

**DRAFT**

## Chapter One

# Reconsidering the Unknown Public

### *A Puzzle of Literary Gains*

Simon Frost

**[1.0]**

In 1858, in an article of the same name for *Household Words*, Wilkie Collins discovered an “Unknown Public.” The literary preferences of this unknown public—poor, in his estimation—were a mystery to him, but he credited those readers with an emancipatory curiosity and predicted they would enlighten themselves along a path beginning, he suggested, with Scott’s *Kenilworth* and ending with the “very best men among living English writers”: including, by implication, Wilkie Collins.<sup>1</sup> A later solution to the puzzle of who this unknown public might be, suggested by Thomas Wright in 1883 for *The Nineteenth Century*,<sup>2</sup> would have come as a surprise to Collins, but not so surprising as the implication I hope to draw out in this chapter. Collins shared the idea of a hierarchy of literatures that persists today, in which reading ought naturally to gravitate toward the “best” literature. From this perspective, any attempt to understand the experience of the poorest literature would seem as perverse as any active resistance to best. From this perspective, the reading habits of the unknown public might just as well remain unknown. But from another perspective, the puzzle opens up to a different way of understanding literature, from the “poorest” to the “best.” Collins’s failure to guess the true identity of the unknown public was not simply a literary or a cultural-political one, enmeshed as he was in specific structures of literary cultural capital, but it was also a failure of method; of failing to realize that literature, for many readers, can stray beyond the literary and into areas of personal gain where, perhaps worryingly for literary scholars at least, the discourse best placed to articulate those gains is economics.



Chapter 1

DRAFT

Collins found his unknown public during his wanderings “more especially in the second and third-rate neighbourhoods” of the city. Its outlets were the “small stationers or small tobacconist’s shop,” and its teeming publications were to be had in “the deserts of West Cornwall . . . the populous thoroughfare of Whitechapel . . . [and] a little lost town at the north of Scotland.”<sup>3</sup> This public numbered in the millions: three was Collins’s estimate, although, toward the end of the century and based on the circulation of well-established penny magazines, Wright later put the figure closer to five million. The literature most eagerly consumed in this market was the fiction serialized in weekly penny journals, small quarto in size, consisting of a few unbound pages, each with a picture on the upper half of the front leaf, and a quantity of small print on the under half. According to Collins, the quality of the serial fiction—usually illustrated by the journal’s only purpose-cut woodblock—utterly lacked any promise in style, characterization, or “arrangement of incident”: features, incidentally, that Collins had elsewhere perfected. He thought the stories remarkable only for their “extraordinary sameness” and so engrained was this public’s literary taste for the formula that it would not even be enticed by the comparatively “lower” literatures of Alexander Dumas or Eugene Sue. Collins’s understanding, however, was that this public was in need of education and, with patience, he foresaw a progression in taste.<sup>4</sup>

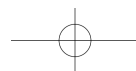
[1.1]

What perturbed Collins, though, was that he could find no one among his extensive circle who was a subscriber to such penny journals. He could easily imagine the religious public with their own booksellers and literatures; the public who read for information, tackling biographies, histories, and travel; the newspaper-reading public; and the public for amusements frequenting the circulating libraries and railway stalls. For Collins, the unknown public remained a blank that could be filled only by speculation, its intellectual capacity to be gauged by criteria established within Collins’s literary realm. But to his consternation, when republishing the article in 1863, Collins found no new evidence that the public’s tastes had improved. “Patience! patience!” he counseled, but they seemed to remain impervious to better writing.<sup>5</sup>

[1.2]

That the public must exist was a matter of deduction on the part of Collins because they were needed to explain the penny journal sales, but Collins and critics like him had “never been able to discover a living specimen of the unknown public, and express themselves curious to know who and what manner of people the members of such a public can be.”<sup>6</sup> Wright’s 1883 reply initially followed lines of reason set up by Collins, but the bulk of his response came from personal involvement because, “In my green and salad days . . . I belonged to the unknown public . . . and even now I do not feel the humiliation which I suppose I ought to experience in making this confession.”<sup>7</sup>

[1.3]





**DRAFT**

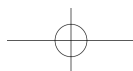
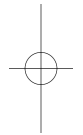
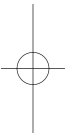
*Reconsidering the Unknown Public*

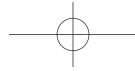
**[1.4]** Wright's point was that Collins had metaphorically and mistakenly equated the style of penny journal writing with class division—as the writing was “poorest” so too would be its audience and, linking stylistics to social standing, Collins thought to look among the very poor. A glance at contemporary surveys, however, shows us why Wright was right to suspect Collins was wrong.

