louisa May Alcott, Edith Wharton, and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (2013) ; Babak Elahi in *The Fabric of American Literary Realism: Readymade Clothing, Social Mobility and Assimilation* (2009) discusses the assimilation of immigrants and religious minorities through clothing and fashion

²² Michael Denning's *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (1989; 1998) and Pamela Bedore's more recent *Dime Novels and the Roots of American Detective Fiction* (2013) are two well-known examples.

²³ Considerations of the relationship of male characters to domesticity are discussed in both Chapter 2, where the relationship between personal possessions, hoarding and Victorian beliefs in the characterological import of material culture will be considered and in Chapter 3, during discussions of architectural spaces and gendered norms within the home.

²⁴ Foote defines the parvenue as "class climbers" (5)

²⁵ Green makes her distaste for material or economic considerations in marriage clear in an undated letter written in 1884, just prior to her own marriage to Charles Rohlf. In it, she writes to her friend Hattie Hunt, "I have not told you anything about the splendid man I am going to marry but I assure you he is one of the rare ones. Not rich. O no, but a man to respect, to love, to trust in. I am the happiest of the happy." (Green, "Dear Hattie", n.d.)

²⁶ The connection between interior design and moral character is discussed in Chapter 2. But it is notable that the doctor is described as "sombre and inscrutable" while the rented rooms he inhabits are barren and uninviting, and "within the space of its four bare walls not an article of beauty nor an object of taste is to be seen" (Green Behind 135)

²⁷ She is not the earliest, however. *The Leavenworth Case* features two socially ambitious characters. Hannah, the Irish maid, is persuaded to keep silent about what she witnessed on the night of the Horatio Leavenworth's murder when Trueman Harwell promises to marry her once the investigation is resolved. Although he himself is only lower-middle-class, his social standing is significantly above that of a newly arrived Irish immigrant and would represent a marked elevation for a young woman in service. Harwell ultimately poisons Hannah, exploiting her faith

in his romantic promise. Harwell himself is the other social climber. As the family's private secretary, he has planned to blackmail Mary Leavenworth into marrying him in return for keeping silent about a damning letter that would provide the police with a solid motive and make her the prime suspect in her uncle's murder. In this case, both attempts fail. Hannah dies while Harwell is arrested and repudiated by Mary. Both of the individuals behave unethically, and in Harwell's case, criminally, and their attempts at betterment fail.

²⁸ This theme is evident in many of Green's books, and remains one of its most consistent moral positions. It can be observed beginning in *The Leavenworth Case* (1878), where Mary Leavenworth's reluctance to cede her inheritance leads to her cousin's being suspected of their uncle's murder; a similar outlook is observable in *The Mayor's Wife* (1908), where the blackmailer threatens his elderly aunts in order to ensure that they continue to fund his lavish lifestyle, regardless of the deprivation it causes them; and even in Green's final novel, *The Step on the Stair* (1923), where the murder is committed by a long-standing family servant in order to ensure that their favourite nephew receives the entirety of their uncle's wealth.

²⁹ Other influential pairs of 'twins' in detective fiction include Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick in Wilkie Collin's *The Woman in White* (1860) and the racially charged switched-at-birth pairing of Tom and Chambers in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1893).

³⁰³⁰ The abortive marriage between Genevieve Gretorex and Dr. Molesworth is one of only two that I have found in Green's writing where the woman to be married has greater social and economic resources than her spouse. The other occurs in *The Filigree Ball* (1901). In that story, the woman intends to marry a socially prominent man but is hampered by an earlier secret marriage to a miner that would not only invalidate her new union but harm her socially. On her wedding day, she murders a man whom she mistakenly believes is her long-lost husband, before

finally committing suicide. Green also depicts a number of middle-class women marrying working class men. The outcome of these marriages is rarely favorable for the women who enter into them, either. Genevieve's own mother embarked on "a runaway match." Green outlines the pattern she believes such marriages "are very apt to follow...six months of extreme joy, followed by sickness, want, and growing neglect on the part of him who led her into this trouble" (*Behind* 288). Even more common are bad marriages between young men of the upper classes with pretty but impoverished women. For example, Ruth Oliver's hasty marriage to Randolph Stone leads to her abandonment and him attempting to murder her in *That Affair Next Door*; similarly unhappy marriages occur in *The Mystery of the Hasty Arrow* (1917), *The Mayor's Wife* (1908), *The Millionaire Baby* (1902) and *Hand and Ring* (1883). All of these unions reach tragic outcomes, ranging from crimes such as murder, attempted murder and blackmail to abandonment, social exile and poverty for the women involved. Genevieve's suicide fits the pattern of negative consequences which Green assigns to socially disparate unions, as does Dr. Molesworth's death of fever following a police pursuit.

