EPIGRAPHIC ENCOUNTERS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

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EPIGRAPHIC ENCOUNTERS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

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This dissertation uncovers the crucial role that chapter epigraphs played in the evolution of the English novel's form and develops a new theory for reading this structurally significant paratext. Drawing our attention to epigraphs' profoundly expressive non-semantic qualities, including size, attribution, aggregation, optionality, diversion, and hierarchical organization, "Epigraphic Encounters" argues that writers of the long nineteenth century harnessed these elements in order to create meaning and negotiate generic transformations—first from poetry to the novel, and then from one novel genre to another. Case studies of Ann Radcliffe, Walter Scott, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot demonstrate how chapter epigraphs facilitated the emergence of gothic, historical, and realist novels by making literary-historical negotiations an indelible part of their structural framework. The fifth chapter examines the influence of these texts on the twentieth-century writer John Fowles, and the role his novels played in characterizing chapter epigraphs as a "quintessentially" Victorian phenomenon. These readings ultimately lead to a more capacious understanding of epigraphic form in spatial, temporal, social, and material terms.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Amelia L. Hall studies British literature of the long nineteenth century. She attended Georgetown University as an undergraduate, where she completed her B.A. in English and Theology in 2013, before moving to Ithaca to complete her Ph.D. in English at Cornell University. Her article "Elliptical Thinking: Planetary Patterns of Thought in *De Profundis*" appeared in the Winter 2019 edition of *Volupté: Interdisciplinary Journal of Decadence Studies*, and received the British Association of Decadence Studies Postgraduate Essay Prize. A second article, "Epic-graphic Proportions in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*," will appear in the Autumn 2020 issue of *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*.

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"Men can do nothing without the make-believe of a beginning."

This strikingly self-referential sentence opens Chapter One of George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda*. The first line of a paragraph-long epigraph, it instantly theorizes about its own characteristics while also asserting its essential function in the story. In a sophisticated synergy of form and content, this sentence teaches us that epigraphs are "make-believe beginnings" that get a chapter going, while also revealing the difficulties inherent in understanding them: are epigraphs a part of the novel proper, or not? How do they relate to their surrounding text? And if they are imaginary starts, why bother including them at all?

Fascinating to a few readers, but forgettable for most, the chapter epigraph is a rarely examined element of the nineteenth-century novel. Occupying the liminal space between a chapter title and the main body of text, an epigraph draws our attention to the words it contains while also, oddly enough, compelling us to skip over it. Due to their seemingly subordinate status, epigraphs are typically either ignored by scholars or quoted piecemeal en route to arguments unconcerned with their unique paratextual position. Curiously, the epigraph's structural sibling, the footnote, has fared far better, being both the focus of Anthony Grafton's book, *The Footnote* (1997), and the subject of Brad Pasanek and Chad Wellmon's recent article "The Enlightenment Index," which investigates, among other things, eighteenth century bibliographic practices. When epigraphs are discussed by critics, the tendency is to either read them in terms of legitimation, or to enfold them in broader discussions of print culture. These approaches, which focus primarily on the content of individual quotations, overlook the myriad

other methods epigraphs employ to make meaning, as well as their broader historical significance. Aiming to correct these oversights, this dissertation highlights the role that chapter epigraphs played in the evolution of the English novel's form and develops a new theory for reading this structurally significant paratext. Drawing our attention to epigraphs' profoundly expressive non-semantic qualities, including size, attribution, aggregation, optionality, diversion, and hierarchical organization, "Epigraphic Encounters" argues that writers of the long nineteenth century harnessed these elements in order to create meaning and negotiate generic transformations—first from poetry to the novel, and then from one novel genre to another. Case studies of Ann Radcliffe, Walter Scott, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot demonstrate how chapter epigraphs facilitated the emergence of gothic, historical, and realist novels by making literary-historical negotiations an indelible part of their structural framework. The conclusion examines the influence of these texts on the twentieth-century writer John Fowles, and the role his pseudo-Victorian novel, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, played in characterizing chapter epigraphs as a quintessentially nineteenth-century phenomenon.

Chapter epigraphs emerged in the eighteenth century as one of several types of paratextual structures that organized the early novel, alongside numbers, chapter tags, summarizing headings, and chapter titles (Jacobs 60). Although texts as early as William Chaigneau's picaresque novel *The History of Jack Connor* (1752) contained chapter epigraphs, epigraph use did not become widespread until the end of the eighteenth century, when Radcliffe's gothic novel *The Romance of the Forest: Interspersed with Some Pieces of Poetry* (1791) appeared, igniting interest in the form and inspiring other gothic novelists to use epigraphs as well. In the century that followed, chapter epigraphs were employed by writers of historical romance, including Scott and the American novelist James Fenimore Cooper, used by

silver-fork novelists to provide decorative displays of literacy, and ultimately revived with their respectability restored in the realist novels of Gaskell and Eliot. Delving into this history, this dissertation demonstrates how the chapter epigraph's function evolved over the long nineteenth century in keeping with the needs of its users; for Radcliffe and Scott, epigraphs provided a way to negotiate the emergence of nascent literary genres—the gothic novel and historical novel, to be precise; for Gaskell and Eliot, epigraphs provided a method of engaging pressing social concerns of cross-class collaboration and gendered authorship. Along the way, we will see how each author adds a new dimension to our understanding of epigraph function: Radcliffe draws our attention to epigraphs' optionality and hierarchical organization; Scott emphasizes their influence on readerly pacing; Gaskell highlights epigraphs' aggregative, diverting qualities; and from Eliot, we learn the importance of size and attribution. Ultimately Fowles, through the metaphor of fossilization, transforms the chapter epigraph from a form used by nineteenth-century writers, to a form that defines their era. This history of the chapter epigraph's evolution provides a compelling counterpoint to Gérard Genette's claim that paratexts are an area "in which authors innovate less often than they imagine" (*Paratexts* 13). Although epigraphs have spoken to different concerns across history, their continual invoking rests on their particular aptness as tools for definition, be it the defining of a new genre, the defining of pressing social concerns, or defining one's position as an author.

I. Theories of the Epigraph

Few critics have explored the chapter epigraph's role in the development of the novel. The most wide-ranging examination to date is Genette's *Paratexts*, which suggests that an epigraph's function is to either comment on the text surrounding it, or to impart an air of dignity to the novel in which it appears. Providing a four-part definition of epigraph function. Genette

asserts that epigraphs can comment on a text, comment on a title, provide an excuse to bring in a well-known author, or impart intellectuality to the book that uses them by associating it with other well-known works (*Paratexts* 156-160). The downside of the first half of this definition is that it renders an epigraph's meaning largely dependent on the text with which it immediately corresponds, and precludes the possibility that epigraphs could convey commentary in other ways. The second half of Genette's definition reduces an author's epigraph use to an upwardly mobile attempt to establish a text's place in a literary canon. This dissertation calls for a more capacious understanding of epigraph function than Genette's definition permits, and will draw our attention to capabilities of epigraphs that move beyond Genette's classification. For example, if we take a broader view of Genette's claim that epigraphs are tools for authorial alignment, we can then examine them as writers' attempts to negotiate a generic position for themselves and their works. Moreover, Genette writes relatively little about readers' encounters with epigraphs, aside from short comments on "epigraphees" (155-156). Yet epigraphs do influence the experience of reading: they may slow readers down, compel others to skip, or take one's focus out of a story, leading to a disjointed and diverting reading experience. In omitting a discussion of epigraphs' effect upon reading experiences, Genette overlooks a significant way epigraphs shape and structure a novel.

Aside from Genette, a handful of critics have investigated epigraphs' role in the nineteenth-century novel. None of these critics evaluate epigraphs in terms as broad as Genette's, instead largely confining their analyses to discussions of a single author or text at a time. With a few exceptions, their approaches fall into one of three categories: the study of how epigraphs relate to the chapters they precede; reading epigraphs in terms of authority and legitimation

(especially with regards to gender); and interpreting epigraphs as evincing the influence of print and publishing culture on authors' structuring of novels.

The first approach can be seen as early as 1970, when David Higdon's article "George Eliot and the Art of the Epigraph" (1970) proposed that there is a "conscious artistry" (129) at work in Eliot's epigraphs and discerned "four major tendencies—structural allusion, abstraction, ironic refraction, and metaphoric evaluation" (134). Exploring similar relationships in his recent article "The Function of Poetic Epigraphs in *Daniel Deronda*," Eike Kronshage perceives a "structure of quotation and repetition" (233) connecting the novel's poetic epigraphs to the prose which follows them (239). J. H. Alexander's monograph *Walter Scott's Books: Reading the Waverley Novels* (2017), draws similar conclusions with one notable difference: in addition to recognizing that epigraphs "referred to their chapter as a whole" (89), he also notes that "frequently an epigraph refers primarily or exclusively to the opening of its chapter" (89).

The second category includes critics examining questions of authority, liberation, and legitimation, often with regards to gender. Genette suggests as much when he writes, "People have rightly seen the epigraphic excess of the nineteenth century as a desire to integrate the novel, particularly the historical or 'philosophical' novel, into a cultural tradition" (*Paratexts* 160). Herbert F. Tucker argues in his essay "Poetry: The Unappreciated Eliot" (2013) that epigraphs provided a place in which Eliot could try her hand at new genres, and suggests that "a separate study" of Eliot's poetic epigraphs "might well show that fragmentary shapes liberated her, as poems fully rendered for publication didn't" (188). Taking a slightly different approach, the narratologist Susan Lanser examines the feminist implications of Eliot's epigraph use. In "Woman of Maxims: George Eliot and the Realist Imperative" (1992), Lanser suggests "Eliot's epigraphs create a super text and intertext in which the extrafiction 'George Eliot" stands among

male voices as the dominant though unidentified voice," and further observes that epigraphs serve a legitimating function, as they allow Eliot to place her voice alongside those of renowned male authors (98-99). Also interested in the gender implications of epigraph use, Ada Sharpe suggests that "Gaskell cites Hemans as a means of claiming authority for a distinctly British tradition of women's writing" (199).

The third group of critics understands chapter epigraphs as a form evincing the influence of print and publishing culture on an author's structuring of a novel. For instance, Leah Price's article "George Eliot and the Production of Consumers" (1997) argues that epigraphs provided a way for Eliot to control how her novels would be excerpted for publication in anthologies (145, 151). Jeffrey Jackson, too, is interested in how authors use epigraphs in response to the demands of print culture. Drawing our attention to *North and South*'s publication history, Jackson posits that "the presence of epigraphs in the first edition…indicates Gaskell's particular vision for *North and South*," offering that epigraphs mark out Gaskell's liberation from the strictures of "weekly periodical publication" (62). Most recently, Rachel Sagner Buurma has suggested that in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels, chapter epigraphs functioned "as another paratextual technology of information management," aimed at helping familiarize a newly educated middle-class readership with "classical or modern literary traditions" (170).

Notably, each of these three approaches locates the significance of epigraphs in their content; such methods often lead to insular readings, in which an epigraph's meaning is determined mainly by the texts it engenders, and as a result do little to explain epigraphs' collective role within a specific novel, theorize about their function, or to ask how readers' encounters with epigraphs affect their perception of a novel's form. Seeking to correct these oversights, this dissertation aims to broaden our understanding of epigraph function to

encompass attributes other than content. This broadening begins with a revision of our definition of the epigraph, comprehending it for what it is in its most basic form: a small, subsidiary saying subsumed within a vast novel, that sometimes diverts readers. When we focus not simply on questions of content, but also on questions of scale, hierarchy, and speed, what emerges is a structure that plays with proportions to produce meaning and uses stop-start pacing to compel readers to re-think their expectations for emergent genres.

In making these claims, I join a burgeoning movement in literary studies to expand our understanding of paratextual forms, a challenge taken up most recently by Elaine Freedgood, who offers a new approach to the epigraph in her recently published book *Worlds Enough: The Invention of Realism in the Victorian Novel* (2019). The "Paratexts" chapter of this monograph offers a wide-ranging examination epigraphs and their significance that extends well beyond questions of content and legitimation. Freedgood suggests that epigraphs, together with footnotes, provide "a way to examine bibliographies metalepsis: the infinite library that lurks in the margins of the text, and sometimes breaks through them" (77). Specifically, Freedgood directs our attention to Wordsworth's perplexing presence in *Middlemarch,* as both fictional character and extradiegetic epigraph, suggesting that "this is an ontological impossibility that the novel as a genre regularly enables" (83). Continually bringing the question of who's "in or out" (86) of the story to bear on our understanding of the epigraph, Freedgood highlights the permeability of paratextual boundaries as a means of demonstrating how epigraphs bring a vast network of intertextual expansions to bear on our understanding of a novel.

Throughout her book, Freedgood return to the idea of epigraphs' diverting quality, noting that "an epigraph disturbs the text it is both inside and outside of, and the world in which the telling takes place interrupts the world of which we are being told" (xvi). More broadly she

asserts that "fictionality is constantly ruptured by reference" (xvi). This notion of epigraphs as a kind of diversion in the novel is also important to my project. Formalist criticism of epigraphs has, up until now, primarily focused on constructing connections between an epigraph and the text which follows it. Implicit in this approach is the idea that epigraphs introduce ruptures which must be mended, as well as the assumption that epigraphs are too piecemeal and too partial to subsist on their own. Such methods thus preclude the possibility that epigraphs can be independent forms conveying meaning in their own right. I offer that rather than devoting critical energy to integrating each epigraph with the text it precedes, we would be better served if we adopt a historically informed formalist approach that allows epigraphs' rupture status to stand, and comprehends them for what they are in their most basic form: that is, as fragments that fragment a reader's attention. In other words, chapter epigraphs break up the experience of reading a novel, rupturing it, through momentarily drawing one's attention away from the story. This systematic, regular diverting of attention is undertaken towards different ends in different novels—Radcliffe and Scott use chapter epigraphs to draw attention to questions of generic self-definition, while Gaskell and Eliot bring issues of gendered authorship into focus—but in the end what remains is that an epigraphical diverting of attention amounts to a redirecting of attention, towards issues that authors find to be of pressing significance. Here my analysis goes beyond Freedgood's observation that epigraphs "break through" into the main text, by not simply recognizing that paratextual ruptures are taking place, but rather asking to what end such ruptures occur.

This understanding of epigraphs—as fragmentary, fragmenting forms that divert and direct a reader's attention beyond the plot of the novel itself—yields a kind of reading more in keeping with the way most readers encounter epigraphs than the highly localized formalist

readings of Higdon, Kronshage, and Alexander allow; that is, it allows us to approach epigraphs not as sites to revisit and retrospectively make sense of once a chapter has been read, but rather as immediately felt, thought-provoking interruptions. In addition, I propose that epigraphs, though encountered individually, should not only be analyzed as isolated incidents, but should also be read in relation to one another; this method is especially important with regards to the epigraph collections in individual novels. When considered collectively, epigraphs' effects prove to be accumulative as well as immediate, and we find patterns of thought not perceptible when examining epigraphs on their own.

Contesting the critical tendencies to understand epigraphs either locally, in terms of the chapters they precede, or reflectively, as texts evincing the influence of print culture, and believing that questions of legitimation and authority are good starting—but not ending—points for discussing epigraph function, this dissertation offers instead that authors consciously deployed epigraphical forms to explore issues they determined to be of pressing significance. Sometimes, these are social concerns, as in the case of *Middlemarch*, which contains a multifaceted examination of "the Woman Question" expressed in epigraphical form. At other times these are concerns of genre—for example, in *Waverley*, which employs epigraphs as a conditioning mechanism that trains readers to read at a pace the narrator deems appropriate for the emergent historical novel. Examples such as these provide support for one of this dissertation's overarching premises: namely, that epigraphs are not merely decorative curiosities, nor is their meaning solely conditioned by the chapters they preface, nor are they primarily reflections of the material conditions of the literary world in which novels emerge. Rather, epigraphs are strategically employed literary forms that enable authors to negotiate generic transformations and engage with contemporary debates.

II. Methodology

This argument is, at its core, a formal one, following from a revived New Formalist movement that began taking shape two decades ago with Susan Wolfson's call for a "reinvigorated formalism" in a special issue of *Modern Language Quarterly* (16). The essays in this issue—for instance, Catherine Gallagher's argument that we can conceive of form in terms of time—argue on behalf of a "conceptual agency of form" and demonstrate "the way form shapes perceptions and critical thinking" (15). Further exploring the contours of formalist practice in her aptly titled *PMLA* essay, "What is New Formalism?" (2007), Marjorie Levinson characterizes "new formalism as a movement rather than a theory or method" whose primary concern is "rededication" aiming "to generate commitment to and community around the idea of form" (560-61). Highlighting the critical stakes of the New Formalist project, Tucker characterizes its scholars as critics "who pushed back against a shopworn Historicism that was so far from New that it was cheapening monographs, overrunning conferences, and stultifying classrooms" ("Formalism" 703).

Further elaborating on these critical stakes, Levinson turns to Richard Strier's account of New Historicist criticism. Levinson suggests "new historicism flatly refuses the meaningfulness of form, of the aesthetic" (565) and Strier observes that its approaches "treat passages almost entirely in terms of content" (213). The scholarly treatment of epigraphs over the last several decades largely aligns with this account. Epigraphs have primarily been treated as individual oddities, items from literature's curiosity cabinet to be taken up, examined, and brought to bear on the novels in which they appear, without consideration of their unique status as paratexts. Epigraphs fall prey to what Levinson describes as new historicism's elision of the distinction between use and mention—that is, the mere fact that a text is mentioned in an epigraph is often

considered enough to justify an entire essay about that text's special relevance to the novel in which it appears.[1] (For instance, Ada Sharpe's essay about Gaskell's paratextual dialog with Felicia Hemans, who is only cited twice in *North and South*'s epigraphs). In such readings, a paratextual epigraphical quotation becomes indistinguishable from an allusion to a text or author in the main text of a novel. Rather than locating epigraphs' significance in their content, this project locates epigraphs' significance in their formal qualities.

Levinson and Tucker each primarily define "formalism" negatively, in terms of what it is not. Levinson explains that her primary reason for "denying new formalism the status of a theory or methodology" is because it neglects to critique "either the premises or the defining practices of historical reading" (560). Tucker similarly pronounces: "I don't think my keyword belongs with Methodism, Marxism, and other badges of adherence to a system of belief" (702-703), and concludes that "defining formalism is no fun...we can do better by asking what formalism's opposite may be" (704). Bearing these difficulties of defining formalist practice in mind, it is nonetheless useful to state this project's goals in positive, affirmative terms, rather than by lapsing into inverse analogy. When I say that my methodology is "formalist," what I mean is that it focuses on questions of epigraphic form. By "epigraphic form," I mean epigraphs' aesthetic, non-semantic qualities, including size, scale, starting position, aggregation, and construction of a literary hierarchy. This understanding of epigraphic form adheres, in part, to Sandra Macpherson's recent description of "form as nothing more—and nothing less—than the shape matter (whether a poem or a tree) takes" (390).

Macpherson's description of form as the shape of matter comes closest to the approach of this dissertation's first and fourth chapters, which interrogate epigraphs in terms of fragmentation

[1] For Levinson's discussion of W. V. Quine's use-mention paradigm, and its relationship to new historicism, see pp. 561, 565-566.

and miniaturization, respectively. What concerns these chapters is the shape—the aesthetic dimension—of the epigraph, rather than its content. In the second chapter's examination of slow starts, Gallagher's call for us to understand "the effect of modern perceptions of time on conceptions of form" becomes more important, while the third chapter's argument that epigraphs construct a cross-class collective of voices reads epigraphs' accumulative impact in terms of societal configurations ("Formalism and Time" 232). The fifth chapter demonstrates the usefulness of physical metaphors for thinking through form, through its interpretation of chapter epigraphs as literary fossils. Comprehending epigraphs in spatial, temporal, social, and material terms, this project offers an understanding of epigraphic form that is, admittedly, quite capacious. Stephen Arata highlights the usefulness of conceiving of form different ways, proposing that a "lack of definitional clarity is not a flaw in formalism but one of its enabling conditions" (701). An expanded understanding of form enables this project to account for the many different aspects of epigraphs—their position on the page, their impact on readers, and their correspondence to the novels in which they appear—and to explore how those elements interact to make meaning.

III. Chapters Overview

The first half of this dissertation explores how Radcliffe and Scott use epigraphs to define and shape readers' encounters with emergent genres—the gothic novel and the historical novel, respectively. Epigraphs enable Radcliffe to construct novels on the crumbling textual ruins of poetry, and allow Scott to train readers to read at the slower pace appropriate for the new historical novel, in contrast to the speed with which they were accustomed to move through gothic novels, like Radcliffe's. Moving from questions of generic negotiation to questions of contemporary engagement, the second half of this dissertation contends that epigraphs were

deliberately deployed by Gaskell and Eliot as a means of engaging with pressing social issues in the realist novel. Gaskell uses epigraphs to create a cross-class collective of voices in *Mary Barton*, while Eliot's self-authored, unattributed epigraphs in *Middlemarch* recuperate the small and unacknowledged as formal techniques to enact an encouraging feminist politics in the realist novel. The conclusion examines the reception and reconfiguration of epigraphical forms in Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, which invites us to understand them as fossilized fragments of past literary structures.

Radcliffe was one of the first authors to systematically incorporate chapter epigraphs throughout a novel and introduced their use to the wider reading public; my first chapter contends that she did so because epigraphs are a form peculiarly well-suited to the formulaic features of gothic romance—in particular, its use of ruins. This chapter considers Radcliffe's chapter epigraphs, which consist primarily of poetic fragments, as a type of textual ruin analogous to the gothic ruins appearing within her novels. Reading epigraphs in terms of their architectural counterparts reveals a paradoxical paratext that simultaneously enables poetry to dominate our reading of the novel, while also suggesting its encroaching obsolescence by placing it in an optional, subsidiary space that encourages readers to skip over it. Examining *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Italian* (1797), and *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826), I demonstrate that chapter epigraphs enact a kind of formal decay by breaking down their originating texts into smaller and smaller pieces—in essence, crumbling them. By incorporating a crumbling epigraphic edifice as the structural scaffolding of her novels, Radcliffe remodels poetic and novelistic forms, negotiates the nascent novel's role in literary history, and establishes conventions for epigraph use for later authors to follow.

Further exploring how chapter epigraphs participate in a text's generic self-definition, Chapter Two turns to Scott's novels, particularly *Waverley* (1814), *The Antiquary* (1816), and *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (1818), and argues that epigraphs train readers to read slowly, at a pace appropriate for the newly developing genre—the historical novel—in which they appear. Epigraphs function as structural speedbumps that delay a reader's entry into a chapter, and collectively amount to a series of slow starts. Key to this argument is the way that Scott's novels use reading pace to distinguish their place in the literary canon. For example, *Waverley*'s narrator suggests that readers accustomed to gothic romance will find its beginning tedious, warning that "those who are contented to remain with me will be occasionally exposed to the dullness inseparable from heavy roads, steep hills, sloughs, and other terrestrial retardations" (27). Epigraphs take the idea of a slow start Scott describes here and formally enact it, and in so doing speak to one of the most common complaints levied against Scott's novels in his time and ours: namely, that his works are too slow-going.

After the Romantic period, the use of chapter epigraphs largely fell out of favor; the latter half of my dissertation asks why, given this context, Gaskell and Eliot chose to revive the chapter epigraph for the realist novel. Reading Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1855), Chapter Three demonstrates how epigraphs work in tandem with the mimetic realist text, by transforming some of these narratives' central preoccupations into structural elements of the novel's form. Specifically, epigraphs foreground issues of collective action and peripheral influence. *Mary Barton*'s epigraphs require readers to become listeners to the working-class people of Manchester, and, when read in the aggregate, enact a structural embrace of cross-class collaboration and recognition. The epigraphs of *North and South*, as peripheral paratexts, dramatically accentuate the novel's preoccupation with thresholds and boundaries; reading the

epigraphs alongside the novel's peripheral letter-writing characters, Edith Lennox (née Shaw) and Frederick Hale, reveals an understanding of epigraphs as liminal diversions, or momentary mental vacations for readers.

Chapter Four focuses on Eliot's epigraph use in her final two novels, *Middlemarch* (1871-72) and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), texts that push the limits of authorial self-quotation and paratextual self-referentiality, respectively. *Middlemarch* contains numerous unattributed epigraphs written by Eliot herself, and draws our attention to their status as subsidiary forms embedded within a vast novel, eventually harnessing this relationship to enact "epigraphical empathy" for those women who, like Dorothea, lead diffusive, unknown lives. This section also demonstrates how we can use the figure of Edward Casaubon—a man repeatedly described in language evoking shriveling, fragmentation and mummification—to understand the shrinking and miniaturizing processes of epigraphical forms. The latter half of the chapter turns to *Daniel Deronda*, whose opening epigraph defines itself in terms of its initial position and optionality rather than size, stating "men can do nothing without the make-believe of a beginning" (3). Ultimately these epigraphs imbue the novel with a series of optional beginnings, or false starts, corresponding to the plight of the novel's titular character, Deronda, who doesn't know his origins and has difficulty getting started in life.

Chapter Five turns to Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), in order to investigate the legacy of the nineteenth-century epigraphic novel. Challenging the typical characterization of this novel's epigraphs as parodic appropriations of Victorian literary culture, I argue that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* brings one of its most basic themes—fossilization—to bear on our understanding of epigraphs. The novel does this, first, by inviting us to understand chapter epigraphs as a form that paratextually petrifies and preserves past literary structures; and

second, by showing us how these fossil-like structures convey the double-mindedness of the Victorian age, particularly in chapters that use two epigraphs simultaneously. Ultimately, Fowles provides an understanding of the epigraph as a form that paratextually petrifies and preserves, and as such, is uniquely suited to make available literature from the nineteenth century.

Chapter 1

Radcliffe's Epigraphic Edifices

Reviewing Ann Radcliffe's oeuvre, Anna Laetitia Barbauld provides the quintessential formula for the gothic novel: "'time-shook towers,' vast uninhabited castles, winding staircases," and "long echoing aisles."[1] If dilapidated ruins, labyrinthine passages, and inscrutable echoes are synonymous with the gothic, then Radcliffe's chapter epigraphs dramatically amplify these effects. Formally doubling down on those elements of a genre that was often derided as "formulaic,"[2] Radcliffe's chapter epigraphs exemplify the most distinguishing characteristics of gothic romance while at the same time defining the broader position of the emerging novel's form, as a genre built upon the disintegrating ruins of poetry. Every chapter epigraph in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and *The Italian* (1797) is a poetic excerpt of some kind, usually from the likes of Shakespeare, Milton, or (occasionally) Radcliffe herself.[3] These poetic fragments provide structural scaffolding for the novels in which they appear, seeming, in turns, to be as relentlessly oppressive and eerily echoing as the deteriorating buildings in the novels they subdivide. Why this epigraphic edifice? Radcliffe was one of the earliest novelists to use chapter epigraphs, so she had little literary precedent to pattern

[1] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, "Mrs. Radcliffe," *The British Novelists*, vol. 43, (London: Printed for Rivington et. al, 1810), i, https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=yxsPAQAAMAAJ&rdid=book-yxsPAQAAMAAJ&rdot=1.
[2] See Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (New York: Manchester UP, 1995), 1-3, which provides a delightfully snarky 1797 "recipe" for a gothic novel. Formulas for the gothic similar to this recipe's and Barbauld's are offered up in numerous eighteenth and nineteenth-century reviews of Radcliffe's work.
[3] With one exception: chapter five of *The Romance of the Forest* has a chapter tag, which is a short title-like summary of the chapter's plot. See Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, ed. Chloe Chard (1791; Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009); *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée (1794; Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008); and *The Italian*, ed. Frederick Garber (1797; Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017). Further citations come from these editions, and appear parenthetically in the text. *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* will hereafter be referred to in the abbreviated forms *Romance* and *Udolpho*. For a list of authors Radcliffe cites, see Edward Jacobs, "Ann Radcliffe and Romantic print culture," in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism, and the Gothic*, eds. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014), 58.

her paratextual process after. What made epigraphs so useful for her particular novelistic project? In what follows, I offer that the chapter epigraph was created because it was a form peculiarly well-suited to the formulas for gothic romance, and that understanding it requires us to investigate issues of crumbling structures, generic hierarchies, and the evolution of the novel's form.[4]

Although Radcliffe was not the first author to use epigraphs, in her hands the form reached unprecedented levels of sophistication and nuance; she was the first to systematically incorporate chapter epigraphs throughout a novel, and introduced their use to the wider reading public, stimulating interest in the form.[5] While chapter epigraphs do appear in a few work predating *Romance*—John Moore's gothic novel *Zeluco* (1789)—they are used sporadically; of the novel's hundred chapters, a little over half exclusively use epigraphs, and Moore was just as likely to use chapter tags or combine multiple paratexts at once.[6] Prior to *Zeluco* and *Romance*, epigraphs typically appeared on title pages to entire novels. The 1750s in particular saw an unprecedented outpouring of title page epigraphs, within texts ranging from the well-known

[4] Although the incorporation of poetry into the early novel has been examined by several critics, the chapter epigraph, as a distinct method of doing so, has not. See Mary A. Favret, "Telling Tales about Genre: Poetry in the Romantic Novel [Corrected Version]," *Studies in the Novel* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 281-300, www.jstor.org/stable/20831880; G. Gabrielle Starr, "The Limits of Lyric and the Space of the Novel," in *Lyric Generations*: *Poetry and the Novel in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004), 125-158; and Ingrid Horrocks, "'Her Ideas Arranged Themselves': Re-membering Poetry in Radcliffe," *Studies in Romanticism* 47, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 507–27, www.jstor.org/stable/25602167.

[5] See Jacobs, "Ann Radcliffe," 60-65, and Terry Castle, introduction to *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, by Ann Radcliffe, ed. Bonamy Dobrée (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), xi-xiv.

[6] John Moore, *Zeluco*, ed. Pam Perkins (1789; Kansas City, Valancourt Books, 2012), kindle. In *Zeluco*, sixty-two chapters exclusively use epigraphs, thirty-two use summarial tags that function like titles, and six employ both chapter tags and chapter epigraphs at once. None of *Zeluco*'s epigraphs were written by Moore himself. For more information, concerning Moore's use of chapter epigraphs, see Pam Perkins, introduction to *Zeluco*, by John Moore (2008; Kansas City: Valancourt Books, 2012), Kindle. There is no way to know whether Radcliffe read *Zeluco*, and it may very well be that she came up with the idea of the chapter epigraph independently of Moore's work. Nonetheless, this information provides an important counterpoint to those critics, most recently Jacobs and Claudia Stokes, who erroneously credit Ann Radcliffe with the invention of the chapter epigraph (See Jacobs, "Ann Radcliffe," 63; Claudia Stokes, "Novel Commonplaces: Quotation, Epigraphs, and Literary Authority," *American Literary History* 30, no. 2 [Summer 2018]: 207, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/692307).

Tristram Shandy (1759) to the lesser-known *The Life and Adventures of Joe Thompson* (1750).[7] Coinciding with this literary trend was the increased use of chapter breaks in novels; chapter segmentation became widespread in the 1740s, and from this time onwards, chapters evolved in tandem with a plethora of paratexts, including numbers, chapter tags, summarizing headings, titles, and epigraphs.[8] The use of title-page epigraphs largely fell out of fashion after the 1760s, while chapter segmentation persisted. This conflation of fortuitous circumstances, however, still does not explain why Radcliffe decided to start using chapter epigraphs. (After all, her first two novels, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), and *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), were perfectly content to use chapter numbers and nothing else). What possibilities did the chapter epigraph offer the gothic novel, that could not be provided by chapter numbers or chapter breaks alone? Radcliffe was the epigraph's early adopter and formative innovator, and her ongoing experimentation in *Romance*, *Udolpho*, *The Italian*, and *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826) suggests that the paratext had a special function to play in the gothic novel. Imbuing the novel in which they appear with an interconnected series of fragmented poetic structures, chapter epigraphs segment and support Radcliffe's romances like so many clustered columns and flying buttresses; gothic novel and ruin alike are composed of-crumbling edifices, and reading epigraphs in terms of their architectural counterparts reveals a paradoxical paratext that enables poetry to dominate our reading of the novel while simultaneously suggesting its encroaching obsolescence. By embedding an epigraphic edifice—a textual ruin—within her novels, Radcliffe remodels poetic and novelistic forms simultaneously, negotiates the nascent novel's role in literary history, and establishes conventions for epigraph use that we still draw upon today.

[7] See Janine Barchas, *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2003), 85-90, and Jacobs, "Ann Radcliffe," 60-65.
[8] Jacobs, "Ann Radcliffe," 60.

I. Inset Poetry versus Paratextual Epigraphs

Radcliffe's epigraphs have historically been overshadowed by their flashier intradiegetic poetic sisters; usually, these are lyric poems expressing a heroine's emotions, often in response to a picturesque landscape, for instance, Adeline's "To the Visions of Fancy" or Emily's "The Piedmontese" (*Romance* 35; *Udolpho* 169). Radcliffe's contemporaries, by and large, ignored her chapter epigraphs, preferring to discuss her original inset poems, and modern critics have followed suit by conflating the role that chapter epigraphs and interpolated poetry play in the novel. Even criticism that purports to be about both mainly focuses on Radcliffe's inset lyric poetry; Beatrice Battaglia promises to show that "a necessary respondence and formal economy…link the epigraphs and the poems," but in fact confines her analysis of epigraphs to a brief four paragraphs which conclude with the unsurprising claim that epigraphs set the atmosphere of a chapter.[9] Nathaniel Paradise and Gary Kelly, lumping original inset poetry and poetic epigraphs together, insist that woman authors, especially Radcliffe, employed poetry as a means of legitimizing themselves and their chosen genres, by either including male authors or writing in a typically "masculine" poetic mode.[10] In her influential essay "Telling Tales About Genre: Poetry in the Romantic Novel," Mary A. Favret thoughtfully observes that "the random intrusions of original poems, as well as the scraps of Shakespeare, Milton, Thompson, et. al that punctuate and adorn the novels, do not follow any explained logic; they appear often and erratically."[11]

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[9] Beatrice Battaglia, "The 'Pieces of Poetry' in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*," in *Romantic Women Poets: Genre and Gender*, eds. Lilla Maria Crisafulli and Cecilia Pietropoli (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 143-145, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cornell/detail.action?docID=556640.