**[1.5]** During his 1902 undercover slum explorations, recounted in *People of the Abyss* (1902), Jack London saw how scant the disposable income was that might be spent on reading. People could read or be read to and would when they had respite, but purchasing reading matter was something else. Staying not in a private doss-house, a place of “unmitigated horrors,” but in one of the better poor man's hotels in Whitechapel, London described the competing claims on the laborer's leisure time. Following a meal of bread dipped in salt, with a mug of tea and a piece of fish to finish, and driven up by the nausea caused from kitchen smells, London entered the smoking room to find “a couple of small billiard tables and several checkerboards were being used by young working men, who waited in relays for their turn at the games, while many men were sitting around, smoking, reading, and mending clothes.”<sup>8</sup> Alcohol would not have been tolerated in such reforming houses, so opportunity costs between reading matter and drink can be disregarded in the doss-house (though not elsewhere!). But the men smoked (by the 1880s, Wild Woodbine had become one of the most popular cigarettes: a packet of five costing one penny) and their clothes needed mending. Doubtless they needed new clothes, too, when the old began to rot.<sup>9</sup> Where would purchased reading material come on a list of priorities?

**[1.6]** Compared to the price of a penny journal, London paid five pence for his “cabin” at his poor man's hotel, which redeemed a space just large enough for a bed with a slot next to it in which to undress. Most men in the doss-house were between twenty and forty, of working age. Older single men, less employable and with less income, were forced to make do with the work-house. Earlier in the day London had eaten in a coffee house stewed mutton and peas, which cost him sixpence. In lodging houses, gas for cooking cost a penny, which was barely sufficient to cook a meal.<sup>10</sup>

**[1.7]** At the end of the century, an inexperienced bottle washer in a factory could earn 3 shillings (3s) per week, working from eight in the morning to seven at night, a jam factory worker at the height of the fruit season might earn 7s per week, while the factory average was between 8s and 11s per week, though wages as high as 15s could be had from meat-packing factories.<sup>11</sup> Unlike today, food and not rent would have taken the lion's share of a lower wage, with several surveys circumspectly estimating proportionately 7:3 of income spent on food and shelter.<sup>12</sup> Ten shillings could be stretched to support a family for a week but only with rigorous control, and any disposable income still had to be divided between family members, remembering





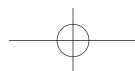
that around 1900 a laboring family would still number around six, and often more.<sup>13</sup> The 21s upon which London based his calculations of weekly expenditure for a family of five—rent 6s, bread 4s, meat 3s 6d, vegetables 2s 6d, coal and firewood 1s 4d, other necessities 46d—meant that “the family cannot ride in busses or trams, cannot write letters, take outings, go to a tu’penny gaff . . . join social or benefit clubs, nor can they buy sweetmeats, tobacco, books or newspapers.”<sup>14</sup> In short, there is little to suggest that the poorest of the laboring classes could support a market of up to five million.

The objection that Wright’s article raised, instead, was the assumption of one indiscriminating homogenous public who read and only read penny journal novels. “That there may be individual members of the unknown public whose reading is confined to the penny journals I do not doubt,” he contended, but penny novel readers did not lack discrimination. Rather, they were omnivorous and would devour everything from penny novels to Wilkie Collins. “I have seen the [penny] journals . . . lying on drawing room tables among the more permanent ornaments of which were—strange as the assertion may sound to those holding the hitherto prevailing views concerning the unknown public—such books as handsomely got up editions of Shakespeare’s *Works*, the Doré edition of *Don Quixote*, and Farrar’s *Life of Christ*.”<sup>15</sup> Few adults from this public had not read in serialized form at least some of Dickens’s novels, a few of Scott’s, and many of Bulwer Lytton’s. The failure of Scott’s *Kenilworth* in the penny weeklies, he claimed, was because its legion editions had already been available “from every second-hand bookseller’s shelves or old book-hawker’s barrow.”<sup>16</sup>