³¹ While a doctor, Molesworth is socially undistinguished and openly contemptuous of domestic comforts. His colleague, Dr. Cameron, describes him as "all right in a professional way, but he is on the Health board and confines his practice to charity patients in the —— Ward" (Green *Behind* 33). Molesworth's personal motto is "Live poor, go hungry, go cold, suffer any amount of privation and discomfort, but do not fail in what you undertake" (Green *Behind* 136). Such Calvinist privation—he regularly throws patients' gifts in the fire – is an absolute repudiation of the period's obsession with visible comfort and the absolute opposite of the Gretorex's conspicuously wealthy lifestyle.

³² In a telling conversation at the beginning of the novel, Walter Cameron dismisses the possibility of Genevieve Gretorex even knowing Julius Molesworth, due to their widely divergent social spheres. He views their being romantically involved as even more implausible. Gryce responds by saying “It is not always safe to say whom a woman may or may not meet”(Green *Behind* 33).

³³ Gryce details his history as a young police officer, climbing the ranks, in the short story “The Staircase at Heart’s Delight” (1895). He also discusses the difficulty he experiences interacting with socially prominent individuals outside of executing his professional duties with Everett Raymond in *The Leavenworth Case* (1878).

³⁴ Women could not serve as members of the NYPD until the early 20th century, and their role was largely relegated to secretarial responsibilities. Women did work as private detectives, however. One of the most well-known examples of this was Kate Warne, who was hired by Allan Pinkerton in the mid-1860s. She undertook a range of investigations, including undercover assignments, for the Pinkerton Detective Agency through the 1860s and 1870s. See Enss (2017).

³⁵ The era’s belief in the characterological significance of an individual’s material culture choices, and Green’s depictions of it, are discussed in Chapter 2

³⁶ “The Ruby and the Caldron ” has an interesting counterpoint in a number of other short stories that Green wrote. “The Thief” (1910) hinges on many of the same circumstantial devices and involves distinguished guests in a social setting. When a valuable coin disappears at a dinner party, suspicion quickly falls on the one guest who refuses to turn out his pockets. When the coin is later found, the host decides to apologize to the guest. In the course of locating his guest, he learns that the young man, who was wealthy, is now destitute. The only good clothes he still

owns is the suit he wore at dinner. He had been reluctant to display the contents of his pockets because he had taken a dinner roll. In *7 to 12* (1887), which is one of her earliest short stories, a NYC detective is called to the scene of what appears to be a brazen daylight robbery of a valuable diamond necklace. He initially suspects the family's profligate step-son. However, in the end, it is revealed that the necklace's owner has staged the crime in order to prevent her husband from learning that she had previously pawned the necklace and has been wearing a valueless glass replica in its stead. She is left penniless and socially isolated when her husband is revealed to be equally duplicitous. His urgency in recovering his wife's jewels was not predicated on avoiding scandal but on his own desperate financial situation. Having embezzled money to finance his lavish lifestyle, he had intended to prevent exposure by selling the jewels and replacing the money before his crime was revealed.

³⁷ The reluctance to be searched, leading to a circumstantial assumption of guilt, occurs in another of Green's short stories. In *The Thief* (1910), a valuable coin goes missing at a dinner party. All but one of the guests readily agrees to turn out their pockets to mitigate suspicion against them. The young man who refuses leaves the party under a cloud of suspicion. When the host of the party subsequently recovers the coin, which had accidentally fallen between the leaf of the table, he pursues the young man to apologize for accusing him unjustly. He discovers that the young man, while previously belonging to a wealthy family, is now destitute and living in squalor, having sold everything of value except for his dinner suit. The young man's reluctance to turn out his pockets stems from the fact that he had stolen several dinner rolls because he could not afford another meal.