[10] See Paradise, "Interpolated Poetry, the Novel and Female Accomplishment," *Philological Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 57-76, http://link.galegroup.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu/apps/doc/A17340163/AONE?u=nysl_sc_cornl&sid=AONE&xid=f4b127e8; and Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789-1830* (1989; New York: Routledge, 2013), 54.

[11] Favret, "Telling Tales about Genre," 294.

Underscoring each of these analyses is the assumption that inset poetry and chapter epigraphs are interchangeable—but they are not, and such an approach neglects their unique functions. For example, no inset poetry occurs in *Udolpho*'s middle section, but epigraphs persist. Their regular, predictable appearances at the beginnings of chapters stand in sharp contrast to the chaotic cameos of the inset poems elsewhere in the novel, which spring forth without warning from the text. Epigraphs impose structure and a semblance of order on gothic narrative; spontaneously occurring interpolated poetry takes order away. Moreover, epigraphs are brief fragments of texts, most spanning a few lines or single stanza,[12] while intradiegetic poems are longer and complete, stretching to twenty-five stanzas or more.[13] The main reason, however, to examine these texts separately, is that chapter epigraphs are explicitly textual in a way that interpolated poems are not. Radcliffe's characters tend to compose lyric poetry extemporaneously, speaking it aloud without ever writing it down. For instance, Adeline nearly always sings or recites her poetry (*Romance* 75, 83, 298).[14] Given that most inset lyric is spoken aloud by characters, if we are to ask questions about the development of the novel—by definition, a text-based genre—epigraphs are a far more suitable place to begin, because they primarily occur in the novel as textual fragments.

To date, only a few critics have given Radcliffe's epigraph use sustained analysis. Recently, Jo Ellen DeLucia and Kate Rumbold have explored how specific subsets of epigraphs—Scottish poetry and Shakespearean quotations, respectively— function in Radcliffe's works, underscoring *Udolpho*'s feminist theory of history, on the one hand, and the emotions and

[12] See *Udolpho*'s "The Sea-Nymph," which encompasses twenty-five stanzas and one hundred lines (179-181).
[13] For example, "Titania to Her Love," or "Morning, on the Sea Shore" (Radcliffe, *Romance*, 284-285, 288-290).
[14] Favret similarly observes that Radcliffe's "novels present lyrics not as portraits but as spontaneous songs, recited in private and not committed to paper" ("Telling Tales about Genre," 292).

voices of Radcliffe's characters, on the other.[15] These interpretations exclude over half of Radcliffe's epigraphs, and thus cannot explain how epigraphs collectively function in the novel. Rumbold's analysis builds upon Leah Price's seminal work *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel* (2000), which reads Radcliffe's chapter epigraphs and inset poems as texts that reiterate the literary marketplace's competition between poetry, as elevated literature, and novels, as low-brow literature.[16] Similarly focused on print culture, Jacobs points out that epigraphs "function to legitimate and frame [Radcliffe's] novels…as perpetuations of the hegemonic British literary tradition dominated by poetic texts and male authors."[17] These scholars too fall prey to the same elision as critics who focus on Radcliffe's interpolated poetry; Price perceives epigraphs and interpolated poems as performing similar functions, while Jacobs insists that epigraphs' primary purpose is to impart literary dignity to the novel that uses them. Claims about authorial legitimation ignore the unprecedented uniqueness of Radcliffe's epigraphical project. Radcliffe wasn't simply using chapter epigraphs—she was creating and popularizing them. Thus, understanding the purpose of her epigraphs isn't a simple question of authorial legitimation along predictable gendered lines. Such claims are based on the assumption that the inclusion of an epigraph indisputably indicates admiration of the author and text being quoted. But what if the presence of a chapter epigraph in fact indicates something more? Patrick R. O'Malley has recently suggested as much, contending that Radcliffe's epigraphs provide "an alignment of the material text with architectural space" which "makes of the book an analogue to the architecture

[15] See JoEllen DeLucia. "From the Female Gothic to a Feminist Theory of History: Ann Radcliffe and the Scottish Enlightenment," *The Eighteenth Century* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 101–15, www.jstor.org/stable/41468058; and Kate Rumbold, "Ann Radcliffe's Gothic epigraphs," in *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Cultures of Quotation from Samuel Richardson to Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016), 133-56.
[16] Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*: *From Richardson to George Eliot* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2000), 96-97.
[17]Jacobs, "Ann Radcliffe," 58-59.

of the gothic fortress."[18] It is with this relationship, between material texts and architectural forms, that this chapter begins. When we attend to how the newly developed epigraphical form functions in Radcliffe's novels, we discover not a straightforward indication of admiration, but rather a desire to repurpose, remodel, and rebuild.

Aside from the fact that ruins are a central theme in Radcliffe's texts, a question of method still lingers: why read epigraphs in architectural terms? Why not, for instance, comprehend these fragmented forms as bodily pieces, in keeping with the gothic's overall preoccupation with mutilated bodies? Anna Kornbluh can help us here; offering a theory of realism that is constructive rather than mimetic, she suggests that the realist novel can be read in terms of architecture's ability to erect new spaces, suggesting that "architecture does not represent, depict, denote, or refer—it rather takes place, makes space, composes shape, inaugurates contour," and describes realism as the "literary instantiation" of architecture (204-205). Radcliffe's novels, though of course not realist texts in a traditional sense, can still be read productively with Kornbluh's theory, given their emphasis on the explained supernatural—that is, giving seemingly otherworldly moments concrete, logical solutions. Radcliffe's chapter epigraphs "inaugurate contour" within the gothic novel, making paratextual spaces that introduce openings and windows into other worlds where they had not existed before. Kornbluh offers that the "firstness of architecture may be most thinkable precisely in its proximity to, rather than distance from, *writing*" (204, emphasis original), and it is this proximity, between text and edifice, that this chapter will explore.

Even though Radcliffe may not have been, technically speaking, the first to use chapter epigraphs, she did invent new ways to use the form and established its conventions, in keeping

[18] Patrick R O'Malley, "'It may be remembered': Spatialized Memory and Gothic History in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*," *The Eighteenth Century* 59, no. 4 (Winter 2018): 504, doi: https://doi.org/10.1353/ecy.2018.0030.

with Gérard Genette's assertion that "the gothic novel" is "the channel by which epigraphs in large number get into prose narrative.[19] In this chapter, I will show that the gothic novel was particularly amenable to the inclusion of chapter epigraphs, because chapter epigraphs amplify its most definitive features. Considered collectively, epigraphs constitute a fragmented structure, or textual ruin, which gives shape to the gothic novel. Considered individually, epigraphs reiterate some of the Gothic castle's most memorable characteristics: they are eerie echoes of voices from the past, operate like walls between one chapter and the next, and, in *The Italian*, function as secret passages that liberate a woman while concealing her identity. While augmenting the gothic novel's distinguishing characteristics, chapter epigraphs also engage questions of genre. We find the novel carving out a generic position for itself, by breaking apart poetry and then constructing its story on the epigraphical edifice that results. In so doing, the gothic novel acknowledges its indebtedness to poetry, while at the same time suggesting that prose fiction is the next step for literature's development. If the gothic romance is—as Robert Miles has suggested—"a self-conscious intervention" in early generic debates,[20] then in Radcliffe's epigraph-laden novels we find a self-conscious remodeling of two genres at once. In the process, these novels establish the expectations for what chapter epigraphs are, how they function, and how they relate to literary history, ultimately providing a paratextual blueprint for future authors to follow.

II. Poetic Ruins

In her discussion of the development of epigraphs in the British novel, Janine Barchas points out that the use of English-language epigraphs was highly uncommon, remarking that "a

[19] See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 146-147.
[20] Miles, *Ann Radcliffe*, 39.

survey of all the mid-century fictions previously mentioned produces the following list of novels bearing epigraphs from English sources, a list which is as unimpressive as it is short" (88-89). Radcliffe's use of epigraphs, when seen from this vantage point, becomes even more innovative, because all of her epigraphs are in English. This leads us to consider the possibility that Radcliffe, in choosing poetic English epigraphs, is making an argument about British literary genres, their development, and form. Specifically, we find her using fragments of canonical poetry—Shakespeare, Milton, Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray, and many more are quoted—to provide the epigraphical framework of her novels. Appearing at the beginning of every chapter in *Romance*, *Udolpho*, and *The Italian*, epigraphs take excerpts from well-known poetic and dramatic works and render them structural scaffolding that segments the novel. Taken together, these pieces of poetry appear in a piecemeal, fragmented fashion, not unlike those ruins that appear throughout Radcliffe's novels. Epigraphical edifices, like architectural ruins, provide a crumbling framework that is male-dominated and infused with history.

The connection of epigraph to ruin is aptly encapsulated in the inaugural epigraph to *Udolpho*—arguably, the most "gothic" of gothic romances, and thus the one to begin with if we are to understand the connection between epigraphs and ruins in Radcliffe's works. Appearing on the title page, the epigraph describes echoes in medieval architectural features:

> Fate sits on these dark battlements, and frowns,
>
> And, as the portals open to receive me,
>
> Her voice, in sullen echoes through the courts,
>
> Tells of a nameless deed.

This is one of Radcliffe's earliest self-authored epigraphs, and the paratext appears to meditate on the function of epigraphical forms; written by Radcliffe though not acknowledged as such, the

epigraph constitutes the uttering of an unknown female voice, and is therefore itself, quite literally, a "nameless deed." Fusing textual form and thematic content, the poem introduces a connection between epigraphs and echoing voices which persists throughout Radcliffe's novels. These echoing voices, as the epigraph describes them, don't occur just anywhere—they resound specifically in medieval architectural forms. "Battlements" are defensive walls, [21] and "portal" likely refers to the entry points or gateways that allow passage into a castle.[22] "Courts," of course, refers to those walled-in gardens and yards surrounded by buildings on all sides, and perhaps even the building itself.[23] The epigraph slows down our entry into the novel, and thus functions like a battlement—a wall impeding and delaying progress. Here Radcliffe experiments with the relationship between segmenting forms, paratextual purpose, and textual content, and in so doing provides the parameters for making sense of the newly developed epigraphical form. This self-aware epigraph places Gothic architecture alongside concepts of echoes and nameless feminine deeds, and in so doing invites us to think of it—and epigraphs in general—in terms of architectural ruins, echoing passages, and concealed identities. We can use the understanding of epigraphs offered in this inaugural passage to guide our reading of poetic chapter epigraphs in the gothic novel more broadly.

Unlike their interpolated lyric cousins, epigraphs' collective import is structural, rather than emotive; they make an impact through regular repetitive appearances. Many critics have argued that within the gothic novel, castles and abbeys are spaces that facilitate and emblematize patriarchal oppression and women's imprisonment in the domestic sphere.[24] Such readings

[21] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "battlement (*n*)," https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/16276?rskey=6s3T0X&result=1&isAdvanced=false.
[22] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "portal (*n.1*)," www.oed.com/view/Entry/148114.
[23] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "court (*n.1*)," www.oed.com/view/Entry/43198.
[24] See, for instance: Eugenia DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford UP, 1990); Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (U of Illinois P, 1989); and Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (Routledge, 1995).

suggest that lost heroines, wandering through the depths of a building, are experiencing an externalized version of the repression they suffer under a villain's tyranny. Indeed, a quick survey of Radcliffe's novels reveals the extent to which men control the buildings: Montoni's castle of Udolpho, the monastery of San Stefano, Schedoni's "ancient and peculiar" coastal mansion, and Marquis de Montalt's palace (*The Italian* 200). Even the seemingly harmless La Motte, upon looking around the ruined abbey of St. Clair, declares his intention to "consider this place as my castle" (70) before concealing himself in its depths. Each of these examples speaks to the male-dominated nature of architectural ruins. Epigraphs, as fragments of poems that were written almost entirely by men, mimic these male-dominated structures in which heroines find themselves. (Only three women are quoted in the chapter epigraphs to *Romance*, *Udolpho*, and *The Italian*: Radcliffe, Hannah More, and Anna Seward). Most notably, epigraphs, through regular reappearances, impose structure upon our reading of the novel. One way they exert control is through diversion. Originating in outside texts, epigraphs momentarily take a reader outside of the story, but their continual reiterations of the gothic's major themes (terror, evil, death, and the like) may make a reader feel as though they have read that text before.[25] Taking one outside of the plot but leading nowhere new, epigraphs regularly delay and entrap readers, in the same manner as the corridors of Udolpho and the convent of San Stefano, which repeatedly divert the heroines lost inside of them. Emily must visit and revisit her aunt in a tower, retracing her steps through Udolpho until she finally finds a way to leave, while Ellena, escaping through the "subterraneous labyrinths" of the convent, encounters several dead ends and must make two separate attempts with two different clergymen to escape (*The Italian* 132). With their relentless

[25] A few examples: for epigraphs on the theme "terror" see *Udolpho*, 222, 371; *Romance,* 15, 152; 224; and *The Italian*, 36, 94. For epigraphs on the theme "evil," see *Udolpho*, 331; *Romance*, 315, 332; and *The Italian*, 7. For epigraphs on the theme "death," see *Udolpho,* 375; *Romance*, 1, 271, 335; and *The Italian*, 164.

reappearances at the beginnings of chapters, epigraphs function like those castle walls and dead-end passages that impede a heroine's access to the outside world, by blocking access to chapters and cutting off the action precisely at moments when readers want to know what happens next.[26] For example, many chapters in *Udolpho*'s middle conclude with Emily falling into an uneasy sleep in anxious anticipation of the morning; however, instead of finding out what happens when she wakes up in the next chapter, readers are first compelled to read a chapter epigraph.[27] Just as the imprisoning passages of a building externalize villains' attempts to impose patriarchal structures on the novel's heroines (an unwanted marriage, the giving up of an inheritance, the taking of the veil) so to chapter epigraphs impose an oppressive structure on the text, which controls how readers progress through the novel.

Dominant and domineering, chapter epigraphs formally replicate the oppressive qualities of the architectural structures in Radcliffe's novels, in a striking collaboration of form and content. This epigraphical dominating of the structure of the novel bespeaks another more significant type of domination—that of genre. Radcliffe's chapter epigraphs aren't drawn from just any texts; they are drawn from poetry and drama—the elevated genres at the time—by canonical, "dominant" male authors: quotations from Shakespeare's plays and the poetry of Milton and William Collins abound. Miles reminds us that "poetry and tragic drama were the prestigious literary forms" when Radcliffe was writing, "partly for historical reasons and partly because they were the province of men."[28] Radcliffe's chapter epigraphs, then, are doubly dominant—they exercise a significant influence over the structure of a novel and readers'

[26] Leah Price similarly observes that "Like the massy doors that block so many subterranean passageways…the epigraphs and inset poems cut readers off from the next chapter or the next event" (Price, *The Anthology*, 96).
[27] See transitions between *Udolpho* volume 2 chapters 4-5 and 11-12 for particularly striking instances of this phenomenon.
[28] Miles, *Ann Radcliffe*, 35.

experiences of it, while also evoking a prestigious literary mode considered to be the purview of men. However, this seeming domination of poetry and drama is undercut at every turn by the fact that the epigraphs are nothing more than fragments of texts; although poetic epigraphs do affect a reader's progress through a novel, they also enact a disintegrating of the genre they contain.

No one would dispute that decaying and dilapidated structures are a definitive element of the gothic. Chapter epigraphs take this idea of gothic decay and formally enact it, by breaking down their originating texts into smaller and smaller pieces—in essence, crumbling them. Within *Udolpho*'s epigraphs, for example, iconic plays and poems, such as *Macbeth* and *Comus,* are reduced to a scanty few sentences or severed stanza.[29] Present only as epigraphical fragments, great genres and authors of the past crumble under the weight of the novel and its new structural segmentations. Poetic epigraph and ruin alike, as Favret explains in a slightly different context, "parade their own ephemerality,"[30] and nowhere is this interconnected ephemerality more apparent than in chapter 1, volume 3 of *The Italian,* which opens with a meditation on the nature of ruins, and then goes on to describe Elena's wanderings through the ruined villa of the Barone di Cambrusca. The chapter begins with the following epigraph:

> Mark where yon ruin frowns upon the steep,
> The giant-spectre of departed power!
> Within those shadowy walls and silent chambers
> Have stalked the crimes of days long past! (247)

This poetic epigraph provides another example of one of Radcliffe's own self-authored chapter epigraphs. I discuss the significance of unattributed epigraphs later on in this chapter, but for now, would like to point out the way that this epigraph contemplates the conditions of its own

[29] For but a few examples see *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* pp. 102, 272, 341, 389.
[30] Favret, "Telling Tales about Genre," 294.

emergence. Reminding us of dominant authors and literary modes of "days long past," epigraphical forms haunt the novel as structural "spectre[s] of departed power,"[31] just like the ruins of the villa that the novel goes on to describe. In the ensuing chapter we learn that the remnants of the villa in question include "fallen fragments of columns," "fragments of a marble fountain," "shattered remains," a "destructive mass," a "heap of ruins" and the like (*The Italian* 248-251). The villa was controlled by a tyrant, but fell apart when an earthquake brought it tumbling to the ground, leaving "much that has been strong [lying] in ruin" (249). Just as the earthquake is a foundation-shattering event resulting in structural fragments, so to the chapter-epigraph laden prose novel is a foundation-shattering event littered with literary fragments. In Radcliffe's hands, historically dominant modes of literature—poetry and drama—are reduced to shattered, scattered remains sprinkled throughout the novel, the segmenting specters of long-gone authority. Shakespeare and Milton, like Barone di Cambrusca, are "buried under the ruins" of their former grand accomplishments, their works relegated to a deteriorating epigraphical frame that supports the prose novel (*The Italian* 250).

We can use scenes of people contemplating ruins in Radcliffe's novels to help us understand how the novel guides readers to contemplate its epigraphical ruins. Ruins impress those that view them with their might and historic grandeur, which is garnered, at least in part, from their visibly encroaching obsolescence. Chapter epigraphs, too, impart to readers a sense of the encroaching obsolescence of the genres they contain. When La Motte first sees the ruins of the abbey of St. Claire, he aptly anticipates the fleeting, momentary manner in which epigraphs would be contemplated by eighteenth-century readers. Looking at the abbey La Motte notes that

[31] Deidre Lynch has also noted the spectral quality of poetry when it appears in a novel, suggesting "It's as if the Shakespearean words that supply the epigraph raise the spectre. It's as if they are the spectre" ("Gothic Libraries and National Subjects," *Studies in Romanticism* 40, no. 1 [Spring 2001]: 42, www.jstor.org/stable/25601485).

"the comparison between himself and the gradation of decay, which these columns exhibited, was but too obvious" and laments that he, like the building, "may be the subject of meditation to a succeeding generation, which shall totter but a little while over the object they contemplate (*Romance* 16). These fears of obsolescence because of too-brief contemplation will soon be realized in early reviews of Radcliffe's work, the bulk of which bemoan her inclusion of original poetry: Barbauld, for one, claims that "the true lovers of poetry are almost apt to regret its being brought in as an accompaniment to narrative, where it is generally neglected…the common reader is always impatient to get on with the story."[32] Samuel Taylor Coleridge similarly observes that "poetical beauties have not a fair chance of being attended to, amidst the stronger interest inspired by such a series of adventures."[33] These reviews each bespeak an anxiety about the future of poetry; when embedded in prose, reviewers suggest, poetry becomes skippable secondary material. Radcliffe's choice to use verse epigraphs, by extension, was a choice to put poetry in places that virtually ensured it would not be read. In keeping with this idea, scenes of reading poetry in Radcliffe's novels suggest its increasing futility and diminishing importance. For example, in the middle section of *Udolpho* Emily tries to lose herself in reading poetry, but is unable to do so: "she tried to divert her anxiety, and took down from her little library a volume of her favorite Ariosto; but his wild imagery and rich invention could not long enchant her attention" (284). Later on during her captivity, Emily is again incapable of reading, and laments "are these, indeed, the passages, that have so often given me exquisite delight?" (383). In both instances, poetic passages prove impotent within the terror-inducing walls of Udolpho, in a manner which speaks to poetry's increasing irrelevance to the novel by the same name. Within *Udolpho*'s pages, poetic epigraphs which interrupt the main plot do not have the ability to catch

[32] Barbauld, "Mrs. Radcliffe," viii.
[33] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Review of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *Critical Review* 2nd ser. 11, (1794): 369.

a reader's attention; in fact, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Radcliffe's epigraphs garnered so little attention that no critics explicitly mentioned their existence. Ultimately then, epigraphs help bring about the dissolution of the genre that comprises them; bit by bit, they chip away at generic hierarchies by fragmenting canonical texts into tiny set-pieces, whose main perceptible purpose (as far as the eighteenth-century critic is concerned) is to slow a reader's progress through the novel. Terry Castle similarly notes that "when Shakespeare, Gray, or *Il Penseroso* is reduced to a sound-bite, a tiny mood-setting fragment within a great wash of prose narrative, the impinging obsolescence of the poetic—its loss of cultural relevance—is palpably if paradoxically confirmed."[34]

Epigraphs enable the gothic novel to make disintegrating forms an integral part of its structure; in so doing, the novel represents its own evolution in terms of generic decay. If epigraphs comprise an oppressive, deteriorating ruin when considered collectively, then, when considered individually, they correspond with particular parts of that ruin—specifically, with its passages and echoing corridors.

Epigraphs, as passages of text that link one chapter and the next, serve a function similar to passages between the walls of ruins. The use of "passage" to refer to a small section of text dates as far back as 1550,[35] and in the initial third of *Udolpho,* the term typically refers to a section of poetic text, with Valancourt, for instance, "reciting beautiful passages from…the Latin and Italian poets" (42). By contrast, in *Udolpho*'s labyrinthine middle section, "passage" nearly always refers to sections of the castle, and the only poetic passages we find are the epigraphs. Why do poetic epigraphs persist here, while interpolated lyric drops away? Ingrid Horrocks

[34] Castle, introduction, xiii.
[35] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "passage (*n*)," https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138437?isAdvanced=false&result=1&rskey=gvcee2&.

suggests that quotation, "by ceasing to work in the most oppressive section of novel…does not partake of Emily's imprisonment and torture. Quotation is carefully distinguished in *Udolpho* from gothic occupation."[36] This observation neglects the presence of chapter epigraphs in the middle of *Udolpho,* which are, of course, quotations.[37] Epigraphs' continual appearance in *Udolpho*'s middle suggests that they have a particular connection to gothic buildings that their lyric counterparts do not. Specifically, Radcliffe's epigraphs mimic the circular nature of the passages in Udolpho. Reiterating the same authors, texts, and themes, epigraphs weave between chapters like so many "roundabout passages" (334) in Montoni's castle; these paratexts between chapters, like those "narrow passages, cut…in the walls" (632), are ceaselessly circuitous. Rather than momentarily mentally liberating readers, epigraphic passages in Udolpho's middle cause us to become more firmly entrenched in bowels.

In the belly of this four-volume baggy beast of a novel, there is a scene in which narrative passages and Udolpho's labyrinthine passageways are explicitly interconnected. Du Pont tells Emily that while he was hidden in a passage between "decayed" walls of the castle, he overheard Montoni describing its history (459). Du Pont relates:

> I listened closely…and, in the most striking passages of his story, I joined my voice, and repeated his last words, in a disguised and hollow tone…I knew, that, if Montoni had been acquainted with the secret of this passage, he would not have confined me in the apartment, to which it led. (460)

Here we find densely imbricated ideas: hidden, decaying passages lead to the overhearing of narrative passages, and echoing language links both types of passages together. Particularly

[36] Horrocks, "'Her Ideas Arranged Themselves,'" 514.
[37] As I suggested earlier, the fact that poetry "ceases to work" in the middle section of *Udolpho* speaks less to quotations' lack of connection to gothic occupation, than to poetry's dwindling importance as a genre.

noteworthy is the way that Udolpho's concealed corridors become the vehicle and impetus for an act of verbal repetition; the "striking passages" vocally reiterated in its hidden corridors speak to epigraphs' status as passages between chapters that reiterate common themes by means of male voices. In this section of Udolpho, Du Pont repeats words from within a wall; *Udolpho*'s epigraphs, which surface in-between the novel's segmenting sections, are essentially those words—and more particularly, those repetitive voices—that come from within the wall. As this excerpt suggests, *Udolpho* runs rife with echoing corridors: servants "start…if the echo of a closing door murmur[s] along the passage" (538), "sound runs along…vaulted passages" (433), and "passages send echoes all round the castle" (450). Epigraphs, too, are passages that send echoes all round *Udolpho*. Reiterating the same themes with slight variations throughout a novel, epigraphs formally emulate the way that echoes reverberate throughout structures, repeating the same sound until gradually fading away. Divorced from their main textual body, epigraphs evoke those seemingly disembodied masculine voices which resound throughout *Udolpho*, and are analogous, for instance, to those ghostly sounds Ellena hears from her chamber, (*Udolpho* 340) or the anguished groans of a mangled body being dragged off (*Udolpho* 317-318).[38]

It is worth pausing to note that this characterization of epigraphs, as a forms detached from their originating textual bodies, also lends itself to a conception of epigraphs as bodily pieces. Such a reading is certainly in keeping with gothic narratives' overarching concern with bodily mutilation; indeed, in *Udolpho*, Emily discovers several mutilated bodies, encountering both a "corpse, stretched on a kind of low couch, which was crimsoned with human blood"

[38] Others have also discerned a vocal quality in Radcliffe's epigraphs. Lynch suggests that epigraphs in gothic texts are akin to voices from the past ("Gothic Libraries and National Subjects," 41), while Battaglia offers that epigraphs perform the same function as the chorus of a play ("'Pieces of Poetry,'" 143). Despite their apt recognition of the vocal quality of epigraphs, however, neither acknowledges the extent to which Radcliffe's epigraphs structurally resemble echoes, as I do here

bearing “more than one livid wound” (348), and an (apparently) disintegrating human, whose “face appeared partly decayed and disfigured by worms, which were visible on the features and hands” (662). Using the gothic’s preoccupation with mangled bodies to understand its paratexts would yield an understanding of the chapter epigraph as a kind of severed form that is tucked away within vast narratives, the same way that severed limbs are often hidden in the vast bowels of a castle. Such an analysis would, in turn, lend itself to a rather violent conception of literary history in which generic transformations involve dismantling the bodies of texts that come before, and then subtly subsuming pieces of those texts into a new work. Mutilated bodies, however, do not work as well for helping us understand chapter epigraphs as the metaphor of architecture; the reason, is that implicit in the concept of mutilated bodies is the notion of disconnected parts, working (or not) in isolation. Such an analogy does not provide a framework for exploring the accumulative impact of chapter epigraphs throughout a novel, the way that a concept of crumbling ruins does. Moreover, reading epigraphs in terms of dismembered body parts directs our attention onto something viscerally physical, in so doing runs the risk of ignoring the distinctive vocal quality of the epigraphs.

Frances A. Chiu points out that Radcliffe “amplifies” the “identification between man and castle”[39] and this connection is literally represented in her gothic novels’ epigraphs, which enable masculine voices to have an echoing paratextual presence throughout the novel. Amplified in the echo chamber of form, voices from literary history provide the last gasps of a diminishing genre. Poetic groans resound throughout the novel like Schedoni’s final anguished cries, a reminder that the poetry-dominated literary past will soon be overwhelmed by the prose

[39] Chiu, “Faulty Towers,” para. 36.

novel.[40] The impending obsolescence of the ruin meets the last gasps of a dying man, and what at first seems to be the dominating form in Radcliffe's novels turns out to be the dominated form, as poetry is subsumed within vast swaths of prose. But the question of generic shift that the novels pose is not a simple question of one form overwhelming another. Ironically, the gothic's structural segmentation and formal augmenting of its distinguishing features is directly tied, in these novels, to poetry. Rather than thinking in terms of one form dominating another, it may be more useful to think of the gothic novel's incorporation of poetry in terms of collaboration; in repurposing poetry for the remodeled interior of the gothic novel, Radcliffe refashions both genres as once. Novel and poetry alike emerge as dependent on one another—poetry on the novel, to appear at all, and the novel on poetry for structure and a formal amplification of its core themes. Within *The Italian*, epigraphs once again emerge as sites of collaboration, but this time, it is a collaboration of woman and paratext, rather than genres, that takes center stage, when Radcliffe offers a new kind of epigraph for our consideration: the self-authored, unattributed quotation.

II. *The Italian*'s Secret Passages

In the previous section we saw how Radcliffe's epigraphs resembled ruins when considered collectively, and how they evoked echoing, circuitous passages when examined individually. Although these findings are applicable to each of Radcliffe's chapter epigraph containing novels, they are especially useful for understanding *Romance* and *Udolpho*. When it comes to *The Italian*, however, epigraph use is a bit more complicated. *The Italian* is exceptional for several reasons: it contains no interpolated lyric, it was the last novel published by Radcliffe during her lifetime, it is the only one of these novels to open with a frame tale, and—most

[40] The text states: "heavy groans laboured from his breast. Schedoni was now evidently dying… Schedoni uttered a sound…strange and horrible" (Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 380-381).

importantly—it contains the most extensive display of Radcliffe's own self-authored epigraphs. Why did Radcliffe move her original poetry from the body of the text, to paratext? A possible answer becomes clearer when we consider that, of the novels examined in this essay, *The Italian* is the one most centrally concerned with the veiling of identity, as well as the one in which a woman most dramatically collaborates with the secret passages of a building.[41] When examined in light of these themes, chapter epigraphs prove to be doing more than merely doubling down on the formulaic features of gothic fiction, for in this novel, unattributed epigraphs function as secret passages which conceal a woman's identity while allowing her a space for poetic experimentation.

In making these claims, I draw on the work of a recent group of critics aiming to complicate conceptions of gender and genre in the gothic novel, in particular, the long-held characterization of the gothic castle as an inherently oppressive space that entraps women.[42] Ellen Ledoux and Kristen Girten dispute such interpretations, claiming that they oversimplify the shifting, nuanced relationships between heroines and gothic architecture. [43] Ledoux calls us to recognize the "fluid signification" of architecture in the gothic novel, directing our attention to the "protective potential" of "gothic space" (332-335) while Girten suggests that although Radcliffe's gothic ruins often function as oppressive tools of patriarchy, "at other times, they facilitate the heroine's empowerment" (716). Ledoux and Girten each demonstrate that women

[41] I am specifically referring here to the persistent concealing of Ellena's mother's identity under a nun's veil, and to Ellena's dramatic escape out of the convent by means of a secret underground passage. *Udolpho*, of course, features a scene in which Emily lifts a veil to reveal an artificial corpse. However, as the dramatic import of this scene occurs because of what is suddenly seen, I read this passage as a moment of revelation rather than veiling, which conceals a woman's identity.

[42] See DeLamotte, Ellis, and Kilgour.

[43] See Ellen Malenas Ledoux, "Defiant Damsels: Gothic Space and Female Agency in *Emmeline, The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Secresy*," *Women's Writing* 18, no. 3 (2011), pp. 331-347. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2010.508889. See also Kristen Girten, "'Sublime Luxuries' of the Gothic Edifice: Immersive Aesthetics and Kantian Freedom in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2016), pp. 713-738.

are not necessarily trapped by gothic spaces, and on the contrary, often work in tandem with them. These critics argue that rather than serving as sites of women's imprisonment or suppression, gothic architectural spaces can be read in terms of alliances, comfort, and protection. This idea, of gothic structures' potential function as sites of collaboration and support, has special bearing on *The Italian*'s unattributed self-authored epigraphs, which are similarly gothic structures that a woman (in this case, Radcliffe herself) collaborates with. Finding generic liberation in her epigraphic secret passages, just as Ellena finds liberation by working her way through a convent's secret passages, Radcliffe employs the obfuscatory power of paratextual space as a means of exhibiting her original poetry while simultaneously concealing its origins.

Radcliffe wrote her own epigraph to *The Italian* proper, as well as to seven of the novel's chapters: original epigraphs precede volume 1, chapters 8 and 11; volume 2, chapters 1, 4, and 7; and volume 3, chapters 1 and 9.[44] Fittingly, several of these epigraphs are about the process of concealment—often, the concealment of a woman via her veil. Shrouding the identity of the author who employs them, Radcliffe's unattributed self-authored epigraphs amplify the theme of veiling found throughout the novel by enacting a veiling of their author. Speaking to these issues, the epigraph to volume 1, chapter 8 asks:

> Who may she be that steals through yonder cloister,
> And, as the beam of evening tints her veil,
> Unconsciously discloses saintly features,
> Inform'd with the high soul of saintly virtue? (80)

[44] In addition to these eight epigraphs in *The Italian*, Radcliffe wrote the inaugural epigraph to *Udolpho*, and likely wrote the epigraphs to chapters 13 and 24 of *Romance*, for a total of eleven self-authored epigraphs across the three novels.