Familiar titles among the unknown public were held to include “*It’s Never too Late to Mend* [Charles Reade 1856], *Hard Cash* [Charles Reade, serialized in *All the Year Round*, March 28 to December 26, 1863] and *The Woman in White* [Wilkie Collins, serialized in *All the Year Round*, November 26, 1859 to August 25, 1860], *No Name* [Wilkie Collins, serialized in *All the Year Round*, March 15, 1862 to January 17, 1863], and the earlier works in the Braddon series.”<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, author of the wildly bestselling *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862 to 1863 in serial, 1862 in volume), shared the top-three favorite slot among the unknown public along with the co-authored novels of Walter Besant and James Rice and the now wildly neglected James Payn, author of some forty-one novels including the revealingly titled *For Cash Only* (1881 to 1882), *What He Cost Her* (serialized in *All the Year Round*, August 12, 1876 to June 2, 1877), and *A Modern Dick Whittington* (1892). And among his own reading from his youth among the public, Wright had read “infinitely greater works” from an earlier age: *Pilgrim’s Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, *Gil Blas*, the leather stocking stories of James Fennimore Cooper, Sir Walter Scott, and several novels of Captain Marryat.<sup>18</sup>

[1.8]

[1.9]





**DRAFT**

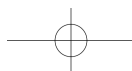
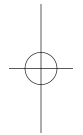
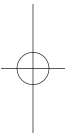
*Reconsidering the Unknown Public*

**[1.10]** The unknown public of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was prepared to read across genres and centuries. Unlike the twenty-first century, in which purchase price is relatively less costly, their reading habits were driven as much by maximizing returns on financial outlay than by prescriptions for serial fashion requiring the latest, or by avant-gardism (as prescriptive literary scholarship would have it) requiring the most advanced. The question remains, though, whether the unknown public regarded their penny novels as a harmless substandard necessity or whether, like magpies, they picked around the book market for anything that glittered, knowing full-well that all was not gold but what was not might well still be useful.

**[1.11]** The consumers of penny novels, contrary to Collins's assumption, were to be found among higher levels of disposable income. By 1861 over 1.5 million domestic servants worked in Britain, topping at two million around 1914: "A general maid might get something between £10 and £16 pound per year, a footman £20 to £40 depending on experience."<sup>19</sup> Domestic servants, avoiding accommodation costs and receiving full board, would therefore have roughly 4s to 6.5s per week for personal items for a female maid and 8s to 15s for a male footman. For this group, penny journals were a thrifty alternative to the 3s or 6s novel or the similarly priced single-volume reprints of a standard three-volume commercial library novel at 5s to 6s.<sup>20</sup>

**[1.12]** Nevertheless, Wright was reluctant to locate the unknown public only among domestic servants: "Thousands of servants are to be found among the millions of the unknown public; but they are comparatively outsiders and of little account."<sup>21</sup> For Wright, the penny public had a specific class and gender. They came from "several cuts above the domestic class. They belong to the Young Lady classes—the young ladies of the counters, of the more genteel female handicrafts generally and the dressmaking and millinery professions in particular." To these readers Wright also added a small army of unattached "real genteel" ladies, who lived comfortably on an albeit limited family allowance, and, in what Wright considered was a feminine aptitude for cooperation, "by a system of 'exchanges' . . . [they] manage to obtain a practically unlimited supply of this reading at an outlay of two to three pence per week."<sup>22</sup> The journals, witnessed in the houses of highly respected tradesmen, were purchased not only from small by-street shops or from newsboys selling by the armful, but also from the largest booksellers or news agents of the high street. Being constant readers, Wright claimed, and averse to the enforced abstinence necessary for purchasing a novel in volume, the general alternative for the penny public was to be novel-less.

**[1.13]** Carrying their tastes into married life, these ladies passed on their reading material to their clerk, shopkeeper, and well-to-do artisan husbands, as well as to male and female siblings. "The men do not, as a rule, read the stories," and preferred the random columns of variety, views, news, and answers to correspondents, but "there is no hesitation in thrusting them into the pockets





Chapter 1

DRAFT

of ‘working clothes.’ . . . Penny fiction journals are no uncommon sight in the workshop world, especially among hands who stay in the shop to their meals.”<sup>23</sup> However, if “better” novels became available from beyond the penny journal, then opportunities were seized.

