

# Newgate Narratives

Richmond; or, Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Officer, Drawn Up from His Private Memoranda

Edited by  
Gary Kelly



ROUTLEDGE  


## NEWGATE NARRATIVES

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NEWGATE NARRATIVES

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Volume 2

*Richmond; or, Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Officer, Drawn Up  
from His Private Memoranda*

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## INTRODUCTION

*Richmond; or, Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Officer, Drawn Up from His Private Memoranda* was published in three volumes in early March 1827 by the firm of Henry Colburn, the most prominent publisher of fashionable novels at this time.<sup>1</sup> *Richmond* has been seen as innovative for introducing the figure of the professional police detective as the central character in the novel, since two of its three volumes comprise a series of cases solved by the narrator-protagonist, a ‘Bow Street officer’, or ‘runner’. This was a special kind of policeman operating partly independently and partly under the direction of the magistrate at the Bow Street police office, near Newgate prison, in London. *Richmond* may have been a response to the publication or imminent publication of the supposed memoirs of the notorious Paris police chief, François Vidocq (1775–1857), but *Richmond*’s handling of the subject of crime detection is distinctive and unique. Further, this aspect of *Richmond* is less innovative than the way it novelizes the news, or fictionalizes themes currently or recently in the news at the time the novel was published. The author of *Richmond* was and is unknown, but this attribute is characteristic of novels by the professional journalist Thomas Gaspey (1788–1871). Gaspey, his other novels, and *George Godfrey* are dealt with in separate introduction to Volume 3 of this set. The purpose of this introduction to *Richmond* is not to establish its authorship but to show how it, too, novelizes the news, not only in its themes or content, but also in its development of the novel form, and thereby participates in ‘Newgate discourse’, or the set of texts, practices and institutions around crime and punishment, symbolized by London’s infamous Newgate prison.

Nevertheless, a brief consideration of *Richmond*’s authorship will help highlight its formal and thematic contexts. *Richmond* has been attributed to Thomas Skinner Surr (1770–1847) as well as to Gaspey, though E. F. Bleiler, in his introduction to a modern edition, rejects both Surr and Gaspey as its authors.<sup>2</sup> Against attribution to Gaspey is the fact that *Richmond* is unlike his previous novels in important respects: it is a first-person narrative, it deals with contemporary life, it is more fluently written, it lacks a well prepared and strong closure, it does not contain blocks of information obtained from antiquarian or travel

literature and it abandons chapter epigraphs for head-of-chapter summaries. Further, when Gaspey's widow applied for relief to the Royal Literary Fund in 1875, she did not list *Richmond* among her late husband's works.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, *Richmond* does not particularly resemble Surr's previous novels. In favour of attribution to Gaspey is the fact that *Richmond* does resemble his novelistic practice in important respects: it continues the kind of exploration of popular novel forms seen in his previous fiction, it involves a lot of travelling or wandering by the protagonist, it exhibits Gaspey's predilection for puns, it contains songs and poems similar to those in his other novels and to the kind Gaspey published in magazines, it takes up themes that recur in his earlier novels, it resembles *The History of George Godfrey*, published the following year by the same publisher, and which *is* attributed to Gaspey. Differences between Gaspey's previous novels, all published by the firm of Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, and *Richmond* and *George Godfrey*, both published by Henry Colburn, may also be attributable to change in publisher and to changes in Gaspey's professional life. Certainly *Richmond* is, in major ways, more journalistic than novelistic in form and more characteristic of a writer who was by this time an experienced, fully engaged newspaper journalist and editor. Most important, then, like the novels known to be Gaspey's, *Richmond* incorporates a number of related topics of current or recent interest at the time of the novel's publication: it novelizes the news. Indeed, it goes further and attempts to fuse the novel form with journalistic discourse and conventions.

As a novel, *Richmond* is a fictional autobiography in two large movements: the first volume recounts Tom Richmond's life from his childhood to his joining the police force known as the Bow Street 'runners', or 'officers'; the next two volumes recount five of the cases he investigates – the abducted boy, the persecuted clergyman, the smugglers and grave-robbers, the man who tried to reenact Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* in his own marriage, and the genteel gamblers and forgers.

Richmond opens his account with his early years in rural Derbyshire, his childhood pranks, rebellious schooldays and local sweetheart, Anne, and his early employment in a Liverpool counting house, or accounts office. While in Liverpool, he is fascinated by a performance of George Colman the Younger's popular musical play *Inkle and Yarico* (1787), staged by a company of 'strolling' or itinerant actors, and he runs off with his friend Jem Bucks to take up the theatre life. Together Richmond and Bucks ramble about Westmorland and Lancashire, encountering a highway robber named Blore and some country folk, getting arrested and managing to escape, eventually finding work with an itinerant theatre company at Lancaster. Richmond urges Anne to join him. She manages to escape her uncle's vigilance and does so, and they plan to marry. When they are about to perform on stage at Lancaster as Romeo and Juliet,

however, she is seized by an agent of her uncle. A troop of gypsies, including an eccentric young gentleman named Wilton and his gypsy lover, Mary, help find her. Anne and Richmond join the wandering gypsy band, but she falls ill and dies. The group then wanders across England to Cambridge, where they befriend a poacher and then help him escape from the game-keepers. While camped outside Cambridge they encounter some gentleman-student gamblers, Lord Blank, Sir Byam Finch and others. Richmond, Wilton and the gypsies continue their roaming and camp on Hampstead Heath, north of London. Here, offended by the parish vestry's notice banning gypsies, vagabonds and similar types, they plan to erect a counter-notice banning the vestrymen. They also discover that the local people are disgruntled by corruption among the vestry council, and Wilton, Richmond and their companions plot to expose them. Wilton then engages in a wrestling match with some prizefighters on Wimbledon Common, which he wins thanks to the strength and endurance he has gained from his vagrant life. After several more years of such wandering, quickly passed over in the narrative, Richmond decides to find a settled profession and, meeting Jim Bucks, who has been taken on by the Bow Street police office in London, he too becomes a police detective, closing Volume 1.

Volume 2 launches Richmond on his career in crime detection with investigating the abduction and possible murder of a boy at Roehampton, south-west of London. The investigation turns up Richmond's former friends, the gypsies, and the robber, Blore, but eventually leads to Jones, a dealer in bodies stolen from graves and sold to commercial anatomy schools – regulations at the time required medical students to study anatomy by dissecting human cadavers, creating a constant demand for them, which was supplied commercially. The boy was not murdered for this trade, but is discovered concealed on a river barge guarded by Jones's accomplice, a dangerously violent Welshwoman. The terrified boy is released but the woman escapes after nearly killing Richmond and his helper. Though Jones is arrested he too manages to get away. Richmond's next case is comical: he is called in by the clergyman of the village of Duckenhurst to solve mysterious hauntings. On investigation, these turn out to be pranks by parishioners disgruntled by their new minister's rapacious policy of exacting tithes – he was formerly a grasping attorney. Though Richmond sympathizes with the parishioners, he exposes their tricks and, in the process, uncovers a gang of body snatchers working with Jones, stealing recently interred bodies and selling them to commercial anatomy schools. The gang are also engaged with Jones in smuggling taxable goods into England from abroad, a widespread practice at the time, sometimes employing entire villages. Assisted by an impetuous but good-hearted Irish labourer, Thady, Richmond breaks up and arrests the gang and sets off to Hampshire, where Jones is operating from a place of concealment in the New Forest. At the smuggling village of Cadenham, Richmond again encoun-

ters the gentlemen swindlers, Lord Blank and Sir Byam Finch and, with Thady, secretly defeats their plan to fleece a wealthy Creole named Blizzard. Richmond also meets Maria, who was seduced at Cambridge by Finch and whom Finch is now trying to cast on Blizzard. But Richmond falls for the despondent and repentant woman, deciding to help her and, despite her 'fallen' condition, marry her himself. Thady uncovers Jones's plan for a grand smuggling operation and Richmond prepares to catch the gang red-handed, with the assistance of the gruff but professional lieutenant Frampton, commander of a revenue sloop and an uncorrupted Hampshire magistrate, 'W—m M—d', who can be identified as the actual William Mitford (1744–1827), famous historian of ancient Greece and a Hampshire magistrate.

Volume 3 opens with Richmond's plan in progress and, after a series of nocturnal adventures and fights between the smugglers and the government forces, Jones and his gang are taken and Richmond and Thady are appropriately rewarded. In London, Thady is soon cheated of his money – London was famously a dangerous place for naïve countryfolk and foreigners. Richmond deals with a call into the country to try to deal with an eccentric young husband who is re-enacting Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* in his own domestic sphere. When Richmond returns to London he is drawn in to the case of young Percy, a rich heir plundered of his wealth by sharpers. One of these is a farmer, Grinstead, who has inveigled Percy into appearing to court his daughter and who is extorting money from Percy by a threat of a lawsuit for breach of promise. Another and very different sharper is the glamorous Mrs —. From her house in Mayfair she operates both a fashionable but dishonest private gambling casino and a secret printing press for forged banknotes. Richmond is drawn to the case when he notices her attempting to pass forged notes while shopping. He then intervenes to save Percy from suicide after following him from Mrs —'s house one night. Richmond is now married and settled with Maria and they take Percy in and care for him. While with them, he unfolds his tale of being systematically cheated, first by Grinstead and then by Mrs — and her husband. Again, Richmond lays his plans and, acting with his friend and fellow officer Jem Bucks, surprises and seizes the forgers, while a party of police enter the front of the house to apprehend Mrs — and her husband. They find Mrs — in a concealed room, but she takes laudanum and expires rather than face public exposure and prison. Her husband is later killed in a duel by Percy, who then escapes to the Continent, and the novel closes precipitately with Richmond's assertion that, 'My purpose will be answered if what I have recorded in these volumes shall serve to beguile an idle hour, or show to those, who are inexperienced, the innumerable snares which beset the path of life, particularly in this overgrown and bustling metropolis.'