³⁸ Stories which feature wealthy wrong-doers include *X.Y.Z.* (1883), *The Mill Mystery* (1886), *7 to 12: A Detective Story* (1887) and *The Mayor's Wife* (1908).

 CHAPTER 2

³⁹ Examples of the tendency include Bill Brown's *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (2003), where he discusses Mark Twain's home at length; Andrew Miller's *Novels Behind Glass* (2006) and Christoph Lidner's *Fictions of Commodity Culture: From the Victorian to the Postmodern*. Dicken's is one of the only canonical authors of the period in which hoarding, dirt and disorder have been discussed: examples include Patrick Chappell's *Paper Routes: Bleak House, Rubbish Theory, and the Character Economy of Realism* (EHL, 2013) and Robert Lougy's *Filth, Liminality, and Abjection in Charles Dickens's Bleak House* (EHL, 2002). Only in the past few years have critics focused on non-curated objects, assembled without consideration for an overall aesthetic approach or consistency of design and intent. An example would be Jonathon Shear's and Jen Harrison's *Literary Bric-à-Brac and the Victorians: From Commodities to Oddities* (2013)

⁴⁰ As Jonathan Shears and Jen Harrison note in their introduction to the essay collection *Literary Bric-a-Brac and the Victorians*, the word bric-à-brac is a term intimately connected with the 19th century, first entering the lexicon in the 1840s and in wide use by the 1880s. When applied to material objects, its key characteristics were typically a lack of material worth, objects that had been removed from their point of origin, clutter, disorder and incongruous show or display (5).

⁴¹ *Orlando* (1928), with its broad historic satire provides an excellent example of Woolf's attitude towards the era.

⁴² Of the three doctors discussed in this chapter, only one – Dr. Cameron – is shown receiving and treating patients in his home. Dr. Izard is only shown in the context of a hospital visit, while Dr. Poole is never shown involved in treatment.

⁴³ Worthington (2005)

⁴⁴ It is not until after World War One that medical doctors appear as criminals in detective fiction. The best known examples include Sir Julian Freke in Dorothy Sayers *Whose Body?* (1923) and of course Dr. James Sheppard, the murderous narrator of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926)

⁴⁵ The other two appearances of doctors occur in the short story *The Doctor, His Wife and the Clock* (1895, 1914) and *The Bronze Hand* (1897). In both cases the doctors act criminally. In the former, Dr. Zabriskie is guilty of manslaughter. Blind, he mistakenly shoots his neighbour in a fit of jealous rage after he is persuaded to believe that his wife is having an affair. In the latter, Dr. Merriam's Baltimore office houses the titular bronze hand through which a Civil War-era spy ring communicates and selects their next assassination target.

⁴⁶ Important examples of domestic decorating titles include the hugely influential *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details* (1868) by Charles Eastlake, which was in continuous print well into the early twentieth century; the monthly periodical *House Beautiful*, which began publishing in 1896 and is still being published today; and Edith Wharton and Ogden Codmen's *The Decoration of Houses* (1897).

⁴⁷ An example of this disapproval occurs in *Cynthia Wakeham's Money* (1892). Waiting to meet a potential client, the young lawyer is dismayed by the Cavanaugh sisters' parlour. Looking about the room, he reports that it is "as stiff as at a funeral. The high black mantel-shelf was without clock or vase, and the only attempt at ornament to be seen within the four grim walls was an uncouth wreath, made of shells, on a background of dismal black" (79)

⁴⁸ For discussions of the Rohlf's' design aesthetic and depictions of their Buffalo homes' interiors, see Cunningham (2008) and Sussex (2012).

⁴⁹ Throughout their married life, the Rohlf's family expended an extraordinary amount of effort in decorating their homes. After they moved to Buffalo in 1887, when they could not find furniture that they liked, Charles Rohlf's drew on his experience as an industrial designer and built many of the pieces in their homes. These efforts would lead, in the late 1890s, to the establishment of his own small-scale furniture concern, building handmade furniture and decorative objects in the Arts and Crafts style. They were offered for sale through a number of high-end catalogues and he had a booth at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo near his rival, Gustav Stickley. Always an effective self-promoter, both the Rohlf's home and his pieces were featured in a wide range of decorating magazine articles, both in American and Europe.