Fathers, brothers, or lovers of the young ladies may be members of mechanics’ or literary institutions, or work for firms having their own lending libraries, or be entitled to borrow books from free libraries. They may be haunters of second-hand bookstalls, or occasional buyers of new books.<sup>24</sup>

[1.14]

Such better books flowed readily into circulation along with penny literature. The unknown public were simply members of a broad-reading general public with an eye to thrift. By the 1890s, referring to this public’s apparent preference for similarly cheap “snippets” associated with journals such as *Tit Bits*, one commentator could decry:

[1.15]

The general public is now to be counted in millions, for it includes nearly all the mill-workers, tradesmen, domestic servants, errand-boys, and strikers. To these add the innumerable clerks of our great cities, and we have some notion of the public whom our novelists miss and Snippets catches.<sup>25</sup>

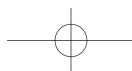
[1.16]

The unknown public ran from domestic classes to “several cuts above,” from strikers to the clerks of great cities, or more simply they were a large swathe of the general reading public. The population of Britain in 1883 was around twenty-five million, whereof 35 percent were under fifteen.<sup>26</sup> Remembering Wright’s figure of five million—the estimate’s plausibility backed by Wright’s position as a professional journalist working for the rags-to-riches publishing entrepreneur Henry King—it would seem that the circulation of penny journals reached 30 percent of the adult population over fifteen. A sizeable chunk of Britain’s readers at the turn of the century had access to cheap penny serials while less often, but no less significantly, to the better fiction of its and earlier ages, including Wilkie Collins.

[1.17]

The penny journal par excellence was the *London Journal*, from 1845 to 1912, specializing in working-class fiction. Edward Salmon, in an article less-than-supportive of progress and upward mobility, from 1886, titled “What the Working Classes Read,”<sup>27</sup> complained that the *London Journal* had lost its earlier modicum of dignity and now published only trash: an odd claim because the journal’s first editor was that giant of labor agitation, republicanism, and entertainment George W. M. Reynolds, whose *Reynolds’s Newspaper* (formerly *Reynolds’s Miscellany*) was another outlet for penny fiction.<sup>28</sup> A representative list of penny journals would include *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, an extremely popular one-penny Sunday paper for which Salmon claimed a circulation of three-quarters of a million weekly. Among other fictions, it serialized Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Parasite* (1894) and

[1.18]

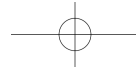


published Mrs. Linton's short story "My Charming Lodger" in 1895. The one-penny Saturday weekly *England: A Weekly Newspaper for all Classes*, which incorporated *The Primrose Chronicle* from 1886, was another serial fiction outlet and, according to Salmon, drew its popularity from publishing only facts that tended to discredit the Liberal Party. *The People: A Newspaper for All Classes*, a one-penny Sunday paper, included serializations of Wilkie Collins, Ouida, Mrs. Linton, Conan Doyle, Grant Allen, and Rider Haggard. The *Penny Illustrated Paper*, serializing Hall Caine, William Russell, Walter Besant, and Wilkie Collins, among others, sold "in its hundreds of thousands weekly" and secured "a well-merited popularity with every class"; itself a spinoff from the mighty six-penny *Illustrated London News*, which listed among its many contributors serializations by Joseph Conrad, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, George Gissing, Walter Besant, Wilkie Collins, and Rider Haggard.<sup>29</sup> Salmon particularly praised the one-penny *Family Herald* for serializing Florence Warden's *The House on the Marsh* (1883). *Rare Bits* and *Tit Bits*, along with *Cassell's Saturday Journal*, were popular with "readers among the poorer classes," as were *The Leisure Hour* and *Sunday at Home*. Though not an outlet for fiction per se, but certainly of useful knowledge and high (though fragmented) cultural capital, was the magpie-like *Great Thoughts* that "culls from master works some of the choicest ideas ever given to the world."<sup>30</sup>

[1.19] Rather than a deduced necessity, the idea of an "unknown public" was a political construction that concealed the wilfully undisciplined behavior in a specific market, wherein popular authors such as M. E. Braddon and Ouida, as well as canon writers such as Bunyan and Shakespeare, and writers now familiar on the nineteenth-century syllabus such as Eliot and Collins, rubbed not shoulders but book jackets together with authors who have now little value: Caroline Cameron, Mary Albert, Grant Allen, Robert Francillon, and the man whom Wright believed eclipsed Mary Braddon, James Payn, enticingly straddling high and low critical repute: "Mr Payn's novels, while favourites with polished and critical readers, are making more way with the many-headed than those of any contemporary writer."<sup>31</sup>