As this summary indicates, *Richmond* seems to have started out as a picaresque novel of adventures on the road and then shifted suddenly to being a detective novel. This turn may owe something to the exploits of François Vidocq, Paris police chief. Vidocq was a controversial character who crossed back and forth over the line between criminal and police and was also able to survive radical changes of political regime in France. This adaptability would have reminded British observers of the best known English criminal-turned-policeman, Jonathan Wild (1683–1725), whose relationship to *Richmond* is discussed later. An edition of what purported to be Vidocq's memoirs was being prepared in Paris in the mid-1820s. Vidocq was not the author of these memoirs, which were probably assembled or rewritten from his notes by Émile Morice and Louis-François L'Héritier. Their contribution seems to have been to enliven or sensationalize François Vidocq's material. A four-volume English translation appeared as *Memoirs of Vidocq* in the series *Autobiography: A Collection of the Most Instructive and Amusing Lives ever Published, Written by the Parties Themselves*, published between 1826 and 1833.<sup>4</sup> The publisher was a conger of the firm of Hunt and Clarke, publishers of plays, travels and books and periodicals associated with reformism, and the firm of Whittaker, Treacher and Arnot, a more miscellaneous publisher but specialists in biographies and autobiographies. Though *Richmond* was published in 1827, information about Vidocq and 'his' memoirs may well have been circulating earlier, given their sensational nature and their supposed author's prominence and career. As a journalist, Gaspé was well situated to hear of such matter and so *Richmond* may owe the idea of a collection of police cases and its first-person narrative form to the *Memoirs of Vidocq*. Otherwise *Richmond's* material is not as sensational as Vidocq's and is handled in a more matter-of-fact and journalistic way – perhaps more like François Vidocq's own accounts of his cases, before they were popularized by Morice and L'Héritier. Further, British interest in French policing practices in the 1820s was treated less as a subject in its own right than as a matter of comparison related to the larger issues of reform of policing, criminal law and the penal system being intensely debated in Britain itself. 'Vidocq' became very popular in France, with many editions, adaptations and later films and television series through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Britain, however, other detectives, whether policeman or private investigators, would be more prominent. Though perhaps instigated by the appearance of the *Memoirs of Vidocq*, *Richmond* drew thematically and formally not so much on that work as on two large discourses ready to hand, the picaresque novel tradition and the developing practices of journalism.

Formally, *Richmond* can be read in part as a contribution to the long tradition of a kind of crime literature that many 'Newgate novels' drew on – the picaresque romance. This tradition goes back to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish

picaresque or 'rogue-on-the-road' fiction, including the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), Mateo Alamén's *Guzman de Alfarache* (1599–1604) and Francisco de Quevedo's *El Buscón* (1662), known in English as *The Sharper* or *The Swindler*. This form developed in various ways down to Gaspey's day, including the criminal autobiographies of Daniel Defoe such as *Colonel Jack* (1722) and *Moll Flanders* (1722), Henry Fielding's satirical *Jonathan Wild* (1743), and Tobias Smollett's grim *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753). In the last decade of the eighteenth century the form was adapted again, this time by writers with a reformist agenda inspired partly by the English 'constitutionalist' tradition and partly by the early developments of the French Revolution, in such novels as William Godwin's *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) and Thomas Holcroft's *Hugh Trevor* (1794–7) and *Memoirs of Bryan Perdue* (1805). At this time, anti-Revolutionary writers also adapted the form, depicting the rogue-on-the-road as a conspirator or spy, a traitor or foreign agent out to corrupt virtuous English maids, delude well-meaning young English gentlemen, and overthrow the British constitution, in such novels as George Walker's *The Vagabond* (1799) and Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800). More recently, there were Gothic novels and Romantic narrative poems that adapted the picaresque rogue novel in new ways, such as C. R. Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), and Byron's hero-villain poems such as *The Corsair* (1814) or *Don Juan* (1819–24). *Richmond* resembles yet differs from these predecessors.

In particular, *Richmond* participates in a tradition of picaresque fiction in which the protagonist operates on or moves back and forth between both sides of the law. Here the best known example at the time *Richmond* was published would still be Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, the fictionalized biography of a real-life thief turned thief-taker (1683–1725). There were early nineteenth-century editions of Fielding's book and a chapbook edition of Wild's story in 1825, and Wild continued to appear in successive editions of the *Newgate Calendar*, a compendium of brief biographies of convicted criminals. More broadly, Fielding's novel, with such continuingly popular classics as John Gay's musical drama *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), suggested that the state and its officials and institutions were as vicious and corrupt as, and often in cahoots with, the criminal underworld they pretended to prosecute and punish. *Jonathan Wild* had continued relevance in the early nineteenth century because members of the law enforcement and justice systems were still widely believed to collude with the criminal underworld, and such collusion was exposed from time to time. Tom Richmond's career is not as dark and devilish as Jonathan Wild's, and *Richmond* does not satirize so strongly the world of the establishment and the state as mirrored in and colluding with the underworld of crime and corruption. Richmond's adventures, whether on the road with the gypsies and strolling actors or on the hunt as a police investiga-

tor, are more genially comic than in the long tradition of picaresque fiction from the early Spanish novellas to the more recent social novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Nor does *Richmond* resemble the optimistic picaresque novels of certain late eighteenth-century reformist writers, such as Thomas Holcroft, a point that would align *Richmond* with Thomas Gaspey's cautious sympathy for certain reform causes of the 1820s while supporting the established system. Finally, Tom Richmond remains a largely social character, with relatively little subjective self-examination or inner conflict, unlike the political inquirers, glamorous swashbucklers and satanic protagonists of British political novels of the 1790s and Byronic narrative poems and Gothic romances of the 1810s and 1820s.

Admittedly, the fictitious autobiographical form of *Richmond* is a departure from the third-person form of Gaspey's novels from *The Mystery* to *The Witchfinder* and his later novel, *The Self-condemned*. Nevertheless, *Richmond* is, like them, designed to address current or recent public events, issues, and controversies, and particularly those in the news during the mid-1820s. Among the topics cast into fictional form in *Richmond* are: police and policing; strolling players, gypsies and vagrants generally; the game laws; corruption in local government; 'body snatching' or the theft of cadavers of the recently deceased, or even murdered persons, to supply anatomy subjects to commercial medical schools; tithes and collection of tithes that supported the established church and clergy; marriage and divorce; various kinds of fraud and deception; forgery in particular; gambling, or gaming; and several others.

As its subtitle indicates, *Richmond; or, Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Officer* is largely a collection of cases investigated by a member of the police body attached to Bow Street magistrate's office and known under various names and nicknames but particularly as Bow Street 'runners' or 'officers', and as 'robin red-breasts', after the red waistcoats that, with a blue coat, formed part of their dress, but only when assembled as a body and not when on active duty, when they were in effect plain clothes officers. The Bow Street officers as a body were created from foundations laid down in the 1750s by the magistrate Henry Fielding, also author of the criminal biography *Jonathan Wild*, numerous satirical plays, and the widely read novels *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones* and *Amelia*, and then by his brother John Fielding. The Bow Street officers were paid from government funds in an attempt to detach them from the traditional kind of thief-takers, the most notorious of which was Jonathan Wild, who solved crimes for a fee and who were often, like Wild, themselves criminals or in cahoots with criminals.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the largely ineffective policing force known as 'watchmen', who were based in each parish and walked the streets at night to keep order, but who were largely passive in their procedures, the Bow Street officers were meant to be active. They were the magistrate's agents, serving writs and investigating matters assigned to

them. They also, however, retained traits of the old-style entrepreneurial thief-takers, who took up cases likely to produce financial rewards for themselves and who, notoriously, often colluded with or created crimes in order to 'solve' them and receive the rewards. In 1816, for example, a Bow Street officer was among a group of six policemen of various kinds who were charged with participating in crimes for this purpose.<sup>6</sup>

In 1816 John Townsend, perhaps the Bow Street officer best known to the wider public, gave testimony as to his and the other officers' duties and way of working to the parliamentary committee 'on the State of the Police of the Metropolis'. He testified that the officers worked out of the Bow Street magistrates' office and that they did not attend at the office every day. His opinion was that an officer could not live on his salary as an officer alone and that officers should be paid one-hundred guineas a year to make them independent. He stated that the officers were often sought at the police office for immediate action by official institutions such as the Excise Office and the Bank of England, and that they would be paid an extra guinea a day for attending at these places. He testified that officers often collected rewards posted for solving crimes, that only the crimes of highway robbery and burglary provided rewards, and that wealthy criminals would attempt to bribe officers. He confirmed that officers occasionally had to leave the country on police business. He was certain that officers had to frequent places of criminal resort or 'flash houses' in order to procure the information necessary to solve crimes. It was his opinion that, despite there being fewer executions than in the past, 'the morals and manners of the lower people' were worse in the past than in the present, that many committed crimes because they could not obtain honest work, that policing diminished the number of crimes, that displaying the bodies of the hanged in public deterred others from crime, and that some years of prison confinement were worse punishment than hanging.<sup>7</sup>

In 1822 John Stafford, clerk of the Bow Street office, gave the parliamentary committee on the policing of London detailed information about his officers. They were John Townsend, John Sayers, John Vickery, Daniel Bishop, Samuel Taunton, William Salmon, George Ruthven and James John Smith. According to Stafford, they were deployed as follows:

Townsend and Sayers generally attend His majesty [George IV] when he is out of town, they are now at Brighton [where the king had a palace]; Salmon and Ruthven have been upon the Continent in pursuit of persons who have absconded with property belonging to their employers in the city, they are both returned; Bishop has been at a variety of places in the country, I think three or four different places, on business; Taunton has been recently to the Exeter assizes [or periodic criminal trials], and he is now at the Maidstone assizes, a little while before that he followed some offenders to Scotland and brought them from thence; Vickery has been employed a good deal in

making inquiries for the post office relative to some offences that have been committed there, he has been also in Hampshire, and on account of his being very unwell he applied for permission to stay a little while at Odiham, which, I believe, is his native place; in fact he has never been well since he was very ill-used some time ago, and nearly murdered; Smith has been employed in a variety of matters in Kent and at Norwich, and latterly at Baldock in Hertfordshire.<sup>8</sup>

Of these officers, the one whose activities most closely resemble those of the protagonist of *Richmond* is perhaps Daniel Bishop. Ironically, a year after *Richmond* was published Bishop was revealed to have colluded with a receiver of stolen goods and was dismissed from the service, though later reinstated on the grounds that such practices were commonplace.<sup>9</sup> Stafford went on to tell the parliamentary committee that much of the Bow Street officers' work was in the country and that otherwise they were assigned to cases in London; that they were the police officers most often requested for such service because of their reputation for perseverance, bravery, initiative and reliability; that they could be hired to carry out private investigations, as Tom Richmond is; that if additional officers were needed they were selected from among the best assigned to other police offices in the metropolis; that what they were paid in salary was regarded as a retaining fee and not full remuneration; and that 'the constables at the different police offices are left a good deal at their own guidance and discretion, as to how they dispose of their time'.