This poem—as happens in so many of Radcliffe's self-authored epigraphs—meditates on its own form and function. The first self-authored chapter epigraph to appear in *The Italian*, its lack of attribution shrouds Radcliffe's identity in mystery, in keeping with the way that *The Italian* is full of veiled women, such as Olivia, whose identities are partially concealed—but partial concealment also means partial discoverability. Just as the tinted veil "unconsciously discloses saintly features" of a woman, so too, the self-authored unattributed epigraphs' sameness of theme and scope discloses the distinguishing features of their author. A more interesting instance of paratextual veiling occurs in the epigraph to volume 2 chapter 1, which reads:

> That lawn conceals her beauty
> As the thin cloud, just silver'd by the rays,
> The trembling moon: think ye 'tis shrouded from
> The curious eye? (125)

We encounter this poem immediately before passages detailing Ellena's escape from the convent of San Stefano. It again draws our attention to the process of veiling (a "lawn" is a type clothing made of linen fabric). This poem too suggests that one hidden behind a lawn is nonetheless capable of being seen, with the probing question "think ye 'tis shrouded from/the curious eye?" Drawing our attention to a woman's simultaneously visible and invisible presence, Radcliffe once again underscores the unique abilities of unattributed epigraphical forms, which enable a woman's original poetry to be visible to readers while allowing her identity to remain invisible. Indeed, Radcliffe's own paratextual veiling of identity worked so well that her contemporaries did not recognize that some poetic epigraphs were her own invention. For instance, her epigraph

to volume 2 chapter 7 of *The Italian* is attributed to "Anonymous" in the February 1832 magazine *The World of Fashion, and Continental Feuilletons*.[45]

In these examples we find Radcliffe working with and within epigraphical forms, the same way that Ellena works with and within the secret passages of the convent. In both instances, a secret passage (epigraphs of unknown authorship in the first case, labyrinthine underground corridors in the second) gives a woman place to hide and find liberation. Within the convent of San Stefano, Ellena's escape is wholly dependent on her ability to work her way through hidden underground tunnels. She escapes into a "passage" that "is known only to the brothers of the convent" and typically "used for the purpose of conveying secretly to the shrine" (133). This secret underground passage is a source of escape and eventual joy for Ellena, as she "rejoiced on perceiving a door in the remote winding of the passage, which she believed would emancipate her from the convent" (133). Later on in the novel, Ellena again works in tandem with hidden portions of a building in order to protect herself. Upon spotting Spalatro (whom she fears wishes to kill her) Ellena conceals herself in the ruin: "That part of the room which she stood in, fell into a kind of recess; and whether it was this circumstance that prevented him from immediately perceiving her…he did not choose to pause" (252). Here Ellena falls back into a secret section of the ruin, which helps her evade detection. Be these buildings providing hidden corridors or obscure recesses, their secret passages enable Ellena to hide in plain sight, and provide protection and support. Chapter epigraphs, too, are secret passages which enable a woman to hide in plain sight. Secreting Radcliffe in obscure passages of the novel just as Ellena secrets herself in hidden sections of ruins and convents, unattributed chapter epigraphs provide a place to support and protect poetic experimentation, for, in placing Radcliffe's original poetry in

[45]Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 417n198.

an unobtrusive space, they shelter it from the charge of interrupting the narrative previously brought against it in others novels.[46] A collaboration of form and content, *The Italian*'s self-authored unattributed epigraphs combine Radcliffe's two distinct experiments in literary form, poetic epigraphs and original interpolated poetry.

III. A Special Case: *Gaston de Blondeville*

Radcliffe's posthumously published novel *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826) provides an epigraphical edge case demonstrating the extent to which paratextual structures and architectural structures are related in her works. [47] Its chapter epigraphs are, as Jacobs rightly observes, "ekphrastic" rather than poetic (65). In this novel, illustrations of a "castellated mansion" with "walls now crumbling into ruin, that were once so magnificent" are translated into textual chapter epigraphs (1: 104, 112). Specifically, each chapter of *Gaston* is preceded by a paragraph-long prose description of the image that began the chapter in the "original" thirteenth-century manuscript, whose origins are explained in the novel's prefatory frame tale. We learn that in the original manuscript, "at the heads of chapters and sometimes on the broad margins…there were made drawings of parts of Kenilworth castle" (1: 107). The drawings in question provide "an inside view of a tower" (1: 108) and display "knowledge of perspective and…attention to proportion" (1: 107). We also learn that "among other things in the book…is a view of this old hall," which "had a high roof, like a church there, and a gallery ran all along the bottom of it" (1: 104). These illustrations are in essence pictorial epigraphs, which are then converted into descriptive prose epigraphs, such as:

[46] See Barbauld's and Coleridge's criticisms on pages 15-16.
[47] See Ann Radcliffe, *Gaston de Blondeville,* 2 vols., (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1826), https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015028095787. All references are to these volumes, subsequently quoted in the text. *Gaston de Blondeville* will hereafter be referred to as *Gaston*.

> Here was a drawing of the inside of the great hall, with the King and Queen holding festival. In the back-ground was a sketch, of what seemed to be a pageant acted there; and yet the spectators appeared to be looking on, with an interest too serious for so trifling a performance. In the margin, also, was drawn, the chapel before mentioned, with a marriage ceremony on the porch. (2: 2)

In passages such as this, *Gaston* presents an explicit relationship between a ruined building and chapter epigraphs, but seems to be following the inverse process of Radcliffe's prior novels; rather than having epigraphs emulate a ruin, the novel uses chapter epigraphs to bring a ruined building back to (textual) life, through transforming intradiegetic illustrations into extradiegetic prose. The graphic, in other words, becomes the epigraphic. Here architectural ruins, generic translation (from illustration to textual description) and paratextual function are intrinsically interconnected, in a series of relationships that ultimately leads to the collapsing of the paratext-as-ruin metaphor, as epigraphical structures and architectural structures become one.[48]

Despite its fascinating fusion of architectural and epigraphical concerns, *Gaston* was not discussed at great length in this chapter, because the ekphrastic quality of its epigraphs was not continued on in the works of Walter Scott, Elizabeth Gaskell, or George Eliot. Poetic epigraphs, it seems, were the variety that took hold. Although *Gaston's* epigraphs are not poetic fragments (and, an astute reader may point out, should perhaps not be counted as "epigraphs" at all) they are still of great interest for this reason: they allow us to see that Radcliffe was continuously and intentionally experimenting with potential uses for epigraphs in her novels. This experiment,

[48] Radcliffe's comparison of chapter epigraphs to gothic structures had precedent in her eighteenth-century literary milieu; English writers between 1777-1800 often employed the gothic castle and its architecture as metaphors, with reformists describing the past as a frightening, outdated architectural nightmare whose structures ought to be abandoned and demolished. See Frances A. Chiu, "Faulty Towers: Reform, Radicalism, and the Gothic Castle, 1760-1800," *Romanticism on the Net*, no. 44 (November 2006), doi: https://doi.org/10.7202/013996ar.

over the next hundred years, would be repeated, challenged, and modified to the point of unrecognizability by Scott, Gaskell, and Eliot.

To return to the inquiry that opened this chapter: why did Radcliffe start using chapter epigraphs? One potential answer is that chapter epigraphs amplify some of the gothic novel's most distinguishing characteristics: epigraphs constitute an oppressive, deteriorating ruin when considered collectively, and imbue the novel with eerie echoes, obfuscating veils, and secret passages when considered individually. The epigraphic structuring of the novel was, at its inception, a distinctly gothic structuring of the novel—and, if reception history is any indication, this structure served the gothic well; many of Radcliffe's contemporaries imitated her chapter epigraph use, most famously Matthew Lewis in *The Monk* (1796), which takes its chapter epigraphs from a wide range of English poetry and prose. Other gothic novels that employed chapter epigraphs include Charlotte Smith's *Marchmont* (1796), which contains unattributed poetic chapters epigraphs from the likes of Edmund Spencer's epic poem *The Faerie Queen* (1590-96) and Shakespeare's play *As You Like It* (78, 101); and Regina Maria Roche's forgotten bestseller *The Children of the Abbey* (1796), which contains lyric epigraphs from now-obscure authors such as the poet and physician Mark Akenside (76) and the seventeenth-century dramatist Thomas Otway (11); and Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), which contains epigraphs from English poets such as Robert Southey (201), and non-English epigraphs from writers such as Seneca (204) and the Italian opera *Didone* (220). Notably, all of these novels were published after Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), and their epigraph use was likely inspired by her employment of the form; further exploration of the chapter epigraph in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novel might consider to what ends the form was adopted in different types of gothic narratives—for instance, whether Smith's

incorporation of gothic imagery into a domestically oriented novel yields a different understanding of paratextual purpose than, say, the picaresque, nestled story-within-story narrative that comprises Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*.

In fusing gothic formulas with the formal structuring of a text, Radcliffe remodels the interior of the novel, by creating a new segmenting form and expanding the potential ways that a novel's middle can function. At the core of this analysis is the realization that epigraphs are always alterations to their originating texts;[49] on the basis of this idea, we can view epigraphs not merely as evincing a desire to legitimate a woman author, but rather a desire to remake and remodel, to build new genres and improve upon old ones. The metaphor of the ruin enables reveals that epigraphs were, from their inception, a form concerned with literary-historical negotiations. In Radcliffe's novels, we don't find poetic literary structures of the past wholly demolished in favor of something new. Rather, we find a genre engaged in a careful, conscientious process of dismantling, incorporating, rebuilding, and hierarchical rebranding—and chapter epigraphs are a key component of this process. Breaking apart canonical poetry to make a crumbling epigraphical edifice on which to construct its story, the novel simultaneously acknowledges its literary indebtedness while challenging generic hierarchies; poetry is indeed relegated to a less desirable, epigraphical space, where it is less likely to be read—but it is still a significant space, both for the structure of the novel and as a site of formal experimentation. The history of the chapter epigraph, in turn, is itself a kind of echoing process; epigraphs had a strong presence in the novels of Radcliffe's contemporaries, but their use significantly declined as the nineteenth century went on. This fading away of the form has led Jacobs to conclude that Radcliffe's incorporation of epigraphs into her novels was a "'failed' Romantic experiment."[50]

[49] Except, of course, in cases where the epigraph is the originating text of its content.
[50] Jacobs, "Ann Radcliffe," 64.

However, this claim is not entirely true. Chapter epigraphs persisted, though not necessarily with poetic content, and were used by three of nineteenth-century Britain's most well-known authors—Walter Scott, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot. Radcliffe's epigraphs set the standard for what chapter epigraphs should look like, how they should function, and how one should read them.

Countless reviews by Radcliffe's contemporaries broke down her fiction into gothic formulas: in a letter from early October 1810, Coleridge famously "amused [him]self…on reading a Romance in Mrs. Radcliff's style with making out a scheme, which was to serve for all romances a priori…A Baron or Baroness ignorant of their Birth…Underground Passages—Pictures—A ghost" and "all the nomenclature of Gothic Architecture."[51] John Dunlop dismisses Radcliffe's novels as being full of "gothic castles, gloomy abbeys, subterraneous passages, the haunts of banditti…and the howling of the storm."[52] Allan Cunningham put it best, I think, upon reflecting that "Mistress Anne…produced a rusty key of gothic pattern."[53] In incorporating chapter epigraphs as a means of accentuating the formulaic features of the gothic, Radcliffe also, as it turns out, gives us the formula for a new paratextual form: cite texts at the beginnings of chapters. Keep it brief. Keep it poetic. Don't hesitate to cite yourself. This formula will be replicated, challenged, and improved upon by her literary progeny, but the chapter epigraph itself will remain.

[51]Coleridge to William Wordsworth, early October 1810, in *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 3: 294-295.
[52] John Colin Dunlop, *History of Prose Fiction*, vol. 2, ed. Henry Wilson (1814; London: George Bell and Sons, 1888), 580-86, quoted in *The Critical Response to Ann Radcliffe*, ed. Deborah D. Rogers (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 100.
[53] Allan Cunningham, "Anne Radcliffe," *Biographical and Critical History of the British Literature of the Last 50 Years* (Paris: Baudry's Foreign Library, 1834), 122-25, quoted in *The Critical Response to Ann Radcliffe,* ed. Deborah D. Rogers (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 127.

Chapter 2

Scott's Slow Starts: Paratextual Pacing in the Waverley Novels

In 1814—nearly twenty years after the publication of *The Italian* (1797)—Walter Scott's first prose novel *Waverley; Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* was published. This novel also employs chapter epigraphs, but in a strangely sporadic fashion; namely, they do not appear consistently until the end of the novel's third volume, in the final five chapters.[1] Given that *Waverley* is not a gothic text—and in fact, was one of the earliest iterations of what would come to be known as the historical novel—what, precisely are these inconsistently applied epigraphs doing in it? Scott's subsequent novels, for the most part, used chapter epigraphs regularly, a fact that has led critics to suggest that their primary purpose was to help the nascent novel form obtain an aura of respectability. Gérard Genette, for instance, suggests that the epigraph's primary purpose is to "integrate the novel, particularly the historical or 'philosophical' novel, into a cultural tradition" (160), and C. M. Jackson-Houlston has recently elaborated on this idea, arguing that "Scott's invention of false intertexts is an extra layer of a claim for membership of the literary elite by way of his facility as a poet" (7). Offering an alternative to these perspectives, this chapter argues that epigraphs are not simply integrating Scott's novels into a wider literary canon, but also negotiating its generic position, and as such, are a key element of the early historical novel's self-definition. Specifically, chapter epigraphs function as strategically deployed slow starts, which formally encourage readers to read at the pace appropriate for the emerging historical novel. In *Waverley*, this effect is achieved by using chapter epigraphs as structural speedbumps in the novel's final section—precisely the point when, according to Scott, readers are most likely to

[1] Here I am discounting Volume 3, Chapter Twenty-Five, which really functions more as a paratext than a conclusion to the novel proper, as reflected in its title: "A Postscript, which should have been a Preface" (375).

speed up; *The Antiquary* (1816), invites us to read epigraphs in terms of its overburdened slow-moving scholar Jonathan Oldbuck; and in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (1818), consistently deployed chapter epigraphs imbue the novel with a halting stop-start pacing, in keeping with the novel's paratextual prefatory tale, which describes a journey that keeps stopping and starting. Each case study demonstrates how epigraphs formally elicit and respond to questions of delay and reading speed, and more broadly, suggest that a slowed pace is an important characteristic of the nascent historical novel.

I. Scott's Epigraphical Influences

Scott's own comments concerning his creation of epigraphs are not particularly useful for those wishing to discern their function. Displaying a frustration about the entire enterprise, Scott wrote in his *Journal* on March 24, 1826: "Damn the mottoe. It is foolish to encourage people to expect mottoes and such-like Decoraments. You have no credit for success in finding them, and there is a disgrace in wanting them" (320). Further evincing an ambivalence towards using chapter epigraphs (and perhaps a bit of self-mockery), Scott suggests in his introduction to *Chronicles of the Canongate* (1827-28) that:

> The scraps of poetry which have been in most cases tacked to the beginning of chapters in these Novels, are sometimes quoted either from reading or from memory, but, in the general case, are pure invention. I found it too troublesome to turn to the collection of the British Poets to discover apposite mottos, and, in the situation of the theatrical mechanist, who, when the white paper which represented his shower of snow was exhausted, continued the storm by snowing brown, I drew on my memory as long as I could, and, when that failed, eked it out with invention. I believe that, in some cases, where actual

> names are affixed to supposed quotations, it would be to little purpose to seek them in the works of the authors referred to. (9)

In this strikingly candid confession, Scott acknowledges several peculiar aspects of his epigraphs that, we shall see, distinguish his use from Radcliffe, Gaskell, and Eliot. He knowingly misquoted sources, invented others, and attributed his own writing to actual known sources. The occasional misquotation or misattribution occurs in Radcliffe, Gaskell, and Eliot as well—but these authors do not, by and large, acknowledge that they were consistently careless in their epigraphical citation practices. Scott suggests here that he misattributed and invented epigraphs because he could not be bothered with finding appropriate ones in literature. (An account of Scott's epigraphing practices from his admiring biographer, John Lockhart, supports this assertion, although several critics have rightly questioned whether we should take Scott's own comments about his epigraph use at their word.[2]) Knowing that Scott invented paratextual quotations to avoid cumbersome research does not, however, explain to what end they were employed in his novels. More to the point: if Scott found incorporating chapter epigraphs tiresome, then why bother using them at all?

One potential answer, of course, is that Scott incorporated chapter epigraphs because they were used by Radcliffe, whom he deeply admired. Famously naming Radcliffe "the first poetess of Romantic fiction," Scott lauded Radcliffe as the founder of "a separate and distinct species of writing" ("Prefatory Memoir" xx) with "the most decided claim to take her place among the favoured few, who have been distinguished as the founders of a class, or school" ("Prefatory

[2] According to Lockhart, "It may be worth noting, that it was in correcting the proof-sheets of this novel [*The Antiquary*] that Scott first took to equipping his chapters with mottoes of his own fabrication. On one occasion he happened to ask John Ballantyne, who was sitting by him, to hunt for a particular passage in Beaumont and Fletcher. John did as he was bid, but did not succeed in discovering the lines. 'Hang it, Johnnie,' cried Scott, "I believe I can make a motto sooner than you will find one.' He did so accordingly" (4.13-14).

Memoir" xvii-xviii). However, conceiving of epigraphs as a technique borrowed from a writer Scott admired still does not take us far in figuring out their function: *Waverley, The Antiquary*, and *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* are not, of course, thematically preoccupied with ruined historic structures, so Radcliffe's conception of epigraph use is not portable to these novels. Scott, however, does share Radcliffe's preoccupation with a hierarchical organization of forms, as manifested in epigraphs' optionality;[3] however, here the question of readers' encounters with an optional form becomes more pronounced, as Scott's novels formally and thematically explore the significance of a slow start. Epigraphs, within this matrix, are noteworthy less for their edificiality than for their ability to direct and divert readers' attention, and their concomitant impact on the pace of a novel.

Scott's works are well-known for their plethora of paratextual materials, including prefaces, epilogues, footnotes, and of course, epigraphs. While most critics acknowledge the vast extent of Scott's paratextual apparatuses, relatively few have focused on epigraphs in particular. Dieter Berger suggest that Scott used epigraphs because they enabled him to subtly continue publishing his own verse after leaving behind a poetic career (383), while Margaret Fetzer has suggested that Scott's paratexts (of which epigraphs are obviously a component) "blur and obscure supposedly hard and fast cultural as well as aesthetic distinctions," rather than "mark any absolute or abrupt beginnings" (273). J.H. Alexander has provided the most sustained analysis of Scott's epigraphs to date, and offers a thoughtful formal explanation for many potential epigraph functions—for instance, providing the atmosphere of a chapter, or commenting on the middle of a chapter—before concluding that "Scott usually leaves his readers to determine for themselves the extent of the parallels between epigraphs and text" (87).

[3] Freedgood also points out that epigraphs are an "optional" form (*Worlds Enough* 77).

Alexander's primary aim, it seems, is to demonstrate how an epigraph's content applies, however obliquely, to the text surrounding it. Implicit in this approach is the assumption that epigraphs introduce ruptures which must be mended, and reconciled with the main text. This chapter offers an alternative to Alexander's approach, by offering a theory of Scott's epigraph use that enables their status as ruptures to stand. Comprehending epigraphs in terms of diversion and attention, rather than integration, allows for a theory of the epigraph that takes readers' encounters into account. Berger suggests that verse epigraphs enabled Scott "to exercise control over his 'romantic' readers with their particular interest in poetry" (396), and indeed, *Rob Roy* (1817) briefly suggests that epigraphs' function is to attract and control readers' attention. The narrator, Frank Osbaldistone, claims that "I have tagged with rhyme and blank verse the subdivisions of this important narrative, in order to seduce your continued attention by powers of composition of stronger attraction than my own" (85).

Understanding Scott's epigraphs, then, involves attending to the question of readers' attention, in particular, the tension between reading and not reading that paratextual poetry creates when embedded in a prose novel. This tension, we shall see, creates and contributes to an overall impression of slowness, as verse epigraphs momentarily take a reader outside of the main plot, and the genre of the main narrative.[4] Attending to questions of pacing, diversion, and beginning, rather than questions of integration, legitimation, or immediate connection, we discover that the cumulative effect of Scott's epigraph use is to imbue the nascent novel with a series of slow starts, that train readers to proceed at the leisurely pace appropriate for the emerging historical novel.

[4] In making these claims, I draw on Nicholas Dames's recent exploration of nineteenth-century reading practices, in particular, his argument on behalf of a Victorian physiological novel theory that was an "affective, reader-centered methodology whose notion of 'form' was thoroughly temporal" (10).

II. *Waverley*'s Structural Speedbumps

Waverley is distinguished among Scott's novels—and epigraphic novels more generally—for its highly unusual use of chapter mottoes; namely, *Waverley* does not employ epigraphs consistently until its final chapters. It is also noteworthy for its interrelated discussions of plot and pacing, and self-aware descriptions of how its treatment of those issues constitutes a departure from its literary predecessors. *Waverley*, particularly in its beginning and concluding sections, is preoccupied with questions of readerly skipping and the seeming speed (or lack thereof) of its plot. Bringing these discussions of genre, pacing, and attention to bear on *Waverley*'s chapter epigraphs yields an understanding of the paratext as a type of structural speedbump, deployed to delay readers at the precise moment the novel anticipates they will want to speed up.

Identifying the extent to which *Waverley* self-consciously engages the question of readers' encounters with starting forms helps shed light on its use of chapter epigraphs, which are, essentially, beginning forms. *Waverley* is consistently preoccupied with the question of how readers interact with texts—more specifically, how readers interact with the beginnings of novels. These theorizations of beginning forms occur in conjunction with discussions of genre, as *Waverley* strives to distinguish itself from the types of novels that preceded it. This dual jostling for generic position and theorizing of beginning forms is present from the novel's opening chapter, subtitled "Introductory," which both slows readers down and points out that it is doing so. This awareness comes through when the "Introductory" describes the many possible ways to begin a novel, and their concomitant genres—a gothic romance, a sentimental tale, a "dashing sketch of the fashionable world"—and in so doing, defers the story it is supposed to be introducing (4). In acknowledging the plethora of possible beginnings that it could have, the

novel underscores the fact that its own beginning is being delayed. Further evincing awareness that *Waverley*'s "Introductory" is taking too long for readers, the narrator writes "I scorn to tyrannize longer over the impatience of my reader, who is doubtless already anxious to know the choice made by an author so profoundly versed in the different branches of his art" (4). Reading such comments in tandem with the Introductory's proliferation of beginnings reveals a text that is aware of readers' frustrations but determined to move slowly anyway.

What emerges in this introduction is an endorsement and enactment of the slow start, an idea that resurfaces throughout the novel proper. Harry Shaw suggests that *Waverley*'s initial chapters are "as long as they are" because Scott wishes to incorporate a "sense of the past" into the novel, and that "the opening section needs to be slow paced and expansive" so as to better invite "us to enjoy in a self-consciously indulgent way the idea of living in a world in which time seems to have stopped" (186). *Waverley* is bookended by two passages that present strong endorsements of the slow start. The first, in Chapter Five, extols the virtues of the slow-moving start, and describes an unhurried pace as the most appropriate speed with which to move through the nascent historical novel:

> I do not invite my fair readers, whose sex and impatience give them greatest right to complain of these circumstances, into a flying chariot drawn by hyppogriffs, or moved by enchantment. Mine is a humble English post-chaise, drawn upon four wheels, and keeping his majesty's highway. Those who dislike the vehicle may leave it at the next halt…Those who are contented to remain with me will be occasionally exposed to the dulness inseparable from heavy roads, steep hills, sloughs, and other terrestrial retardations; but, with tolerable horses, and a civil driver (as the advertisements have it) I

> also engage to get as soon as possible into a more picturesque and romantic country, if my passengers incline to have some patience with me during my first stages.* (27)
>
> *These Introductory Chapters have been a good deal censured as tedious and unnecessary. Yet there are circumstances recorded in them which the author has not been able to persuade himself to retract or cancel. (n.5, p. 401)

In these lines and their accompanying footnote, the narrator defines the appropriate pace with which to move through his novel by contrasting it with the expectations of an "impatient" reader of gothic romance. Moreover, the narrator evinces an explicit awareness, by way of vehicle metaphors, that readers accustomed to gothic narratives will find his opening so slow-moving that they will want to stop reading. Notably, the narrator not only admits that his writing is sluggish and boring, but also makes no promises that the narrative is going to pick up speed, assuring only a "dullness" intrinsically interrelated with "retardations" (27). Here we find *Waverley* being distinguished from the novels that have come before it along generic lines, with the key difference being the speed at which different genres invite one to read. Appropriately enough, this marking out of new literary terrain comes coupled with a discussion of literal terrain—specifically, the kinds of geographical features that slow down someone's journey: "heavy roads, steep hills, sloughs, and other terrestrial retardations" (27). Though Scott elsewhere praises Radcliffe's novels as ones in which "adventures heaped on adventures, in quick and brilliant succession, with all the hair breadth-charms of escape or capture, hurry the reader along with them" (*Miscellaneous* 182), his novels, we learn from this passage, will not be moving at so brisk or eventful a pace. In presenting readers with the idea that a plodding pace is necessary for some kinds of novels, Scott establishes the lay of his land, so to speak—and this is a land in which starts are slow and a reader should linger.

In *Waverley*'s final chapters, epigraphs play a key role in encouraging a lingering, leisurely reading pace. After using pace to define his novel's generic place, the narrator's second striking endorsement of the slow start occurs at the end of the novel. In Chapter Seventy, the progress of *Waverley*'s narrative is compared to that of a stone rolling down a hill:

> But, ere entering upon a subject of proverbial delay, I must remind my reader of the progress of a stone rolled downhill by an idle truant boy (a pastime at which I was myself expert in my more juvenile years), it moves at first slowly, avoiding by inflection every obstacle of the least importance; but when it has attained its full impulse, and draws near the conclusion of its career, it smokes and thunders down, taking a rood at every spring, clearing hedge and ditch like a Yorkshire huntsman, and becoming most furiously rapid in its course when it is nearest to being consigned to rest for ever. Even such is the course of a narrative, like that which you are perusing; the earlier events are studiously dwelt upon, that you, kind reader, may be introduced to the character rather by narrative, than by the duller medium of direct description; but when the story draws near its close, we hurry over the circumstances, however important, which your imagination must have forestalled, and leave you to suppose those things, which it would be abusing your patience to narrate at length. (365)

From this passage we learn two important things: first, it reminds us that the narrator knows his novel's beginning moves at a sluggish pace; second, that the narrator is cognizant that readers, by a story's end, are impatient and inclined to speed up, and will trammel over any obstacle to get to the end. Epigraphs, within this this matrix, can be interpreted as structural speedbumps, or formal interruptions, not unlike those hedges and ditches cleared by a Yorkshire huntsman. Citing Shakespeare plays, verse from a renaissance poetic miscellany, lines from Thomas

Campbell's "Lochiel's Warning," and an excerpt from "Old Song" that first appeared in David Herd's collection of "Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs," the five epigraphs in *Waverley* extend and elongate the beginnings of the novel's final chapters by taking a reader outside of the main narrative at precisely the moment they are impatient to finish. An epigraphical encounter asks a reader to suddenly enter into genres, works, and worlds other than Scott's, and as such, serves to ensure that the slowness so crucial to Scott's nascent historical novel persists, even in the narrative's conclusion.

As beginnings brought in while the novel is rapidly hurtling towards its conclusion, *Waverley*'s epigraphs disrupt our expectations for how a novel should end through allowing slow starts to persist in the very place where the narrative supposedly picks up speed. In this way epigraphs evoke the process of *Waverley*'s concluding chapter, titled "A Postscript, which should have been a Preface." This chapter claims that "most novel readers, as my own conscience reminds me, are apt to be guilty of the sin of omission respecting that same matter of prefaces" (375) and goes on to suggest that: "it is a general custom with that class of students, to begin with the last chapter of a work; so that, after all, these remarks, being introduced last in order, have still the best chance to be read in their proper place" (375). Here the narrator demonstrates an awareness of the reading practices and related habits of mind which shape one's experience of a novel—in particular, a tendency to skip prefatory paratextual material. By making the preface a conclusion with the ostensible expectation that readers will encounter it first, Scott incorporates yet another structural speedbump into his novel. In fact, putting the beginning at the end essentially amounts to the slowest possible start that a story can have, as such a move renders the entire novel an excruciatingly expanded build-up to its own beginning. *Waverley*'s paradoxical postscript and preface which constitutes a self-professed "violation of form" (377) finds its

analog in the chapter epigraphs, which likewise usurp readers' expectations for beginning and concluding forms.

In *Waverley*, ultimately, we find an author conducting epigraphical experiments as a small subset of a much larger project—that is, to extol the virtues of reading slowly, and to train readers to read at the plodding pace appropriate for the newly emerging historical novel. Epigraphically extended chapters, which encourage a reader to linger, play a key role in this retraining project. Within *The Antiquary*, these sentiments are formally put into practice, as Scott theorizes about epigraph function through the figure of a slow-moving antiquary, who serves as the physical embodiment of the slow-moving, epigraph-laden novel.

III. Curious Collections and Pacing in *The Antiquary*

The Antiquary, Scott's third epigraph containing novel, further explores the issue of slowness in relation to chapter epigraphs. This time, rather than presenting a series of experimental structural speedbumps, the novel invites us to understand epigraphs in terms of its titular character, the antiquary (and collector of textual antiquities) Jonathan Oldbuck. Epigraphs can be read both in terms of the objects Oldbuck collects, and in terms of Oldbuck himself; doing so yields an understanding of chapter epigraphs as a form that collectively constitutes a curiosity-cabinet-like assemblage of oddities, and individually function to slow down the pace of the novel, reiterating the slow-going pace of the antiquary himself.

Oldbuck is primarily a collector of literary artifacts, whose assortment of texts includes: a "bundle of ballads" (35); a "mutilated copy of the Complaynt of Scotland" (36); "little Elzevirs" (36); "a little black smoked book about the size of a primer" (36); and even an "original broadside—the Dying Speech, Bloody Murder, or Wonderful Wonder of Wonders—in its primary tattered guise" (37). These historic objects have special bearing on *The Antiquary*'s

chapter epigraphs, which as themselves an assemblage of historic literary texts. As brief fragments of longer works, chapter epigraphs share the disintegrating quality of those "little," "mutilated," and "tattered" texts that Oldbuck collects. Bringing together quotations from a vast range of writers and works, including Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* (228), Thomas Dekker's *The Wonder of a Kingdome* (201), and John Gay's poem "A True Story of an Apparition" (86), as well as citations from ostensibly obscure works such as an "Old Play" (322) (that were probably written by Scott himself), the chapter epigraphs collectively evoke a cabinet—perhaps more accurately, a library—of literary curiosities, and in so doing formally augment the novel's overarching antiquarian theme.

Commenting on the oddity of the sheer variety of the texts Oldbuck collects, the narrative, focalized through Lovel, observes that "the collection was, indeed, a curious one" (34):

> here was a book valued because it had the author's final improvements, and there another which (strange to tell!) was in request because it had them not. One was precious because it was a folio, another because it was a duodecimo; some because they were tall, some because they were short; the merit of this lay in the title-page, of that in the arrangement of the letters in the word Finis. There was, it seemed, no peculiar distinction, however trifling or minute, which might not give value to a volume, providing the indispensable quality of scarcity, or rare occurrence, was attached to it. (36)

Here we learn the value of the texts in Oldbuck's collection rests in their exceptionality—those "peculiar distinction[s], however trifling or minute." *The Antiquary*'s chapter epigraphs, likewise, are of exceptional interest, because nearly one third were written by Scott himself, and then attributed to other sources. This extensive use of self-authored falsely attributed epigraphs was unprecedented in the early nineteenth century, and has led many critics, most recently Elaine

Freedgood, to deem Scott "one of the originators of the self-authored epigraph" (81). Scott likely wrote the epigraph that precedes Chapter Fifteen, but attributes it to an "*Ancient Indorsation of Letters of Importance*" (138), and likely wrote the verse contained in the ostensible "Old Play," which he quotes exclusively in the final third of the novel. These falsely attributed epigraphs are, in some sense, literary fakes, or forgeries, and as such reflect that counterfeit, misattributed antiquities that Oldbuck encounters in the narrative itself: for instance, in Chapter Four, he misinterprets a ditch dug by peasants as the site of an ancient Roman encampment (40), and also overpays for an object he believes to be an ancient coin, that is in fact a "bodle," or Scottish copper coin (46). The close correspondence between *The Antiquary*'s preoccupation with misattributed, forged antiquities, and its own fabricated epigraphs, suggests that Scott's paratextual innovation was—at least in the beginning—undertaken to augment the theme of this novel.

Moving from the objects Oldbuck collects to the figure of Oldbuck himself—in essence, a man who is defined by collecting objects—adds another dimension to our understanding of epigraph function; namely, this antiquarian's meandering movements in the text invite us to understand chapter epigraphs as a form that is similarly slow-going. Many critics have pointed out that Oldbuck seems to be an autobiographical creation, based on Scott himself; both are enthusiastic collectors of antiquities.[5] This connection between creator and character has been addressed by numerous critics, beginning with Scott's son-in-law and first biographer, John Lockhart, who noted that Scott's "own antiquarian propensities […] had by degrees so developed themselves, that he could hardly […] have scrupled about recognising a quaint caricature of the founder of the Abbotsford Museum, in the inimitable portraiture of the Laird of Monkbarns"

[5] More recently, John Sutherland, in his biography *The Life of Walter Scott*, has sketched out a series of telling similarities connecting Oldbuck and Scott (190-192).

(4.12). But Oldbuck is more than mere reflection of his creator; he is also the corporeal manifestation of an epigraph-laden novel. Through the figure of the antiquary, the novel theorizes about the effects and conditions of its own epigraph use. Specifically, the fragment-obsessed Oldbuck's slow-moving characterization calls attention to the epigraphic novel's own slow-going pace.