[1.20] At the fulcrum of literary taste, too, was Ouida: "she is their literary prophet . . . Quida's writing is essentially the acme of penny serial style. The novelists of penny prints toil after her in vain, but they do toil after her."<sup>32</sup> Of penny novelettes, Salmon notes that the editors are occasionally fortunate "to secure a story from such writers as Miss Florence Marryat [youngest child of Cpt. Frederick Marryat] and Miss Jean Middlemass."<sup>33</sup> Acknowledging that many penny writers were utterly obscure at the time, Wright does give more prominent examples, including William Harrison Ainsworth (thirty-nine novels), George Manville Fenn (thirty-three novels; also the editor of the three-penny *Once a Week*), Mary Cecil Hay (fourteen novels, who also wrote under the pseudonym Mark Hardcastle and Markham Howard), Mrs. Pender





Chapter 1

**DRAFT**

Cudlip (née Annie Thomas, sixty-five novels), and Francis Notley (sixteen novels, who published *Red Riding Hood* [1882] in the *Family Herald*, a penny weekly coming out on Saturdays). Wright also names no less a figure than George Augustus Sala who contributed to the penny public both in formative and established years. Sala's early *The Baddington Peerage: Who Won, and Who Wore It. A Story of the Best and Worst of Society* came out in the weekly *The Illustrated Times* in 1857; while *Quite Alone* appeared in Dickens's *All the Year Round*, from February to December 1864; although both *The Seven Sons of Mammon* (1861) and *The Strange Adventures of Captain Dangerous* (1863) were serialized in the more pricey *Temple Bar*, a one-shilling monthly. His eponymous *Sala's Journal: A Weekly Magazine for All*, however, was a one-penny weekly that serialized the work of Mary Kennard, Edward Goodman, Rosa C. Pread, and rags-to-riches playwright, novelist, and campaigner against anti-Semitism Benjamin Farjeon, as well as serializing Sala's *Margaret Forster: A Dream within a Dream* from July to November 1893. For the two-penny public, Wright cites writers such as Charles Lever, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Reade, and Anthony Trollope.

For Wright, the epitome of a successful penny fiction novelist was John Frederick Smith, who produced a number of serializations around mid-century, some of which were reissued in volume by Bradley and Co. London from the late 1880s: including *Minnigrey* (1851–1852, volume 1897), *Stanfield Hall* (serial 1849, three volumes 1888–1889), *Woman and Her Master* (1897), and *Will and the Way* (1888). Wright was particularly grateful to Smith for including an epigraph of verse with each chapter, “and there were two or three chapters in each weekly portion,” some considerable in length and most of them “good bits” in themselves.<sup>34</sup> When finished with the chapters, Wright would reread and occasionally learn the epigraphs by heart, thus granting him his first liking for poetry, from writers such as Thomas Gray and Shakespeare.<sup>35</sup> Toward the end of the century, then, arising from a specific market configuration and an attitude to cost that was part of the current commodity culture, readers were just as likely to gain from reading Cudlip, Payn, and Smith as they were Trollope, Dickens, Collins, Swift, Bunyan, and Conan Doyle.

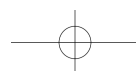
The implications of all these enmeshed readings are revealing. If we believe that the unknown public is not simply a device for maintaining exclusivity, we could choose a linear interpretation, like Collins, and imagine that these readers should progress to better works read with increasing sophistication—then damn them for their obstinacy in remaining unattracted to sophisticated interpretation. The evidence presented here, however, suggests not linearity but a meander and that the general public reads all sorts of literature for its own reasons.

In 1996, John Sutherland playfully asked if Heathcliff was a murderer, presenting a series of quotidian readings of canon works. The volume was so

[1.21]

[1.22]

[1.23]



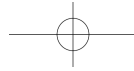


successful that two similar publications followed. The audience to all three volumes were “the tens of thousands of readers” who read closely, though not within the precincts of the academy nor employing its intellectual habits.<sup>36</sup> Its readers, when not bumping into Brontë, are the same readers currently enjoying events such as the Specsavers National Book Awards: a mixture of “mega-sellers and beach reads to high end literary fiction.”<sup>37</sup> Why do they read? What do they hope to gain? The opportunity costs are no longer financial but temporal. Readers spend time reading a book. So why the sacrifice of time available for something else, if there is not some gain that satisfies the expenditure?