By the time *Richmond* was published a number of the Bow Street officers had become public figures and were in the news as individuals. One of these was George Ruthven (c.1793–1844), who came to prominence through helping to expose the so-called 'Cato Street Conspiracy' in late February 1820. A group led by Arthur Thistlewood (1774–1820) planned to assassinate members of the government as a way to provoke a popular revolution and make way for a government based on the proto-socialist ideas of the radical reformist and publisher, Thomas Spence (1750–1814). Ruthven, instructed by Bow Street magistrate Richard Birnie (c.1760–1832), disguised himself as a labourer, spied on the conspirators, and then laid a trap for them as they gathered to carry out their plot. More of a celebrity was John Townsend (1760–1832), who operated within and beyond London, on official duty and for private hire and who rose to be made responsible for the security of the royal family. He was often in the entourage of the Prince of Wales, affected to speak in underworld 'cant' or slang, appeared often in graphic satires of the time and was a major witness before the parliamentary committee of inquiry into policing in 1816, where he expressed opposition to the system of payments to police for contributing to successful capital convictions – a practice that connected the police to the corrupt old system of professional 'thief-takers'. It may well be that the author of *Richmond* obtained suggestions for the protagonist's cases, or even the cases themselves, from inter-

viewing subjects such as Ruthven, Townsend, or others at the Bow Street office – something Gaspey as a journalist was well situated to do. It is notable, however, that the author of *Richmond* chose not to offer fictional ‘political’ cases such as Ruthven’s Cato Street conspiracy or fictional adventures in high life such as Townsend’s association with the King.

The policing of greater London, and the country as a whole, continued to be in the news through the 1820s, especially under the Home Secretary, or government minister for law and order, Robert Peel (1788–1850), who held the office from 1822 to 1827 and again from 1828. Earlier, Peel had been chief secretary of the administration of Ireland, and had established a countrywide police force to suppress the widespread economic and political violence carried out by the disaffected Irish peasantry. This force became a model for similar ones established elsewhere in the empire and eventually, after *Richmond* was published, in London. During the 1820s parliament examined the issue of policing several times, in connection with legal and penal reform, and in the context of widespread public concern about a supposed increase in crime, the inconsistency and harshness of the criminal law, the inadequacy of the prisons and the penal system, and the ineffectiveness of existing kinds of punishment as either deterrent or regime of reformation (see the documents selected in Volume 1 of this series). *Richmond* novelizes issues of policing and certain crimes, in particular; *George Godfrey* would go on to novelize other issues in this broad public, parliamentary, judicial, and administrative reconsideration of crime and punishment in the 1820s. In 1822 parliament issued its *Report from the Select Committee on the Police of the Metropolis*, recording evidence and making recommendations, among which was extension, regulation, and professionalization of the system of Bow Street officers. Robert Peel continued to guide parliamentary consideration of policing and eventually succeeded in passing the Metropolitan Police Act in 1829, two years after publication of *Richmond*. The act established a metropolis-wide police force with many of the positive features of the Bow Street system, in essence the same policing system still in place. Many of the Bow Street officers were absorbed into the new London police force. By its positive and sympathetic portrayal of a Bow Street officer, the novel may have contributed to that development. Certainly Tom Richmond exemplifies the kind of policeman that the act and its consequences created.<sup>10</sup> Yet the positive representation of the Bow Street officer in *Richmond* may also have been intended to oppose the creation of a new police force, which many resisted as a dangerous strengthening of state power, by showing that the Bow Street police were adequate to the job.

In the news alongside policing was the supposed crime wave that a reformed police service was meant to address. Through the 1820s there was a succession of parliamentary reports on numbers of commitments and convictions for criminal offences, in response to the general perception that crime had increased after

the end of the Napoleonic wars. The increase in crime was usually attributed to unemployment, exacerbated by other factors such as the practice of supplementing low wages from the poor rate (or parish-based welfare system), and leading to such 'crimes' as poaching, vagrancy, highway robbery and similar crimes of necessity or opportunity committed by the marginalized and distressed. It is these 'crimes' that are represented in the first volume of *Richmond*, as the protagonist roams over half of England with strolling actors and gypsies, encountering poachers and robbers, before he crosses over from outlaw to lawman in the rest of the novel. The problem again provoked public debate and parliamentary action, with a bill 'to amend laws relating to vagrants' in 1821; a bill 'for consolidating and amending laws relating to rogues, vagabonds, vagrants, and disorderly persons' in 1822; returns for the number of 'persons committed under vagrant laws to prisons in England and Wales' in 1824, culminating in a bill 'for more effectual suppression of vagrancy and punishment of idle and disorderly persons' in 1824. In his *Observations on the act (1824)*, the lawyer and historian John Adolphus (1768–1845), who had defended the Cato Street conspirators in 1820, criticized its harshness and its definition of vagrant, which included unlicensed 'common stage actors', 'pretended gypsies', 'fortune tellers' – all of which appear in *Richmond* – as well as many others. A writer using the pen-name 'Barrister' also criticized the act in *The Vagrant Act in Relation to the Liberty of the Subject* (1824) and *A Letter to a member of Parliament on the Impropriety of Classing Players with Rogues and Vagabonds in the Vagrant Act* (1824).

In *Richmond* it is in fact Wilton, the gentleman turned 'pretended gypsy', who celebrates the 'liberty' of the vagrant life. Strolling actors had long been treated sympathetically and even glamorized in fiction; in the 1810s and 1820s gypsy life was presented positively, and even as a utopian community, in new editions of the well-known chapbook *Adventures of Bamfylde Moore Carew*, supposedly king of the gypsies; and there were historical and cultural accounts of the gypsies and their customs and language in magazine essays and such books as William Chambers's *Exploits and Anecdotes of the most Remarkable Gypsies in the Southern Counties of Scotland; Together with Traits of their Origin, Character and Manners* (1821, reprinted 1823). Poaching was also widely seen as an 'excusable' crime; as the 1827 parliamentary *Report from the Select Committee of Criminal Commitments and Convictions* observed, 'there is a general feeling both amongst the farmers and amongst the labourers that poaching is not a moral crime'.<sup>11</sup> Poaching for personal consumption was less an issue than poaching for sale, as represented in *Richmond*. Such sale was illegal, but as the 1823 parliamentary *Report from the Select Committee on the Laws Relating to Game* had concluded, existing laws had utterly failed to stop the practice and should be abolished and replaced with legislation establishing licensed sale of legally obtained game. Social commentators also represented the game laws as a form of

oppression of the poor, as in Isaac Williams's *Avarice Exposed; or, A Treatise on the Corn and Game Laws* (1826); many law reformers pointed at the notorious 'Black Act', which had made illegally hunting with a blackened face at night a capital offence, a provision later extended to cover protesters outside royal game reserves. In 1825 George Banks published a pamphlet entitled *Reconsiderations on Certain Proposed Alterations of the Game Laws*, in which he upheld the laws but protested that his aim was not to preserve game but to prevent crime; and in *A Treatise on the Game Laws* (1826), Joseph Chitty rehearsed the many statutes that had criminalized the unauthorized hunting of game over the years. These various categories of vagrant depicted in *Richmond* – the strolling actors, gypsies and poachers – are treated sympathetically, though not uncritically, and even the highway robber Blore is portrayed as acting more out of desperation than depravity.

Perhaps more contentious than suppression of vagrancy and poaching was the imposition of tithes, or the exaction of a proportion of produce or money for the support of the established state church and clergy. Tithes had long been socially divisive, setting clergy and the established church against not only religious dissenters, or those who refused to accept the authority of the established church, but also against property owners, however small, who adhered to the state church but who resented its tax on the produce of their land, investment and labour. In Ireland, where such tithes were exacted from the Catholic majority for the benefit of a Protestant minority, the imposition was widely and often violently resisted by the 1820s, and was a major cause of Irish Catholic political protest and mobilization. But even in England, where the majority belonged to the established church, tithes were unpopular, and becoming more so in the face of increasingly determined attempts by proprietors of tithes to levy them regularly and in full, and to reclaim those that had fallen out of use or that had, perhaps centuries earlier, been settled for a 'composition', usually a fixed monetary sum, which had of course decreased in real value over the generations. In Volume 2, *Richmond* gives full satirical treatment to such proprietors intent on re-establishing the original value of the tithe with the case of the rector of Duckenhurst, formerly a petty attorney who entered the clergy solely to have an easy life on the income of his tithes, and whose despotic insistence on his 'rights' evokes the hostility and harassment of his parishioners. Though *Richmond* is sympathetic to the parishioners, he does his duty and pursues the troublemakers. Through the 1820s there was a lively and often bitter 'paper war' over tithes, political economists weighed in with arguments on whether or not tithes were a drain on the economy, and reformists held up tithes as an example of a powerful and privileged minority exploiting and oppressing the majority. Not surprisingly, William Cobbett, the tireless critic of economic parasites and the privileged classes, lambasted tithes and those who exacted them, in his March

1822 *Monthly Sermon*. Given the inflammatory nature of the issue, parliament addressed it several times from the 1810s onward – several times a year in the case of Ireland. An 1817 parliamentary Bill for the Amendment of the Law in Respect of Tithes gave relief at law to those benefiting from a long-established composition of the tithe. Parliament continued through the 1820s to monitor the issue and the conflicts arising from it, and in 1827 attempted to make commutation of tithes by mutual agreement easier, observing in the preamble to the bill that ‘in many places much inconvenience has been found to result from the levying of Tithes, and many disputes have arisen in consequence between the Rectors, Vicars and other Incumbents of Ecclesiastical Benefices and Livings and their Parishioners or other persons liable to pay Tithes to them.’<sup>12</sup>

Another topic that was related to the theme of ‘crime’, broadly understood, that was often in the news, especially from 1820, and that is novelized in *Richmond*, is love and with it marriage and divorce. This topic is represented from a variety of angles in the novel: in the early and almost illicit relationship of Richmond and Anne, the manifestly illicit relationship of Wilton and the gypsy Mary, the bad marriage of the parents of the abducted boy, the illicit relationship of Sir Byam Finch and the naïve Maria, Richmond’s marriage to Maria despite her ‘fallen’ condition, and other relationships. Marriage and divorce were in the news most spectacularly and alarmingly, from a national point of view, in 1820 with the attempt by the then Prince Regent to divorce his estranged wife, Princess Caroline. The cause of Caroline was taken up by the political opposition, reformists, and a disaffected public as a way to force regime change, with large popular demonstrations that, many thought, portended an imminent political revolution. The potential political consequences of this marital dispute were exacerbated when the Prince Regent succeeded to the throne in 1821, making Caroline the Queen and, in the event of her husband’s incapacity – not unlikely since his father had been incapacitated by mental illness for many years – possibly regent herself, with considerable political power. The issue faded from public attention with Caroline’s death in 1822, but the ‘Queen Caroline Affair’ intensified public interest in, and concern over, issues of marriage, divorce, property, and legitimacy through the 1820s, and the early 1820s saw a spate of pamphlets on these subjects, inspired by the public spectacle of royal marriage breakdown.