Of all the characters in Scott's novels, Oldbuck is the figure most clearly associated with epigraphs. He readily admits that he lives, eats, and breathes textual fragments upon saying: "I delight in the *analecta*, the *collectanea*, as I may call them, of the preceding day's dinner" (137). Literally the terms "analecta" and "collectanea" refer to crumbs, but in early nineteenth-century usage they referred to literary extracts (Watson 455). Here we find Oldbuck acknowledging that he feeds off of extracts, in language reminiscent of epigraphs; after all, what are epigraphs if not literal literary extracts? The connection between the epigraph-eating Oldbuck and the epigraph-laden novel is further suggested in Chapter Sixteen, which evinces a self-consciousness of its own epigraphical forms upon describing Mr. Oldbuck "muttering the while the words of Falstaff which we have chosen for the motto of this chapter" (149). Here the novel connects an intradiegetic character with an extradiegetic text, by placing the words of the latter in the mouth of the former. This is the only time *The Antiquary* explicitly acknowledges its own use of mottos, and Oldbuck, notably, is the vehicle for doing so. When Oldbuck's language is overtaken by the language of an epigraph, the end result is a seeming suggestion that the two are interchangeable. Further cementing this relationship between antiquary and epigraph is the quotation preceding Chapter Six, from William Cartwright's mid-seventeenth-century play *The Ordinary*:

> *Moth.* By Woden, God of Saxons,
>
> From whence comes Wensday; that is, Wodnesday,

> Truth is a thing that I will ever keep
> Unto thylke day in which I creep into
> My sepulcre—

The character who speaks these lines, Robert Moth, is himself an antiquary. In transforming an actual antiquary (or more accurately, his language) into a paratextual epigraph, the novel again invites us to read collectors and collected texts in terms of each other, and further supports a reading of Oldbuck as representation of the epigraph-laden novel.

Recognizing that the novel invites us to read Oldbuck as a figure for *The Antiquary* is useful for exploring how the novel theorizes epigraph function. Oldbuck is repeatedly characterized as "something of a sluggard"—that is, as a slow-moving man (343). Throughout the narrative, Oldbuck is constantly slowing people down or being slowed down. This idea is present from the opening chapter of *The Antiquary*, which features a scene of delay in which Oldbuck and Lovel are waiting for a carriage that is fifteen minutes late, and Oldbuck becomes increasingly irate (16). After boarding the carriage, the men are twice more delayed, but these interruptions now only bother Oldbuck insofar as they interrupt his excited descriptions of artifacts:

> Although two causes of delay occurred, each of much more serious duration […] our Antiquary only bestowed on the delay the honour of a few episodical poohs and pshaws, which rather seemed to regard the interruption of his disquisition than the retardation of his journey.
>
> The first of these stops was occasioned by the breaking of a spring […] To the second, the Antiquary was himself accessory, if not the principal cause of it; for, observing that

> one of the horses had cast a fore-foot shoe, he apprized the coachman of this important deficiency. (18)

In this opening we learn both that the Antiquary has been slowed down, and that he eventually slows others down. By beginning with an account of an antiquary off to slow start, this chapter sets the precedent against which we can evaluate the novel's epigraphs, which are also beginning forms that appear repeatedly throughout a novel.

In an extraordinarily self-referential statement regarding pace and timing, chapter seven opens with a description of how Oldbuck is painfully slow-moving, due to his intrusive intellectual ramblings. This acknowledgement of the antiquary's antagonizing slowness is couched within a direct address to readers:

> With our readers' permission, we will outstep the slow, though sturdy pace of the Antiquary whose halts, as he turned round to his companion at every moment to point out something remarkable in the landscape, or to enforce some favorite topic more emphatically than the exercise of walking permitted, delayed their progress considerably. (114)

Here we find a sentence whose syntax formally enacts its theme, for the very acknowledgement of halting is interrupted and delayed by clauses describing the sorts of commentary that Olbuck uses to slow Lovel down. Even at the level of the line, then, this antiquary halts and delays us. Encountering his informative intellectual asides alongside Lovel, we too find that Oldbuck's commentary postpones our progress into the chapter. This moment is emblematic of the way in which Oldbuck's lengthy quotations of obscure texts delay readers throughout the novel. This antiquary's persistent bringing up of textual tangents—and bringing the action of the narrative to a crawl when he does—suggests that we can understand *The Antiquary*'s epigraphs as

intellectual asides that intrude upon a reader's pace with "some favorite topic." As poetry embedded in prose, chapter epigraphs similarly interrupt and slow down readers at the start of a chapter, by momentarily taking one outside the plot and the genre of the main narrative. Functioning in this way, epigraphs are the extradiegetic counterpart to Oldbuck's intradiegetic antiquarian asides. Delaying readers and drawing our attention away from the main text, epigraphs, like antiquarian rantings, bring our progress through the novel to a very slow crawl.

A particularly fitting example of this delaying process is found in the epigraph to Chapter One, which, like the narrative it precedes, is all about coach travel—specifically, it is about calling for a coach:

> 'Go call a coach, and let a coach be call'd
> And let the man who calleth be the caller;
> And in his calling let him nothing call,
> But Coach! Coach! Coach! O for a coach, ye gods!'
>
> -*Chrononhotonthologus* (13)

There is an apparent unconcern, in these lines, with getting the novel going. The first, second, and third lines are individually redundant, as each issues the same command in two different ways—the first asks someone to shout for a coach, the second describes the kind of person who should call the coach, and the third introduces the idea of what that person will yell. "Call" is used six times, five of which are verbs, and the redundancy and overabundance of repetition in these lines results in the unnecessary lengthening of a simple, brief command: "Go call a coach, and saying nothing but Coach!" The end result is an epigraph which delays readers before the story has even gotten going. In paratextually delaying readers, this initial epigraph serves as a

slow start to a chapter that is itself about a slow start, and as such, establishes one type of relationship that will connect epigraph to text throughout the novel.

The epigraph preceding Chapter Fifteen evinces a similar difficulty with getting the chapter going. The epigraph, which was likely by Scott himself, reads:

> 'Be this letter delivered with haste—haste—post-haste! Ride, villain, ride—for thy life—for thy life—for thy life!'
>
> *Ancient Indorsation of Letters of Importance* (138)

Ironically, despite being preoccupied with the theme of quick movement, this epigraph evinces delaying tactics much like those in the epigraph preceding Chapter One. Repeating "ride" twice, and "haste" and "for thy life" three times each, this epigraph again unnecessarily lengthens the rather simple command of: "Deliver this letter swiftly." Moreover, given that this statement was written by Scott—and thus, the attribution is a fabrication—this quotation gets readers of the chapter off to a false start, as well as a slow one.

Within the figure of the fragment-collecting antiquary, we find the *The Antiquary* theorizing about its own epigraph use. In inviting us to read epigraphs in terms of a slow-moving character, *The Antiquary* prefigures the techniques of Gaskell's *North and South*, and Eliot's *Middlemarch*, which invite us to understand epigraphs in terms of peripheral characters and shrunken scholars, respectively. Turning our attention to *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, we find a text that takes this theorization of epigraphs a step farther, by highlighting a particular aspect of mottos that makes a novel containing them seem so slow-going; namely, their status as multiple beginnings, that compel readers to adopt a stop-start reading process.

IV. Stop-Start Structures in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*

Scott's epigraph use in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* would seem, upon first glance, to be the most conventional and uninteresting among the novels examined in this chapter: Unlike *Waverley*, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* uses chapter epigraphs consistently; unlike *The Antiquary*, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* does not contain a corporeal manifestation of the epigraph-laden novel. Instead, within *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* we find a consistent series of mostly poetic epigraphs, many having clear connections to the chapters they precede. Tony Inglis describes the novel's epigraphs as texts "flashing an advance signal […] to the reader"—and he is not wrong (XXV).[6] And yet, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s epigraph use is no less noteworthy than that of its predecessors. The epigraphs' importance lies not in their correspondence to actual characters or textual fragments appearing in the novel, but rather in their correspondence to *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s many beginnings. Critics have long-noted that *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* is, even for a Scott novel, incredibly slow-going, in large part because the novel seems to start at least three times, first with Pattieson's opening anecdote, then with the Porteous riots, and finally with its focus upon Jeanie Deans. Speaking to this subject, Ian Duncan observes that "the narrative seems to pause and begin again at its eighth chapter" (147) while Sutherland notes that "'begin at the third chapter'" is advice useful to follow when reading *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (216). As opposed to *Waverley* and *The Antiquary*, whose starts, though slow, maintain a clear forward direction and keep their focus largely on their same character, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s opening changes focalizers, genres, and plots with such jolting frequency that its beginning is as memorable for its false starts and stop starts as for the narrative it introduces. It is precisely these

[6] The only thing unusual about *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s epigraph use is that, unlike many of Scott's other novels, all but two of its epigraphs—those to Chapters 19 and 24—have real historical sources.

qualities of the novel—its multiple beginnings, and the resulting stop-and-start pacing that they create—that its epigraphs reiterate and amplify.

Ian Duncan suggests that *Mid-Lothian*'s multiple beginnings can be explained by envisioning the novel as panorama of society, which needs a "scattering" of plot-points, because "the more scattered the narrative, the more proof of a larger form filled by its scattering" (148). Duncan's metaphor is useful for helping us comprehend *Mid-Lothian*'s multiple beginnings within the context of the novel as a whole—that is, the novel after one has finished reading it. However, in subsuming the story's many beginnings within a "panorama" metaphor, he seems to be flattening the novel's multiple temporalities, and neglecting it readers. Considering the possibility that readers' encounters—specifically, the temporality of the reading experience—shape their perception of Scott's beginnings will take us further towards providing a theory of form that does not artificially freeze time in order to make its claims.

Within *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* we find that slow starts are a structural as much as a narrative matter, and as such, the novel adds an additional layer of comprehension to our understanding of epigraphs as slow starts. Specifically, the novel provides us with insights into those qualities of chapter epigraphs that makes them seem so slow-going. If *Waverley* explains why a slow reading pace is necessary for the newly emergent historical novel, and *The Antiquary* theorizes about the slowness of the epigraph-containing novel through the figure of a slow-going antiquary, then *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* offers variations on the theme "slow start," through providing an understanding of epigraphs as multiple beginnings which compel a stop-start reading process.

The Heart of Mid-Lothian's chapter epigraphs allow the theme of slow starts articulated in the first chapter to persist throughout the novel. *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* features an

introductory text that, despite being called "Chapter One," really seems to serve as an introductory paratext to the novel proper, as its content has very little to do with the main plot. Instead, this chapter presents the purportedly true event of Peter Pattieson's life that caused him to write the novel, and in so doing dramatically slows down the narrative for readers desiring to get to the story's main plot. In a fitting fusion of form and content, the novel's first paragraph is a lengthy commendation of slowness, as Pattieson bemoans the quickly-moving stage coach's rise in popularity, which has occurred to the detriment of the "ancient, slow, and sure modes of conveyance" (11). Acknowledging that many "ridiculed the slowness of these vehicles of public accommodation" (11), Pattieson points out that violent accidents as a result of high-flyers and mail-coaches speeding along cause many to "rue the exchange of the slow and safe motion of the ancient Fly-coaches" (11-12). Slow and steady pacing, these opening paragraphs remind us, is far preferable to the speedier, scarier pace allowed for by modern vehicles. Notably, this discussion parallels those other discussions of slow-going vehicles that we have already seen in the "humble English post-chaise" of *Waverley,* and the repeatedly delayed public carriage of *The Antiquary*. If these prior opening discussions are any indication, then it seems that any time a slow-moving vehicle appears in Scott's work, a discussion of readers, genres, and narrative pacing will follow close behind. Returning to *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s opening, then, with a heightened awareness of the interconnected ideas of vehicles, beginnings, and reader pacing, allows us to examine Pattieson's introduction with an eye attuned to what it may tell us about beginning forms.

The dilly-dallying quality of Pattieson's introduction is then further represented in its content, for the chapter provides an account of a stage-coach journey that encounters obstacles and gets delayed. Pattieson's routine leisure activity—watching a stage-coach speed through

town—is deferred because the stage coach in question has flipped over, and in so doing slowed down the journey of two lawyers. Notably, one of these delayed travelers is an avid novel reader, who confesses, "I read and swear till I get to the end of the narrative" (20). In other words: the novel begins with a novel-reader who has been delayed on his journey. More particularly, it begins with a person who reads with a fervent desire to "get to the end" of a narrative, who has been interrupted. In providing such a figure, the novel seems to be commenting via content upon what it is itself doing through form: that is, delaying readers who long to get going, and get to the end of a story. The idea of a "slow start" continues to surface as the chapter proceeds, as the lawyers encounter two more delays to their departure; first, due to a carriage with no room, and then, due to an inhospitable political climate. Recognizing the mutually illuminating relationship between opening form and content allows us to conceive of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s slow start as a feature that is not—despite Nassau Senior's claims to the contrary—"singularly careless," but instead intentional, strategic and self-aware, allowing for the formal introducing of the theme of narrative delay that will carry into the start of the novel proper (224). Bringing this opening's techniques and themes to bear on the novel's epigraphs allows us to conceive of them as beginning forms that play a key role in this slowing-down process.

Pattieson's account provides no main characters, no main action, and at first it is difficult to determine who and what one should pay attention to. In other words, Chapter One is a formal slow start that delays readers. *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s representation of the slow start is dramatically amplified in the novel's epigraphical structure. Epigraphs, like the novel's opening chapter, redirect readers' attentions onto topics other than the main plot, and in so doing slow readers down. If we imagine *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s readers to move with the same "need for speed" as this chapter's novel-reading lawyer, then chapter epigraphs emerge as the formal

echo of the many delays that the lawyer encounters. Citing a range of sources from Burns to Milton, epigraphs delay one's reading of the main plot every time they introduce a new topic. For example, the epigraph to Chapter Sixteen reads

> —She speaks things in doubt,
> That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
> Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
> The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
> And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts.
>
> *Hamlet* (163)

Although this epigraph describing a mad Ophelia eventually proves to be a psychological sketch of Madge Wildfire, who is introduced in the chapter that follows it, such a connection is available to a reader only in hindsight, and thus, the immediate impact of the epigraph is to pull a reader's focus away from the story. This distracting and disruptive quality of the epigraph is further accentuated in Chapter Sixteen's opening sentence, in which the narrator compares his narrative techniques to those of "the digressive poet Ariosto" (163). The end result of the novel's epigraphical redirecting at the beginning of chapters is a stop-start reading process, as one must pause and ponder the purpose of an epigraph before returning to the main narrative. This "stop start" quality of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s epigraphs is felt even more acutely when we recall that nearly all of them are pulled from poetry or plays, and thus require different reading strategies than prose. For example, the very first epigraph to the very first chapter of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* poetically portrays the progress of a stage coach, saying

> So down thy hill, romantic Ashbourn, glides

The Derby dilly, carrying six insides.

Frere (11)

Were we to read this epigraph as a poem, we would read with an eye attuned to rhyme, alliteration, and meter, among other things—none of which are issues pertinent to the prose of the first chapter of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*. Berger aptly remarks that sometimes Scott's mottos "lead […] the reader astray at first," and indeed, occasionally the epigraphs' stop-start structures prove to be false-start structures (395). Some of the novel's epigraphs have a very murky connection to the chapter that follows them, and this obliqueness makes the epigraphs seem like false starts to the chapters they precede. For example, the epigraph to the final chapter of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* has no easily discernible connection to the chapter that follows it. Pulled from the first part of *Henry VI*, the epigraph features Talbot's address to his son, immediately before both die in battle:

> —I did send for thee
>
> …
>
> That Talbot's name might be in thee reviv'd,
>
> When sapless age, and weak unable limbs,
>
> Should bring thy father to his drooping chair.
>
> But,—O malignant and ill-boding stars!— (526)

This epigraph, with its talk of a father living on through his son, most obviously signals the story of Effie Deans's son, the Whistler, which doesn't appear until three pages (e.g., ten paragraphs) into the chapter. Even then, the epigraph's connection to the father/son story which unfolds is an unclear one—the Whistler and his father do not meet in the chapter, except perhaps in the hint of patricide that lurks around the edges of George Staunton's murder.

The stop-start and false-start qualities of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s epigraphs evoke the stop-start structure of the novel's opening eight chapters. After Pattieson's introduction the novel seems to begin at least two or three more times, including its account of the Porteous riots, its focalization through various characters, and Jeanie's appearance. The first seven chapters describing the Porteous riots leave it unclear as to who the novel's protagonist is, therein making it difficult to determine which character should receive most of a reader's attention. Should we pay attention to Robertson or Wilson? Porteous or Saddletree? Butler, one of the main characters, only appears at the end of Chapter Four, and then a few chapters focalized through him create the impression that he is the protagonist. But eventually this too emerges as a false start, upon the introduction of Jeanie Deans, the protagonist, in Chapter Eight. Moreover, these chapters spend a good deal of time dwelling on largely minor characters—Dumbiedikes, Wilson, Saddletree, etc., even going so far to focalize portions of the story through them. When we realize upon reaching Chapter Eight that such men aren't the novel's main characters, our having given them so much attention starts to feel like a waste of time—and thus, with the benefit of hindsight, the first eight chapters of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* all emerge as a series of false starts, whose cumulative effect is to the make novel's beginning feel excruciatingly slow. *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s chapter epigraphs imbue the novel with multiple structural beginnings in ways that parallel these multiple beginnings of the novel proper.

To encounter an epigraph is to encounter a chapter that begins twice. *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s juxtaposing of epigraphical structures with a narrative that starts multiple times highlights this particular effect of epigraph use. In so doing the novel foregrounds how chapter epigraphs are a slow-going literary form, whose ultimate effect is a general impression of slow pacing. From *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, then, we learn that the effects of epigraphs—like the

effects of the novel's myriad beginnings— are accumulative; whether we characterize them as false starts, stop-starts, or simply slow starts, the novel's chapter epigraphs constitute an extended exploration of what it means to start slowly, and more particularly, what it means to start slowly structurally, in literary form. The problems of a too-slow beginning presented in *Waverley* and *The Antiquary*—dwelling on irrelevant characters and details, impatient readers desiring to get to the main plot, and an introductory frame that slows things down—are augmented and more deeply explored through *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s epigraphical forms. Reading the epigraphs alongside *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s myriad beginnings reveals that paratext and main text alike are structured as a series of stop-starts, which is really just a particular way of moving slowly.

V. Scott's Slow Starts

In 1963 John Raleigh, paraphrasing Victorian historian Andrew Lang, observed that, by the 1880s, "any tyro could get things going better than Scott" (49). In saying that a novice writer could get the beginning of a narrative moving more quickly than Scott, Raleigh aptly encapsulates over one hundred years of critical complaints concerning the beginnings of Scott's novels, which inspired some choice critical epithets: Nassau Senior complained that *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*'s "beginning, or rather…beginnings, for there are half a dozen of them, are singularly careless" (224); R.H. Hutton found that Scott's "rather elaborate jocular introductions …are clearly laborious at times" (497); and another critic likened Scott's introductions to "a vicious undergrowth" (Inglis XX) written by, as A.N. Wilson put it, "a bore who has got us into a corner" (120). Be Scott's beginnings careless, laborious, or down-right boring, the critical complaints they inspired suggest another characteristic they share: in short, they are too long-winded. Indeed, Andrew Hook has cited Scott's "slack and slow-moving narrative procedures"

as part of the reason why he transformed from "The Great Unknown" to "the Great Unread" (11-12), while the 1993 and 1975 editors of *Old Mortality,* deeming the opening too sluggishly paced, suggested "skip the 1830 Introduction, skip the framing narratives…and begin with the wappenshaw which opens the action proper" (Stevenson and Davidson xxxix).

Continuing these critics' preoccupation (though not, of course, their condemnation), this chapter has argued that epigraphs can be understood as strategically employed slow starts, and that the slow-going pace they create is helpful for understanding the nascent historical novel's generic self-definition. Whether readers welcome Scott's slow starts or criticize them has far more to do with changing literary tastes than with the quality (or lack thereof) of his writing itself. Some modern-day readers will likely find Scott's chapter mottos irritating and unnecessary—as Berger suggests, "if, as perhaps often happens now, the reader skips and neglects [them], then there is nothing the author can do" (384). However, nineteenth-century readers often admired epigraphs, as the publication of an anthology of Scott's mottos, compiled "in compliance with the wishes of many readers," makes abundantly clear (Advertisement). One particularly enthusiastic reviewer, the Rev. Thomas McCrie, proclaimed that the mottos "contributed as much as anything to the popularity of the tales" and likens the "leading beauties" to "the chorus in the ancient Greek tragedy," drumbeats, and horn calls, among other things (qtd. in Alexander 84). In this text there is a palpable pleasure taken in the pause of an epigraph, and a discernable enjoyment of the lingering, leisurely practices epigraphs compel. Thus, although Alexander remarks that "some will choose to ignore the mottos. That is their right" (88), to do so is to miss, perhaps, the pleasure of the paratextual pace the novel sets.

In this chapter, we have seen that Scott—despite making claims to the contrary[7]—was not a careless user of epigraphs, but rather, a formally conscientious one. Whether we find them pleasurable or painful to read, the fact remains that Scott's starts are slow ones, and that this slow going comes from a knowing author, who is attempting to distinguish his novel's novel place in the literary canon. In *Waverley*, *The Antiquary*, and *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, we find epigraphs exploring different issues, but whether functioning as structural speedbumps, stop-start openings, or paratextual reflections of a meandering character, epigraphs emerge in Scott's works as a form intrinsically preoccupied with questions of slowness, readerly focus, and beginning. These questions are further explored by Gaskell and Eliot; *North and South* invites us to consider epigraphs as diversions that momentarily take us beyond the main narrative, while *Daniel Deronda* continues to highlight the difficulty of getting something started—be it a novel, a chapter, or the life of its titular character. Neither of these novels, however, sustains the preoccupation with slowness and its merits that we find in Scott's mottoes, and this may be the epigraphical feature that is distinctly, wonderfully, and uniquely Scott's own.

[7] For instance, in a letter written while the anthology of his mottos was being prepared, Scott pronounced:
"It is odd to say but nevertheless it is quite certain that I do not know whether some of the things are original or not and I wish you would devise some way of stating this in the title. The author of Waverley finding it inconvenient to toss over books for a motto generally made one without too much scrupling whether it was positively and absolutely his own or botched up out of pieces and fragments of poetry floating in his memory."
(*Letters* 104)

Chapter 3

Gaskell's Epigraphical Collectives and Excursions

The latter half of this dissertation turns from the Romantic to the Victorian period, asking what role did the chapter epigraph play in the realist novel? Elizabeth Gaskell herself offers little in the way of direct explanation, given that her only explicit comment on the topic is an 1848 statement made in a letter to the publisher of *Mary Barton*, saying, "You will see that I have decided on mottoes" (*Letters* 56). Gaskell is one of only two significant Victorian novelists to use chapter epigraphs (the other being George Eliot), and this fact has led several critics to conclude that the paratext was somehow antithetical to the project of the realist novel. Gérard Genette suggests that the nineteenth-century novel aimed to "repudiate the epigraph" as "the great modern realistic tradition" overturns "the historical, fantastic, or 'philosophical' narrative" (148), while Jeffrey Jackson suggests that epigraphs have a disruptive quality that is "at odds with the mimetic, realist text" (65). This chapter offers an alternative to readings suggesting that epigraphs are somehow inherently opposed to realist effects, by demonstrating how the paratext transforms some of the central preoccupations of *Mary Barton* and *North and South* into structural elements of the novel's form. Specifically, epigraphs foreground issues of collective action and peripheral influence. *Mary Barton*'s epigraphs require readers to become listeners to the working-class people of Manchester, and simultaneously enact a wordless embrace of cross-class collaboration and recognition. The epigraphs of *North and South*, as peripheral paratexts, dramatically accentuate the novel's preoccupation with thresholds and boundaries; reading the epigraphs alongside the novel's peripheral letter-writing characters reveals an understanding of epigraphs as liminal diversions, or momentary mental vacations for readers.

I. Gaskell's Contemporary Influences

Although the mid-nineteenth century is typically characterized as the period in which chapter epigraphs fell out fashion, this is not strictly speaking true. Several of Gaskell's contemporaries, the "silver fork" novelists, used chapter epigraphs as well. "Silver fork novel" refers to a type of literary genre popular from the 1820s to 1840s that was concerned with fashionable society, the regency, and aristocratic manners. Sometimes considered a generic "bridge" between Scott's historical romances and the realist novels of writers like Dickens, silver fork novels were often written by women, and provide a possible source of inspiration for Gaskell's adaptation of epigraphic forms (Engel 18). For instance, Gaskell's contemporary, Catherine Frances Gore, wrote several novels that incorporated chapter epigraphs. Among these is *Mrs. Armytage* (1836) which contains epigraphs from the likes of John Dryden and Shakespeare, and was deemed by Gaskell in a March 1855 letter "the best novel that Mrs. Gore has written" (*Further Letters* 127). In this same letter, written at the request of someone asking for recommendations of novels and novelists, Gaskell also mentions "*Emilia Windham*" [sic] a chapter-epigraph-containing novel by a "Mrs. Marsh" (Anne Marsh-Cadwell). It is worth noting that Gaskell's familiarity with the epigraph-laden novels of her contemporaries does not necessarily translate into admiration of the writers or their works. She describes Gore's novels as "fashionable" texts which "have very little plot in them, their principal interest (for those who read them,) consisting in a lively, spirited epigrammatic description of the manners of lords and ladies" (*Further Letters* 127). In a similar vein, Gaskell describes Marsh as a "lady [who] has written about thirty novels, one or two of which are very good; three or four tolerable, and the rest forgotten as soon as read. She writes for money and writes far too quickly" (*Further Letters* 127). Importantly, the silver fork novel that Gaskell proclaims "worth all Mrs. Gore's and Mrs.

Marsh's novels put together," *Christie Johnstone* (1853) by Charles Reade, does not use chapter epigraphs.

Knowing that silver fork novels contained chapter epigraphs—and that Gaskell clearly did not think highly of the genre or its key practitioners—raises several puzzling questions: why did Gaskell incorporate chapter epigraphs in her industrial novels, if they were a technique employed by a genre she abhorred? What capabilities did the chapter epigraph offer her Condition of England novels, that could not be achieved through the main text alone? To begin answering these questions, it is worth noting that Gaskell's epigraph use differs from that of her immediate predecessors in two important ways: first, Gaskell does not limit her epigraphic citations to historically important, canonical authors such as Shakespeare, Dryden, or William Wordsworth, the likes of which provide the majority of epigraphs for Marsh's and Gore's novels. Rather, Gaskell quotes from a wide range of her contemporaries, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning and political activist Ebenezer Elliott, and lesser-known historical writers, such as the poet and Jesuit priest Robert Southwell. In the silver fork novels, then, chapter epigraphs seem to amount to a sort of fashionable display of literacy that provides legitimation for women writers as well as decorative ornamentation for a fashionable novel, the paratextual equivalent of the "epigrammatic description" which these novels, according to Gaskell, prioritize over plot (*Further Letters* 127). Second, Gaskell's epigraph use departs from that of Gore and Marsh in that hers are the only works containing epigraphs that were written for the novels themselves. (The "Manchester Song[s]" of *Mary Baron* written by Gaskell's husband William Gaskell being one particularly famous example). These facts suggest that for Gaskell, the inclusion of chapter epigraphs was not a straightforward process of legitimation, ornamentation, or even the borrowing of techniques from works she admired; rather, her epigraph use was a conscientious

and at times collaborative structural choice. This aligns her paratextual practices far more with those of Ann Radcliffe or Walter Scott, than with those of her immediate literary predecessors.

Although we have little record of Gaskell directly discussing her use of epigraphs, the publishing history of her novels evinces a record of consistent, thoughtful engagement with and revisions of the "mottoes," as she herself called them. As mentioned at this chapter's outset, Gaskell agreed on mottoes for *Mary Barton* in conversation with her publisher, and these mottoes were then expanded and further elaborated in the novel's second edition (Foster xxvii). Moreover, epigraphs were not included in *North and South*'s original serialized run in *Household Words* (2 September 1854 through 27 January 1855) but were added in later for the revised and expanded first edition in book form, published in two volumes by Chapman and Hall in 1855. What we glean from this history is a sense of a writer who was highly aware of her use of epigraphs, and employed them not as incidental after-thoughts but as deliberate structural choices. Furthermore, several critics have argued that Gaskell's writing evinces a "formal self-consciousness" (Gallagher 33-34; Stone 176), and we know from her correspondence that she was highly aware of issues of novel construction, in particular issues of pacing and how the overall shape of a narrative would be affected by extending or compressing particular chapters. In particular, her letters evince anxiety about either overly diluting her work with extra material, or overly condensing it to suit publishers' needs. When writing to Edward Chapman about *Mary Barton* in May 1848, Gaskell exclaimed "it is such a relief to find I shall not have to dilute my story so much as I feared. It would be like adding water to an already drained tea-pot" (*Further Letters* 39). Expressing the opposite concern to her friend Maria James seven years later in January 1855, Gaskell complains "oh! I have been so cramped for room at the end of N & S.!...my poor story is like a pantomime figure, with a great large head, and very small trunk…I

shall try to add something to the separate publication to make it less unnatural, & deformed" (*Further Letters* 123). These letters reveal a writer anxious about adding either too much to a novel, or not being able to add enough; such negotiations lend credence to the idea that chapter epigraphs were not incorporated into her novels as incidental filler to suit the needs of a publisher, but rather as carefully considered parts of its structure.

Few critics have explored Gaskell's epigraph use; those that do tend to focus on a few quotations within a single novel at a time, rather than theorizing about epigraphs' impact in collective terms. The earliest examinations primarily focus on providing historical context: Graham Handley examines Ann Radcliffe's epigraphical influences on Gaskell, while C.M. Jackson-Houlston carefully traces out the literary environment in which the "Manchester Song[s]" of *Mary Barton* were written. More recently, Larry Uffelman has suggested that epigraphs "reflect…the substance of the chapter" they proceed" (76), while Ada Sharpe, focusing on Gaskell's quoting of Felicia Hemans in *North and South*, argues that this process constitutes "a means of claiming authority for a distinctly British tradition of women's writing" (199). In Sharpe's approach, epigraphs serve more as a justification for discussing Hemans's influence on Gaskell's text, rather than as objects of critical interest in their own right. Jackson and Elaine Freedgood have each theorized that chapter epigraphs provide a liberating space, either for Gaskell herself as an author, or for her characters. Freedgood, exploring the limitations of a sympathetic narrator attempting to portray the interiority of her characters, argues that epigraphs help maintain a "gap" which "is a space of freedom for the characters who cannot, finally, be spoken for in their entirety as subjects and who therefore have yet to be represented fully in novelistic terms" (220). Jackson suggests that epigraphs' liminal status means that there is something inherently revolutionary about them, and offers that "*North and South*'s epigraphs

instantiate the novel's striking resistance to established Victorian publishing practices" (58). Although Jackson's analysis comes closest to providing a coherent theory of Gaskell's epigraph use, his approach has several limitations: one issue is that Jackson constructs his theory through examining only one novel, *North and South*, with little mention of its structural predecessor, *Mary Barton*, which—though it is also concerned with questions of class division—lacks *North and South*'s overarching preoccupation with boundaries and thresholds. Thus, Jackson's theory of *North and South*'s epigraph use is not readily applicable to *Mary Barton*. Second, Jackson transforms a highly compelling insight—that epigraphs are a kind of threshold, or "edge" in the text—into a rather trite statement about their essentially radical potential, saying "epigraphs are inherently implicated in the resistant, the marginal: discourse from the textual dangerous edge of things, is, finally, about the dangerous edge of things" (57). Why does the fact that something appears on a margin make it inherently resistant? Jackson's methodology here involves a linguistic slippage, in which a description of placement becomes an assertion of topic. Given that Gaskell had already written one epigraph-containing novel by the time of *North and South*'s publication, and was familiar with several others, Jackson's overarching point that epigraphs by virtue of their appearance constitute a significant challenge to "serial and volume publication alike" seems untenable (58).

Gaskell's epigraphs are better comprehended in terms of the collective, the peripheral, and the diverting, rather than in terms of resistance or liberation. Within *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, epigraphs translate some of their narratives' central foci—a concern with collective action and cross-class reconciliation, on the one hand, and a preoccupation with boundaries and peripheral texts on the other—into perceptible elements of the novel's form. Epigraphs, in other words, help further the mimetic project of the realist novel, rather than oppose or repudiate it.

II. The Collective Function of *Mary Barton*'s Epigraphs

First appearing in 1848, *Mary Barton* contains an epigraph for every chapter, and the unattributed ones with no known source are widely believed to have been written by her husband, William Gaskell (Ward lxviii).[1] These include two epigraphs titled "Manchester Song," (5, 56) as well as poems with titles like "Love Thoughts," (80) "The Dream," (366) and "The Constant Woman," (246) among others. Many critics suggest that the poems' lack of attribution arises from Gaskell's desire to use them to provide an aura of regional authenticity for her novel. Jackson-Houlston, for one, proposes that in creating epigraphs for the novel and attributing them to authorless songs, "Gaskell is following in a tradition created by Scott in his Waverly novels" (27). The fact that William Gaskell wrote poetic epigraphs for *Mary Barton* bespeaks an important element of the paratext that can help us in understanding its function: namely, its inherently collaborative and collective nature. *Mary Barton* itself is a novel densely imbricated with overlapping collectives—collective voices, co-authored sayings, collections of specimens, and calls for collective action. In this section, I will explore the different types of collections, collecting practices, and collective activities in *Mary Barton*, and demonstrate how these different types of collectives can help us understand epigraphs' collective function in the novel. These inquiries are guided by the question: can epigraphic forms tell us anything about Gaskell's vision for social reform?