⁵⁰ The Green family were active members of the Plymouth church in Brooklyn where Beecher spent the majority of his celebrated career. The family joined the church in 1846 upon their return from Richmond, Indiana. J. Wilson Green, Anna's father, was on the committee that hired Beecher in 1847, and he and his wife Catherine named their youngest son, who was born in 1848 but who died in infancy, after the preacher. Anna Katharine Green maintained her membership in the church even after her move to Buffalo following her marriage in the mid-1880s and the family supported the minister during his infamous civil trial for infidelity in 1874.

⁵¹ *The Mill Mystery* is discussed in Paul Rooney's 2017 article "'By the Author of The Leavenworth Case' or Capitalizing on Reader Appetite for the Bestselling Novelist: Female Detection, Transatlantic Popular Fiction and Anna Katharine Green's *The Mill Mystery* (1886)

⁵² The shift away from 'character' and a transformation into modern notions of 'personality' and self-expression was only just beginning to emerge when Green wrote *The Mill Mystery* in 1886 but it is clear from the quote that even by this date, the modern notion of the home as a personal reflection of its inhabitants had already emerged in the popular consciousness. Mrs. Haweis, an

English designer who wrote a popular decorating column that was widely serialized, uses very similar language the mid-1880s when she urges her readers to “cultivate individuality” when decorating their homes. Deborah Cohen argues that Haweis position was not merely convincing her readership to partake in mindless consumption, but was itself a reaction to the problem of individuality in a society beset by mass production. Like others who promoted notions of self-expression, she believed that cultural attributes such as taste would be as important to an individual’s status as their occupation, religious affiliations or their political positions. (134) This outlook aligns with Green’s and shows how, in both American and Britain, the transformation of the home in response to commodity culture was already well underway.

⁵³ Dolin’s article, “*Cranford* and the Victorian Collection,” makes a number of important points about the gendered nature of collecting in the period. He does this by considering its depiction in Gaskell’s 1855 novel. Most generally though, Dolin draws attention to the fact that it is not merely that nineteenth-century things may have had a prescribed or normalized owner chosen on the basis of gender, but that gender was also implicated in the categorization of such things, shaping not only their design and use but also “their definition and description, as well” (179).

⁵⁴ Luttra Schoenmaker is only ever seen in domestic settings: the criminal home that she shares with her father and brother, and which she escapes, living in secret in her spouse’s home, in captivity in transient home (boarding house) that is none the less headed by the female boarding house keeping and finally, within the family’s ancestral home, acknowledged as Blake Holman’s wife, when Evelyn hosts the ball celebrating their nuptials. In fact, even after Holman has seemingly rejected her, Luttra’s decision to disguise herself and live in secret in her husband’s home is motivated by the fact that “her idea of a wife’s duty” cannot be reconciled with living “under any roof than that of her husband” (Green *Strange* 203)

⁵⁵ This description suggests that as much as detective fiction is normally read through a realist lens, in this case, a more appropriate context would be the American Gothic, a tradition that would link *Dr. Izard* to texts such as Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) or William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* (1930)

⁵⁶ Interestingly, it is the hermit's cave, rather than either the Earle or Izard homes, that displays the most homelike atmosphere. The cave contains "a small but well furnished room, stocked with provisions and containing many articles of domestic use" (Green *Izard* 27). Before his death, the elderly Hadley had lived alone but still maintained, in a manner that strongly recalls Robinson Crusoe, the practices of his formerly social life. The cave is unoccupied but it is still guarded by "the faithful creature" – his dog – who was his sole companion in life. The attachment evinced by the animal suggests a true emotional connection to the space that is lacking in either of the other male occupied spaces.