These issues were not, of course, new. For decades literature had portrayed the conflicts and injustices caused by unequal laws of marriage, divorce, property and child custody. The relationship between love and marriage had long been a subject of conflict in middle-class culture and literature, especially novels. On the one hand there was growing resistance to marriage arranged for family or property reasons and support for a meritocratic ideology of love and marriage based on individual suitability and preference. On the other hand there was fear that personal preference might lead to ‘imprudent’, exploitative, or unhappy

marriages, to seduction and loss of moral reputation, or to sexual promiscuity and bastardy, all affecting the stability, preservation and transmission of property. Lawmakers struggled to regulate marriage and to maintain conjugal power in men's hands. Since the 1790s, led by feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft, a middle-class political and cultural avant-garde had criticized the patriarchal marriage-property system in their writings and experimented with alternative amorous and conjugal arrangements in private life. Religious and moral commentators denounced the moral degeneracy of the age and middle-class social managers tried to 'reform' and regulate what they saw as lower-class and upper-class 'libertinism', while reform-oriented intellectuals and writers, led by figures such as the poet Byron and the 'Holland House' circle, cultivated and promoted purposely transgressive sexual and marital relations. The upper class were widely perceived as routinely unfaithful maritally and promiscuous sexually, while the lower classes were widely supposed to emulate their 'betters' in these respects. A popular form of cheap literature comprised accounts of lawsuits arising from extra-marital affairs in high society. The publisher John Fairburn specialized in this line of chapbooks in the 1810s and 1820s, reporting lawsuits for what was known as 'criminal conversation' or 'crim. con.' – extra-marital sexual intercourse – and newspapers and magazines regularly carried accounts of such suits. Because divorce was difficult or impossible to obtain in the law courts, parliament received a steady stream of petitions to dissolve marriages, and accounts of these were also published for public amusement, instruction, titillation, or outrage. The interest extended to cultural anthropology and Romantic Orientalism, with their depictions of other cultures' practices of sexuality and marriage; for example, increased interest in the subject led in 1824 to a new edition of James Lawrence's 1811 novel ostensibly about the unconventional marriage practices of a south Indian people, entitled, *The Empire of the Nairs; or, The Panorama of Love*, with the engaging subtitle, 'enlivened with the intrigues of several crowned heads; and with anecdotes of courts, brothels, convents, and seraglios; the whole forming a picture of gallantry, seduction, prostitution, marriage, and divorce, in all parts of the world'.

Attitudes to love and marriage had wide political implications, especially after the 1790s. The Society for the Suppression of Vice, established in 1802 after a royal proclamation against vice in 1787, was instigated by the religious Evangelical and anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce and his associates. As commentators of the time pointed out, however, the Society concentrated their attention on the lower and lower-middle classes and on what they saw as the intertwined dangers of sexual immorality, religious free-thinking and 'blasphemy' and political reformism. A particular object of the Vice Society's system of harassment and intimidation was the radical reformer, writer and publisher, Richard Carlile (1790–1843). Carlile was jailed from 1819 to 1825 for repub-

lishing the works of Tom Paine and other writings, but his wife and then his sister carried on selling his publications, one of which was *Every Woman's Book; or, What is Love?* (1826), a pamphlet advocating sexual equality, acceptance of sexual pleasure as human and social, and practice of birth control. At the same time, legal and theological discourses were brought to bear in such works as the lawyer Thomas Poynter's *Concise View of the Doctrine and Practice of Ecclesiastical Courts in Doctors' Commons on Various Points Relative to Marriage and Divorce* (1824) and the Rev. Hector Morgan Davies's *Doctrine and Law of Marriage, Adultery, and Divorce* (1826). *Richmond* does not deal directly with issues of marriage, adultery and divorce that were constantly in the news in the 1820s, but it repeatedly represents unconventional or illicit conjugal relationships and unsatisfactory marriages. In doing so, the novel emphasizes the forbearance and sacrifice of women in making and maintaining conjugal relationships, legalized or not, in all the depicted relationships, but most obviously in the case of the man enacting Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* in his own marriage, an episode which otherwise fits oddly into Tom Richmond's dossier of cases. Further, in the one happy marriage that the novel features, between Tom Richmond and the 'fallen' Maria, Richmond expressly raises and dismisses the issue of female sexual chastity as a *sine qua non* of marriage, and while he concedes that Maria's loss of 'respectability' may be a consideration – 'virtuous' women were not supposed to befriend or even visit a 'fallen' woman – he also sets that aside as irrelevant to people in their humble station in life – policemen, like hangmen, were conventionally regarded as social outsiders by profession. In short, *Richmond* treats love and marriage in relation to and as part of a broad and complex topic in the news, touching private and public life, morality and property, and regulation and reform.

*Richmond's* representation of organized and systemic forms of crime also incorporated certain current news topics as indications of public and institutional interest and concern. There are four main topics absorbed into the novel in this respect. One of these is 'body-snatching', or the theft of the recently deceased from graveyards for sale to commercial anatomy schools. Newspapers carried reports of often violent confrontations between the public and grave-robbers, and between gangs of grave-robbers, and newspapers and cheap pamphlets reported murders carried out as a way to obtain specific kinds of saleable cadavers. The demand for fresh cadavers arose from the requirement to study anatomy in order to qualify to practise medicine, and dissection classes open to the public were also a form of commercial entertainment. Since the eighteenth century, many anatomical subjects had been supplied from the gallows, and legislation provided that the bodies of hanged felons be turned over to anatomy schools, though the practice was widely unpopular and from time to time a mob sympathetic to a particular criminal would try to prevent this. By the mid-1820s,

however, increasing demand from anatomy schools, the inability to preserve bodies for very long and diminution in the number of hangings created a crisis of supply, leading to organized theft of the recently interred from graveyards – one of the trades Jones practises in Tom Richmond’s first case. Grave-robbing led to gang rivalries and fights, and extraordinary measures were taken by relatives of the deceased to prevent such theft, such as guarding the gravesite or erecting a ‘mortsafe’ around it.<sup>13</sup> Murders were also committed as part of this traffic, as in the famous case of William Burke and William Hare, who carried out a series of murders in Edinburgh for this purpose in 1827 and 1828, just after *Richmond* was published. In 1828 parliament also investigated the matter, producing the *Report of the Select Committee on Anatomy*, which eventually led to the 1832 Bill for Regulating Schools of Anatomy.

Connected to grave-robbing in *Richmond* is smuggling, a longstanding and, with poaching, perhaps the most pervasive crime of the time. Grave-robbing, poaching and smuggling were similar in being nocturnal crimes usually executed by gangs, which the property owning public seem to have found especially alarming. Poaching and smuggling had particular resemblances of their own. They were among the commonest offences listed in the returns to parliament for criminal convictions and the authorities found both very difficult to suppress. Law manuals for justices of the peace and magistrates all contained instructions on dealing with those apprehended for smuggling, which was a serious crime, yet, like poaching, also widely accepted and even connived at by people in all social classes. The seriousness of smuggling was stated emphatically in the eleventh edition (1825) of a widely used law manual of the time, *Gifford’s English Lawyer; or, Every Man His Own Lawyer: Containing a Summary of the Constitution of England, Its Laws and Statutes*:

This offence is restrained by a great variety of statutes, which inflict pecuniary penalties, and seizure of goods for smuggling, and affix the guilt of felony, with transportation for seven years, upon more open practices. By the [act] 10 Geo. II. c. 34. if three or more persons shall assemble with fire-arms or other offensive weapons to assist in the illegal exportation or importation of goods, or in rescuing the same after seizure, or in rescuing offenders in custody for such offences, or shall pass with such goods in disguise, or shall wound, shoot at, or assault any officers of the revenue when in the execution of their duty, such persons shall be felons without benefit of clergy.<sup>14</sup>

The statement indicates that the offences were frequent enough to require such penalties as deterrents, and these offences are precisely those depicted in *Richmond*. To assist law enforcement and the justice system further, there were regular updates of *An Alphabetical Abridgement of the Laws for the Prevention of Smuggling*, listing statutes from the time of Charles II up to the year of publication. In 1825, parliament passed *An Act for the Prevention of Smuggling*, and the government ordered the publication of James Hume’s *The Laws of the Customs*,

Compiled by Direction of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, and Published by the Appointment and under the Sanction of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs, with Notes and Index. Meanwhile, moral and social commentators attempted to persuade the public that purchasing smuggled goods was wrong for a variety of reasons. These pamphlets included *The Sin and Misery of Smuggling Considered in a Sermon* (1819); a reprint of the Methodist John Wesley's *A Word to a Smuggler* (1823); *The Bold Smuggler* (1824), a melodramatic and ostensibly true tale of the exposure of a villainous smuggler; and the prolific Evangelical writer Caroline Fry's *Peggy Lum; or, A Hint to the Purchasers of Smuggled Goods: A Tale* (1825). In a more elaborated and belletristic way, *Richmond* takes its place in this campaign to portray the evils of smugglers and smuggling.

Finally, *Richmond* represents a variety of organized frauds and deceptions that were in the news and before parliament in the 1820s. Two of these, counterfeiting banknotes and crooked gambling, are connected through the same perpetrators, Mrs — and her husband and their accomplices. Richmond first notices the lady attempting to pass forged banknotes in shops, using her genteel appearance and manners to pay for small items with large notes, aiming to receive change in genuine money. While observing her house in a fashionable part of London, Richmond then becomes involved with the wretched Percy, who is stripped of his large inheritance by the crooked gambling carried on at Mrs —'s house and various other frauds she and her accomplices practise on him. This lengthy episode in the novel responds, very broadly, to public concern in the 1820s over what was perceived to be an increase in crimes of fraud and deception, linked to concern over the reliability and stability of the system of public credit and finance.