The chapter epigraphs of *Mary Barton* run parallel to the main text of the novel but remain apart from it; operating in adjacent but separate spheres, the paratext and main text work

[1] This widely-accepted claim can be traced back to Dr. A. W. Ward's introduction to a 1906 edition of *Mary Barton*, which states: "there is no need for attributing to the lyrical inventiveness of Mrs. Gaskell the mottoes at the heads of several of the chapters of *Mary Barton*…they were more probably the productions of her husband, who had a distinct lyrical gift" (lxviii). It is worth noting that this observation does not seem to extend to the anonymous epigraphs of *North and South*. Insofar as I have been able to discover, no critics have yet investigated the provenance of *North and South*'s unattributed epigraphs.

together to keep a divided structure firmly within readers' view. This dichotomous framework structurally echoes the novel's broader preoccupation with the tension between opposing classes. Freedgood has also noted this dimension of the novel, explaining that chapter epigraphs "keep the two nations literally on the page, in their separate textual spaces" (213). Furthermore, throughout the novel, epigraphs' presence highlights the tension between individual action and collective purpose. Most individual epigraphs maintain a straightforward relationship to the text they precede, offering commentary or summary of important themes in the chapter to follow. Taken together, however, epigraphs' import resides not in their commentating capabilities, but rather in their status as a collective of voices that mixes texts from the regional, the radical, and the highly regarded in an embrace of cross-class reconciliation.

One of *Mary Barton*'s driving tensions is the struggle among speaking, listening, and authority: namely, whose voice has the right to be heard? The epigraphic "Manchester Song[s]" of *Mary Barton* enable us to see how these issues are also key preoccupations of the novel's epigraphs. Marjorie Stone notes that "chapter mottoes…do much to establish a matrix of working-class discourse" in the novel, and the "Manchester Song[s]" are a key part of establishing this discourse (187). Their very title suggests that they arose out of the collective wisdom of the working-class Manchester milieu in which the novel takes place. These epigraphs compel readers to become listeners, through presenting the regional song of the urban working class whose demands are otherwise ignored. Jackson-Houlston similarly describes the "Manchester Song" of *Mary Barton* as "represent[ing] the voice of a newly literate laboring proletariat" (28). John Barton, the "Chartist…ready to do any thing for his order," is one such laboring man whose voice is represented in the epigraphs (*Mary Barton* 25). Early in the novel Barton experiences how "Parliament had refused to listen to the working men, when they

petitioned, with all the force of their rough, untutored words, to be heard concerning the distress which was riding…among the people (95-96). Each "Manchester Song" of *Mary Barton*, alongside other assorted unattributed poetry, helps to paratextually correct this problem, by asking readers to consider those texts ostensibly produced by the local people of Manchester, even giving their voices pride of place; the first chapter epigraph to the novel—thus, the first text in the novel proper that we read—is a "Manchester Song." Such songs suggest the important connection between epigraphic and ethnographic function in *Mary Barton,* as they record and make available the voices of the working poor. This observation is in keeping with the fact that William Gaskell took an ethnographic interest in the Manchester poor, even going so far as to write two lectures on their Lancashire dialect, which were published with one volume 1854 edition of *Mary Barton*. The novel's second epigraphic "Manchester Song" particularly vividly relates the difficulties of men like John Barton:

> "How little can the rich man know
> Of what the poor man feels,
> When Want, like some dark demon foe,
> Nearer and nearer steals!
>
> *He* never tramp'd the weary round,
> A stroke of work to gain,
> And sicken'd at the dreaded sound
> Which tells he seeks in vain.
>
> Foot-sore, heart-sore, *he* never came

Back through the winter's wind,

To a dark cellar, there no flame,

No light, no food, to find.

He never saw his darlings lie

Shivering, the flags their bed;

He never heard that maddening cry,

'Daddy, a bit of bread!'"

Manchester Song (56, emphasis original)

Presenting the problems of starvation, unemployment, inadequate shelter, and vast employer neglect, this song allows the complaints of the urban working class to have a paratextual poetic voice. Beginning with the denial of employment and ending with the cries of a starving child, this poem is structured in a way aimed to elicit sympathy for its working-class protagonist, perhaps to ensure that this song—unlike the complaints of the Chartists—does not fall on deaf ears. Blurring the boundaries between reading and listening, text and speaking, *Mary Barton*'s "Manchester Song" underscores the way in which Gaskell, as Shirley Foster elegantly explains, "centers her reforming vision on a call for better listening and more generous feeling" (xxvi).

III. Collecting Activities and Collective Actions

No discussion of the novel's overlapping collectives would be complete without a brief mention of its prolific scientific collector, Job Leigh. Similar to Walter Scott's antiquary, Leigh leads a life dedicated to the practice of collecting. Admittedly, his objects of choice are scientific specimens rather than old texts, but nonetheless, this collector offers us one potential way to understand Gaskell's chapter epigraphs—namely, as a collection of curious specimens, preserved

and displayed for all to see. It is easy to imagine that Leigh's numerous natural specimens, like the "scorpion" which hangs suspended in fluid, are analogs to the chapter epigraphs, which are literary specimens that hang suspended between chapters (39). In a curious inversion of collector and collected which blurs the boundaries between literary and scientific specimens, the opening epigraph to the chapter in which we first meet Leigh seems to be a description of him:

> 'Learned he was; nor bird, nor insect flew,
> But he its leafy home and history knew:
> Nor wild-flower decked the rock, nor moss the well,
> But he its name and qualities could tell.'
>
> Elliott (37)

In this descriptive excerpt from Ebenezer Elliott's poem "The Splendid Village" (1834), a collector of scientific specimens is reduced to a paratextual literary specimen; the collector becomes the collected text, and in so doing reminds us that when examining epigraphs it is important to keep the concept of collectives front and center.

Mary Barton offers another way to understand its chapter epigraphs in collective terms; this time, rather associating them with scientific specimens, the novel associates epigraphs with collections of textual fragments. In one of the novel's most important scenes, collective action takes the form of manipulating and remediating textual fragments. Notably, this scene occurs at the end of a chapter preoccupied with Trades' Union meetings, the "power of speech," and attempts at collective bargaining (177). This bargaining twice culminates in the creation of paper fragments that induce action—the first, is when Harry Carson's "admirable caricature" (179) of the Trades' Union negotiators is torn in two, discarded, and discovered by the union members, eventually motivating John Barton to call his union to "give the last drop of…blood to avenge us

on yon chap, who had so little feeling in him as to make game on earnest, suffering men!" (181-183). The second is when

> A number of pieces of paper (the identical letter on which the caricature had been drawn that very morning) were torn up, and *one was marked*. Then all were folded up again, looking exactly alike. They were shuffled together in a hat…each drew out a paper…He who had drawn the marked paper had drawn the lot of the assassin! and he had sworn to act according to his drawing! But no one, save God and his own conscience, knew who was the appointed murderer. (185, emphasis original)

In a fascinating intrusion of narrative topic into the epigraphic paratext, the new chapter immediately following this passage begins with a quotation attributed to an "Anonymous" source, perhaps underscoring the anonymity of the chosen assassin (185). In this scene's complex process of mediation and remediation, the fragment of paper first used to caricature the working-class men is transformed into many small pieces, one of which appoints an anonymous assassin; in other words, the literal drawing is transmuted into the drawing of lots for murder. Key to this part of the novel is the way in which a bit of torn up and redistributed paper—that is, a collection of textual fragments—becomes a tool of collective action. *Mary Barton*'s chapter epigraphs, too, are literary fragments whose presence in the novel amounts to a kind of collective action. In this case, epigraphs' content is less important than their attribution. Taken together, the epigraphs constitute a heterogeneous mixture of voices representing a range of classes: *Mary Barton* cites the "anonymous" (185, 257), authorless verse meant to convey a sense of regional authenticity and local knowledge (each "Manchester Song" [5, 56] as well as poems such as "The Dream" [366] and the well-known nursery rhyme "Polly Put the Kettle On" [13]); well-respected romantic writers such as Coleridge (207) Byron (359) and John Dryden (196);

Shakespeare plays (323); reformist poets such as Elliott (27, 37, 110, 335), [2] well-known supporters of social reform including Caroline Norton (95) and Thomas Hood (19), and working-class poets such as Robert Burns (323). The epigraphs' mixture of the regional with the revolutionary, the anonymous author with well-known and canonically accepted, allows the novel to structurally reconcile cross-class divisions and assert the equal authority of "those so bound to each other by common interests" (*Mary Barton* 3). In this way, the novel helps achieve through epigraphical structures the goals of the Trades' Union's agitations for social reform: an equitable, mutually interdependent society. Appearing at the head of every chapter, epigraphs allow each author cited—be they a recognizable writer or ostensibly anonymous regional contributor—to be equally influential within and subservient to the larger novel in which they appear.

I call this element of the paratext *Mary Barton*'s "epigraphic embrace," and it corresponds with other scenes of wordless physical embrace in the novel, most importantly, John Barton's final dying moments in the arms of the factory owner Mr. Carson, who "raised up the powerless frame; and the departing soul looked out of the eyes with gratitude. He held the dying man propped in his arms. John Barton folded his hands, as if in prayer" (358). It is important to note that this moment of wordless embrace occurs between two men associated with fragmentary texts elsewhere in the story: John Barton drew the scrap of paper marking him as the assassin, and used a fragment of a valentine to assassinate Harry Carson, while Mr. Carson encounters a fragment of scriptural verse, "They know not what they do," which inspires him to re-read the Gospel in a single night and ultimately to forgive John Barton (357). This moment of mutual recognition and reconciliation ultimately motivates Mr. Carson to take professional actions to

[2] Jackson-Houlston has pointed out that although Elliott was himself rather radical in his views, the poetic excerpts Gaskell cited were not, and "come from the milder or more literary side of his writing" (32).

ensure "that a perfect understanding, and complete confidence and love, might exist between masters and men" (374). At the novel's end we learn that "many of the improvements now in practice in the system of employment in Manchester, owe their origin to short earnest sentences spoken by Mr. Carson" (374). Brief statements, in other words, can have a powerful effect in reconciling class differences. In this context, epigraphs serve as the formal equivalent of Mr. Carson's brief proposals: epigraphical forms underscore the novel's calls for social reform, through embracing paratextual cross-class collaboration which places all authors cited, and all their voices, on an equal, and equally authoritative, footing.

Discussing *Mary Barton*'s numerous interpolated texts—not only epigraphs, but inset poetry, proverbs, and maxims as well—Stone suggests that "subsequent novels by Gaskell do not exhibit this plenitude of working-class discourse to nearly the same degree, and there is much to suggest that it results from deliberate narrative and rhetorical strategies in *Mary Barton*" (187). One of those strategies, I offer, is the attempt to formally foreground a sense of something collective. Be that something collective voices, collective actions, or collaborative authorship, epigraphs ensure that questions of class division, authority, and cross-class reconciliation are never far from readers' consideration. *Mary Barton*'s epigraphs do not offer a radical expression of solidarity, or a call for revolution, but rather a subtle structural embrace that translates some of the novel's most pressing issues and dramatic moments—the desire to be heard, the calls for collective action, and culminating cross-class wordless embrace—into distinguishing elements of the novel's form. In this way the chapter epigraphs do not repudiate the mimeticism of a novel which Gaskell "tried to write truthfully," but rather reinforce and enhance it (*Mary Barton* 4).

IV. Epigraphic Excursions in *North and South*

North and South is Gaskell's other epigraphic novel, though its initial print run in *Household Words* did not contain chapter epigraphs. This aspect of its publishing history has led Jackson to conclude that chapter epigraphs were Gaskell's means of self-consciously breaking free from the strictures imposed by serial publication (62). To assert, however, that epigraphs' import rests in the fact that their use constitutes a departure from the original version of *North and South*, is to overlook the novel's own theorizing about the import of peripheral texts. Hilary Schor has suggested there is an "intense self-consciousness" in *North and South* compelling readers to pay "attention to varieties of reading and readers" (124). This self-consciousness can also be extended to the novel's incorporation of chapter epigraphs, and its implied guidance in how we should read them. Epigraphs enable *North and South* to transform its preoccupation with boundaries, borders, and thresholds, as suggested by its dialectic title, into structural elements of the novel's form. Rather than assuming that a paratext in a liminal space is inherently resistant, as Jackson does, epigraphs' liminal status is better theorized through *North and South*'s liminal characters, Edith Lennox (née Shaw) and Frederick Hale. Edith is peripherally present in the novel's middle section by way of her letters describing life in Corfu, which amount to mental mini-vacations for Margaret Hale and reader alike. The novel's use of these letters as textual diversions provides us with a way to theorize about the function of epigraphs, which are likewise textual diversions on the periphery of the story that momentarily take a reader outside of the main text. Reading *North and South*'s peripheral paratexts alongside the novel's peripheral characters and the texts they produce generates an understanding of epigraphs as purposeful diversions which provide momentary mental respites, or imaginary vacations, for readers. These

aid a reader in getting through a novel that is at times so morose that Gaskell was tempted to name it "Death & Variations" (*Letters* 324).

Notably, this way of reading constitutes a departure from the prior section's focus on epigraphs as a cross-class collective of voices. This may seem odd given that *North and South* is also focused on questions of social unrest and the need for reform, as seen through the plight of the factory workers in the fictional industrial town of Milton, whose failed strike results in a riot. However—as Stone aptly explains—"on the whole" *North and South* "is much less polyglot, in part because of the use of Margaret Hale as a center of consciousness" (198). In fact, when other critics have discussed epigraphs in *North and South*, the overwhelming tendency is to associate them, as fragmented texts, with Margaret, and to a lesser extent her friend Bessy Higgins. These claims, put forward by critics such as Jackson and Sharpe,[3] rest primarily on evidence such as the moment Margaret hears "pieces of the conversation out of the next room" and attempts to sort "the fragments of conversation which [she] overheard" (8). Bessy Higgins, similarly, recites piecemeal quotations from the bible in daily conversation.[4] Although reading epigraphs in terms of textual fragments is a compelling critical move (in fact, this chapter has already done so in its reading of *Mary Barton*), in the case of *North and South*, the narrative offers us other, more compelling approaches. Given *North and South*'s recurring preoccupation with questions of borders, boundaries, and edges (what Jackson calls Gaskell's "epigraphic understanding" [58]), an approach that comprehends epigraphs in their status as threshold texts is more aligned with the novel's conceptual focus. This way of reading brings Edith—and to a lesser extent

[3] See Sharpe 203, and Jackson 67-68.

[4] In particular, Bessy often cites the Book of Revelation. Here is but one of many examples, which occurs during a conversation she has with Margaret: "'I ask your pardon,' replied Bessy, humbly. 'Sometimes, when I've thought o' my life, and the little pleasure I've had in it, I've believed that, maybe, I was one of those doomed to die by the falling of a star from heaven; 'And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.'" (126).

Frederick—rather than Margaret or Bessy into sharper focus. Appearing at the beginning and ending of the novel, Edith exists on the edges of the narrative, and makes her appearances mainly by way of her letters. Edith's narrative liminality is reinforced by the fact that she lives at the edges of the novel's geography in Corfu. Edith's existence at the narrative and geographic periphery of the story, coupled with her association with peripheral texts, make her a far more epigraphic character than Margaret or Bessy, whom are located squarely within Milton, the novel's geographic and narrative heart. As such, Edith provides a markedly different way of understanding epigraphs.

Throughout the novel, Margaret eagerly awaits Edith's letters, which typically arrive during difficult circumstances and provide a momentary mental reprieve from her worries. Indeed, in Volume 1, chapter 3, when Henry Lennox awkwardly arrives unannounced to court Margaret and happens to bring a letter from Edith, she cares far more about that letter than she does about her potential love interest, "half wishing to read it alone and unwatched" (23). Edith's letters, as texts from outside of Milton with vivid descriptions of life in an exotic locale, consistently serve as imaginary vacations for Margaret. For instance, upon feeling the "stupor of despair" (61) while settling into her decrepit Milton home, Margaret "determined to take her mind away from the present; and suddenly remembered that she had a letter from Edith" (62). In other words, Margaret intends to use the letter to take her focus off of her Milton problems. The letter in question tells "of their arrival at Corfu; their voyage along the Mediterranean—their music, and dancing on board ship; the gay new life opening upon her; her house with its trellised balcony, and its views over white cliffs and deep blue sea" (62). Reading almost like a travel magazine advertisement, Edith's letter goes on to describe her "villa, high up on the beautiful precipitous rocks over hanging the sea" (62). Though it is tempting to dismiss this letter's

content as ostentatious bragging, or perhaps as a plot device meant to throw into sharp relief how destitute Margaret's life has become, it is nonetheless important to note that these letters have a freeing effect upon their reader and enable her to momentarily travel away from Milton and its "heavy smoky air" (61). Indeed, Margaret thinks that "all out-of-doors, pleasure-seeking and glad, Edith's life seemed like the deep vault of blue sky above her, free—utterly free from fleck or cloud" (62). Notably, Edith's letter, after instigating a mental vacation, ends with a plea for Margaret to "come out and pay her a long visit"—that is, an invitation to take an actual vacation (62).

Mid-way through the novel, in Volume 2 chapter 4, another letter from Edith arrives. Its vacation-like quality is further underscored by the chapter's title, "A Ray of Sunshine" (215). This letter, occurring in the chapter between those detailing Bessy Higgins's and Mrs. Hale's deaths, once again provides respite from Margaret's difficulties with its descriptions of an Edenic paradise where "everybody…is young and well, and our skies are always blue, and our sun always shines, and…my baby always smiles" (215). Interspersed with these descriptions of the "delicious climate" (216) are Edith's entreaties that Margaret and her mother come to Corfu for an extended visit. Once again, this letter's descriptions provide a momentary imaginative vacation for Margaret, who

> did long for a day of Edith's life—her freedom from care, her cheerful home, her sunny skies. If a wish could have transported her, she would have gone off; just for one day. She yearned…even for a few hours to be in the midst of that bright life. (216-217)

"Forgetting herself" in reading, Margaret finds in Edith's letters a way to momentarily travel beyond Milton and her family problems (217).

Edith's letters, as diverting texts from the periphery that momentarily intrude upon and overtake the main narrative, offer us a way to think through the role of epigraphs in *North and South*. Pulled from a variety of poetic sources, such as Felicia Hemans's "The Two Voices" (220), Coleridge's *Literary Remains* (215), Robert Southey's "English Eclogues" (97), and Matthew Arnold's "The Consolation" (54), among others, chapter epigraphs invite a reader to pause and ponder over the verse they provide. Though the subject matter of the epigraphs typically relates to that of the chapters they precede, they nonetheless enable readers to momentarily move beyond the main text, by having us enter into works, words, and worlds from writers other than Gaskell. Taking readers outside of the main prose narrative and into pieces of peripheral poetry, chapter epigraphs provide temporary textual vacations from the main narrative, particularly if a reader is familiar with the work being cited and able to bring intertextual expansions compelled by the quotation into their reading of the text. Uffelman remarks upon this very quality of epigraphs upon noting that in *North and South* Volume 1, chapter 25, "the epigraph Gaskell chose to open the story of Frederick's return comes from Lord Byron's poem *The Island*…Margaret's worry, expressed at the end of the chapter, echoes the pathos of Mr. Christian's death as rendered in Byron's poem, a point which would have subtly enriched the experience of Victorian readers familiar with *The Island*" (77).

The diverting quality of epigraphs is even more apparent in sections of the novel where the quotations seem to have little or no relationship to the chapter they precede: for instance, the epigraph to Volume 2 chapter 10 reads: "'There's nought so finely spun / But it cometh to the sun.'" (251). At first glance, this unattributed poem has no obvious connection to the chapter following it, which describes the aftermath of Margaret's fainting spell, Thornton's encounter with police-inspector George Watson, and Margaret's conversation with her father about her

brother's new fiance. Upon closer examination, this poem's references to something "spun" and that something coming close to the "sun" might possibly refer to Margaret's lie to the police commissioner in the prior chapter, and her current worry that her lie will be discovered ("sun" here being equated with adages about the "light of truth"). Nonetheless, this prefatory epigraph's relation to the chapter is at best an oblique one, and this tentative connection underscores its distracting, diverting quality.

It is important to note that Edith is not the only liminal character in *North and South* sending letters to Margaret; Frederick Hale, her disgraced brother on the run from the law for mutiny, also exists on the periphery of the novel, both in terms of its narrative and geography. Frederick's appearances in the novel are the inverse of Edith's; his letters appear towards the beginning and ending, and he is briefly physically present in the novel's middle section, upon sneaking into Milton to see his dying mother. Frederick's peripheral presence adds an additional dimension to our understanding of *North and South*'s epigraphs. As a man on the geographic and societal margins of his community, Frederick has a unique relationship to *North and South's* epigraphs, which are primarily from the works of male writers, and thus render their authors similarly marginal male figures within the wider story. Examining these peripheral paratexts alongside the peripheral Frederick highlights an additional aspect of their diverting capabilities; namely, Frederick helps us see that marginal texts can serve as worrisome distractions as much as pleasurable ones. At the novel's beginning Margaret suspects that "some late intelligence of Frederick…was making her father anxious and uneasy" and "notice[s] an absence of mind, as if his thoughts were preoccupied by some subject" (21). This distracted worry manifests itself in Mr. Hale waiting "anxious[ly] for the village postman" (21). Although we soon find out that Mr. Hale's behavior arises not from concern about his son, but rather from his worries over leaving

the church, it is nonetheless noteworthy that Margaret interprets her father's anxious distractedness and waiting for letters as actions caused by her brother. Later on in the novel, in Volume 1 chapter 14, memories compelled by a re-reading of Frederick's "yellow, sea-stained letters" (98) distract and preoccupy Margaret's mother, Mrs. Hale. At the beginning of this chapter Mrs. Hale draws "more tenderly and intimately towards [Margaret] than she had ever done since the days of her childhood" (97). After reading Frederick's letters, however, Mrs. Hale takes "her hand out of Margaret's with a little impatient movement, as if she would fain be left alone with the recollection of her son" (101). Frederick's presence, in other words, interrupts Mrs. Hale's bonding with Margaret, who leaves the room "oppressed with gloom" (21). Frederick's peripheral presence suggests that peripheral texts can bring worrisome distractions as much as pleasurable ones. *North and South's* epigraphs, though distractions that take one outside of the main text, are also at times worrisome; for instance, an epigraph to Volume 1 chapter 21 inauspiciously reads "On earth is known to none / The smile that is not sister to a tear" (151, quoting Elliott's "Corn-Law rhymer"), and the epigraph to Volume 2 chapter 11 gloomily foretells "The steps of the bearers, heavy and slow, / The sobs of the mourners, deep and low" (264, quoting Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem "The Sensitive Plant").

On the whole, however, in the novel Frederick's letters—and eventually those from his wife—function in a manner similar to Edith's, as pleasurable, welcome distractions from Margaret's present difficulties. For instance, a March letter bringing news of Frederick's marriage helps momentarily lift Margaret out of "the dreary peacefulness of the present time" (312). In another letter, "Frederick spoke so joyfully of the future that he had no thought for the past," and soon

> the pretty, timid, girlish letters of Dolores were beginning to have a charm for both Margaret and her father. The young Spaniard was so evidently anxious to make a favourable impression upon her lover's English relations, that her feminine care peeped out at every erasure; and the letters announcing the marriage were accompanied by a splendid black lace mantilla, chosen by Dolores herself…Frederick was very, very happy. Dolores must be charming, and the mantilla was exquisite! And then she returned to the present life. (312-313)

In these letters, the writers' friendly, optimistic comments and descriptions provide momentary respite from Margaret's Milton problems. Towards the end of the novel, even the mere thought of visiting Frederick in Spain serves as a pleasing distraction. Mr. Campbell mentions that "he always went somewhere during the long vacation, and did not see why he should not go to Spain as well as anywhere else" (366-367), and Margaret can "hardly explain…how this idea of Spain, mere Chateau en Espagne as it might be, charmed and delighted her" (367). The French phrase, "Chateau en Espagne" literally means "castle in Spain," and serves as a metaphor for fantasy. It is not coincidental that one of the few times the novel explicitly mentions a vacation is a moment centered on imaginary dreams of the periphery, and on fantasies of leaving.

The diverting quality of *North and South*'s epigraphs constitutes a distinct departure from their use in *Mary Barton,* in which epigraphs—especially the "Manchester Song[s]" and poems from the likes of Elliott, Norton, and Hood—often seem to be generated by Manchester locals or those invested in their problems, and therefore redirect one back into, rather than take one outside of, the text. Of course, comprehending epigraphs as peripheral excursions presupposes that they will, in fact, be read. Gaskell's own comments about the pleasurable pauses compelled when reading quotations suggests that the epigraphs of *North and South* were incorporated with

the straightforward intention that they would be read. Gaskell evinces an understanding of quotations' delightfully diverting capabilities in her 1854 letter to Anna Jameson, writing that upon receiving Jameson's commonplace book "I…turn it over, and peep in, and read a sentence and shut it up to think over it's [sic] graceful and suggestive wisdom" (*Letters* 322). Gaskell goes on to describe the commonplace book full of quotations in nature-attuned language that evokes Edith's descriptions of Corfu. Reading "it is like looking into deep clear water—down below every instant of prolonged gaze, one sees some fresh beauty or treasure of clear white pebble, or little shady nooks for fish to lurk in, or delicate water weeds" (*Letters* 322-323). Gaskell's vivid descriptions of reading collected quotations as a process of delightful contemplation and prolonged gazing upon small beauties suggests that she intended for her readers to contemplate her novel's collected quotations in a similar fashion. When we read *North and South*'s peripheral paratexts alongside the novel's two peripheral characters, a new understanding of the chapter epigraph emerges: the novel compels us to comprehend epigraphs in their liminal status, and invites us to consider them as vacation-like distractions, which—like Edith's and Frederick's letters—momentarily take a reader outside of Milton and the main narrative. In providing us with an understanding of epigraphs as peripheral diversions, *North and South* constitutes a departure from the works of Radcliffe and Scott, which harness the idea that chapter epigraphs might not be read—that is, their optionality—in order to generate meaning.

Through *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, Gaskell highlights epigraphs' aggregative, diverting qualities, and demonstrates how the form can be used to investigate social issues, as opposed to merely formal or literary ones. Ones comes away from these novels with a more expansive sense of epigraphs' capabilities, because each texts highlights how epigraphs are a form capable of gesturing outward—be that gesture towards real issues of the working poor, or

simply towards words and worlds other than Gaskell's own. Jackson observes that "genealogists of the epigraph would allege that *North and South* may have been a bit of an oddity for its time, to a degree seldom appreciated then or now" (63). Gaskell's epigraph-containing novels are exceptional, I would add, not simply because they use chapter epigraphs, but because they are the first significant realist novels to do so. In both *North and South* and *Mary Barton*, chapter epigraphs augment and explore broader social and formal concerns posed by the main narrative. In the case of *Mary Barton*, paratexts provide a collection of voices that enacts an epigraphic embrace of cross-class collaboration. *North and South*'s portrayal of letters from peripheral characters enables us to understand its own peripheral paratexts—that is, chapter epigraphs—as momentary mental respites for readers. In each case, we find that epigraphs are not at odds with the mimeticism of the realist novel, but rather are working in tandem with it to amplify, underscore, and further elaborate upon issues raised in their texts. Ultimately, Gaskell's gleaning of collective meaning from epigraph attribution in *Mary Barton*, and association of peripheral characters with peripheral paratexts in *North and South*, prefigures the epigraphic techniques that would later be used by George Eliot in *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*. As we shall soon see, these novels similarly harness epigraphs' collective impact to great effect, using a shrunken, fragment-collecting scholar (Edward Casaubon) and hesitant young man unsure of his own origins (Daniel Deronda) to explore questions of social form, the novel's form, and the role of epigraphs in the Victorian novel.

Chapter 4

Eliot's Epigraphical Experiments in *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*

Turning to George Eliot's epigraph use in her final two novels, *Middlemarch* (1871-72) and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), this chapter argues that epigraphs provide Eliot with a space to examine questions of social form and literary form, respectively. In many ways, Eliot's epigraph use corresponds with that of her predecessors, and can be seen to evince their influence. Like Radcliffe, Eliot employs unattributed self-authored quotations in her work, but does so more extensively and to very different ends. Rather than thinking through epigraphs in terms of "ruin," as do Radcliffe's works, the two Eliot novels discussed here—*Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*—take "shrinking" and "make-believe beginnings" as their key concepts. Like Scott, whose work she deeply admired, Eliot explores the concept of epigraphical starts (and comes under similar criticisms of lengthiness and laboriousness), but seems more interested in using her findings to theorize about the form and function of epigraphs than in training readers to read at a particular speed, as Scott does. Finally, Eliot's epigraphs, like Gaskell's, address a social issue; this time, it is a question of gender and authorship, rather than one of cross-class collaboration.

Preoccupied with issues of literary form, as are Scott and Radcliffe, as well as social issues, as is Gaskell, Eliot's epigraph use is nonetheless distinguished from that of her predecessors, in that her works provide the most sustained and explicit self-conscious theorization about the purposes and potentialities of epigraphical forms. *Middlemarch* acknowledges epigraphs' status as small subsidiary forms embedded within a vast novel and harnesses this relationship in order to make structurally sophisticated claims concerning the greatness of women authors, while *Daniel Deronda*, considering epigraphs in terms of their

initial position rather than size, presents epigraphs aware of their status as "make believe beginnings" that imbue the novel with a series of false starts and unattributed origins directly corresponding to the plot and plight of the novel's titular character, Deronda.

I. Epic-graphic Proportions in *Middlemarch*

By the time *Middlemarch*'s first installment appeared in 1871, chapter epigraphs had long fallen out of fashion for use in novels; and yet, *Middlemarch* contains an entire library of them.[1] When the works in which *Middlemarch*'s eighty-six epigraphs originate are listed side-by-side, the result reads like the syllabus for an eclectic Western Literature survey course. George Eliot quotes from the works of thirty-three different authors, including Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Dante's *Purgatorio*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, William Wordsworth's "London, 1802," several Shakespeare plays and—most compellingly—herself, over thirty times.[2] Eliot quotes no women other than herself, and quotes herself far more often than any other writer, with unattributed epigraphs spanning the genres of poetry, prose, and drama.[3] *Middlemarch* was not the first novel in which Eliot used epigraphs; chapter epigraphs also appear in *Felix Holt* and *Daniel Deronda*, and *Adam Bede* and *Silas Marner* contain epigraphs to the novels overall. She intended to include chapter epigraphs in *Romola*, but ultimately removed them before publication.[4] This history suggests that the use of epigraphs was not a fleeting endeavor for Eliot,

[1] Despite the widespread use of chapter epigraphs in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century novels—for example, in the works of Ann Radcliffe and Walter Scott—their popularity drastically dropped off in the mid-nineteenth century. Almost no Victorian authors use them. Two notable exceptions are George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell.

[2] George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ed. David Carroll (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), pp. 22, 176, 96, and 478. Subsequent references to *Middlemarch* come from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text and notes by page number. For a more in-depth catalog of Eliot's epigraphs, see David Leon Higdon, "George Eliot and the Art of the Epigraph," *NCF* 25, 2 (September 1970): 147-51.

[3] Eliot wrote over one-third of the epigraphs to *Middlemarch* herself.

[4] See Andrew Sanders, "Appendix B: The Unused Epigraphs to *Romola,"* in George Eliot, *Romola* (1863), ed. Andrew Sanders (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp. 682-5, qtd. in Antonie Gerard van den Broek, "Appendix A: Epigraphs to *Felix Holt, Middlemarch*, and *Daniel Deronda*," in *The Complete Shorter Poetry of George Eliot*, ed. William Baker, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 129.

but rather an ongoing experiment that was continually revisited and revised throughout her career. This chapter explores what it meant for Eliot to resurrect the out-of-date epigraphical form for *Middlemarch* in particular, and asks why she epigraphically included herself as the only woman alongside so many canonical male authors.[5] Key to these investigations is the way that *Middlemarch* urges us to read with attention to the significance of comparative scales, using phrases such as that eminent "microscope directed on a water-drop" and the "addition of proportional ciphers" to suggest that even the smallest moments can provide insights into much larger matters (pp. 55 and 320). *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs, likewise, can be understood if one reads them with an eye attuned to the significance of size and scale; doing so reveals a multifaceted examination of the Woman Question expressed in epigraphical form.

Fascinating to a few, but forgettable for far more, *Middlemarch*'s chapter epigraphs remain, quite curiously, one of the most rarely-discussed features of this otherwise extensively examined novel. Eliot's epigraph use is never mentioned within what is arguably the most well-known examination of epigraphs to date, Gerard Genette's *Paratexts* (1997), though that of her predecessors Radcliffe and Scott receives ample attention.[6] A handful of critics have attempted to remedy such omissions, with the earliest seeking to catalog and classify Eliot's epigraphs and their functions. J.R. Tye focuses on assigning authorship to the unattributed epigraphs in Eliot's novels, whereas David Higdon proposes a "conscious artistry" at work in Eliot's epigraphs and discerns "four major tendencies" connecting epigraphs to the main text: "structural allusion,

[5] To put the issue another way: why did Eliot, whom we know thought highly of Harriet Martineau, Charlotte Brontë, and Elizabeth Gaskell, quote no other women in her epigraphs? (See George Eliot, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," [1856], *Westminster Review*, New Series, 10 [July/October 1856]: 442-61).

[6] See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 144-60. Genette's omission is especially conspicuous in his discussion of epigraph attribution, where he claims that anonymous epigraphy implies "a level of personal commitment far beyond that of the ordinary epigraph" (p. 153). Given the degree of interest and importance Genette allocates to anonymous epigraphs, it is quite disappointing that he does not mention George Eliot once.

abstraction, ironic refraction, and metaphoric evaluation."[7] Other contemporary critics have sought to understand Eliot's epigraphs in ways extending beyond their relationship to individual chapters. Antonie van den Broek considers Eliot's epigraphs as part of her overall poetic oeuvre, while Herbert Tucker suggests that poetic epigraphs allow Eliot to experiment with composing in new genres.[8] Leah Price, providing the most sustained examination of Eliot's epigraph use, argues in her article "George Eliot and the Production of Consumers" that Eliot incorporated chapter epigraphs into her final two novels in attempt to influence which portions of her books would be extracted for publication in collections of sayings, arguing that "anthologies redefine the genre of Eliot's oeuvre and the gender of its author in contradictory ways" (145).