⁵⁷ This argument is the same as the one used by Judge Archibald Ostrander in *Dark Hollow* (1914), which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

⁵⁸ This concern with money and personal finances is reflected by the experiences of nearly all of the other central characters. Although not discussed in this chapter in any detail, both Marion Ocumpaugh and Valerie Carew both continue the pattern of monetary obsession. For instance, while the Ocumpaugh marriage is acknowledged to be a love match, the inequality in wealth between Philo, the son of a wealthy New York family, and Marion, a pretty but impoverished girl with no social pedigree, is repeatedly referenced. Marion is taunted by her mother-in-law over "the fact that she brought nothing into the family but herself—not even a *towel*" and when she is unable to conceive, her place in the family seems increasingly perilous. This leads her to engage in the illegal adoption (Green *Millionaire* 229). Likewise, Mrs. Carew, the ambitious

actress who gave Gwendolen up at birth, “bartered her child away as she would have parted with any other encumbrance likely to interfere with her career” and arranged to have Gwendolen “sold for a half year’s independence” (Green *Millionaire* 353; 354). It is only once she has inherited a large fortune of her own that her maternal instincts seem to reignite and when Dr. Poole threatens to reveal the truth about Gwendolen’s birth, she exploits Marion’s fears, turning the crisis to her own advantage.

⁵⁹ The fixation with money begins with the title itself. A reference to the kidnapping victim, Gwendolen Ocumpaugh, whose disappearance initiates the narrative’s investigation, the six year old is known in the press as “The Millionaire Baby” due to the fact that she is “the direct heir to three fortunes” (Green *Millionaire* 4). When the family announces that she has been snatched from the grounds of their luxurious Hudson River mansion, it elicits a frenzy of interest amongst the press and the public. This fascination is amplified when her father, Philo, who is travelling in Europe, promises that anyone who ensures her safe return will receive a \$50,000 reward. The incredible sum is announced by the newspaper headline “A Fortune for a Child” (Green *Millionaire* 2). While the tendency to detail a victim’s wealth is not uncommon in detective fiction, as it provides a strong rationale for motive, unusually, this concern with money extends beyond the victim and the suspects to the detective as well. It also makes Gwendolen a clear symbol of economic exchange and she is repeatedly referred to in terms that make clear she is “an object” to be “bartered” or “sold” (Green *Millionaire* 291; 353; 354).

⁶⁰ There was a proliferation of morally ambiguous detectives at the turn of the century. These include Maurice LeBlanc’s Arsène Lupin, the gentleman cambrioleur, who first appeared in print in 1905; Guy Boothby’s *The Prince of Swindlers* (1897), in which the central detective moonlights as a thief and investigates his own crimes and Israel Zangwill’s *The Big Bow Mystery*

(1892), in which the killer is a retired police detective whose motive for killing his fellow lodger is to ensure the continued sale of his memoirs, now in their twenty-fifth printing.

CHAPTER THREE

⁶¹ Nickerson makes the point of distinguishing between these gothic-infused examples of American domestic detective fiction and the British Victorian sensation novel. Although both developed contemporaneously, she argues that it is the “moral purpose” of the American novels which sets them apart from their English counterparts (19). Although both forms share similarities in subjects, the former are “more interested in how women can foil the gothic plots laid against them than, as is the case in the bulk of sensation novels, in spinning out variations on that theme” (19).

⁶² See Nickerson (1998); Arntfield (2016); Miranda (2017)

⁶³ See Tange (2012); Halttunen *Parlor* (1989); Brown *Individualism* (1990); Prewitt Brown (2008)

⁶⁴ Rural families who lived on farms are one obvious exception to this emerging division, a fact which continued well into the twentieth century. But when Miss Butterworth visits Mrs. Boppert in *That Affair Next Door*, the fact that the shopkeeper’s private quarters where the meeting takes place are separated only by “glass door” from the store itself and that the private space is decorated with cast-offs from the shop is read as a clear sign that its inhabitants are working class. (*Green Affair* 188) Likewise, despite aspiring to gentility, Mrs. Desberger’s parlour cannot disguise that she supports herself by opening her home to strangers by operating a boarding-house. It is “respectable, but in wretched taste” (*Green Affair* 220).

⁶⁵ Green's use of the home as a setting for her detective fiction is not unique. Earlier sensation novelists like Wilkie Collins frequently set their narratives, including *The Woman in White* (1860), in isolated ancestral homes. Likewise, setting a detective fiction narrative in 'old manor' would become almost a cliché during the Golden Age, with writers including A.A. Milne, Agatha Christie and Mary Roberts Rinehart all setting narratives in such spaces. I would argue then that while she was not the first, it was her example in fictions like *The Leavenworth Case* which established the home as a central setting for the modern detective fiction novel.