More particularly, the novel responds to public concern over the counterfeiting of Bank of England notes in the early 1820s. There were two related issues here — the ease or difficulty of forging banknotes, and the reliability and stable value of paper currency. Until 1821, banknotes could not be exchanged for gold and silver currency, exacerbating concern over the genuineness of the paper notes. In 1818 Charles Williams published his *Considerations on the Alarming Increase of Forgery on the Bank of England, and the Neglect of Remedial Measures; with an Essay on the Remedy for the Detection of Forgeries*; this book came out with the firm of Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, soon to be publisher of Thomas Gaspey's first five novels. Williams attributed the supposed increase in counterfeiting banknotes to the same cause of economic distress blamed by commentators on the increase of other crimes, such as poaching and smuggling, referred to earlier. Williams also blamed the Bank of England and the government for insufficient care in making notes counterfeit-proof, declaring, 'The unguarded character of the Bank note seems almost to invite the bold and the

unwary to the trial, instead of being fenced about by difficulties, if not sufficient to keep the enterprising or the desperate from the attempt, at least to give them obstacles to surmount before they venture to immolate themselves' (p. 41). The American inventor Jacob Perkins (1766–1849) came up with a more sophisticated printing method and in 1819 moved to Britain and obtained the contract for producing Bank of England notes. His invention was discussed by Sir William Congreve in his *Analysis of the True Principles of Security against Forgery Exemplified by an Enquiry into the Sufficiency of the American Plan for a New Bank Note* (1820). At the same time, there was public discussion of appropriate punishments for forgery as a crime that threatened the basis of the national economy. Anxiety about banknotes' genuineness persisted, however, and was exacerbated by a perceived increase in frauds and forgeries carried out by those entrusted with a wide variety of documents of value, such as stocks and instruments for establishing or transferring property. In 1819 George Cruikshank and the reformist William Hone issued a burlesque banknote satirizing paper money and the government's attempts to ensure its credibility through legislating harsh punishments for forgery and for passing bad notes. In 1821 an anonymous writer addressed the Lord Chancellor *On the Subject of Forgeries and Bank Prosecutions, and on the Proposed Amelioration of the Criminal Law*. Though technological improvements made forging banknotes more difficult after the early 1820s, confidence in paper money continued to weaken, and by 1825–6 there was a crisis in banking and paper currency, with consequent failure of country banks and bankruptcy of many businesses. The government responded with a banking act in 1826, initiating a process of liberalization in banking and joint-stock companies. One of the commentators on this crisis was the same Thomas Skinner Surr who is sometimes credited with authorship of *Richmond*, in a pamphlet entitled *The Present Critical State of the Country Developed; or, An Exhibition of the True Causes of the Calamitous Derangement of the Banking and and Commercial System* (1826).

The reliability of paper currency and the banking system was related to the reliability of other kinds of paper instruments used to represent or transfer property. This issue is strikingly presented in *Richmond* in the case of Percy, who is bilked of large sums by fraud and the fraudulent passing of his cheques and other instruments of property by Farmer Grinstead and Mrs — and her gang. The most celebrated such case in real life was probably that of Henry Fauntleroy (1784–1824), a banker who financed a lavish lifestyle by forgery and fraud with his clients' property, and who was caught, convicted and hanged outside Newgate prison on 30 November 1824 before a crowd estimated at 100,000. Fauntleroy was fictionalized in Edward Lytton Bulwer's 1828 novel, *The Disowned*, and it may be that Percy in *Richmond* is meant to represent a victim of the fraudster such as Fauntleroy. Legislation did not seem able to keep up with the problem.

In 1823, parliament passed a Forgery Bill consolidating and updating legislation on various kinds of forgery, including wills, legal documents, certain kinds of banknotes and so on. Together, paper money and paper financial instruments, including stocks, deeds, wills and so on, constituted a complex financial system that could both enable and disable economic activity. Political economists weighed in with analyses of the situation and proposals for change, such as Thomas Tooke's *Considerations on the State of the Currency* (1826). The poet Thomas Moore published several satirical poems on currency and finance in 1826 in *The Times* newspaper. Reformers such as William Cobbett had been claiming for years that the currency and finance system was a fraud that benefited and was managed by just such upper-class crooks as Mrs — and her husband. When *Richmond* was published in 1827, all this would be fresh in the minds of readers, and a continuing topic of news, giving additional resonance to the novel's portrayal of forgers and fraudsters.

Banking, banknotes and investment were related in public discussion to the widespread vice of gaming, or gambling, through the identification of both as forms of speculation based on chance rather than knowledge and highly susceptible to, or indeed inseparable from, cheating and fraud. Gaming had long been considered an upper- and lower-class vice, and in the 1820s there were semi-private gambling dens and gambling clubs located in the St James's quarter and elsewhere in London's fashionable west end. Scandal papers frequently reported the enormous losses incurred by the famous and the fashionable, led by George IV when Prince of Wales and subsequently Prince Regent, when his father and parliament paid his debts, in one instance in return for his agreement to marry so as to produce a legitimate heir and thereby ensure the stability of the crown and government. In such ways were gambling and the established order seen as intertwined. As *Richmond* shows in the instances of Percy and the Cambridge student-gentlemen, it could certainly be considered genteel to risk and lose large sums. Middle-class moralists, social commentators, and reformists of course inveighed against the evils of gambling, especially among the lower and upper classes. William Cobbett in his political *Sermon* of 1 October 1821 condemned gaming for hardening the feelings and corrupting society. In the October 1825 issue of the *Newgate Monthly Magazine*, which both sensationalized and condemned lower- and upper-class vice and crime for a middle-class readership, an essayist blamed the upper classes for the recent spread of gambling to the other classes:

The passion for gaming belongs more particularly to what are called the higher orders of society,—to the titled and the aristocratical portion of the community. Yet so prone is mankind to be dazzled by appearances,—so apt is he to copy the manners and practices of those whom he has been taught to look upon as his superiors,—when we reflect that a great part of what were once exclusively the vices of the rich,

are now become extensively the practices and propensities of the poor, owing solely to their pernicious example,—and when we see the influence which riches every where procure for their possessors,—and that the desire of getting riches acts powerfully on all mankind,—we shall no longer be surprised at the progress which gaming has made, and is still making, upon the useful classes of society.<sup>15</sup>

Even more seductive would be the ‘gamestress’, such as Mrs —.

The example of the ‘fashionable gamester’ was considered especially dangerous for ‘mercantile’ or middle-class youth; as *The Economist* magazine put it in 1824:

When the glittering of London pleasures first meets the eye of a young man placed upon the road of a mercantile life, or when he enters any of the multifarious departments in the machine of society which always lead the industrious and prudent to honourable emolument, he too frequently misconceives the fashionable gamester’s character, and confounds his crimes with elegant accomplishments.<sup>16</sup>

The dangers of gambling were also associated with perhaps the most famous murder case of the mid-1820s. This was the murder of William Weare by John Thurtell and his accomplices, known as the Radlett or Elstree murder, in October 1823, over a gambling debt owed by Weare to Thurtell. One of the dozen-and-a-half books on the murder was entitled *The Fatal Effects of Gambling, Exemplified in the Murder of Wm. Weare, and the Trial and Fate of John Thurtell . . . ; To Which Is Added, The Gambler’s Scourge: A Complete Exposé of the Whole System of Gambling in the Metropolis* (1824). In the ‘Gambler’s Scourge’, various supposedly ‘true-life’ incidents are recounted that would together compose the story of Percy in *Richmond*. The picture of ‘fashionable’ gaming presented by these commentators and their judgment of it are similar to those presented by *Richmond*’s narrator-protagonist, though his sympathy for the victim is perhaps greater. More generally, the mid-1820s saw the steady mobilization of middle-class public opinion, parliamentary legislators and the government to restrict and control gambling, among other ‘vices’, as a threat to good work habits, prudent domestic economy, and thus to the national economy as a whole.<sup>17</sup> In this movement, *Richmond* represents a ‘liberal conservative’ approach similar to that taken by the government and such leading government figures as George Canning, whose politics Thomas Gaspey seems to have agreed with in other respects. Finally, in *The History of George Godfrey*, published a year after *Richmond*, Gaspey would vividly represent another form of gambling widely deplored for its negative effect on the national economy – speculating in stocks and shares.

*Richmond*’s representation of fashionable gaming as inherently fraudulent and corrupting is set within the broader context of what were known at the time as the ‘frauds of London’. These encompassed the widespread practices of fraud and deception, both occasional and organized, that were supposed to character-

ize everyday life in the metropolis, to victimize foreigners and country visitors in particular, to contribute to the supposed crime wave of the time, and to participate in a network of fraud and corruption pervading all levels of society, reaching into politics and government, and supposedly requiring any number of reforms. Other parts of this network of fraud, from bogus auctions to the stock market, would be depicted in Thomas Gaspey's *History of George Godfrey*. In *Richmond*, the most prominent victim of the frauds of London is the amiable Irishman (and Richmond's assistant) Thady, who is quickly relieved of his reward for helping to catch the gang of smugglers. Warnings about the 'frauds of London' in fact comprised a form of popular literature that was generations old. In the mid-eighteenth century there were works such as *The Cheats of London Exposed* (1769) and *The New Cheats of London Exposed* (1750), and in the 1770s Alexander Hogg, publisher of a popular version of the *Newgate Calendar*, published *The Frauds of London Detected*. The genre seems to have been reinvigorated in the aftermath of the decades of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. In 1815, an 'Old Bow Street Officer' published a twenty-eight-page pamphlet entitled, *The Frauds of London, Displaying the Numerous and Daring Cheats and Robberies Practised upon the Stranger and the Unwary*. A similar work was *The Stranger's Guide; or, The Frauds of London Exposed* (1821). The frauds particular to 'trade', or small business, were of concern to Londoners themselves, and *The London Tradesman* (1819), a manual for shopkeepers, included a section on 'Swindler's Arts'. The frauds of London were also put into narrative form, as in *A Fortnight's Ramble through London; or, A Complete Display of all the Cheats and Frauds Practised in that Great Metropolis . . . Being a Narrative of the Adventures of a Farmer's Son* (1817). *Richmond* absorbs this topic, too, into its narrative, and in fact the novel's closing sentence declares that its purpose is precisely to bring such information to the reading public.