Notably, each of these arguments locates the significance of Eliot's epigraphs in their content; such approaches all too often lead to insular, similar readings, in which epigraphs' meaning is determined mainly by the texts that follow them—be those texts chapters or anthologies of sayings—and as a result, do little to explain epigraphs' collective structural role within a specific novel, or to explore the significance of Eliot's placing attributed and unattributed epigraphs side-by-side. Seeking to correct these oversights, my approach begins with a revision of our understanding of the epigraph, comprehending it for what it is in its most basic sense: a small, subsidiary saying subsumed within a vast novel. When we focus not on the intertextual expansions epigraphs provide readers, but rather on questions of hierarchical form and attribution, what emerges is a paratextual structure in which great male authors are shrunken down to size and unattributed quotations express epigraphical empathy for those small-scale

[7] See J.R. Tye, "George Eliot's Unascribed Mottoes," *NCF* 22, 3 (December 1967): 235–49; and Higdon, "George Eliot and the Art of the Epigraph," pp. 129, 134.
[8] See van den Broek, *Complete Shorter Poetry*, vol. 2, pp. 129-161; and Herbert F. Tucker, "Poetry: The Unappreciated Eliot," in *A Companion to George Eliot*, ed. Amanda Anderson and Harry E. Shaw (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 178-91.

women who, like Dorothea, leave "no great name on the earth" (p. 785).[9] In suggesting that the significance of Eliot's epigraphs hinges on their movement between the miniature and the massive, I join a burgeoning coterie of critics interested in establishing size as a major analytical category of Victorian fiction.[10] This chapter also draws upon and departs from those examinations begun by Susan Lanser, who was the first to locate a feminist impulse in Eliot's epigraphy. Lanser argues that through epigraphs Eliot "stands among male voices as the dominant though unidentified voice," and aligns herself with renowned male authors.[11] I contend, however, that when we turn to the epigraphs of *Middlemarch*, their feminist function emerges as not only (or even mainly) a question of alignment, but rather as a question of proportion. Rather than using male-authored epigraphs as tools for authorial legitimation, Eliot instead employs them as comparative tools, whose use throws into sharp relief the greatness of herself as a woman author and the protagonist so often identified with her. It is worth noting that Eliot called her epigraphs "mottos," which suggests that they function as summary-like slogans for the chapters they proceed; however, if we wish to examine the formal capabilities of epigraphs rather than their content, the term "motto" is not very useful. One problem is that "motto" implies a short phrase, and many of *Middlemarch's* chapter epigraphs are quite lengthy, especially the ones Eliot wrote herself. More importantly, "motto" lacks the formal literary specificity of the term "epigraph," which describes the beginning placement of a textual

[9] In other words, one of this argument's premises is that prior knowledge of the works in which Eliot's quotations appear is not necessary to understand how they function in the novel.
[10] See, for example, Laura Forsberg's "Nature's Invisibilia: The Victorian Microscope and the Miniature Fairy," *VSIJ* 57, 4 (Summer 2015): 638-66, which highlights the relationship between the small-scale worlds made visible by the microscope, and fairy worlds. Dehn Gilmore's article "Pigmies and Brobdignagians: Arts Writing, Dickensian Character, and the Vanishing Victorian Life-Size," *VSIJ* 57, 4 (Summer 2015): 667-90, argues that Dickens made his characters "larger than life" so that they would seem true to life (p. 668).
[11] Susan Sniader Lanser, "Woman of Maxims: George Eliot and the Realist Imperative," in *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 98-9.

quotation, as well as the purpose of its content. For these reasons, this essay will use the term "epigraph" rather than "motto."

Much work remains to be done on the questions of gender that *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs elicit, although Eliot herself has long been described as being at best indecisive and at worst antagonistic with regard to the "Woman Question," that capacious term for the interrelated arguments concerning women's capabilities and obligations that persisted for much of the nineteenth century. Kathleen Blake aptly encapsulates the feminist dissatisfaction with *Middlemarch* in particular, noting that many "are disappointed that Eliot makes a woman who might have been great come to so little."[12] But I propose that when it comes to *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs, a woman's "coming to so little" is precisely the point; more to the point, Eliot's own "coming to so little" via her unattributed epigraphs has vast implications for our understanding of the novel's handling of the Woman Question. Drawing on the work of Julie Orlemanski, who argues that "scales of reading *happen* in performances of reading," and that readers' shifting between scales constitutes "data," I suggest that when *Middlemarch*'s readers shift between the large-scale text of the novel and the small-scale text of the epigraphs, we find a back-and-forth process of shrinking and enlargement where data—that is, the insights compelled by the epigraphs—resides.[13] In keeping with recent readings by June Szirotny, who argues that Eliot is "more feminist" than usually thought, and Mark Allison, who suggests that *Middlemarch*'s utopian-socialist motif allows Eliot to "unobtrusively position herself in relation to the ideals" of

[12] Kathleen Blake, "*Middlemarch* and the Woman Question," *NCF* 31, 3 (December 1976): 310.
[13] See Julie Orlemanski, "Scales of Reading," *Exemplaria* 26, 2-3 (Summer-Fall 2014): 218-219. Although Orlemanski defines "scale" in relation to the pace of reading, while I am interested in it in its gauging, sizing up or down sense, her point is still applicable, as I also consider scale something that occurs in the process of reading.

early proto-feminist causes, I offer that in *Middlemarch*'s chapter epigraphs we find a more nuanced and encouraging feminist politics than appears in the novel itself.[14]

The following section will show that *Middlemarch* contains a feminist argument articulated at the level of structural form. It will do so through illustrating that a problem repeatedly brought up in the main narrative—the "epic" nature (or not) of a woman's life—is reformulated and rectified in the epigraphs. Paying attention to proportional relations between epigraph and novel, we find that major male authors and their works are miniaturized and relegated to the status of epigram, while Eliot and her novel are magnified, the female life elevated to the status of epic.[15] Key to these arguments is a reading of Casaubon as a man who bodily replicates the shrinking and miniaturizing processes of the epigraphs. Through a two-fold process of concentration and miniaturization when appearing individually, and their tackling of questions of equality and dominance when understood collectively, *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs provide a set of "proportional ciphers" that allow readers to perceive women's supposedly small lives as, in fact, lives operating on a grand scale. In connecting questions of epigraphical form with questions of social form, *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs convey a subtle feminist argument: The women's story is the epic. The men's? Epigrammatic.

More broadly, this chapter offers a theory for reading chapter epigraphs, particularly those in novels of the long nineteenth century. Eliot's extensive use of self-authored quotations unsettles the charge often levied against chapter epigraphs for being nothing more than a literary

[14] See June Szirotny, *George Eliot's Feminism: "The Right to Rebellion"* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 39, and Mark Allison, "Utopian Socialism, Women's Emancipation, and the Origins of *Middlemarch*," *ELH* 78, 3 (Fall 2011): 715.

[15] Here I define "epigram" as a brief quip, characterized by the shrinking down of a great work for a fleeting encounter, and define "epic" as I understand *Middlemarch* to be using it; that is, not in its strictly classical sense, but rather as a noun denoting and sometimes-adjective describing an important, broadly influential life.

symptom of the Victorian impulse to collect and display.[16] Systematic rather than symptomatic, *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs allow Eliot to construe problems of gender, authorship, and significance in terms of textual proportion, and to translate these issues of proportion, in turn, into an argument on behalf of the enormous value of the incrementally influential life. In so doing, *Middlemarch* broadens our understanding of what epigraphs are and what they are capable of, through revealing that their significance lies not only in their relation to the chapters they precede, but also in their proliferation of attributions and dramatic calling of attention to quantifiable questions of amount, size, and scale. Considering the chapter epigraph as a strategically scaled structure rather than an incidental by-product calls for a different kind of methodology than prior criticism has adopted; namely, it suggests that although a novel's chapter epigraphs are encountered individually, they should not be analyzed as isolated incidents, but instead be read in relation to one another, with due attention given to their status as smaller texts subsumed within a massive novel. When considered collectively, epigraphs' effects prove to be accumulative as well as immediate, and we find patterns of thought not perceptible when examining epigraphs on their own.

Before examining *Middlemarch*'s chapter epigraphs, it is helpful to first turn to Eliot's "Notes on Form in Art" (1868), from which we learn that her literary aesthetic was underpinned by a complex consciousness of form—specifically, she viewed the process of writing as an organic one, its end product a complex whole with many interrelated structural parts. This idea is evinced in the following passage, which also provides an apt description of the process of making sense of the epigraphs in *Middlemarch*:

[16] Higdon suggests as much upon offering that one can view epigraphs "as merely another example of the commonplaces so often preserved in Victorian collections of 'wise, witty, and tender sayings'" (Higdon, "George Eliot and the Art of the Epigraph," p. 129).

> And as knowledge continues to grow by its alternating processes of distinction and combination, seeing smaller and smaller unlikenesses and grouping or associating these under a common likeness, it arrives at the conception of wholes composed of parts more and more multiplied and highly differenced, yet more and more absolutely bound together by various conditions of common likeness or mutual dependence … Poetic Form was not begotten by thinking it out or framing it as a shell ...[17]

This is *Middlemarch* in, to borrow Eliot's phrase, "a bivalve shell," a novel composed of densely imbricated epigraphs "highly differenced, yet more and more absolutely bound together."[18] Including male and female authors, taking prose, verse, and dramatic form, and occurring in several sizes, chapter epigraphs prompt readers to use "alternating processes of distinction and combination" in order to discern their purpose. Indeed, in her *Middlemarch* notebooks, which are full of quotations and potential "mottos" for chapters, Eliot evinces just such a process of distinguishing and combining; we find quotations grouped under topics such as "Power of simple words," "Fine pauses," and "Bad Endings," and we see that Eliot at first attributed a self-authored epigraph in *Middlemarch* to a "Black Letter Inscription," before crossing out the attribution and leaving it anonymous.[19] Van den Broek points out that many of Eliot's epigraphs were added after chapters were written, often at the proof stage, and notes that sometimes her written-in epigraphs would extend into the margins of a page.[20] From this composition history, we can see that Eliot was highly deliberate in her choice, placement, and attribution of epigraphs.

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[17] George Eliot, "Notes on Form in Art," in *Middlemarch: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Criticism*, 2nd edition, ed. Bert G. Hornback (New York: Norton, 2000), pp. 530-31.
[18] Ibid.
[19] See George Eliot and William Baker, *Some George Eliot Notebooks: An Edition of the Carl H. Pforzheimer Library's George Eliot Holograph Notebooks, MS 708,* vol. 2 (Austria: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1984), pp. 84, 86, 88, and George Eliot and Anna Theresa Kitchel, *Quarry for Middlemarch* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), n. 80, p. 40. The epigraph in question is that preceding chapter 40.
[20] See van den Broek, *Complete Shorter Poetry*, vol. 2, pp. 129-130.

This thoughtfulness, combined with Eliot's description of the end product of writing as a "bivalve shell," enables us to see why simply understanding the epigraphs as structural copies of those anthologies so popular in the Victorian period would be to project onto them a pre-determined prototype—a structural shell— incompatible with Eliot's own conception of her written works as wholes that have organically evolved. The consciousness of complex structure Eliot displays in "Notes on Form in Art," when read in tandem with her claim that she intended "to make matter and form … inseparable" in her writing, provides us with the justification and impetus for examining how small-scale portions of text—epigraphs— reconfigure the novel's subtle contesting of gender orthodoxy.[21]

In 1872, Victorian reviewer R.H. Hutton found the Prelude and the final chapter of *Middlemarch* "to represent the book as an elaborate contribution to the 'Woman's' question.'"[22] Accordingly, my examiantion of *Middlemarch* will be bookended by analysis of these two sections, each of which introduces concepts that are crucial to understanding the novel's epigraphical examination of gender. In particular, the Prelude's opening description of Saint Theresa, when read in tandem with Chapter One's opening description of Dorothea, helps articulate the connection between questions of women and questions of epigraphical quotation.

The opening paragraph in Chapter One is both *Middlemarch*'s first explicit discussion of quotation and its first direct description of Dorothea, saying:

> her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a

[21] George Eliot, vol. 5 of *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954-78), p. 58.
[22] R.H. Hutton, unsigned review of *Middlemarch*, *Spectator*, 7 December 1872, in *George Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, ed. David Carroll (New York: Routledge, 1971), p. 307.

> fine quotation from the Bible,—or from one of our elder poets,—in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper. (p. 7)

The main narrative's opening lines immediately depict a woman as analogous to a "fine quotation." Given that Eliot epigraphically renders herself as thirty-two "fine quotations" throughout the novel, we can interpret this comparison as a complimentary one, associating the body of a woman with the body of a text. From its very beginning, the novel is suggesting that readers consider Dorothea to be a quotation embodied, and immediately puts her on par with the Bible and "elder poets"—perhaps Milton, Chaucer, or even Eliot herself, as many of her self-authored epigraphs are poems. If Dorothea carries the "impressiveness of a fine quotation" from some "elder poet," then—by inverse analogy—the epigraphical, often poetic quotations throughout *Middlemarch* convey the impressiveness of George Eliot. If we wish to align the epigraphical Eliot with her protagonist, this opening certainly gives us grounds to do so.

Aligning Dorothea and Eliot with the concept of impressive quotation allows us to interpret *Middlemarch*'s well-known opening lines as a metaphor relating how we ought to make meaning from its epigraphs:

> Who that cares much to know the history of man, and how that mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of Time, has not dwelt, at least briefly, on the life of Saint Theresa [?] (p. 3)

Saint Theresa's importance here does not lie (as many feminist scholars claim) in her representation of a version of great success that Dorothea can never attain, but rather in the fact that through her readers are invited to focus upon a woman who stands out as the only named figure in the "mysterious mixture" that is the history of man. In a world in which literary history more or less entailed a "history of man," *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs intervene with an anthology

of male-authored texts and Eliot-authored texts, and as such enact an "experiment of Time" akin to that described in the Prelude. We can view Eliot's decision to mysteriously mix epigraphs of named authors alongside her unattributed ones as an experiment in literary form, whose aim, we shall soon see, is to reformulate and resolve problems concerning the Woman Question that surface throughout the novel. In keeping with this theme, the Prelude calls into question the male-centric nature of epic literature: "That child–pilgrimage was a fit beginning. Theresa's passionate, ideal nature demanded an epic life: what were many-volumed romances of chivalry and the social conquests of a brilliant girl to her?" (p. 3). Here the Prelude makes the broad suggestion that women's lives, though typically considered in terms of the small-scale and inconsequential, (as exemplified in the genres considered appropriate for them) are in fact narratives necessitating epic structures and sizes in order to be conveyed in full.

Within the Prelude's discussion of Saint Theresa, we find a concentrated form of the central concern that is diffused across epigraphical and textual levels in the novel—that is, the question as to whether or not a woman can achieve a distinguished, epic life. In condensing one of the novel's themes, the "Prelude" sets the structural precedent after which many of the novel's epigraphs are patterned. Although this distillation process is present in many of *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs, I have chosen for the sake of brevity one that illustrates this phenomenon particularly well. Chapter Twenty-Four, which describes Fred Vincy's financial failures, begins thus: " 'The offender's sorrow brings but small relief/ To him who wears the strong offence's cross' – Shakespeare: *Sonnets*" (p. 226). In this epigraph we find the theme of the chapter summarized in a parable that parses into: "Your apologies mean little to those who suffer due to your actions." This general wisdom then becomes situation-specific when we read about the financial burden the Garth family must bear (the "strong offence's cross") when they help Fred out of his

monetary obligations. Fred's sorrow does little to re-ingratiate him back into Mrs. Garth's good graces, who evinces her "small relief" upon considering "what words she should use to cut him the most effectively" (p. 233). Through providing a distilled droplet of thought that is then expanded into a complex narrative account, Chapter Twenty-Four's epigraph relates to its succeeding text in much the same way that the "Prelude" relates to the text of *Middlemarch* as a whole. This process need not be discussed at greater length, because what I am calling Eliot's "distillation" of her story's themes has already been discussed in slightly different variations by other critics.[23] What is important to take away from this reading is the idea that epigraphs are a form that shrinks something down. Whether we call this process condensing, concentrating, or distilling, the compression capability of the epigraph extends well beyond its encapsulating of ideas, for the form also, in being distinguished and defined by its down-sizing processes, enables the text to perform a kind of diminishing and demeaning of those authors its quotes. Recognizing the epigraph's ability to cut (or more accurately, shrink) someone down to size provides an important counterpoint to the common critical consensus that the epigraph's primary impact is the dignifying or elevation of the text containing it, in a kind of literary canonization that Genette calls its "epigraph-effect."[24]

In the specific case of *Middlemarch*, epigraphs perform a miniaturization of canonical male-authored works as a means of illustrating that Dorothea's life is in fact the one of epic proportions. Due to their appearance in fragmented form, the male-authored epigraphical quotations shrink great authors down to size. For example, we read from Shakespeare: "How much, methinks, I could despise this man, /Were I not bound in charity against it!" (p. 390); from

[23] Tye claims that epigraphs "express in brief the heart of the matter" and Higdon calls the process "metaphoric evaluation." (See Tye, "George Eliot's Unascribed Mottoes," p. 249; and Higdon, "George Eliot and the Art of the Epigraph," p. 134).
[24] Genette, *Paratexts,* p. 160.

Milton “Say, goddess, what ensued, when Raphael,/The affable archangel…/Eve/The story heard attentive, and was filled/With admiration, and deep muse, to hear/Of things so high and strange.” (p. 22); and from Chaucer “He had more tow on his distaffe/Than Gerveis knew” (p. 96). This sampling of quotations reveals canonical male-authored works reduced to a mere two or three lines, or at most a single paragraph, and their small size stands in stark contrast to the immense novel containing thousands of lines that encompasses Dorothea’s life story**.** Playing with paratextual proportions, the novel’s epigraphs render great male literature a series of isolated, piecemeal passages, whose presence throws into sharp relief the vastness of the interconnected woman-authored epic that contains them.

The process of “miniaturization” enacted on the formal epigraphical level is also represented in the main narrative. Of particular interest is Edward Casaubon, who, as a learned and ambitious intellectual and aspiring author of his “Key to all Mythologies,” is exactly the sort of character in *Middlemarch* likely to write epigraphs. Casaubon’s entire life’s work involves nothing but “mythical fragments” of important texts, and throughout the novel an abundance of references to shrinking miniaturize him (p. 22). We learn that he is “a dried bookworm” (p. 21) and “no better than a mummy” (p. 54); that his “capacity of thought … had long shrunk to a sort of dried preparation” (p. 184); that he “shrinks from pity,” especially in Dorothea’s presence (pp. 262, 391, 399); and that his “intellectual ambition” has “absorbed and dried him,” (p. 391) all resulting in his “small hungry shivering self” (p. 263). Shrinking, drying, and mummifying evoke the physical process of becoming smaller; thus, we find that Casaubon is bodily replicating the miniaturization process of the epigraphs. In all instances, an ostensibly great author and his works are reduced to something small. These descriptions sharply contrast with

the language used to describe Dorothea, whose "Titanic life" and "full nature, like that river of which Cyrus broke the strength" seem to ceaselessly grow and expand (pp. 181 and 785).

Though Dorothea initially has a high opinion of her husband's intellect, she too eventually participates in his miniaturization by way of her thoughts, the most compelling example occurring during her sleepless nightmare when she envisions her future "sifting those mixed heaps of material" after Casaubon's death:

> for she looked with unbiased comparison and healthy sense at probabilities on which he had risked all his egoism. And she now pictured to herself the days, and months, and years which she must spend in sorting what might be called *shattered mummies*, and *fragments of a tradition* which was itself a mosaic wrought from *crushed ruins*—sorting them as foison for a theory which was already *withered in the birth like an elfin child*.
>
> (pp. 449-50, emphasis added)

In envisioning Casaubon's "life's work" as a "shattered mummy," Dorothea's description echoes the belittling language used to describe him throughout the novel and takes it one step further—for the author is not merely shrunken, but shattered, broken to pieces in his wife's mind, his writing now a mere mosaic composed of literary remains. In her "unbiased comparison" Dorothea realizes that Casaubon's ideas and writings are nothing like the works of Milton to whom she was so fond of comparing him. Rather, Casaubon's works are disappointing "fragments" "withered … like an elfin child." Casaubon's life and life's works are miniaturized within Dorothea's imagination, and thus the man in *Middlemarch* most analogous to the canonical authors Eliot quotes is—as they are—reduced to a mere "fragment of tradition." Diminished and demeaned, his work is associated not with vast greatness, but rather has more in common with the fragmentary text of an epigraph.

Casaubon proves to be something of a miniaturizing Midas in the novel, as even the objects in his home wither away. Dorothea returns to Lowick Manor as a newlywed and finds that "the very furniture in the room seemed to have shrunk since she saw it before" (p. 256). Playing with proportions, Chapter Twenty-Eight's opening paragraphs repeatedly oscillate between remembrances of Dorothea's youthful epic visions for her life, and descriptions of the lesser reality she instead finds herself in. The end effect of these shifting scales is that Dorothea is trapped in something akin to a carnival funhouse, in which everything keeps getting smaller: "The duties of her married life, contemplated as so great beforehand, seemed to be shrinking with the furniture" (p. 257). With her eyes opened to the terrors of Casaubon's small-scale existence, Dorothea discovers that his shriveling world is one of nightmarish proportions:

> All existence seemed to beat with a lower pulse than her own, and her religious faith was a solitary cry, the struggle out of a nightmare in which every object was withering and shrinking away from her. (p. 258)

Our realization that Casaubon's shrinking in Dorothea's estimation is accompanied by a literal and horrifying shrinking in his home underscores the idea that in *Middlemarch* shrinking is—to put it bluntly—a very bad thing; by extension, those male-authored forms which have a similarly shrinking effect, (that is, epigraphs) should be viewed in a correspondingly negative light. Casaubon's negative associations with something shriveled and fragmentary prove to be the most dramatic iteration of a larger pattern of characterization running throughout *Middlemarch*, in which great male authors are miniaturized. For instance, Milton, to whom Casaubon is often compared, is also physically miniaturized in *Middlemarch* when the narrator dryly observes: "even Milton, looking for his portrait in a spoon, must submit to have the facial angle of a

bumpkin" (p. 78). Here the text reduces the iconic Milton to a small, shrunken, rather humorous head, and as such once again evokes the down-sizing process of the epigraphs.

Mr. Brooke provides another key example of the way *Middlemarch* fragments its male authors. Brooke's defining characteristic is a tendency to "rambling habit(s) of mind"[25] and in his hands significant authors are again miniaturized, when his disjointed thinking results in the syntactical trivialization of the authors he's discussing:

> "Sir Humphry Davy?" said Mr. Brooke, over the soup, in his easy smiling way, taking up Sir James Chettam's remark that he was studying Davy's 'Agricultural Chemistry'. "Well, now, Sir Humphry Davy: I dined with him years ago at Cartwright's, and Wordsworth was there too—the poet Wordsworth, you know. Now there was something singular. I was at Cambridge when Wordsworth was there, and I never met him—and I dined with him twenty years afterwards at Cartwright's. There's an oddity in things, now. But Davy was there: he was a poet too. Or, as I may say, Wordsworth was poet one, and Davy was poet two. That was true in every sense, you know."
>
> Dorothea felt a little more uneasy than usual. In the beginning of dinner, the party being small and the room still, these *motes from the mass of a magistrate's mind fell too noticeably*. She wondered how a man like Mr. Casaubon *would support such triviality.*
>
> (p. 15, emphasis added)

In these lines, Mr. Brooke manages to speak at great length about two well-known authors, Wordsworth and Davy, without ever once actually discussing their works. Thanks to Mr. Brooke's miscellaneous mental meanderings, the poets are reduced to nothing more than tiny

[25] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 8.

trivialities, designed to entertain at a dinner party. Dorothea, the passage makes clear, finds her uncle to be engaging in the most egregiously small of small talk; according to the *OED*, "mote" refers to a small substance that is insignificant and very possibly irritating.[26] Thus, when Dorothea is embarrassed at the "motes from a magistrate's mind" upon hearing her uncle speak, she is in fact miniaturizing male authors, and Brooke's speech acts, in a manner than prefigures the way she will miniaturize Casaubon later on in the novel.

Through subsuming minor male epigraphs within a major female epic, *Middlemarch*'s dueling textual forms render male authors and their characters secondary footnotes in Dorothea's life story; a reader can take or leave male-authored quotations without losing the overall meaning of the text. If we move from an analysis of male-authored epigraphs to an examination of Eliot's own unattributed ones, we discover an intricate display of her multifaceted position on the Woman Question, for Eliot's self-authored epigraphs simultaneously assert her equality to male authors while also allowing her to overpower them.

In *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs, an assertion of Eliot's equality with men is articulated numerically. Of the novel's eighty-six epigraphs, Eliot quotes from thirty-two additional authors, mostly named men, and quotes herself thirty-two times.[27] Though one may be tempted to dismiss these matching numbers as an unintentional coincidence, when we recall the consciousness of complex structure that informed the writing of Eliot's novels, it becomes more difficult to dismiss this numerical equality as a wholly unintentional accident. What we find instead, I

[26] "mote, n.1," *OED Online* (Oxford Univ. Press), March 2019.

[27] The six epigraphs without known authors include two books of the Bible: *Book of Tobit* and *Ecclesiastes*; the Middle English "Old Romance" *Squire of Low Degree*; a Middle English poem, the "Not-browne Mayde," and an "Italian Proverb" and "Spanish Proverb" (These observations are indebted to Higdon's "George Eliot and the Art of the Epigraph," pp. 147-49). Given that the history of the Bible's compilation and dissemination involved primarily editorial choices made by men, and that most of the canonical Middle English authors that Eliot would have been familiar with were men such as Chaucer (whom she does quote), I include these works as ones from "male authors" in my analysis. Proverbial wisdom, as "public knowledge," I interpret as echoing the male voice from the public sphere.

suggest, is the assertion that the works of a woman author are just as good as—if not better than—those of any man. In "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" Eliot asserts: "Fiction is a department of literature in which women can, after their kind, fully equal men."[28] The same sort of equality described here is conveyed in *Middlemarch*'s epigraphical structure, which uses thirty-two Eliot-authored epigraphs to match the thirty-two authors Eliot allows a place in her novel. Eliot is not using epigraphs as a means to legitimize her position as a novelist, but rather to assert that she, as a woman, is already fully equal to those she quotes.

At the same time they assert Eliot's equality, her self-authored epigraphs allow her to overpower male authors. In terms of numbers, Eliot's quotations make up more than a third of the epigraphs used in the novel, and so her "citation count" (that metric we continue to use for assessing the impact of work) far exceeds that of any other author. This is over two-and-a-half times as often as Shakespeare, (whom she quotes twelve times), eight times as often as Chaucer, sixteen times as often as Wordsworth and Dante, and thirty-two times as often as Milton, among others.[29] Such significant figures demonstrate that Eliot does not merely insert herself into a canon of European men: she overwhelms it. This is in keeping with Lanser's observation that Eliot "dominates the tradition evoked" by the collective epigraphs.[30] As the greatest source of her epigraphs, Eliot exhibits a mastery over the canon they contain. In an age in which literary value was often determined by an author's quotable potential, Eliot's abundance of self-quotation suggests that she thought her writing just as valuable and great as that of male authors—if not greater.[31]

[28] Eliot, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," p. 461.
[29] Higdon, "George Eliot and the Art of the Epigraph," pp. 147-49.
[30] Lanser, "Woman of Maxims," p. 99.
[31] See Price, "George Eliot and the Production of Consumers," 158-59.

Eliot's mastery over the canon is exhibited not only by the number of times she quotes herself, but also in the generic variety of the epigraphs themselves. We find numerous poems, prose, and what seems to an unfolding drama between "1st Gent and 2d Gent," who make several appearances throughout the novel.[32] In demonstrating her aptitude for each type of writing, Eliot showcases her ability to master the genres of the authors she quotes, be they poets such as Wordsworth, prose writers such as historian Thomas Fuller, or dramatists such as Shakespeare. Discussing Eliot's poetic epigraphs, Tucker suggests "a separate study of the verse epigraphs Eliot placed in her novels might well show that fragmentary shapes liberated her."[33] They did indeed—in more ways than Tucker perhaps realizes. The liminal textual space occupied by the collective epigraphs is a liberating one which gives Eliot the opportunity to both quietly assert her equality to male authors, and to exhibit her dominance over them. In so doing Eliot affirms time and again the greatness of herself as an author. Of course some may suggest that Eliot's citing of canonical authors evinces not a wish to assert authorial dominance, or to diminish, but rather a desire to show respect for her literary predecessors and place herself among them. However, I would direct such critics to an instance from Eliot's life which indicates that showing respect for others was not the principle motive underscoring her epigraph choices. In 1876 she decided to remove a Walt Whitman quote from *Daniel Deronda* "because, since I quote so few poets, my selection of a motto from Walt Whitman might be taken as a sign of a special admiration which I am very far from feeling."[34] Although Beverly Rilett speculates that this is an act of self-censorship on Eliot's part in response to negative publicity that Whitman had

[32] For examples of poems, see *Middlemarch*, pp. 467, 405; for prose, p. 487, and for the 1st Gent and 2nd Gent drama, pp. 32, 67, and 608.
[33] Tucker, "Poetry: The Unappreciated Eliot," p. 188.
[34] George Eliot, vol. 6 of *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954-78), p. 241.

received in the press, the fact remains that Eliot is here both aware that an apparent 'special admiration' is a potential consequence of quoting someone, and eager to deflect such charges, therein suggesting that there can be other, less obvious reasons for epigraphing an author.[35]

On that note, Eliot's self-quotation might come across to some readers as an elitist display of self-admiration. After all, what could be more self-involved than citing yourself repeatedly throughout your writing? However, any claim concerning the elitism of Eliot's self-epigraphy is complicated by the fact that Eliot's self-authored epigraphs are unattributed; their lack of a signature is crucial to understanding how Eliot's epigraphs engage with political questions of gender and authorial influence. Eliot is well-known for her reluctance to make a definitive statement on the topic of Victorian feminism, going so far as to tell her friend and activist Mrs. Nassau John Senior: "There is no subject on which I am more inclined to hold my peace and learn, than on the 'Women Question.'"[36] And yet this purported reluctance is called into question by the alternating processes of miniaturization, enlargement, and equality-assertion that occur within her epigraphs. The ending of *Middlemarch* certainly weighs in on the Woman Question, and in so doing sums up the role that unattributed epigraphs play in the novel:

> Her full nature … spent itself in channels which had *no great name on the earth*. *But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts*; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a *hidden life*, and rest in unvisited tombs. (p. 785, emphasis added)

[35] For a discussion of Eliot's quoting of Whitman, see Beverley Rilett's "Victorian Sexual Politics and the Unsettling Case of George Eliot's Response to Walt Whitman," *WWQR* 31, 2-3 (Fall 2013/Winter 2014): 85-89.
[36] George Eliot, vol. 5 of *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954-78), p. 374.

Middlemarch's unascribed epigraphs put into practice the teaching of these concluding lines, for they allow Eliot to express compassion for and camaraderie with those women who, like Dorothea, have "no great name on the earth" (p. 785). I call this element of the novel its "epigraphical empathy." Through epigraphs, Eliot makes the bold move of dispersing her work throughout an all-male canon, yet this great action goes unacknowledged, as her epigraphs lack her signature; thus, Eliot's unascribed epigraphs are not unlike those "unhistoric acts" and "hidden lives" to which *Middlemarch*'s conclusion alludes. The lack of attribution enables Eliot's epigraphs to simultaneously self-elevate and self-deprecate, so that what at first appears to be an elitist act reveals itself, by the novel's conclusion, to be an act of humility, allowing Eliot to sympathetically identify with those great but nameless unknowns. Within *Middlemarch*'s unattributed epigraphs, then, we find the empathetic enactment of the optimistic feminist politics expressed in the novel's finale: epigraphs enable a woman bearing no great name to maintain an "incalculably diffusive" yet highly influential presence throughout the novel. In so doing, they demonstrate that a woman's small actions can still be powerful and have wide-ranging impact, even if their greatness is not widely recognized.

By the time of *Middlemarch*'s publication Eliot appears to have recognized the political import of quotation; this is perhaps unsurprising given that, as Casie Legette points out, Eliot was familiar with the writing of activist George Jacob Holyoake, who often quoted her work as a means of uniting his diverse working-class and middle-class readers.[37] In Eliot's case, however, it is self-quotation—rather than quoting the works of others—that allows for the strongest and most nuanced enactment of a political position. The question left for us in the finale is not whether or not a woman can have a life of epic proportions (Eliot has just shown readers that she

[37] See Casie LeGette, "Cooperative Quotation: George Eliot and George Jacob Holyoake," *VSIJ* 59, 4 (Summer 2017): 585–608.

can in an enormous novel) but rather, whether or not readers can alter their perception of epic eminence to accommodate women such as Dorothea, whose story, though not an epic in the classical sense, is still one of epic proportions. *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs aid readers in altering their perceptions of epic greatness, through compelling us to read at different scales and consider the significance of the back-and-forth process of shrinking and enlargement we find when alternating between epigraphs and the main text.

It is remarkable that Eliot, despite being quite famous by the time of *Middlemarch*'s publication, nonetheless chooses to "come to so little" via her unattributed epigraphs.[38] Her choice to do so, I argue, is a strategic and intentional one that allows for epigraphical expressions of equality and empathy simultaneously.[39] For in making herself come to little in her anonymous epigraphs, Eliot asserts not only that she is as great and quotable as canonical male authors, but also that she has a "little life" just as hidden, small, and diffusive as those of her female contemporaries. In recognizing that *Middlemarch*'s epigraphs provide an incremental implementation of the novel's final claims, a new dimension for feminist inquiry into the novel emerges. Far from Eliot's being ambivalent, hostile, or unsuccessful with regards to the Woman Question, *Middlemarch*'s epigraphy suggests that her attitude towards Victorian feminism was positively oriented towards the end of her career. By calling a reader's attention to questions of proportional relation, miniaturization, equality, overpowering numbers, and the value of the

[38] Blake, "*Middlemarch* and the Woman Question," p. 310.