[1.24] David Lodge has claimed that “We read fiction, after all, not just for the story, but to enlarge our knowledge and understanding of the world.” Perhaps. But if by enlarging our understanding we mean a purely functional, epistemological project, then the evidence seems to point elsewhere. A recent study in Sweden of *gymnasister*, Swedish senior high school students, suggested that even these educated readers read for entertainment or rather for that sense of losing oneself in fiction.<sup>38</sup>

[1.25] What is needed is a context within which all these non-prescribed readings might make sense. I have elsewhere tried to define commodity culture and how it emerged in Britain over the last third of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. In this context, the satisfaction of goals and the resolution of problems are achieved through commodity acquisition, to be measured in gains and losses. The publishing industry and its delivery of fiction is by necessity predicated on commerce, while the markets for published fiction make up part of commodity culture. The language of private gain, of benefit and loss, which is the heart of commodity culture, is perhaps well suited for thinking about general-market reading. And if we can get past the hijacking of economics by neo-liberalism, or get past neo-liberal reductionism that converts everything to financial indices, we may admit that economics has something to say about the mechanisms of gain.<sup>39</sup>

[1.26] In reading fiction, we may want to enlarge our understanding of the world, but we may equally want personal encouragement, guidance, intellectual insight, a barrier against boredom, or a remedy against loneliness. We may read because we think we should, or because other people do and we want to belong. We might want to read about other people, to find out how they think and why. Narratives, especially the narratives of a realist novel, are well suited to finding out about other people and, in doing so, they provide us with opportunity to opine about people we’ve fictionally met. As a younger reader, I used to think “I” in the poems of Baudelaire and Rimbaud was conspicuously cool. I admired the nerve of “I” who wrote the *Tropics of Capricorn* and *Cancer*. I thought understated Marlow was unflinchingly capable. Some years on, I changed my mind and thought Marlow ought to try something difficult, like raise a family. Henry Miller should try holding



down a job. And all those characters and authorial voices, all that “characterization”—and who can think of fiction that doesn’t involve characterization, even that of animals and cities—fill the market with something that readers can identify with and against. Buying fiction is a way to access differing views of ourselves from our affections and disaffection for characters, narrators, and author figures, and to renegotiate these affections through how we imagine others see us. They provide a measure, an instrument of socialization, if you will, by which to gauge what we’ve become. Most importantly, in this sense, reading provides a gain.

Behavioral economists, like those at the New Economics Foundation, broadly agree that “consumption is in some sense inextricably linked to personal and collective identity” but that our understanding of gains in terms of identity is complicated because “our concepts of self are (at best) socially constructed and (at worst) helplessly mired in a complex of ‘social logic’”<sup>40</sup>—something that has been recognized since as long ago as George Herbert Mead and more recently refined through self-discrepancy theory.<sup>41</sup> So if we imagine that gains from reading fiction might impinge in some way on self-identity—and we know that self-identity is helplessly social—then that type of gain would be well served by an instrument of socialization. That type of need would be satisfied through novelistic form.

We don’t know what gains were achieved by the so-called unknown public, but we do know who that public was and we can make informed guesses: identity formation being one. Furthermore, we can induce useful points from what is left in the record.<sup>42</sup> But we also know new types of questions that remain to be asked, which center not on the meaning or quality of texts but on readers’ experiences.<sup>43</sup> If it were possible, I would like to ask those readers who were nothing less than Collins’s own public not what they thought was the meaning of the books they read, but what they *gained* from reading Smith, Payn, and Ouida, as well as Collins or, say, Bunyan or Shakespeare. I would ask whether there was one gain that was common to all those writers. I would ask what that gain might be.

## NOTES

1. Wilkie Collins, “The Unknown Public,” *Household Words* 18 (August 21, 1858): 217–22, available online at Paul Lewis, Wilkie Collins Pages, <http://www.web40571.clarahost.co.uk/wilkie/etext/TheUnknownPublic.htm>.
2. Thomas Wright, “Concerning the Unknown Public,” *The Nineteenth Century* 13 (February 1883): 279–96.
3. Collins, “Unknown.”
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Wright “Concerning,” 280.
7. *Ibid.*, 285–86.
8. Jack London, *The People of the Abyss* (New York: London, 1903), 243, 245–46.

[1.27]

[1.28]

[1.48]

[1n1]

[1n2]

[1n3]

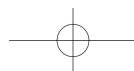
[1n4]

[1n5]

[1n6]

[1n7]

[1n8]





**DRAFT**

*Reconsidering the Unknown Public*

[1n9]

9. Waterproof cloth had been available since 1817 and was improved with a rubberizing process around 1844, but it was heavy and smelled. In bad weather people would often stay indoors. Aquascutum helped and was used by the army in the Crimean War, but it was not until 1870 with Burberry’s waterproof gabardine that waterproof clothing became more available. Prior to that, and economically at levels beneath its acquisition cost, people unable to stay indoors simply got wet and, without drying facilities, their clothes would rot.