Finally, it is one victim of the 'cheats of London' in the novel, Thady, who also foregrounds one of Gaspey's favourite themes, and a continuing major issue in the news – Ireland and the 'Irish problem'. *Richmond* portrays Thady and the other Irish as representative the entire Irish people; the portrayal is both sympathetic and condescending. On the one hand, Thady is passionate, impulsive, naïve and uncultured; on the other hand, he is loyal, honest, reliable and strong. In the period just preceding publication of *Richmond* the 'Irish problem' had become increasingly pressing. Led by Daniel O'Connell, the Catholic Association had been holding huge demonstrations in various parts of Ireland, demanding emancipation of Catholics from their long-standing civil disabilities, such as exclusion from certain public offices and professions, restrictions on worship and religious education and so on. To achieve this end, the Association demanded an end to the union of Ireland with Great Britain, that is, with England and Scotland. Perhaps most importantly, the organization, size and

composition of the Association demonstrated the feasibility of something that alarmed the ruling establishment of the United Kingdom – a coalition of lower and middle classes to demand reforms, in an organization funded by very small individual contributions, mobilized to express their demands with convincingly large numbers – a movement with the manifest potential to carry its demands by force should it choose to do so. Two years after *Richmond* was published, the Catholic Relief Act conceded many of the Association's demands as the only way of avoiding such a violent revolution, though against the continuing opposition of the king, the establishment and most non-Catholics across the United Kingdom. The Catholic Relief Act enfranchised many Catholics, but not most of those who had mobilized in the Catholic Association; in fact, the Act extended citizenship only to more well-to-do, property-owning Catholics, as an attempt to break up the coalition of lower and middle classes that had made the Catholic Association such a powerful force, alarming to the establishment and an example to a similar, emergent coalition in England and Scotland. The same tactic would be used by the establishment in devising and enacting the Reform Bill of 1832.

Gaspey would later give full, if oblique, treatment to the 'Irish problem' of his day, using the form of the historical novel, in *The Self-Condemned* (1836), a quite substantial work of fiction. There he acknowledged the assistance of the Irish-born Protestant civil servant, antiquarian and writer, Thomas Crofton Croker (1798–1854). It is possible that Gaspey already knew Croker in the mid 1820s, when Croker was working at the Admiralty office in London and published his *Researches in the South of Ireland, Illustrative of the Scenery, Architectural Remains, and the Manners and Superstitions of the Peasantry* (1824), and his widely read and admired *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (1825–8). Certainly *Richmond* portrays Thady and the other Irish characters in the novel as inhabiting a world of 'superstitions of the peasantry' and 'fairy legends and traditions'. Further, Thady shares a name and a similar character with the narrator of *Castle Rackrent* (1800), Maria Edgeworth's widely read comic novel promoting the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Both Croker's work and the two Thadys are designed to show the desirability of maintaining a paternalistic and conciliatory relationship between Great Britain and Ireland, in the interests of both. This implication goes beyond Ireland to the empire at large. Through Thady and his compatriots, *Richmond* represents the Irish as an unmodernized 'folk', like the peoples of Britain's other colonies as the British liked to see them: essentially virtuous, well meaning and docile but easily misled by appeals to their passions and requiring the direction and management of a supposedly more cultivated, rational and self-disciplined people and government, in order to bring out the best rather than the worst in them. Susceptible to the 'cheats of London' in the broadest sense of exploitation by the unscrupulous and self-serving, Thady, as representative of the Irish, clearly needs a 'union' with

the well-meaning and virtuous of Britain in order to be useful to others and do well for himself. Though the issue here is not attribution of *Richmond* to Thomas Gaspey, nevertheless, its view of the Irish and the 'Irish problem' is broadly similar to that set out in the novels known to be Gaspey's.

So too, with the novelistic form of *Richmond*, despite the fact that it seems formally different from Gaspey's earlier novels in major respects. Though *Richmond* is in first-person narrative form, unlike Thomas Gaspey's early novels, this is consistent with the participation of *Richmond* in the picaresque tradition, discussed earlier, major representatives of which were also first-person narratives. Gaspey's early novels were all to some degree historical romances and the usual narrative mode for this subgenre was third-person; both *Richmond* and Gaspey's *George Godfrey* are set in contemporary life, in addition to being picaresque novels and so a change in narrative mode to first-person was appropriate for the conventions of this subgenre. Further, *Richmond* does not use the first-person narrative form to develop a complex and conflicted protagonist, as many other novels of the time in this form did. Tom Richmond remains a relatively straightforward character, not much given to self-reflection, like the protagonists of Thomas Gaspey's early novels. Gaspey's early novels were structured as a braided or criss-crossing narrative, in which the story shifts back and forth from one character or group of characters to another or back and forth from the narrative present to a retrospective explanation of events just recounted; at the novel's closure, the several strands come together. The narrative structure of *Richmond* appears to differ from this, as the story, narrated by its eponymous protagonist, follows his adventures. Nevertheless, this story also shifts focus from time to time as Richmond recounts the background and experiences of one character or another that he encounters in the course of his own adventures. Though in a moderated way, then, the narrative structure of *Richmond* is also based on the braided pattern.

Other aspects of *Richmond* that seem to differ from Thomas Gaspey's novelistic practice in his early novels may be placed more or less directly in relation to Gaspey's employment as a journalist. From *The Lollards* to *The Witch-finder* and the later *Self-condemned*, these novels are larded with antiquarian and historical information, an interest that was Gaspey's sideline or hobby, whereas *Richmond*, especially Volumes 2 and 3 recounting the hero's cases as a Bow Street officer, is filled with anecdotes that could have come from the 'Court News' or 'Bow Street News' sections of the *Morning Post* or *Courier* newspapers, for which Gaspey worked. Antiquarian and historical anecdotes could be regarded as the documented news of past times, and news of the present as the documentation for antiquarian and historical researches of the future. The artistic objectives of including such material, in both the historical romance and the novel of contemporary life, were to create an impression of the authenticity of the represented

fictional world, to establish the author's knowledge and reliability in this representation, and to create for the reader an effect of 'real life'. All of these objectives could be reduced to the single one of rhetorical effectiveness—persuading the reader of the 'truth' of the fiction, or its ideological validity, its applicability to the reader's real world. There may of course be other, crass objectives, such as filling up the length of the three-volume novel that publishers expected, or economically using up material left over from or unsuitable as newspaper and magazine work. By changing his material from antiquarian to journalistic, Gaspey – if he was the author of *Richmond* – may have been drawing on his profession rather than on his hobby and changing his compositional method less than his subject matter. If the author of *Richmond* was not Gaspey, there is good reason, from both its content and form, to believe that its author was someone in or close to the world of journalism.

In short, the fact that all but one of the novels known to be by Gaspey are historical romances, whereas *Richmond* is a novel of contemporary life, does not alter the issue of *Richmond's* form. As shown here and in the general introduction to Gaspey's novels, both these and *Richmond* incorporate important issues in the news. At this time, both the historical romance and the novel of contemporary life dealt with issues current at the time of the romance's or novel's composition and publication, though they do so in different ways and usually obliquely. In both kinds of fiction, drawing explicit connections between the situations of the story and issues in contemporary reality was usually done lightly if at all, though not so much from overriding concern with artistry. Rather, most readers and authors seem to have considered that a novel's being too explicit about such connections jarred or interfered with the novel's effectiveness as a novel and thus with its rhetorical and ideological persuasiveness about real world issues and concerns. Historical romances 'find' such issues in the past and there are few if any novels that are entirely antiquarian in the sense of representing a past period or moment for its own sake. Moreover, historiographical and antiquarian works themselves can usually be demonstrated to address issues and concerns current at the time they were researched and published. Similarly, novels of contemporary life usually avoid much 'editorializing' – to use a later term from journalism – about issues from contemporary life depicted in the novel. The important point is that the cultural and ideological work of both historical romances and novels of contemporary life – indeed, all kinds of the novel – is to illustrate or dramatize the operation and effect of such real-life issues in individual, domestic, local, everyday life but shaped and given a closure that such issues seldom have in the real, ongoing experience and lives of readers. Such present-centredness was and is a large part of what interested the novels' readers, in the sense of addressing those readers' real material interests and their understanding of the world they returned to when they set down a novel they had been reading. The relationship

between historical romance, novel of contemporary life, journalism and the real world and its larger issues may, then, be understood in this way: the first two are different methods of fictionalizing or representing the real world and its larger issues, as these are also reported or represented in journalism. Put another way, novels and newspapers are different discourses related to the same real world and its larger issues. The question that remains is the relationship between *Richmond*, specifically as a novel of contemporary life, and its use of novelistic and journalistic discourse.

*Richmond* may be seen as a journalistic novel in terms of its form as well as its content, or topics from the news; it attempts to converge or fuse these otherwise different discourses. A 'journalistic novel' in this formal sense may be regarded as one that appropriates, adapts or incorporates the overall structure of a journal or newspaper as well as the compositional and stylistic practices characteristic of journalism. It is true that as a whole *Richmond* seems like two different novels crudely joined together – a first volume of picaresque road adventures and a further two volumes of disparate tales of crime and detection. The first volume looks like the opening of a novel of bohemian adventure, or genteel vagrancy, though unlike some earlier picaresque novels it is predominantly comic rather than satiric in tone. The second and third volumes look like a folder of police detective cases. It is possible that the author of *Richmond* set out to write one kind of novel and then decided to change it to another. Nevertheless, both parts of *Richmond* may be seen to be informed by journalism and journalistic discourse. As illustrated earlier, both parts of *Richmond* represent issues in the news, sometimes the same issues, and ones that were reported according to conventions of journalism in the kind of newspapers that Thomas Gaspey worked for. Further, both parts of *Richmond* may be seen to have underlying connections with journalistic method and the discourse of journalism, or its assumptions, practices and conventions, as these were developing in the 1820s. Gaspey began his career in journalism when newspapers were still developing their newsgathering practices and increasing staff reporters, and investigative journalism was relatively undeveloped. The idea was only beginning to be established of the newspaper press as a 'fourth estate', in addition to the three constitutional and political estates or powers of monarch, aristocracy, and commoners (sometimes varied to mean aristocracy, clergy, and commoners). In this 'estates' model, journalism was seen to have a particular responsibility to inquire into and, if appropriate, to expose and challenge the activities of government and the other estates that controlled and dominated the government. In the 1820s, the notion of the press as the fourth estate was associated by some specifically with the parliamentary reporters, of whom Gaspey was one. Others in the 1820s went further and associated the 'fourth estate' not with the kind of newspapers Gaspey worked for but rather with those produced by reformist journalists such as William Cobbett,<sup>18</sup> precursors of what would

now be considered investigative journalism, who professed to detect and expose the hidden crimes and secret conspiracies of the privileged classes and the established order. In this understanding of a 'fourth estate', the kind of newspapers Gaspey worked for were assumed, often correctly, to support either the government or the parliamentary opposition, to receive payment for doing so, and thus to condone or collude with the established system to a greater or lesser extent.