[39] Some may argue that Eliot's epigraphs are exclusionary rather than empathetic, a kind of literary name-dropping whose intertextual expansions are only accessible to the well-educated reader who has prior knowledge of the works she quotes. For such critics, any expressions of empathy or equality that the epigraphs provide is overshadowed by their alienating display of knowledge. However, because many of Eliot's epigraphs are self-authored and unattributed, such a reading is untenable; no one could have prior knowledge of the works quoted by these epigraphs, because they first appeared in *Middlemarch* itself. Because all readers encountering them have the same amount of prior knowledge, (namely, none at all) *Middlemarch*'s unattributed epigraphs render the novel's epigraphical structure a more democratic, less exclusionary space.

hidden life, the epigraphs argue on behalf of the greatness of Eliot as a female author and—by extension—the greatness of an unhistoric woman's existence.

"*Middlemarch* is an epigraphic master-class"—so claims Toby Lichtig in *The Guardian*.[40] The novel certainly teaches us that when it comes to understanding the epigraph and its function, size matters. The relationship I have traced between *Middlemarch*'s epigraphical structures and its tackling of gendered social structures models a new strategy for reading chapter epigraphs in the nineteenth century novel; rather than approaching epigraphs as collected curiosities or forms patterned after a wisdom literature prototype, we would be better served if we consider them as shrunken, subsidiary structures with the paradoxical ability to denigrate and dignify. Incremental in immediate influence but immense in overall impact, epigraphs require readers to oscillate between minute issues of attribution and anonymity, and big-picture questions of gender and unrecognized greatness, and in so doing reconfigure the novel's concluding comments concerning diffusive lives along paratextual and proportional lines. In the process we discover that quotations, in particular epigraphical forms, have the power to enact political reformations, in subtle but substantial and meaningful ways. Furthermore, in highlighting the possible negative function of epigraphs, *Middlemarch* challenges our tendency to read them in overwhelmingly positive terms, as either signs of admiration, or as a method of authorial self-aggrandizement, and thus provides a crucial alternative to Genette's widely-accepted assertion that the epigraph is an author's self-canonizing "consecration."[41]

[40] Toby Lichtig, "Epigraphs: Opening Possibilities," *The Guardian*, 30 Mar. 2010, https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2010/mar/30/epigraphs-toby-lichtig.
[41] Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 160.

II. Make-believe Beginnings in *Daniel Deronda*

Recognizing Eliot's deft deployment of epigraphical forms in *Middlemarch* opens up the possibility of locating a similarly strategic harnessing of epigraphs in *Daniel Deronda*, *Middlemarch*'s structural sibling. Positing that *Deronda*'s epigraphs evince a far more acute awareness of the function of their own form than *Middlemarch's* epigraphs, the second half of this chapter explores the extent to which *Deronda*'s epigraphs correspond with one of the novel's central concerns: questions of beginning and origin. As is the case in *Middlemarch*, the epigraphs of *Daniel Deronda* can be read in terms of a key character, Deronda, who is strongly associated with fragments and persistently preoccupied with beginnings. Reading the epigraphs in terms of Deronda reveals textual forms that reconfigure some of the novel's most fundamental themes: a search for origins, figuring-out how to begin, and Daniel's having a "make-believe beginning" for his own life-story.[42] Ultimately this chapter contends that Deronda and the epigraphs prove to be designed around one another in a striking synergy of form and content which bolsters Eliot's adamant resolution that "I meant everything in the book to be related to everything else there" (*Letters* vol. 6, 290).

Daniel Deronda, like *Middlemarch*, employs self-authored unascribed epigraphs to great effect; however, these self-authored epigraphs are here being employed towards different ends. No men are being shrunk down to size in *Daniel Deronda*, and the epigraphs are generally lengthier and more laborious reads, the longest being Eliot's self-authored prose epigraphs, which seem more like drawn-out starts to chapters than merely optional interludes. These epigraphs, in other words, don't invite an approach which reads their significance in terms of

[42] For a brief but insightful discussion of how George Eliot's epigraphs provoke questions concerning origins and the relationship between the past and the present, see Michael Peled Ginsburg's "Pseudonym, Epigraphs, and Narrative Voice: *Middlemarch* and the Problem of Authorship," *ELH*, 47 (1980), 547-549. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2872795.

gender or scale and locates their impact in those terms. How, then, are we to approach *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs? The answer, I propose, lies in a key difference distinguishing *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraph use from that of *Middlemarch*; namely, *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs evince a far more acute awareness of their position and function than do the epigraphs of *Middlemarch*. From its outset, *Daniel Deronda*'s first chapter epigraph tells us: "Men can do nothing without the make-believe of a beginning" (3). And what is an epigraph, after all, if not the "make-believe of a beginning" for a chapter, as a text simultaneously a part of and apart from the main text in which it is immersed? In pondering the artificiality of beginnings while itself functioning as an invented beginning, this opening chapter epigraph (written, so it happens, by Eliot) primes us to focus upon epigraphs in terms of their initial position in the novel, rather than in terms of size and scale, as we did when reading *Middlemarch*. In self-consciously engaging with questions of beginning, *Daniel Deronda* extends the examination of epigraphical starts begun by Scott, who, as we saw in Chapter Two, employed epigraphic slow starts as a means of training readers to read at the pace he deemed appropriate for the newly emergent historical novel. Within *Daniel Deronda*, on the other hand, epigraphs don't provide slow starts as much as they provide false ones. In calling our attention to the artificiality of beginning and to themselves as beginning forms, *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs aim to educate, rather than frustrate readers; specifically, they encourage readers to ponder unacknowledged conventions of epigraphical form.

Aside from Eliot's contemporaries —one of whom complained that "so many original mottoes prefixed to the chapters…instead of increasing our admiration for the book, rather overweight and perplex it"—virtually no critics have examined *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraph use (Hutton, Unsigned review, 1876, 365-366).[43] In the wake of F. R. Leavis's by-now infamous

[43] A.V. Dicey also dismissed the epigraphs as superfluous, observing that "the impression of a want of simplicity is increased by a study of the mottoes which adorn or deface each chapter…any one who doubts that the long-winded

proclamation that half of *Daniel Deronda* should be excised with the remaining portion published under the name "*Gwendolen Harleth*," many critics interested in form and *Daniel Deronda* have devoted themselves to locating unity where it might not otherwise be apparent (*The Great Tradition* 94-100). These efforts include locating unities of structure (Carroll 369), animal imagery (Hardy 12) and theme (Beaty 18), among other pursuits. Eike Kronshage's "The Function of Poetic Epigraphs in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*" falls firmly in line with these critics. The only critical work currently existing that substantially focuses on the epigraphs of *Daniel Deronda*, Kronshage's essay strives to establish connections between its poetic epigraphs and their ensuing chapters. Kronshage does indeed thoughtfully sketch out the forecasting function of the epigraphs, but in the process, his analysis suffers from two crucial drawbacks: first, he exclusively focuses on the poetic epigraphs of *Daniel Deronda* without justifying the grounds for his decision beyond the fact that they appear slightly more often than prose epigraphs; second, the essay does not provide any comprehensive theory of *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraph use,beyond demonstrating how individual epigraphs connect to the chapters which follow them. The first issue results in the neglect of some of Eliot's most widely remarked upon prose epigraphs; the second issue results in a series of piecemeal readings whose conclusions have little portability and are not particularly surprising, when read in the wake of similar claims offered by Higdon and Tye. The "high level of unity" that Kronshage perceives in *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs is not justified by the relatively small scope of his readings (239). In a departure from Kronshage, I propose that the epigraphs of *Daniel Deronda* should be read collectively as well as individually, with an eye towards their accumulative effects. Doing so

reflections taken from the commonplace book or the unpublished works of George Eliot afford examples of the way in which a statement that has meaning may be overloaded by the conceits in which it is expressed, should examine carefully the motto to the first chapter, and consider honestly whether a rather commonplace sentiment in not beaten out into an inordinate number of words" (Unsigned review, 1876, 401).

reveals a form whose significance lies not simply in its momentary imparting of local connectivity, but rather, in its recurrent evoking of some of the novel's central concerns.

As it turns out, unity indeed an important concept for framing our understanding of the epigraphs in *Daniel Deronda*. However, the unity worth attending to is not that constructed by the relationship of the epigraphs to the individual chapters they preface, but rather, that which emerges when epigraphs are read collectively, alongside the novels eponymous protagonist, Daniel Deronda. A man strongly associated with fragments who spends his life persistently preoccupied with questions of beginning, and maintains myriad make-believe stories concerning his own origin, Deronda's plot and plight prove to parallel the form and function of epigraphs. What emerges in the recognition of this relationship is a previously unacknowledged but striking synergy of literary form and narrative content, in which epigraphs and Deronda appear to be designed around one another. Understanding epigraphs in this way provides an important counterpoint to Kronshage's purely local chapter-specific readings of Eliot's epigraph use, as well as to Leah Price's claims (discussed earlier in the *Middlemarch* section) that Eliot employed epigraphs as a means of regulating which aspects of her work would be extracted for publication in anthologies. I contend that what looks like the pre-packaging of pithy aphorisms proves instead to be a purposeful design in which paratexts deliberately double Deronda. The end result is a novel in which epigraphs are not merely interesting asides but rather richly integrated forms which echo and evoke Daniel's narrative in a tactical strengthening of Eliot's claim, "I meant everything in the book to be related to everything else there" (*Letters*, vol. 6, 290).

The following section contends that *Daniel Deronda*, as a novel centrally concerned with questions of make believe beginning, is also likewise centrally concerned with theorizing about the function of epigraphical forms. Offering that *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs evince a much

more strongly pronounced consciousness of their formal qualities and capabilities than *Middlemarch's* epigraphs, I will explore the densely imbricated relationship between *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs and the novel's titular character. After establishing that Deronda is the character in the novel most strongly associated with epigraphs, I then close-read *Daniel Deronda*'s opening epigraph in its entirety and argue that many of the formal issues the epigraph introduces—in particular questions of make-believe beginnings and false starts—prove to be also the defining issues when it comes to understanding Deronda's progress though the novel. I then demonstrate how Deronda's preoccupations and difficulties with beginning correspond with the epigraph's formal qualities, with a focus on "make-believe beginnings," false starts, unattributed origins, figuring out how to begin, and prediction.

Bolstering Deronda's claim to a unique relationship with *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs is the fact that he is the only character in the novel who reads its epigraphs. In a strikingly self-referential passage in which notions of paratext and primary text disintegrate, we find Deronda reading the epigraph to Chapter Forty-two. The chapter opens with an epigraph in German, and then translates this epigraph within the main text of the novel, saying:

> "If there are ranks in suffering, Israel takes precedence of all the nations—if the duration of sorrows and the patience with which they are borne ennoble, the Jews are among the aristocracy of every land—if a literature is called rich in the possession of a few classic tragedies, what shall we say to a National Tragedy lasting for fifteen hundred years, in which the poets and the actors were also the heroes?"
>
> Deronda had lately been reading that passage of Zunz, and it occurred to him by way of contrast when he was going to the Cohens, who certainly bore no obvious stamp of distinction in sorrow or in any other form of aristocracy. Ezra Cohen was not clad in the

> sublime pathos of the martyr, and his taste for money-getting seemed to be favored with that success which has been the most exasperating difference in the greed of Jews during all the ages of their dispersion. This Jeshurun of a pawnbroker was not a symbol of the great Jewish tragedy; and yet, was there not something typical in the fact that a life like Mordecai's—a frail incorporation of the national consciousness, breathing with difficult breath—was nested in the self-gratulating ignorant prosperity of the Cohens? (441)

This is the singular instance the novel contains in which one of its characters reads its own epigraphs. Notably, there are two levels of translation occurring in this passage, and Deronda performs the second when he provides interpretive guidance concerning the purpose of the epigraphs. Performing a translation of a translation, Deronda here proves to be not merely reading, but comparatively close-reading, the epigraph. First pointing out to us that the epigraph's purpose is to provide ironic commentary on the Cohen family, Deronda then proceeds to characterize the Cohens through describing the stark contrasts between their relatively prosperous reality and the poetic tragedy of the epigraph. The novel presents Deronda as its epigraphs' first and most nuanced reader, in a passage in which the boundaries between a corporeal readers' epigraphical encounters and the novel's own diegetic textual encounters are blurred. Clearly connected and densely imbricated, Deronda and the epigraph emerge as nearly inseparable concepts. The opening of Chapter Forty-two, then, as a passage in which Deronda's narrative and the epigraph are clearly designed around one another, aptly encapsulates a key collaboration that persists in other ways throughout the novel.

Further strengthening the connection between Deronda and the epigraphs is the fact that he is the character in the novel most vividly associated with fragments. He thinks in terms of fragments, as evinced when he ponders his life story and "there came back certain facts which

had an obstinate reality,—almost like the fragments of a bridge" (142), and when he meets Mordecai and hopes that he "might receive…the complete ideal shape of that personal duty and citizenship which lay in his own thought like sculptured fragments" (437). Moreover, Deronda doesn't merely think in terms of fragments; he's an expert on them, as evinced when the text tells us that he is called upon to explain various "architectural fragments" (356). Admittedly, none of the fragments discussed here is textual, (as was the case with Casaubon in *Middlemarch*) but *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs nonetheless correspond with them, as its epigraphs provide a shape and structure—an architecture—to the novel, while acting as bridges between chapters.

The novel's close association of Deronda with fragments and with the reading of fragments suggests that a striking and substantive relationship exists between him and the novel's epigraphs. This relationship is further underscored through the opening epigraph to Chapter One, which contains a pronounced awareness of the potentialities and purposes of epigraphical forms. The complete epigraph reads:

> Men can do nothing without the make-believe of a beginning. Even Science, the strict measurer, is obliged to start with a make-believe unit, and must fix on a point in the stars' unceasing journey when his sidereal clock shall pretend that time is at Nought. His less accurate grandmother Poetry has always been understood to start in the middle; but on reflection it appears that her proceeding is not very different from his; since Science, too, reckons backwards as well as forwards, divides his unit into billions, and with his clock-finger at Nought really sets off *in medias res*. No retrospect will take us to the true beginning; and whether our prologue be in heaven or on earth, it is but a fraction of that all-presupposing fact with which our story sets out. (3)

Among all the passages this dissertation has examined, this one constitutes the most nuanced and self-aware articulation of the function of epigraphical forms. As suggested in this section's introduction, an epigraph is, in a basic sense, the "make-believe of a beginning" for a chapter. Appearing after the chapter-title but before the main text, an epigraph is simultaneously the start of a chapter and the start of the start of a chapter; in this way, it can be thought of as a second beginning for each section of text. Furthermore, in imbuing a chapter with multiple beginnings, epigraphs could also then be considered "false starts," in keeping with this passage's assertion that "No retrospect will take us to the true beginning" (3). If figuring out the true beginning is not possible, then what remains are beginnings that are false. This complex self-referential theorizing about epigraphical forms continues in this epigraph's description of the "less accurate grandmother Poetry" that "has always been understood to start in the middle," and ultimate conclusion that science really sets off "*in medias res*" (3). These lines are in part applicable because a good number of the epigraphs in *Daniel Deronda* consist of poetry, but more importantly, because they draw readers' attentions to the fact that every ostensible beginning is really a "start in the middle," an origin "*in medias res*." Epigraphs are texts which likewise always begin in the middle, in both the narrative sense (they break up the middle of the novel with a series of beginnings) and the structural sense, as epigraphs are positioned "in the middle" of a chapter between the title and the main text. Make-believe beginnings that begin "in medias res," and imbue each chapter with a series of false starts, epigraphs are in a uniquely qualified structural position to interrogate the questions of origin and beginning that permeate *Daniel Deronda*.

From this opening epigraph, we discover that Deronda is not merely a man associated with epigraphs, but is also a character whose plots and plights parallel them. As a man

consistently concerned with questions of origin, who gets off to several false starts and maintains myriad "make-believe" ideas for how his own life began, Deronda faces the same problems in narrative that are posed as formal problems by the presence of epigraphs. The first and most obvious way in which Deronda's plot corresponds with the formal procedures of the epigraphs is his maintaining of many different "make-believe beginnings" concerning his origin. The phrase "make-believe" implies a certain childlike quality inherent in inaccurate wishful thinking (e.g., "make-believe stories"), and Deronda, as a child, certainly puts faith in inaccurate "make-believe" theories of his origins. The novel describes his suspicions about his parentage as "a fiction of his own" (142), and, while a boy,

> A new idea had entered his mind, and was beginning to change the aspect of his habitual feelings… Having read Shakespeare as well as a great deal of history, he could have talked with the wisdom of a bookish child about men who were born out of wedlock and were held unfortunate in consequence… But he had never brought such knowledge into any association with his own lot, which had been too easy for him ever to think about it—until this moment when there had darted into his mind with the magic of quick comparison, the possibility that here was the secret of his own birth, and that the man whom he called uncle was really his father. (141)

Here we find the child Deronda replacing one incorrect origin story (Sir Hugo is his uncle) with another, equally incorrect one (Sir Hugo is his father) gleaned from his experiences reading. (In truth, readers discover, Sir Hugo is no blood relation to Deronda at all). Reflecting upon these imagined origin-stories, Deronda resolves "that he had no certainty how things really had been, and that he had been making conjectures about his own history, as he had often made stories about Pericles or Columbus, just to fill up the blanks" (142). In these lines, we find the child's

speculations about his parentage rendered, quite literally, a game of make-believe. Comparing Deronda's made-up conjectures to the stories he makes up in childhood, the text highlights the artificiality of beginning. Epigraphs, as texts which "fill up the blanks" between chapters, likewise provide artificial origins for the chapters they preface. Thus, in a fitting fusion of form and content, the child Deronda's playful theorizing about his own origins corresponds with the novel's own theorizing about epigraphical forms; in each case there is a "make-believe of a beginning."

A second way in which Deronda's narrative and the epigraphs explore densely imbricated concerns resides in the fact that each is, in a sense, preoccupied with false starts. As an adult, Deronda's prior childhood "make-believe beginnings" solidify into false beliefs about the circumstances of his birth. The text tells us that, by the time he goes off to school, he "no longer held a wavering opinion about his own birth. His fuller knowledge had tended to convince him that Sir Hugo was his father" (148). Even after learning of "the bare possibility" of his Jewish heritage, Deronda's "belief that his father was an Englishman only grew firmer under the weak assaults of unwarranted doubt" (439). The reified certainty with which an adult Deronda ponders his past—as opposed to the wishful imaginings of his childhood—renders his mature beliefs about his beginnings "false starts" rather than "make-believe" ones. Although he comes to doubt his parentage as the story progresses, Deronda continues to believe in other false origin-stories of his own making—for example, his insistence that he is not Jewish. Offering one such denial, he says to Mordecai:

> "Do you remember that I said I was not of your race?"
>
> "It can't be true," Mordecai whispered… "You are not sure of your own origin" (429).

In highlighting the untruthfulness and uncertainty underscoring Deronda's claims, Mordecai points out to him the falsity of his origin story. Deronda's "false starts" are subtly re-articulated in the structure of the novel, for each epigraph could be considered a false start, or false origin, for the chapter it precedes. Supporting this conception of epigraphs' status as false starts is Kronshage's apt remark that "although no empirical study of general reading behavior regarding epigraphs has yet to be carried out, there is reason to believe that mottos are often read with diminished attention, or even skipped over entirely" (244). The fact that many readers view epigraphs as unnecessary appendages and consider reading them to be optional implicitly suggests that epigraphs are false starts. Put another way, the fact that epigraphs are skippable arises from readers' sense that epigraphs aren't the true starts of chapters.

In addition to providing false origins for their chapters, the epigraphs also provide a figuring of Deronda's figuring-out of beginning. In keeping with his characterization as a mature adult of false starts, Daniel has trouble figuring out how to begin his adult life. Unable to choose a vocation or a career path at the university, he quickly gives up on mathematics, while a "heightening discontent" tempts him to ask "Sir Hugo to let him quit Cambridge" (152) and allow him to "have the sort of apprenticeship to life which would not shape him too definitely" (153). Given that "apprentice" is the vocation of beginners, Deronda's longing to hold an "apprenticeship to life" underscores his inability to figure out how to begin a career for himself, through expressing his desire to stay in a permanent vocation of beginning with no end. The novel, like its namesake, can't seem to make up its mind about how to start each chapter, as evinced in the fact that it can't decide what the forms or functions of its epigraphs should be. Encompassing many genres ranging from poetry, to prose, to drama, the epigraphs also have a

variety of lengths and maintain different types of relationships to the chapters they head.[44] They may provide ironic commentary, briefly condense a chapter, glean significance from their attribution, or many other things besides. In their inability to choose a definite genre, length, or consistent purpose, the epigraphs provide a figuring of the figuring-out of beginning, and aptly encapsulate Deronda's "reflective hesitation," a "tendency…encouraged by his position: there was no need for him to get an immediate income, or to fit himself in haste for a profession; and his sensibility to the half-known facts of his parentage made him an excuse for lingering longer than others" (153). The epigraphs, too, encourage a sort of "reflective hesitation" in their readers, as their position in between the chapter title and main narrative requires one to decide whether or not to read them before moving on to the text of the chapter they precede; in other words, they require readers to figure out how to begin.

Beyond exploring questions of beginning, the epigraphs of *Daniel Deronda* are also texts that have origins, in and of themselves. Some of the epigraphs are attributed, though most are not, and one of the main difficulties that arises in interpreting *Daniel Deronda*'s epigraphs is making sense of these shifting attributions, as evidenced by the fact that many critics have striven to either find the sources of the unattributed epigraphs[45] or, as Susan Lanser has, make meaning from the fact that Eliot does not attribute any of her own epigraphs to herself (*Fictions of Authority* 98). I, too, made much of epigraph attribution in the first half of this chapter, as the relationship between Eliot-authored unattributed and attributed epigraphs was a key component of my argument. Based on these examples, current critical practice seems to mandate that making sense of Eliot's epigraphs first requires a knowledge of their origins; thinking in this

[44] As mentioned in the first half of this chapter, David Leon Higdon's "George Eliot and the Art of the Epigraph" has proposed that there is a "conscious artistry" at work in Eliot's epigraphs and discerns "four major tendencies—structural allusion, abstraction, ironic refraction, and metaphoric evaluation)" (129, 134).
[45]See, for example, J.R. Tye's "George Eliot's Unascribed Mottos," 235.

way, we encounter the same difficulty as Deronda, who himself feels unable to move forward without a knowledge of his own origins: "Might there not come a disclosure which would hold the missing determination of his course? What did he really know about his origin?" (402). However, I offer that in the case of *Daniel Deronda*, making meaning of the epigraphs has less to do with discerning their sources of origin, than in comprehending them in their origin-less and attributed states. Specifically, the shifting between attributed origins and unattributed origins in the epigraphs parallels Deronda's own shifting thoughts, which oscillate between attributing his identity to Sir Hugo and not attributing his birth to anyone. The unascribed epigraphs are thus a structural complement to Deronda's own unidentified origins, with every origin-less epigraph reminiscent of Deronda's own self-perceived origin-lessness.

Longing for a definitive of explanation of his beginning, Deronda wishes for a revelation which will "help…him to make his life a sequence which would take the form of duty" (402). In other words, Deronda hopes for an origin-story which will then give him guidance as to the way his life should proceed. In seeking out a beginning which will provide shape and structure to the course of his life, Deronda echoes the behavior of epigraph readers, who likewise expect epigraphs to provide guidance concerning how one should read the chapter that follows them. In light of the expectation that epigraphs should function as future-oriented forms, a fifth and more oblique way in which Deronda and the epigraphs correspond with one another emerges; specifically, epigraphs evoke the novel's preoccupation with prophecy and prediction. Just as Deronda encounters the prophecies of Mordecai throughout the second half of the novel, so, too, epigraphs amount to encounters with predictions for how a chapter could potentially proceed. As numerous other critics have discussed this forecasting function of epigraphs[46] I will limit myself

[46] See Kronshage, Tye, and Higdon, among others.

to one salient example, the epigraph to Chapter Eleven, which reads "the beginning of an acquaintance whether with persons or things is to get a definite outline for our ignorance" (91). This prediction—that the early stages of getting to know someone or something involves being made aware of how much you don't know—is quickly fulfilled in the ensuing pages, as Gwendolen has her first conversation with Grandcourt and suffers from "the reversal of her expectations: Grandcourt could hardly have been more unlike all her imaginary portraits of him" (91). Carrying on with the pattern of self-referential theorizing begun in the epigraph to Chapter One, this line reminds us that an epigraph, too, is the "beginning of an acquaintance" for readers, which clues them in to what they don't know, but will soon find out, upon reading a chapter. Eliot's contemporaries also perceived a predictive bent in her epigraphs—and they did not care for it. Victorian reviewer A.V. Dicey, despite remarking that "a stanza which forms the motto of the second volume compresses into a striking seven lines the moral of the whole book," also observed that "the aphorisms which head the chapters are long…suggestive of a sermon, and the chorus is kept outside the narrative, but delays the action of the piece to press home truths which intelligent readers might in many cases discover for themselves" (Unsigned Review, 1876, 400). In associating epigraphs with long-winded sermons which give too much meaning away up front, Dicey dismisses Eliot's epigraphs as being too patronizingly predictive.

Eliot designs epigraphs and the character Deronda around one another in a unity of form and content that is striking because of just how well it works. As paratexts which repeatedly raise questions of make-believe beginning, false starts, and unattributed origins throughout the novel, epigraphs prove to be the most fitting formal structure for a novel which gleans its shape and structure from a man's figuring-out of his beginnings. In employing epigraphs in this way, Eliot imbues her novel with a heightened, forceful amplification of her pronouncement that "I meant

everything in the book to be related to everything else there" (*Letters* vol. 6, 290). The end result is a novel in which formal concerns of epigraph function and narrative concerns about how beginnings function reflect upon and reiterate one another.

Notably, the extent to which epigraphs reconfigure Deronda's narrative become most apparent when we read many of them in succession; one can only conceive of "a make-believe of a beginning" or a "false start" if there are several beginnings and starts to compare; likewise, the indecisiveness in the epigraphs—their figuring of figuring out how to begin—can only be perceived if many are compared at once, for only then can we perceive what each is doing differently. Such readings show that the effects of epigraphs are accretive and collectively felt, as well as localized within specific chapters. One of this dissertation's central tenants has been that epigraphs' effects are accumulative as well as momentary. As we saw in *Middlemarch*, small changes to chapters have important consequences for how we understand the novel's handling of gender, for changes in author attribution and length of epigraphs reveal a subtle expression of empathy for and solidarity with early proto-feminist causes. In *Daniel Deronda*, epigraphs serve as constantly resurfacing reminders of the artificiality of beginning. This process of gradually accumulating changes in initial conditions with far reaching impacts could be called a novel's "epigraph effect." I use this term well-aware that Genette has already done so, while finding his definition of it unsatisfying. Genette at first defines the "epigraph effect" as the impact epigraphs have simply by being present in a text, but actually proves to mean something far more specific: the epigraph effect, for Genette, seems to be the consecrating, or elevating, effect epigraphs have upon a work—for example, they can impart a certain prestige to a book by associating it with other great works (*Paratexts* 160). As this chapter has made clear, though, a novel's epigraph

effect has as much more to do with epigraph content, and with readers' encounters with that content, than with their imparting of a sort of phosphorescent intellectuality to a text.

Of all the nineteenth-century novels analyzed in this dissertation, *Daniel Deronda* is the one whose epigraphs present the most sophisticated self-awareness of and theorization about their own form. The novel's incorporation of and theorizing about epigraphs becomes all the more striking when we recall that, by 1876, chapter epigraphs had long fallen out of favor for use in novels. For instance, in a review of *Daniel Deronda*, R.H. Hutton compares its chapter epigraphs to "laborious and insignificant remarks," deriding them as "artificial, and even tiresome."[47] As this criticism makes abundantly clear, to use chapter epigraphs in the Victorian era was to run the risk of being deemed clunky, tedious, or patronizingly predictive. Within this late nineteenth-century literary milieu, then, epigraphs were a strange and unfashionable choice; but for *Daniel Deronda*, they are the perfect choice, as they provide the most fitting formal structure for a text consistently preoccupied with make-believe beginnings.

[47] See R.H. Hutton, unsigned review of *Daniel Deronda*, *Spectator*, 9 September 1876, in *George Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, ed. David Carroll (New York: Routledge, 1971), p 369.

Chapter 5

Paratextual Paleontology in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

In the prior four chapters we have seen how the chapter epigraph's use evolved over the nineteenth century, from a paratext providing romantic writers with a means of negotiating their novels' generic positions, to a method of engaging pressing social concerns in the realist novel. Along the way, each author studied has given us a unique method of understanding epigraphs and their function: we have Ann Radcliffe's crumbling ruins, Walter Scott's slow starts, Elizabeth Gaskell's collective voices, and George Eliot's make-believe beginnings. What is the legacy, then, of the nineteenth century epigraphic novel? Is it a legacy of adoption, adaptation, or abandonment? In other words: how have epigraphs been received and reconfigured since the nineteenth century's conclusion? John Fowles's novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) offers some insights into these questions. Blending literary criticism with historical fiction, this neo-Victorian postmodern text is—with the possible exception of *Daniel Deronda*—the most self-consciously epigraphic of the novels examined in this dissertation.

Gérard Genette, describing epigraphs' ability to integrate the nineteenth-century novel into a broader literary tradition, suggests that "the young writers of the 1960s and 1970s used the same means to give themselves the consecration and unction of a(nother) prestigious filiation" (160). Such a reading is complicated, however, by the fact that a significant number of the epigraphs in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* are either from obscure textual sources, or not from the nineteenth century at all. Placing quotations from Victorian poets, newspapers, novelists, and scientists alongside the writing of twentieth-century scholars, the chapter epigraphs in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* defy easy classification. They are typically

considered a quintessential example of Fowles's narrative gamesmanship, and discussed alongside footnotes in arguments seeking to identify the precise parameters of the novel's postmodern playfulness. Such interpretations tend to characterize epigraphs as parodic appropriations of Victorian literary culture that are "transgressive" and in tension with the main narrative; often, this tension manifests itself as a struggle among competing authorial voices for control over the narrative (Booker 192; Bowen 83).[1] These approaches, which begin with the premise that a paratext is inherently irreverent and oppositional, preclude the possibility that epigraphs could work in tandem with the main text in order to create meaning. In so doing, they overlook the novel's own innovative theorization about epigraphic forms, as well as its deep engagement with literary history.

This chapter offers an alternative to such readings, and suggests that rather than theorizing postmodern epigraph function in terms of irreverence, resistance, or historical detachment, we are better served by reading them in terms of continuity, collaboration, and adaptation. When we do so, we discover that epigraphs, rather than being inherently opposed to the main narrative, in fact often work together with it. Specifically, the novel brings one of its most basic themes—fossilization—to bear on our understanding of epigraphs. The novel does this, first, by inviting us to understand chapter epigraphs as fossilized fragments of past literary structures; and second, by showing us how these fossil-like structures convey the double-mindedness of the Victorian age, particularly in chapters that use two epigraphs simultaneously. The fossil particularly lends itself to a consideration of historical double-mindedness, because it invokes two different temporalities at once: the moment in time in which an organism was frozen, and the present moment in which someone encounters that organism in a petrified form.

[1] Making this point especially vividly, Christian Gutleben suggests that "the way Fowles uses and abuses Victorian epigraphs...illustrates his exemplary art of parody" (112).

Along the way, the novel engages those questions of epigraphic edifices, fragmentary characters, and collected specimens which have been so important in this dissertation's prior readings of Radcliffe, Scott, Gaskell, and Eliot. Ultimately, a conception of epigraphs as structural fossils enables the novel's conclusion to consider the question of epigraphs' evolution and possible future.

Aside from a few oblique remarks appearing in the novel itself (which arguably are written by a character-like narrator rather than the author himself) Fowles offers us little explanation regarding his intentions for epigraphs in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. What the text does offer us, however, are many ruminations on the act of novel writing. For instance, in the novel's famously self-referential chapter thirteen the narrator asserts "I am writing in…a convention universally accepted at the time of my story" (95); proclaims "You may think novelists always have fixed plans to which they work, so that the future predicted by Chapter One is always inexorably the actuality of Chapter Thirteen. But novelists write for countless different reasons" (96); and concludes "I do not fully control these creatures of my mind" (97). Numerous critics have commented upon such meta-commentary in Fowles's writing so it will not be discussed at length here,[2] except to say that what we glean from these examples is the sense of a writer acutely concerned with issues of chapter construction, authorial intention, and broader questions of literary history, particularly how his novel relates to those it strives to emulate. Given the intensity of the text's self-conscious interconnectedness, and the fact that fossilization is one of the most sustained concepts in the novel,[3] it is not inconceivable to

[2] For but one of many potential examples, Robert Burden describes the "flamboyant intruder-narrator" of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as a presence that "can both explore and flaunt characteristic narrative devices and so remind the reader that the representation of reality is always necessarily a stylization and a fiction" (136-137).
[3] A.A. Devitas and William Palmer, for instance, proclaim "the fossil, the central image of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*" (93).

imagine that its creator thought about epigraphs not simply in terms of pure content, but also in terms of fossil-like literary structures.