[1n10]  
[1n11]

10. London, *Abyss*, 48, 240, 245.

11. William Hammish Fraser, *The Coming of the Mass Market 1850–1914* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1981), 21.

[1n12]

12. Figures based on findings by W. A. Mackenzie’s study of 1921 cited in Fraser, *Mass Market*, 32. See also Maud Pember Reeves, *Round About a Pound a Week* (London: Bell and Sons, 1914), 76–77, and for a contemporary review see Judith Flanders, “Appendix 3 Currency,” in *The Victorian House* (Flanders, London: Harper Perennial, 2004), 297–98.

[1n13]  
[1n14]  
[1n15]  
[1n16]  
[1n17]  
[1n18]  
[1n19]  
[1n20]

13. Fraser, *Mass Market*, 6.

14. London, *Abyss*, 202–3, 204.

15. *Ibid.*, 283.

16. *Ibid.*, 293.

17. *Ibid.*, 228.

18. *Ibid.*, 287.

19. Fraser, *Mass Market*, 21

20. For an idea of volume price and how changes in volume price coincided with the demise of the great circulating libraries and the introduction the Net Book Agreement of 1894, see Simon Eliot, “The Three-Decker Novel and its First Cheap Reprint, 1862–94,” *Library* 7 (1985): 38–53.

21. Wright, “Concerning,” 282.

22. *Ibid.*, 282.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*, 288.

25. Anon., “Drivel: Weekly 1d,” *The Scots Observer*, December 28, 1889, 157, cited in Peter McDonald, *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 42.

[1n21]  
[1n22]  
[1n23]  
[1n24]  
[1n25]

[1n26]

26. GB Historical GIS/University of Portsmouth, A Vision of Britain through Time, [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10061325/cube/TOT\\_POP](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10061325/cube/TOT_POP).

[1n27]

27. Edward G. Salmon, “What the Working Classes Read,” *The Nineteenth Century* (July 1886): 108–17. Other details of penny periodicals are available, yet again, from that erstwhile *At the Circulating Library* database [www.victorianresearch.org/atcl/index.php](http://www.victorianresearch.org/atcl/index.php).

[1n28]

28. Reynolds studies have increased in recent years, seeing numerous publications including Anne and Louis James Humphreys, eds., *G.W.M. Reynolds* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), and more recently the bicentenary conference *Remarkable Reynolds*, July 26, 2014, <http://remarkablereynolds.wordpress.com/>.

[1n29]  
[1n30]  
[1n31]  
[1n32]

29. Salmon, “Working Classes,” 112.

30. *Ibid.*, 113.

31. Wright “Concerning,” 289.

32. *Ibid.*, 290. An unmissable study is Jane Jordan and Andrew King, eds., *Ouida and Victorian Popular Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013)

[1n33]  
[1n34]  
[1n35]

33. Salmon, “Working Classes,” 114.

34. Wright, “Concerning,” 286.

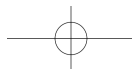
35. The 1888 volume edition of *Stanfield Hall* retains epigraphs including Gray’s “The Bard: A Pindaric Ode,” and Brutus’s “Affairs of Men” speech from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. See John Frederick Smith, *Stanfield Hall: Cromwell or the Protector’s Oath*, vol. 3 (London: Bradley, 1889), 20, 69.

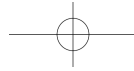
[1n36]

36. John Sutherland, *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), ix.

[1n37]

37. For the U.K. National Book Awards, see <http://www.nationalbookawards.co.uk/>: citation from Sue Baker, “Books of the Year,” *Specsavers National Book Awards, shortlists 2013*, [leaflet] Specsavers ([AQ1]Agile Publishing, 2013), 5.





## Chapter 1

**DRAFT**

38. See research conducted by Torten Pettersson, “Att lära sig något av det som inte är sant: 72 gymnasisters inställning till fiktionellt och dokumentärt berättande” [To learn from what is untrue: the attitudes of 72 senior high school students to fictional and documentary storytelling], in a forthcoming anthology edited by Christina Olin-Scheller and Michael Tengberg based on papers presented at *Symposium för läsforskning* [Symposium of Research into Reading], Karlstad, Sweden, October 3–4, 2013. Of the ten questions put to seventy-two senior high school students about why they read fiction, answers overwhelmingly gravitated toward “För att få vila och avkoppling; För att uppleva verklighetsflykt; För att bli road och underhållen” [To get rest and relaxation; to experience a break from reality; to be amused and entertained] and to some extent “För att uppleva spänning och skräck” [to experience excitement and terror]. Translation by the author.