Nevertheless, Gaspey's novelization of the news in his early works of fiction indicates that he understood the political role of journalism and may have seen himself as a member of an emergent 'fourth estate'. Gaspey's early professional years were spent as a parliamentary reporter, a relatively settled and regular job in journalism, and he went on to become a newspaper editor, around the time *Richmond* was published. As such, his responsibility would have been to have a sense of the overall and fairly regular structure of kinds of news presented in the newspapers of his day, as described here in the introduction to Gaspey's life and career. As a journalist and even more as editor, Gaspey or someone in a similar position would likely develop an understanding of the contemporary world in terms of both the overview and the particular instance – the general structure of relationships between economy, politics and society developing over time, and the individual events that formed the news, classified according to a newspaper's way of ordering such events. These related understandings of the profession of the journalist and the structure of the world and of the journalist's role in mediating or reporting that world to the reading public, day by day and event by event, may be seen as informing the structure and form of *Richmond* in four particular ways.

Tom Richmond, both as genteel vagrant and especially as Bow Street officer, occupies a position analogous to that of the journalist in several respects: he is a voluntary social outsider, he is thereby able to observe and investigate society from the outside and reveal its 'truth', he sustains an identity that is independent of the obligations and responsibilities that trammel the lives and actions of most people, and as the narrator of his own story he reports his findings to the reading public. Further, as a detector of crime, Richmond resembles the emergent investigative journalist of the 'fourth estate'. It is true that, as a Bow Street officer, Richmond is part of a hierarchical organization and an arm of the state but, like the detectives of the much later 'private eye' and 'hard-boiled' popular fiction, the Bow Street officers were famous for the degree of independence they enjoyed and initiative they showed in pursuing and preventing crimes – certainly this is the way the Bow Street officers are portrayed in *Richmond*. Though investigative journalism or the glamorous crusading journalist-hero hardly existed at that time, journalism, and especially parliamentary reporting, was emerging as a distinct professional identity with a sense of having a particular calling and esprit-de-corps, and of being somewhat apart from and perhaps at times opposed to other

professions more obviously implicated in the prevailing systems of hierarchy, power and privilege – professions satirized in Gaspey's *George Godfrey*. The same situation prevailed for the police detective, the precursor of which was the Bow Street officer. At the same time, in the 1820s both the journalist and the police officer retained associations with earlier identities as mere unprincipled 'hacks', willing to serve whoever paid them. The analogy between police detective and journalist is not made explicit in *Richmond* and recognition of such an analogy does not seem necessary to understanding the novel's purpose. This purpose was an explicit if muted critical representation of society as systemic exploitation of the weak by the powerful, unaffected or even exacerbated by unreformed state institutions and agencies, and disrupted or corrected only by the efforts of upstanding individuals such as Richmond, the naval officer Frampton and the magistrate W—m M—d.

A journalistic perspective and practice, with their underlying ideological assumptions, may also be seen as informing the structure of *Richmond*. This structure seems highly episodic, comprising an assemblage of stories more than a connected series of incidents, and united mainly through being brought together in one place and reported by a single observer. Critics have seen the structure of *Richmond* as crude, but rather than being inept and casual it may have its own aesthetic and ideological purpose and meaning. It can be argued that, like the apparently unconnected or loosely connected sections of a newspaper, the sections of *Richmond* may have an underlying principle and coherence. For one thing, *Richmond's* episodic structure resembles that of earlier picaresque novels such as the Spanish *El Buscón* or Defoe's novels. Such novels were once seen as formally inartistic, especially when compared to nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary fiction, but they are now credited with having certain kinds of thematic unity and critical social purpose, such as exposing systemic social injustice, institutional abuses, or human self-interestedness. Similarly, the lack of connectedness in *Richmond* is only apparent. As discussed earlier, there are important contemporary themes that emerge in and align episodes otherwise apparently disparate, such as abuses of love and marriage, vagrancy and its causes, and the pervasiveness of fraud and deception in society. Even these different topics may be gathered under the broad concern over reform in the 1820s.

It may be, too, that the seemingly weak or disjunct structure of earlier picaresque fiction and of *Richmond* has its own purpose as an anti-structure, implicitly set against and critiquing certain kinds of structuring. Much nineteenth- and twentieth-century fiction that distinguished itself or was later distinguished as 'literary', or motivated by 'high' artistic standards and 'serious' moral and intellectual purpose, did so in part by manifesting unity of plot, connectedness of episodes, a causal or dialectical relationship between character and action, and a distinct closure or resolution. A social and cultural function of this form is to

represent a middle-class ideology according to which the individual life and the development of society as a whole are, in a general sense, formable and hence reformable by human agency. The individual life and society as a whole can be fashioned by knowledgeable and self-disciplined persons according to a pattern that is 'progressive', in a structured sequence of foreseeable cause and effect characterized by continuous 'improvement' or betterment. Detective fiction, as a more 'popular' form developed later in the nineteenth and in the twentieth century, was often based specifically on the assumption that the 'truth', or relation of such cause and effect, can be uncovered. By contrast, a purposeful lack of such connectedness in a fiction may suggest that life and social relations are more subject to chance, coincidence, and 'fate', or social and other forces that are usually unforeseeable, mostly unknowable and ultimately uncontrollable. In short, differences in novelistic form may express ideological and political differences.

A 'logical' and 'unified' novelistic structure was pursued vigorously by certain reformists of the 1790s, such as those in the circle of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft – in fact, Godwin's *Things As They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794), which is based on this formal principle, is also cited frequently as the first detective novel. Opposing these reformist novelists were conservative writers who denied that the individual and society were formed by discoverable causes or could be subjected to any 'system' of reform or general 'improvement', and their novels reflected this denial both formally and thematically, being highly episodic, foregrounding chance and the circumstantial, and burlesquing the definitive closure. By the time *Richmond* was published, the idea that the principles of individual and social development can be known and directed in certain 'progressive' ways, however defined, was also associated with a variety of reformists, from humanitarians and religious Evangelicals through 'political economists' and socialists to utilitarians to 'Newgate novelists' such as Edward Bulwer. *Richmond*, like Thomas Gaspey's early novels, rejects the idea of systematic and systemic reform for belief in the ethical conduct of moral individuals, at times acting in concert. In general, such a view seems more characteristic of the professional and predominantly conservative newspaper journalism of the time than of the crusading reformist journalist such as William Cobbett. Like Thomas Gaspey's early novels, *Richmond* is not lacking in reformist sympathies and attitudes, but it may be considered mutedly or conservatively reformist.

The moderately reformist as well as journalistic rather than literary structure of *Richmond* as a whole is reinforced by its journalistic handling of individual episodes. This is perhaps the most innovative and experimental feature of the novel. Richmond's accounts of his adventures as genteel vagrant and of his investigations as police officer often resemble newspaper or magazine reportage in pace and tone. The episodes are reported with a journalistic immediacy, and most episodes resemble newspaper stories, rather than literary stories, in lacking

a distinct closure, or indeed any closure, and some incidents are related as situations rather than finished and completed stories, as in the case of the minister of Duckenhurst and the case of the husband re-enacting *The Taming of the Shrew*. Even when episodes, storylines, or crimes are wound up, as with Richmond's courtship of Maria, his capture of Jones, or the story of Percy, the closing seems muted or even indeterminate. As noted earlier, the novel as a whole stops rather than concludes. These features seem more characteristic of a newspaper story or magazine piece than a work of literary fiction. This is in contrast to Thomas Gaspey's early novels, which seem determinedly, if sometimes awkwardly, literary. Such a departure need not indicate that Gaspey was not the novel's author, but rather indicates that Gaspey, or someone with his journalistic background, was attempting an innovative approach to novel-writing by introducing features of journalism. The episodes have these journalistic qualities throughout the novel, in both Richmond's genteel vagrancy and his police detective work. If not altogether characteristic of a newspaper report, the handling of episodes seems somewhere between such reports and the more literary magazine pieces that Thomas Gaspey produced over several decades of his career. The consistency of this journalistic handling throughout the novel also suggests that it was deliberate, and not an effect of ineptness in or indifference to novelistic conventions and literary quality. Gaspey's early novels introduced the news in certain ways, as themes and aspects of character and setting, while remaining conventionally, and even formulaically novelistic in other respects. *Richmond* introduces the news in similar ways; but it also goes further in attempting to fuse the novel with journalism – to inform the novel, or shape it formally, with journalistic discourse. Such an attempt would be consistent with, though an innovation in, the known novelistic practice of the journalist Thomas Gaspey. The point here is not to establish the authorship of *Richmond*, however, but to specify its distinctive character as a journalistic novel, in form as well as content. Even if *Richmond* turned out not to be by Gaspey, it could or should have been by someone like him, with his experience and engagement in journalism and the news of the day.

In what ways, then, is *Richmond* a Newgate narrative, and what kind of Newgate narrative is it? Most obviously, though it does not mention Newgate prison, *Richmond* is a work that deals in large part and directly with policing and crime in the heyday of Newgate as a major, if infamous, institution within the judicial and penal systems, as a symbol of state power and its limits and as a focus for, and recurring topic in, the continuing debate over reform generally. Like most other Newgate narratives of its time, whether fictional or non-fictional, *Richmond* considers Newgate prison less, if at all, as a material actuality than as a symbol or synecdoche for a complex discourse, or set of ideas, beliefs, practices and cultural objects, including novels. This discourse was concerned with important issues in real contemporary private and public life, such as moral and ethical

conduct, economic relations highlighted by property and theft, social relationships of trust and power, and the political relationship between the individual and the state and how these should and could be made better. *Richmond*, or any Newgate narrative, does not have to mention Newgate prison for Newgate and especially what it represents to be a presence in the text. The often represented realities of Newgate prison and the constantly discussed and debated issues that Newgate stood for were familiar enough to the reading public to enable them to understand the novel's distinctive contribution to Newgate discourse. As demonstrated earlier, though it is a novel, *Richmond* incorporates themes and methods from other media, including polemical and controversial writing and especially newspaper journalism, that also engaged in the social, economic and political discourse around Newgate and what it represented at the time. Like other kinds of non-fiction writing that incorporates Newgate discourse, such as social reportage, reform polemics and parliamentary reports, *Richmond* represents Newgate discourse through a narrative form – in this case, the novel.