Fowles's writing beyond *The French Lieutenant's Woman* provides additional evidence for a metaphorical method of reading that interprets chapter epigraphs as literary fossils. For instance, his essay "Notes on an Unfinished novel" (1969), written while completing *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, conceives of literature in terms of fossilization. Fowles states "I loathe the day a manuscript is sent to the publisher, because on that day the people one has loved die; they become what they are—petrified, fossil organisms for others to study and collect" (148). Here Fowles directly describes literature as something that can fossilize, and evocatively connects the people that study it to collectors of fossils. This moment is important, because it demonstrates that Fowles himself conceived of a tripartite relationship among fossilization, literature, and scholarship. Earlier in this same essay Fowles asserts that "one cannot describe reality; only give metaphors that indicate it. All human modes of description (photographic, mathematical and the rest, as well as literary) are metaphorical. Even the most precise scientific description of an object or movement is a tissue of metaphors" (139). This remark is so significant that the essay in which it appears sets it off as a "Memorandum" and italicizes the entire observation. Here Fowles emphasizes that accurate representation of life is inseparable from metaphor, and that all methods of conveying reality— be they science, technology, or writing—must make use of it. A reading method that seeks out metaphors and investigates how they operate is appropriate, then, for examining a writer who believes he cannot help but use them.

Critics discussing the role of chapter epigraphs in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* generally fall into one of two categories: the first focuses on a particular subset of epigraphs written by a particular author. For instance, David Landrum suggests that Fowles uses epigraphs

to simultaneously criticize and affirm the validity of arguments made by Karl Marx. More recently, Eva Pohler has explored how *The French Lieutenant's Woman*'s paratextual citation of scientists contributes to the novel's "testament to a concept of freedom that is Darwinian in nature" (58). The second group of critics theorizes about the role of epigraphical forms, and tends to emphasize the ways in which the paratext works in opposition to the main narrative. Bowen, for instance, argues that epigraphs imbue the *The French Lieutenant's Woman* with a plurality of voices that ultimately challenge Fowles's narrative authority (70), while Christian Gutleben suggests "these paratextual fragments do not simply announce the diegetic world they introduce, they stigmatize it" (112).[4] Emphasizing historical tension and dialectic critique, David Higdon suggests that *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, by "juxtaposing a paratext (epigraph, footnote, etc.) and the text," creates "the effect…of judging each age as lacking in some way" (571). This chapter adopts a different approach from these critics, and explores what happens if we begin by seeking out collaborations between paratext and main text, and between Fowles's neo-Victorian novel and its forerunners.[5] Doing so reveals a novel that carefully and conscientiously reworks the paratextual paradigms of its predecessors; epigraphs here, rather than being the irreverent tools of postmodern detachment, establish historical continuity. Paratextually petrifying forms and structures from the nineteenth century so that they have a textual space in the twentieth, the epigraphs of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* interrogate issues of inherited structures, fossilized forms, and the literary legacy of the Victorians.

[4] Linda Hutcheon similarly argues that a "doubled use-and-abuse of conventional expectation accompanies….chapter headings and epigraphs," concluding that "this is yet another way in which postmodern literature works to contest (from within) any totalizing narrative impulse" (82).
[5] Positing a similar possibility at the end of his essay, Landrum suggests that "soon the text of the novel begins to have some bearing upon how the epigraphs are understood" (113).

I. Fowles's Fossils

Numerous critics have examined the import of paleontology in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, although none have noticed the relationship between chapter epigraphs and fossils that the text elicits. A.A. Devitas and William Palmer suggest that fossils serve as "an oblique prefiguration" of Charles Smithson's own ossification as a Victorian, whose "existence has become a placid exercise in contemplation of the dead past" (95-66). John Glendening has recently provided a more positive reading of the novel's fossilization theme, suggesting that, although fossils "can purport death or entrapment" they also signify "adaptive change and the potential for liberation as they are uncovered and related to the rest of life" (117). Glendening's insight, that fossils connote a history of adaptive change, is a useful starting point with which to begin investigating Fowles's adoption of epigraphic forms. *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, like Scott's *The Antiquary* and Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, invites us to read epigraphs as extratextual manifestations of objects that get collected in the main narrative. However, rather than serving as representations of literary antiquities or animal specimens, epigraphs in this case serve as analogs to the objects that Charles Smithson, the novel's protagonist, collects. As an amateur paleontologist Charles is always on the lookout for "liassic fossils" (48), specifically, the "echinoderm, or petrified sea urchin" (45). We learn early in the novel that Charles is from a family of collectors, and that a joint interest in collecting texts and collecting fossils runs in his blood, for "his grandfather that baronet" was one of those

> scholarly collectors of everything under the sun; He had collected books principally; but in his latter years had devoted a deal of his money…to the excavation of the harmless hummocks of earth…cromlechs and menhirs, flint implements and neolithic graves, he pursued them ruthlessly. (12-13)

Charles, as a frequenter of "the Old Fossil Shop" (45) in Lyme, follows in his family's legacy, paying "his homage" to "this distinguished local memory…and his cash, for various ammonites and *Isocrina* he coveted for the cabinets that walled his study in London" (45). Charles's collecting of fossils is often described in terms of acquiring fragments for instance, he finds "a pretty fragments of fossil scallop" (69). Charles, in other words, collects and interprets fragmentary structures from the paleontological record, and his behavior casts light on how the novel directs us to understand its own fragments from the historical record—that is, its epigraphs. Fossils are, in essence, small fragments that preserve forms and structures from the past; chapter epigraphs, as residual fragments that make available textual forms and structures from the past, can be understood in this context as literary fossils. Paratextually petrifying obscure Victorian observations on the state of the country, such as an 1850 "Report from the Mining Districts" about the "laboring classes" (107) as well as poignant poetic moments from the likes of Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, and Arthur Clough, chapter epigraphs tell us what genres, authors, and ideas were important to the Victorians. Noting a similar relationship between the fragmentary and the fossilized within the neo-Victorian novel, Jessica Cox observes that "fossils are by their nature partial, incomplete…this serves as a metaphor for the (Victorian) past" (166). Notably, Charles prefers to seek fossils in "petrified mud" whose "highly fossiliferous nature and its mobility make it a Mecca for the British paleontologist" (*The French Lieutenant's Woman* 45). The epigraph-laden novel, we shall see, likewise has a highly fossiliferous nature, for it enables works of a bygone century to be petrified and preserved for readers via paratexts.

Further supporting a reading of chapter epigraphs in terms of paleontological specimens is the fact that the novel itself constructs connections between literature and science, and more

particularly, between writing and fossilization. Early in the novel Charles is teasingly deemed by his fiancé "the scientist, the despiser of novels" (10) in a sentence that, through placing literature and science in a terse dichotomy, suggests a relationship between the two. More specifically, towards its end the novel describes epigraphic language in terms of fossilization. Charles looks upon gravestones in an Exeter church and sees "worn names and dates, last fossil remains of other lives" (360). This description of epitaphs evokes the characteristics of typical epigraphs in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, which likewise display "worn names and dates," typically that of a nineteenth century writer, the title of a text, and its year of publication (e.g., "Tennyson, *Maud*, [1855]") (95).

The novel's densely imbricated conceptions of paratextual and fossilized forms are palpably present in its first chapter epigraph, which creates a fossil-moment for the reader:

> Stretching eyes west
> Over the sea,
> Wind foul or fair,
> Always stood she
> Prospect-impressed;
> Solely out there
> Did her gaze rest,
> Never elsewhere
> Seemed charm to be.
>
> Hardy, "The Riddle" (3)

The subject of this poem is described in language that seems to fossilize her. Still and immoveable, "never" gazing elsewhere, she stands as though petrified in a single direction.

"Impressed" carries connotations of being permanently engraved into something, and thus the unusual phrase "prospect-impressed" implies that her figure appears as an imprinted part of the landscape.[6] Moreover, the use of the term "always" to describe her behavior implies that she has an eternal, indelibly imprinted presence. Fossils, similarly, are indelible, lasting impressions of living creatures, and the novel even directly describes them as "impressions" (50). In providing a poetic fragment that conveys a moment of ossification, the initial epigraph to *The French Lieutenant's Woman* introduces a constellation of fossilization concepts—fragmentation, petrification, and momentary impressions— that we can use to understand the epigraphs that come after it. This epigraph gives us a poetic fragment containing the petrified impression of a moment, and in so doing, prefigures the novel's opening image of Sarah Woodruff standing on the Cobb, which Fowles admitted was the inspiration for his novel ("Notes" 136). Sarah is described as a "figure [that] stood motionless, staring, staring out to sea, more like a living memorial to the drowned, a figure from myth, than any proper fragment of the petty provincial day" (5). The main narrative echoes the opening epigraph upon conveying the fragmentary impression of a petrified figure. This relationship between epigraph and main text underscores how in this novel epigraphs are small, fossilized, fragmentary impressions of past authors and texts.

Many critics have noted that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is centrally concerned with the inherited legacy of the Victorians, and how that history impacts our understanding of the present; epigraphs, as literary structures inherited from nineteenth-century texts, can be understood as a part of this project. If epigraphs are fossilized forms inherited from the literary

[6] "Prospect-impressed" here has a double meaning, of course, because it also implies that the subject of the poem is in awe of her view of the sea.

past, then the opening epigraph to chapter three seems to be theorizing about their function and purpose. The epigraph reads:

> But a still more important consideration is that the chief part of the organization of every living creature is due to inheritance; and consequently, though each being assuredly is well fitted for its place in nature, many structures have now no very close and direct relations to present habits of life.
>
> Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (1859) (11)

Close-reading itself, this epigraph speaks to the conditions of its own emergence and present relevance the novel. Epigraphic forms, as vestigial apparatuses inherited from vast multi-volume novels, seem to have "no very close and direct relation to the present habits" of literature, though they are "well fitted for [a] place" in a novel that takes fossilization as its central metaphor. Such a reading is supported by the fact that the majority of epigraphs in the novel feature quotations from nineteenth century sources and have little discernable connection to the chapter they proceed.[7] Take, for instance, the excerpt from *In Memoriam* preceding chapter forty-one:

> …Arise and fly
> The reeling faun, the sensual feast;
> Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die. (316)

This poetic call upon man to overcome his animal instincts has little bearing on the chapter to follow, which is primarily concerned with Charles's comforting of a distraught child. A brief mention of Charles being too intoxicated to sleep with a prostitute is the only clear echo of the

[7] Bowen makes a similar observation about the epigraphs preceding chapter two of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, noting that "these two epigraphs, which by their juxtaposition suggest that the shortage of eligible men will result in female broken hearts, in context imply a number of things that the chapter does no more than hint at" (76).

epigraphic poem's sensual theme, and even then, the connection is a tenuous one; Charles is not overcoming baser instincts so much as he is succumbing to effects which render him unable to act upon them (316). Obliquely relevant content in epigraphs such as this burden a novel already concerned with burden of history; indeed, Smith himself experiences the literal weight of history upon grabbing the largest, heaviest fossil he can find—"a very fine fragment of lias with ammonite impressions" running across "ten inches of rock" (50)—and noting that "the increased weight on his back made it a labor, as well as a gift" (50). Epigraphs, essentially, are fossilized fragments whose presence weighs down the structural spine of the novel.[8]

It is also worth noting that Charles himself is described as a fossil several times in the novel. We learn that "his step slowed at this image of a superseded monster. He actually stopped, poor living fossil, as the brisker and fitter forms of life jostled busily before him" (290). Charles even goes so far as to fear personal fossilization, acknowledging that "he was one of life's victims, one more ammonite caught in the vast movements of history, stranded now for eternity, a potential turned to a fossil" (333). This characterization adds a new dimension to our understanding of epigraphs; in this context, epigraphs are no longer simply analogs to the objects Charles collects, but are in fact akin to the fossilized Victorian himself. This understanding allows us to comprehend chapter epigraphs as an extension of a pattern of characterization of begun in the text. Echoing Eliot's use of epigraphs to evoke the shrunken, fragment-collecting Edward Casaubon, Fowles's paratexts evoke the fossil-collecting, rapidly fossilizing Charles. Incidentally, the majority of epigraphs in the novel are from male Victorian writers, and their status as fossilized reflections of Charles aligns with a broader trend in the novel that many

[8] Incidentally, I am not the first critic to describe epigraphs is in terms of bodily backs; Leah Price, in *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*, similarly describes them as a structure that "vertebrates" a text (93).

critics have observed; namely, that in Fowles's writing, male Victorians are typically associated with a reified past, in contrast to Sarah's association with modern freedom.

Charles's personal fossilization is emblematic of a broader fossilization of the Victorian era. From the novel we learn that "personal extinction Charles was aware of—no Victorian could not be. But general extinction was as absent a concept from his mind…as the smallest cloud from the sky above him; and even though…he soon held a very concrete example of it in his hand" (49-50). Here a musing about an individual's demise transforms into a meditation on the demise of the entire Victorian era, concluding with Charles holding fossilized evidence of extinction in his hand. This moment of physical touch brings the Victorians and fossils into a more profound relationship than that of collectors and collected objects; here, the collected object, the fossil, becomes a premonitory reflection of the Victorians' impending demise. If the Victorians, like the organisms Charles studies, are a people that went extinct, then the epigraphs and epigraphic forms they left behind are their fossils. Epigraphs, as records of structures, authors, and texts from the past, petrify and preserve specimens from literary history, and in so doing imbue the novel with a fossilferous quality.

We have seen how epigraphs individually function as literary fossils, or reified records of structures of the past. As preserved fragments of text embedded in the extratextual apparatus, or outer crust of the novel, epigraphs collectively create their own parallel historical layer above the main text, and in this way are akin to the "lias strata in the cliffs above" (that is, a geological layer that consists of small fossilized organisms) (49). This observation is keeping with those made by critics who conceive of epigraphs as a type of outer covering for the text.[9] According to the novel, when Charles contemplates these cliffs, he

[9] Speaking of epigraphs Bowen, for instance, asks "what happens when the reader chooses to pay attention to the skin, the fringe, the textual threshold?" (68).

> might perhaps have seen a very contemporary social symbolism in the way these gray-blue ledges were crumbling; but what he did see was a kind of edificiality of time, in which inexorable laws…very conveniently arranged themselves for the survival of the fittest and best, *exemplia gratia* Charles Smithson, this fine spring day. (49)

The novel invites us to consider multiple possible ways to interpret the significance of a crumbling, fossil-laden cliff, suggesting both that it serves as a metaphor for the disintegration of Victorian society, and also that it serves as a comforting reminder of the orderliness of evolution. More notable is Charles's interpretation of the crumbling ledges as a feature evincing the "edificiality of time," an observation which also aptly describes the nineteenth-century chapter epigraphs' collective function in this twentieth-century novel; namely, to provide a crumbling edifice that reminds one of literary history. Here Fowles evinces an understanding of epigraphs' collective function that is similar to Radcliffe, who also deploys a crumbling epigraphic edifice as a means of considering literary history in her novels. Of course, in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* the edifice is geological rather than architectural, and Fowles is concerned with interrogating the literary legacy of the Victorians rather than establishing his novel's generic position, but nonetheless, each text harnesses epigraphs' fragmentary quality to convey a concept of crumbling history.

II. Double Epigraphs and Double-mindedness

We have seen how epigraphs in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* function as literary fossils that preserve fragmented textual forms. Aside from augmenting the novel's central theme, what do these paratexts reveal about the nineteenth century? The text itself provides us with a hint upon stating that "this—the fact that every Victorian had two minds—is the one piece of equipment we must always take with us on our travels back to the nineteenth century. It is a

schizophrenia seen at its clearest, its most notorious, in the poets I have quoted from so often" (368). At first this statement seems to be about the struggle between bodily and mental desires, but then the text cites a vast range of dichotomies (e.g., "the principled man's cry for Universal Education and his terror of Universal Suffrage," or the "tug-of-war" between "Propriety and Conviction") that render the nature of the double-mindedness under discussion something far less specific (369). The Victorian era's defining characteristic, the narrator seems to suggest, is a tendency towards dichotomous thinking. Fowles's unusual decision to include multiple epigraphs at the beginning of chapters formally enacts this idea. Describing the rarity of fossilized sea urchins, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* proclaims that "a morning in which you find two or three is indeed a morning to remember" (46). The same can be said of chapter epigraphs, which usually appear one at a time in nineteenth century novels. *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, however, regularly incorporates multiple epigraphs at the beginning of chapters. Typically pairing a poet and a prose writer concerned with a similar theme, coupled chapter epigraphs compel a reader to think in—quite literally—two or more minds at once.

One way in which coupled chapter epigraphs underscore the double-mindedness of the Victorian age is through offering divergent treatments of a similar topic. Take, for instance, the epigraphs preceding chapter eight, which describes Charles's fossil-collecting activities:

> There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
> O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
> There where the long street roars, hath been
> The stillness of the central sea.
> The hills are shadows, and they flow
> From form to form, and nothing stands;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,

Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (1850)

But if you wish at once to do nothing and be respectable nowadays, the best pretext is to be at work on some profound study…

Leslie Stephen, *Sketches from Cambridge* (1865) (44, ellipsis original)

Here we have two divergent treatments of scholarly research: the first poem's focus on the deep history of an expansive landscape, and expression of scientifically-inspired awe in the wake of new knowledge concerning earth's geological age, sharply contrasts with the second epigraph's ironic description of a gentleman hobbyist's small-scale inconsequential studies. In the actual book *Sketches from Cambridge* one example of such a "profound study" is the collecting of minor texts by an obscure author (6). Hobbyists pursuing such insignificant research, which enables them to "do nothing and be respectable," are apparently much more concerned with appearing important to their peers in the present moment than in contemplating the deep historical mysteries of literature or nature. The epigraphs' divergent depictions of research are reflected in the behaviors of Charles, whose studies oscillate between assertions of importance of minor subjects he collects ("with fellow hobbyists he would say indignantly that the *Echinodermia* had been 'shamefully neglected,' a familiar justification for spending too much time in too small a field" [46]) and awed contemplation of the large-scale significance of geological formations in the cliffs above him.

Another effect of the double-epigraphed chapters is the grounding of poetic musings in concrete historical documents from the nineteenth century. For instance, take the epigraph pairing immediately preceding chapter fifty-six:

Ah Christ, that it were possible

For one short hour to see

The souls we loved, that they might tell us

What and where they be.

Tennyson, *Maud* (1855)

Private Inquiry Office, Patronized by the Aristocracy, and under the direction of Mr. Pollaky himself. Relations with both the British and the Foreign Detective Police. DELICATE AND CONFIDENTIAL INQUIRIES INSTITUTED WITH SECRECY AND DISPATCH IN ENGLAND, TH E CONTINENT AND THE COLONIES. EVIDENCE COLLECTED FOR CASES IN THE DIVORCE COURT, &C.

MID-VICTORIAN ADVERTISEMENT (408, capitalization original)

The first epigraph, again from a Tennyson poem, raises the issue of longing to see something that is missing (in this case, a deceased loved one) while the second epigraph grounds these concerns in a concrete historical advertisement for a detective agency, which presumably locates and investigates missing persons and things. The second epigraph, in other words, answers the call of the first, by offering a service that makes "possible" the sight of a departed loved one, as well as offering a service that can discern "what and where they be."

When considering the possibility that coupled epigraphs exemplify the two-mindedness of the Victorian age, it is important to note that a few of the novel's chapters pair a nineteenth-century epigraph with a twentieth-century source. For instance, the epigraphs preceding chapter twenty juxtapose an excerpt from Tennyson's *In Memoriam* with some sentences from William Manchester's book *The Death of a President* (1967), and chapter three pairs an excerpt from Darwin's book *The Origin of Species* with an observation from G.M. Young's scholarly history

Portrait of an Age (1936), that asserts "of all decades in our history, a wise man would choose the eighteen-fifties to be young in" (11). A particularly striking coupling occurs in the epigraphs preceding chapter two:

> In that year (1851) there were some 8,155,000 females of the age of ten upwards in the British population, as compared with the 7,600,000 males. Already it will be clear that if the accepted destiny of the Victorian girl was to become a wife and mother, it was unlikely that there would be enough men to go round.
>
> E. Royston Pike, *Human Documents of the Victorian Golden Age*
>
> I'll spread sail of silver and I'll steer towards the sun,
> I'll spread sail of silver and I'll steer towards the sun,
> And my false love will weep, and my false love will weep,
> And my false love will weep for me after I'm gone.
>
> West-Country Folksong: "As Sylvie Was Walking" (6)

The first epigraph seems to preemptively interpret the second, by drawing our attention to the historical fact that there were more women than men in the Victorian period, the implication being that a young woman whose aimed "to become a wife and mother" might well be disappointed. The second epigraph is excerpted from a folk song which describes the disappointment of a young woman who awakes to discover that her lover (her "false love") had abandoned her. The majority of the novel's contemporary epigraphs are from two scholarly sources— Pike's collection of historical documents, *Golden Times: Human Documents of the Victorian Age*, and Young's *Portrait of an Age*. The epigraphic pairing of twentieth-century scholarly text with nineteenth-century source text suggest that the novel is inviting us to read the eras in terms of each other, and establishing a productive dialectic relationship between the

centuries. Although the inclusion of contemporary criticism seems to contradict the argument that the novel invites us to understand epigraphs as fossilized Victorian fragments, it is worth noting that both Pike and Young were born in the nineteenth century, and so were technically Victorians themselves. Pike admits in the introduction to his book that "it was a Victorian Mamma who taught me my letters" (7) and Young asserts "I was born…when the Queen still had nearly nineteen years to reign; I saw her twice…I well remember the death of Newman and Tennyson" (ii). Thus, in using contemporary criticism by late Victorians as fodder for epigraphs, Fowles seems to be, as the narrator of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* describes in a slightly different context, "fossilizing the existent" (49).

The narrator himself acknowledges the dialectic quality of coupled chapter epigraphs in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*'s penultimate paragraph, which is also, incidentally, the only place in the novel where Fowles explicitly interprets his own epigraph use:

> For that I have returned, albeit deviously, to my original principle: that there is no intervening god beyond whatever can be seen, in that way, in the first epigraph to this chapter; *thus only life as we have, within our hazard-given abilities, made it ourselves… the actions of men* (and of women) *in pursuit of their ends*. The fundamental principle that should guide these actions…I have set as the second epigraph.
>
> (466, emphasis original)

The narrator's explanation seems at first to establish a fairly straightforward relationship between epigraphs and main text; namely, the concluding epigraphs are setting forth mottoes, or principles, that are then further elaborated in narrative. Specifically, the novel's epigraphs present a sequential argument: first, that there is no god directing human endeavors, and second, as Arnold writes in the second epigraph, that our actions should be guided by what we know.

However, given that the narrator of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* repeatedly gives us reason to doubt him regarding matters of textual interpretation, it is worth considering the contents of an epigraph directly, rather than simply accepting his statement of their significance:

> Evolution is simply the process by which chance (the random mutations in the nucleic acid helix caused by natural radiation) cooperates with natural law to create living forms better and better adapted to survive.
>
> Martin Gardener, *The Ambidextrous Universe* (1967) (461)

Notably, this is one of the rare quotations in the novel from a contemporary source, and thus provides another example of a moment in which the novel appears to be "fossilizing the existent" (49). If we consider the possibility that this epigraph—which appears at the end of an intensely self-conscious narrative preoccupied with inherited historic structures—is commenting upon itself and all the epigraphs that precede it, what emerges is a broader contemplation of the past and future of epigraphical forms. Epigraphs, in this reading, are the entity that "evolves." As excerpts from larger works cited with greater and lesser degrees of accuracy, epigraphs are a chances series of "mutations" of their originating texts. In this context, nineteenth-century textual fragments, preserved in epigraphs, are potentially "forms better and better adapted to survive" in the current literary market than the vast and sometimes obscure Victorian works in which they initially appeared. Such an understanding is especially important given that Fowles himself—and the scholars he cites—acknowledges that the Victorians and their literature have gone significantly out of fashion: Fowles fears that his novel will be criticized for "pointless exploration of an already over-explored age" while Young describes how his book arose out of a desire to correct "ideas and attitudes generated…by an emotional antipathy to the Victorian age" ("Notes" 147; *Portrait* v). What we find in this penultimate paratext, finally, is a hint that

epigraphical forms are not simply fossilizing out-of-fashion texts from a long-dead era, but can also adapt themselves as a means of preservation and ensuring their survival, albeit in an altered and fragmented form. This concern about the survival of literary forms speaks to a particular mid-twentieth century milieu in which Fowles was writing, during which time critics such as Gore Vidal and Roland Barthes (who is mentioned directly in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*) portended the death of the novel. Fowles admits, "Ever since I began writing *The French Lieutenant's Woman* I've been reading obituaries of the novel…we are told no one reads novels any more" ("Notes" 149).

The word "ambidextrous" used in the penultimate epigraph connotes a back-and-forth dialectic between two divergent entities; Victorian epigraphs in a postmodern novel are a similarly ambidextrous form, for their presence requires us to think in two temporal directions at once; that is, to be both backward and forward looking.[10] This concept of ambidexterity returns us to the inquiry that opened this chapter: how does *The French Lieutenant's Woman* receive and reconfigure the paratextual paradigms of its predecessors? The novel nearly answers this question when the narrator considers possible replacements for chapter epigraphs, suggesting that:

> Instead of chapter headings, perhaps I should have written "On the Horizontality of Existence," "The Illusions of Progress," "The History of the Novel Form," "The Aetiology of Freedom," "Some Forgotten Aspects of the Victorian Age" …
> what you will.
>
> (95, ellipses original)

[10] Speaking to this issue of divergent temporalities in "Notes on an Unfinished Novel," Fowles writes: "a journey is a journey, backwards or forwards" (141).

These suggested titles imply that epigraphs—the only "chapter headings" in the novel to speak of— have been intentionally incorporated into the novel as a means of investigating certain topics, including literary history and Victorian ephemera. Notably, two possibilities the narrator here offers ("The History of the Novel Form," and "Some Forgotten Aspects of the Victorian Age") highlight the relationship between literary history and preserving obscure textual oddities that an understanding of epigraphs as fossilized fragments yields. In Fowles's novel, then, although we find many of the same epigraph functions as in the works of Radcliffe, Scott, Gaskell, and Eliot, we also find something new: an awareness of epigraphs' ability to preserve, or fossilize, literary history.

In harnessing the concept of fossilization to theorize about the form, function, and future of epigraphs, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* offers a deep and sustained engagement with Victorian literary history. Rather than serving as a means of irreverently playful historical distancing, epigraphs establish a continuity between the past and the present, and between the paratextual practices of the nineteenth century and a twentieth-century novel taking place in it. Fowles's historically-oriented understanding of the epigraph, as a fossilizing form uniquely suited to preserve and make available literature from the Victorian period, constitutes a departure from his nineteenth-century predecessors, who deployed epigraphs as means of investigating pressing concerns of the present, be they establishing generic positions for their nascent novels or engaging with contemporary social issues. What we glean from this history is a sense that chapter epigraphs are a distinctly, characteristically, nineteenth-century phenomenon. Fowles's novel transforms the chapter epigraph, it seems, from a form used by nineteenth-century writers, to a form that defines their era. This holds whether we consider them literary fossils that convey

the double-mindedness of the Victorian age, or more broadly, as the form of nineteenth-century literature best suited to survive in the twentieth century.

Conclusion

One of this project's overarching goals has been to expand our understanding of epigraphic form. An epigraph is usually defined as a brief quotation, and indeed, that is the definition with which this project set out—but if the content of the quotation is removed, what remains? Are there any general conclusions we can formulate about the structure and impact of epigraphs? Speaking of form in broad terms, Jonathan Kramnick and Anahid Nersessian propose that scholars "need not, indeed cannot provide a single definition of form because form is an entity known by occasion" (664). They go on to assert that forms only "become intelligible in particular and independently interesting contexts" (665). These observations represent, in general terms, the approach of "Epigraphic Encounters," which has been to allow our knowledge of epigraphic form to emerge within the context of individual authors' oeuvres, and sometimes even individual novels. This practice of reading yields a capacious understanding of the epigraph, as a form that can be comprehended in spatial (scale, shrinking, fragmentation); material (buildings, fossils); temporal (slow starts, diversions) and social terms (hierarchies, a cross-class collective of voices).

Although this dissertation began with the premise that Ann Radcliffe, Walter Scott, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, and John Fowles would each yield one or two primary understandings of epigraphic form, what it ultimately discovers is that authors often explore similar aspects of the paratext. Eliot and Scott, for instance, are both preoccupied with the relationship between epigraphs and beginning, while Radcliffe and Fowles both invite us to understand epigraphs in terms of fragmented material structures. These discoveries about epigraphical form help us discern epigraphs' purpose, which falls along a functional continuum,

with epigraphs that comment upon specific issues in a novel (such as Gaskell's cross-class collective of voices) falling on one end, and epigraphs providing meta-commentary (for instance, Scott's comments about the process of reading) on the other. In between these poles there are novelists that deploy both types of epigraph function—for instance, Radcliffe's interrelated explorations of gothic ruins, epigraphic fragments, and issues of generic transformation, and Fowles's use of epigraphs as literary fossils that paratextually amplify *The French Lieutenant's Woman*'s major themes.

Examining the chapter epigraph's evolving uses across the long nineteenth century, and its afterlife in the twentieth, has led me to formulate three general conclusions: first, the epigraph's import is accumulative. A comprehensive reading of epigraphic form should take into account how epigraphs collectively function, especially within specific novels. This approach differs from both typical formalist approaches to the chapter epigraph, which demonstrate how individual quotations relate to individual chapters (for instance, J.H. Alexander's extensive catalog of how Scott's epigraphs comment on chapters), as well as from source-focused studies which explore how one or two types of epigraphs affect our understanding of the novel as a whole (such as JoEllen DeLucia's examination of Radcliffe's epigraphical inclusion of Scottish philosophers). The very term "chapter epigraph" implies that the paratext is part of a larger collection (after all, it is difficult to imagine a book with one chapter), and attending to the logic of aggregation will help yield far more rigorous accounts of chapter epigraphs' function than readings focused on smaller subsets allow. This focus on accumulative impact also highlights one of this project's major limits: namely, that it provides an account of the chapter epigraph only, as opposed to epigraphs that precede essays, entire novels, or non-print media, such as films. It may very well be that there is functional overlap—it is not difficult, for example, to

imagine applying Chapter Four's assertion that epigraphs are make-believe beginnings to title-page epigraphs—but, on the whole, the logic of accumulation cannot help us understand these types of epigraphs, which are usually individual instances of quotation.

Second, this project demonstrates the usefulness of metaphor for thinking through the functions of epigraph forms, be it the metaphor of a ruined building, an excursion, or a scientific specimen. Discussing metaphor's relationship to literary form, Stephen Arata cautions that "the figures we employ in order to think cogently and creatively about form are heuristic devices that need not be organically related to the texts at all" (702). Thus, although this project's metaphors arose within the specific context of individual authors, these findings need not be constrained by their source material. What would happen, for instance, if we took the idea of epigraphs as momentary mental vacations elicited in Gaskell's *North and South*, and applied it to the epigraphs in Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest*, a novel notable for descriptive passages of the French countryside that have the flavor of late 18th-century travel guides?[1] Arata reminds us that "the metaphors we use are always motivated, and that it is best to be as aware as we can of those motivations, especially when we seek to connect texts to the social or natural world by way of the formal attributes we ascribe to each" (702). For these reasons, the best approach to understanding epigraphical form is not to proliferate metaphors indefinitely, but rather to use those metaphors—a building, a vacation, a fossil—to understand what epigraphs are doing: they fragment, they divert, they reify. In short, metaphors are a useful beginning—but not ending—point for thinking through epigraphical form. This being said, metaphors are not always necessary for contemplating epigraph function. For instance, comprehending epigraphs' capacity to shrink something down (Eliot's *Middlemarch*) or slow someone down at the beginning at the

[1] See Chloe Chard, introduction to *The Romance of the Forest*, by Ann Radcliffe (New York: Oxford UP, 2009), pp. xix-xx, which discusses the relationship between the Gothic novel and travel writing at some length.

beginning of a chapter (Scott's Waverley novels) requires attending to the shape and positional placement of an epigraph, but one need not use metaphors to make these claims. One might call this an ontological, as opposed to a metaphorical, approach to the epigraph.

A third and more basic conclusion derives from this conception of epigraphs as forms that can be evaluated in both metaphoric and abstract terms. Namely it is that what an epigraph actually says—its content—is often less important than where it appears, what shape it takes, or its impact on readers. (The one notable exception in this project is *Daniel Deronda*'s opening epigraph's theorization of itself as a make-believe beginning). It is not necessary to read every chapter epigraph in *Middlemarch*, for example, to develop a sense of it as a structure that miniaturizes the work of another, or read every epigraph in *Mary Barton* to perceive its accumulation of voices from a range of social classes. Similarly moving away from content, Gérard Genette has argued that "in an epigraph, very often the main thing is not what it says but who its author is" (159), and Elaine Freedgood notes in her discussion of epigraphs that "paratexts are often regarded as optional" (*Worlds Enough* 78).

This movement away from content brings our attention to the chapter epigraph's most perplexing quality: namely, that it occupies a position that is simultaneously subsidiary and significant. Subsidiary, because readers are often inclined to skip epigraphs when working though a vast novel; significant, because the very fact that epigraphs are set off on a page implies a certain modicum of selection, attention and prioritization on the part of an author. Eliot's *Middlemarch* comes closest to capturing this paradoxical duality, in its deployment of epigraphs as means of diminishing canonical authors, while concurrently giving priority to an unrecognized woman writer's voice. The simultaneously important and inconsequential nature of the chapter epigraph bespeaks its unique formal capacity to invite readers to think through abstract relational

dichotomies, such as the one and the many, the small and the large, and the fragment and the whole.[2] Perhaps these types of dualities were what Fowles had in mind when using epigraphs as a means of ossifying the "two minds" of the nineteenth century (368). To encounter an epigraph, is to be asked to think in two directions at once; discerning what those directions point towards is a matter of context, aesthetics, and experience.

[2] Freedgood recognizes a similarly doubled capacity of the epigraph, asking about Eliot specifically: "why does she seem to need at least two ways to 'tell' each chapter?" (*Worlds Enough* 86).

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