**[1n38]**

39. For an engaging take on neo-liberal reductionism, see Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste* (London: Verso, 2013).

**[1n39]**

40. Tim Jackson, *Motivating Sustainable Consumption: A Review of Evidence on Consumer Behaviour and Behavioural Change* (Guilford: Centre for Environmental Strategy, University of Surrey), 13 and ix, also available online at [http://www.worldresourcesforum.org/files/file/Jackson%20-%20Motivating%20Sustainable%20Consumption%20\(abstrac-chapter11-chapter12\).pdf](http://www.worldresourcesforum.org/files/file/Jackson%20-%20Motivating%20Sustainable%20Consumption%20(abstrac-chapter11-chapter12).pdf). See also NEF, Emma Dawnay, and Hetan Shah, *Extending the “Rational Man” Model of Human Behaviour: Seven Key Principles* (Bristol: Environment Agency and NEF, 2005), 3–7.

**[1n40]**

41. G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self, Society*, ed. Charles W. Morris (London: Chicago University Press, 1934).

**[1n41]**

42. I am thinking here of collective big data initiatives such as the international Reading Experience Database, <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/>.

**[1n42]**

43. Beginning on September 1, 2014, Bournemouth University is funding the project *Private Gains and Retailed Literature: Pathways to an Economics-Based Account of Reading*, involving the universities of Bournemouth, Bedfordshire, and Sterling, United Kingdom, which addresses a lacuna of book history, book retail, and asks why readers have consistently sustained the opportunity costs involved in reading fiction.

**[1n43]**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**[1.29]**

Baker, Sue. “Books of the Year.” *Specsavers National Book Awards, shortlists 2013*, [leaflet] Specsavers (Agile Publishing, 2013).

**[1.30]**

Collins, Wilkie. “The Unknown Public.” *Household Words* 18 (August 21, 1858): 217–22, available online at Paul Lewis, Wilkie Collins Pages, <http://www.web40571.clarahost.co.uk/wilkie/etext/TheUnknownPublic.htm>.

**[1.31]**

Eliot, Simon. “The Three-Decker Novel and its First Cheap Reprint, 1862–94.” *Library* 7 (1985): 38–53.

**[1.32]**

Flanders, Judith. *The Victorian House*. Flanders, London: Harper Perennial, 2004.

**[1.33]**

Fraser, William Hammish. *The Coming of the Mass Market 1850–1914*. Hamden: Archon Books, 1981.

**[1.34]**

Humphreys, Anne and Louis James, eds. *G.W.M. Reynolds*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

**[1.35]**

Jackson, Tim. *Motivating Sustainable Consumption: A Review of Evidence on Consumer Behaviour and Behavioural Change*. Guilford: Centre for Environmental Strategy, University of Surrey.

**[1.36]**

Jordan, Jane, and Andrew King, eds. *Ouida and Victorian Popular Culture*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013.

**[1.37]**

London, Jack. *The People of the Abyss*. New York: London, 1903.

**[1.38]**

Mead, G. H. *Mind, Self, Society*. Edited by Charles W. Morris. London: Chicago University Press, 1934.

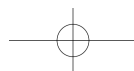
**[1.39]**

McDonald, Peter. *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880–1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

**[1.40]**

Mirowski, Philip. *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste*. London: Verso, 2013.

**[1.41]**



**DRAFT**

*Reconsidering the Unknown Public*

- [1.42] New Economics Foundation (NEF), Emma Dawnay, and Hetan Shah. *Extending the “Rational Man” Model of Human Behaviour: Seven Key Principles*. Bristol: Environment Agency and NEF, 2005.
- [1.43] Reeves, Maud Pember. *Round About a Pound a Week*. London: Bell and Sons, 1914.
- [1.44] Salmon, Edward G. “What the Working Classes Read.” *The Nineteenth Century* (July 1886): 108–17.
- [1.45] Smith, John Frederick. *Stanfield Hall: Cromwell or the Protector’s Oath*. Vol. 3. London: Bradley, 1889.
- [1.46] Sutherland, John. *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- [1.47] Wright, Thomas. “Concerning the Unknown Public.” *The Nineteenth Century* 13 (February 1883): 279–96.