⁶⁶ Other contemporary American titles which share this concern with the safety of domestic space include Mary Wilkins Freeman's "The Long Arm" (1895) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892).

⁶⁷ The importance of domestic spaces to Green is also evident from the titles of her books. Six of her the novels' titles make explicit reference either to a private home or to a space within it: *Behind Closed Doors* (1888); *That Affair Next Door* (1897); *The Circular Study* (1900); *The Woman in the Alcove* (1906); *The House of the Whispering Pines* (1910); and *The Step on the Stair* (1923). The same pattern is evident in her short stories, with titles there including: *The Old Stone House* (1890); *The Hermit of — Street* (1898) *The House in the Mist* (1905); and *The House of Clocks* (1915).

⁶⁸ The link between domestic disorder and criminal behaviour was discussed in Chapter 2

⁶⁹ Examples of Green's fictional families in crisis which are not discussed in this dissertation include *Miss Hurd: An Enigma* (1894), in which an abusive husband repeatedly hunts down his wife after she had fled from their home and *One of My Sons* (1902), which features a wealthy New York investor whose three profligate sons are all viable suspects in his poisoning.

⁷⁰ The maps are only one of a myriad of metatextual clues that Green includes in *The Leavenworth Case*. These include various print sources including letters and headlines purportedly excerpted from various real-life New York newspapers and the words ‘Mary Clavering’ printed in reverse, to replicate their being scratched in into a glass window pane. Even more striking, in the first edition, strips of torn paper were glued into the book by hand. They recreate the process by which Raymond and Gryce reconstitute and decipher the handwritten letter that Henry Clavering sent to Horatio Leavenworth seeking recognition of his marriage to Mary, and which represents a major clue in the novel. Having studied a first edition of *The Leavenworth Case* at the Lilly Library in Bloomington, Indiana, I can attest to the tactile nature of the insert. Folded and glued into the book, the reader must stop and carefully spread the insert out to study it before they can continue the narrative. In contrast to the uniform typeset that the rest of the book is printed in, the incomplete segments of the torn letter are handwritten and make little sense until Raymond recounts his attempts to decipher it in the ninth chapter of the second volume, “Patchwork”.

⁷¹ Contemporary examples of floorplan maps depicting the scene of the crime include Gaston Leroux’s *The Mystery of in the Yellow Room* (1908) and Agatha’s Christie’s *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920). Maps became a common visual inclusion in the Golden Age and appeared in well known texts including Dorothy Sayers’ *The Nine Tailors* (1934) and S.S. Van Dine’s *The Bishop Murder Case* (1929).

⁷² The other two are the Leavenworth mansion itself and Gryce’s modest three story brick home.

⁷³ Beecher and Beecher Stowe’s book was intended, at least initially, for American audiences. It is very likely that Green knew of this book, since both sisters were regular visitors to the Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn which the Green family attended. The church’s

minister was the women's younger brother, Henry Ward Beecher. A similar English example is Mrs. Beeton's *Guide to Household Management* (1861), which like her later American counterparts' effort, went through many editions throughout the nineteenth century. For an excellent overview of the history of household management texts, see Nickols' "From Treatise to Textbook: A History of Writing About Household Management" (2008)

⁷⁴ Amy's account of their courtship tells how the pair met at the resort town the previous spring. Knowing her uncle's opposition to Englishmen, and the fact that her inheritance depended on her marrying a man her uncle approves of, Mary hides the romance from both Eleanore and her uncle. When Eleanore discovers that Mary is planning to marry Clavering in secret, she insists on accompanying her cousin and witnessing the marriage, despite strongly disapproving of her cousin's decision to marry secretly. Amy Belden's home served as the 'post-office' to which the letters could send their correspondence, and Hannah carried the letters to and from her house.

⁷⁵ Tosh (1999)

⁷⁶ In *The Bourgeois Interior*, Julia Prewitt Brown notes the defensive segregation of Robinson Crusoe's cave, surrounded by multiple fences and warning devices, and locates this early novel by Daniel Defoe as the eighteenth century forerunner of the Victorian era's domestic fortress trope.

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