As a novel, *Richmond* engages with Newgate discourse in ways appropriate to that form – representing in individual cases and everyday life the nature and consequences of the same wide social and political issues that are treated otherwise in other forms, such as historiography, legal discussion, religious writing, statistical analysis, 'true crime' pamphlets and compilations such as the *Newgate Calendar*, newspaper journalism, parliamentary reports and legislation and so on. Despite its engagement, as a novel, with Newgate discourse, however, *Richmond* was not considered a 'Newgate novel'. The controversy over so-called 'Newgate novels' emerged in the 1830s as a debate over a kind of fiction, represented by such novels as Edward Lytton Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* (1830) and *Eugene Aram* (1832) and William Harrison Ainsworth's *Rookwood* (1834), supposedly glamorizing crime and criminals and using them to promote reform (see the general introduction to this series). At that time *Richmond* was overlooked and was not considered among such fiction until Keith Hollingsworth's 1963 critical and historical study, *The Newgate Novel 1830–1847: Bulwer, Ainsworth, Dickens, and Thackeray*. Even here, *Richmond* was discussed only briefly and it is often not included among 'Newgate novels' in standard reference works today. Nevertheless, *Richmond* is a Newgate narrative in the sense just outlined; and it is a Newgate novel in the sense that, like other Newgate novels recognized as such, it develops Newgate discourse in particular ways. It draws on and evokes a long tradition of fictional representation of crime, criminals and social underworlds, going back to early picaresque fiction, at least; it reworks that tradition and its themes and formal techniques and conventions and does so in order to portray critically certain social injustices and institutional abuses of the time. In summary, *Richmond* participates in Newgate narrative as a novel dealing with issues

of crime and punishment, with other but related issues in the news at the time of its composition and publication, and with the issue of reform more broadly.

It is *Richmond's* treatment of Newgate discourse in the particular aspect of policing and crime detection that connects it to the later development of the detective novel. This connection is the reason for *Richmond's* survival into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This introduction has argued that *Richmond's* major innovation was to incorporate news and journalistic method in the novel form, but today its innovation is usually seen as being one of the first novels to feature a police detective and to portray cases of crime detection, and its place in literary history is as a precursor of the detective novel. The *Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing* (1999), for example, mentions *Richmond* in the section 'Precursors of the Genre (to 1840)'.<sup>19</sup> The other 'precursor' often mentioned is William Godwin's reformist novel, *Things As They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794). In this novel, the narrator-protagonist is a servant who recounts his uncovering of a murder committed out of injured 'honour' by the gentleman employer whom he reveres, but who then relentlessly persecutes Williams to prevent him from disclosing the crime, and the dishonour. Godwin's narrative of crime and detection was designed as a fable of the exposure of the 'crime' that Godwin saw as inherent in upper-class culture and identity, and the dangerous consequences of allowing such exposure to provoke social confrontation and conflict. More broadly, Godwin's novel may be seen as an early but characteristic instance of what the French crime writers known as Boileau-Narcéjac have identified as a central myth of the detective novel. This is the belief, originating in eighteenth-century Enlightenment rationalism and carried into the rationale of social, political and economic modernization, in the power of reason to discover chains of cause and effect and uncover the 'truth'.<sup>20</sup> *Richmond* may be generally and distantly indebted to Godwin's novel, but it is a work of a different kind and purpose.

Though much of *Richmond* deals specifically with the detection of crimes of various kinds, many eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century novels also do so, though in a less concentrated way. In these novels, the 'crime' may or may not be so defined by law, but it is nevertheless treated as a 'wrong'. Often this crime involves concealment, theft or usurpation of the protagonist's identity and property by 'enemies', and solution of the crime results in disclosure of the protagonist's 'true' identity and family relationships, thereby enabling restoration of the character's social status and property and marriage to an appropriate partner. The myth underlying this kind of crime fiction is the belief of the middle-class reading public that their class 'enemies' have unjustly deprived them of their 'rightful' status and property. Examples would be Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740–1) and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749). In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century an important variant of this 'crime'

plot developed, in which the main character's social status and property were not lost or concealed, but rather undervalued or degraded, perhaps maliciously, in relation to the character's 'true' worth – his or her subjective, moral and intellectual merit. Such novels narrate the discovery or revelation of the character's 'true' or inner worth and show that such worth is appropriate or even superior to his or her ascribed social status and property. The myth underlying these fictions appealed strongly to a middle-class reading public concerned to establish their subjective merit in a society still largely based on and run according to ascribed social status. Examples would be the novels of Frances Burney and Jane Austen. Thomas Gaspey's novels participate in this kind of 'crime' fiction and in fact often involve murder and theft of identity and property. There is significant continuity, then, between *Richmond* and these other kinds of crime and detection fiction.

The relationship between *Richmond* and later detective fiction seems to be of another kind.<sup>21</sup> Histories of detective fiction, which began to appear in the twentieth century, usually date the beginning of the genre to Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', published in 1841, and treat earlier instances such as Godwin's *Caleb Williams* and *Richmond* as 'precursors'. Such an approach is 'Whig history', or a historical narrative based on a plot of progress toward some perfected form of the genre, in this case, and depending on the historian-critic, Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Sherlock Holmes' tales, or the novels of Agatha Christie, Dashiell Hammett, Georges Simenon and others. Further, Whig histories of a genre often collaborate with a typological or taxonomical approach to it, which seeks to specify or prescribe the genre's distinguishing traits or necessary conventions, evident in early forms but fully developed in works of the later golden age. In this case, taxonomists often distinguish detective fiction from crime fiction: the former focuses on the detective and the puzzle presented to him or her by the crime; the latter focuses on the crime and the criminal and often the punishment. Taxonomists also distinguish detective fiction from police detective or 'police procedural' fiction: the former features the solitary detective, often an amateur or private professional, working principally or exclusively alone, and usually choosing which cases to solve; the latter features the detective as part of a team dealing with whatever cases come up according to procedures imposed at least partly from without. A more recent development has been in psychological or psychoanalytical approaches to detective fiction, which see the form as reenacting intense curiosity, desire to know, or drive for intellectual mastery, generated by kinds of psychological repression. Finally, informing the historical, taxonomical and psychoanalytic approaches to the genre is usually an aesthetic or technical argument which designates certain works as exemplars or 'masterpieces' of the genre as an art or craft, based on certain, though not necessarily compatible, formal-aesthetic criteria, such as economy, simplicity, complexity, innovation

based on convention, purity of form and matter and absence of 'extraneous' elements. An aspect of form, artistry and craft closely associated with detective and crime fiction, though not exclusive to it, is suspense, or techniques of generating feelings of uncertainty, anxiety and expectation in the reader, which are usually dispelled by the disclosures and resolution of the plot. In all cases, historians, taxonomists and theorists place the realization and golden age of detective fiction after the publication of *Richmond*, usually – with the exception of Poe's stories – long after, leaving a work such as *Richmond* as at best a 'precursor'.

In recent years the Whig-historical and formalist approaches to detective fiction have been challenged by post-structuralist, historicist and cultural studies approaches. The first understands a genre as part of a discursive continuum, related to other genres, and as a constantly changing interpretative and creative code used by readers and writers, rather than an ideal form to which individual texts aspire. Historicist and cultural studies approaches see genre in a similar way and understand the particular instance of a genre in its own right, in its cultural and social context and in terms of its possible ideological implications for historically and socially specific groups of readers, rather than as an approximation of an unchanging, transhistorical ideal or as an unrealized and flawed version of some perfected instance. From these more recent perspectives, *Richmond* may be seen as a detective or police detective novel, for what that is worth: its protagonist is a police detective who attempts, usually with success, to solve more or less serious crimes through methodical investigation and mental and physical effort. More important for understanding *Richmond* in its time and place, however, are the features discussed earlier – *Richmond's* adaptation of the forms and traditions of picaresque fiction and fictitious autobiography, together with its incorporation of news and journalistic ways of writing. The result is an open-endedness in individual episodes and the novel as a whole that is at odds with the kinds of resounding and definitive closure found in much fiction of its day as well as in most later detective and crime fiction. From the perspective of Whig history and formalist poetics of detective fiction, such open-endedness may seem to be the effect of artistic incompetence or indifference, rather than an attempt to use the novel form in a new way, for a particular ideological and political purpose. Here it has been argued that *Richmond's* open-endedness served a particular political ideology, a cautious reformism or progressive conservatism; but in other novels this form could serve other purposes: in post-structuralist, historicist and contextual readings, formal elements, structures and techniques do not have absolute or fixed meanings.

In light of such readings, it may seem that the potential of *Richmond's* innovativeness remains to be developed. This is despite the fact that several novelists have recently taken up the figure of the Bow Street runner developed in *Richmond*. The American mystery writer Kate Ross has a runner named Peter Vance

appear in *Whom the Gods Love* (1998) to help the protagonist, dandy-detective Julian Kestrel, solve a murder. The Canadian writing duo of Sean Russell and Ian Dennis, known as 'T. F. Banks', has produced two novels, *Thief-Taker* (2001) and *The Emperor's Assassin* (2003), in what is evidently designed as a series featuring a fictitious Bow Street officer named Henry Morton. In 2002 the American school teacher and writer Suzanne K. Rizzolo launched a series featuring a Bow Street runner appropriately named John Chase, with her novel *The Rose in the Wheel*, followed a year later by *Blood for Blood*. In 2004 Kathryn Smith, writer of 'Vampire romances', 'Nightmare romances', and 'Regency Historicals', published *In Your Arms Again*, one of the Regency Historicals, featuring the runner North Sheffield. In 2005 the American historical romance writer Kimberley Logan published *A Kiss before Dawn*, featuring a Bow Street runner who is also an accomplished lover. The English writer known as 'James McGee' (Glen Moy) has produced two novels featuring a 'runner' named Matthew Hawkwood, entitled *Ratcatcher* (2006) and *The Resurrectionist* (2007). The American romance writer Lisa Kleypas has published a 'Bow Street trilogy' of novels: *Someone to Watch Over Me* (1999), featuring the 'runner' Grant Morgan; *Lady Sophia's Lover* (2002), featuring the 'sexy' Bow Street magistrate Sir Ross Cannon; and *Worth Any Price* (2003), featuring the former 'crime lord' turned Bow Street runner, Nick Gentry. The erotic glamour of the earlier twentieth-century 'hard-boiled' detective is appropriated to the runners in these novels, and given a sharper twist in the story 'Fallen Angel' by Jess Michaels, in the historical erotica collection *Parlor Games* (2006). All of these novels deploy the established conventions of the contemporary police detective novel, here set in Regency London. This novelistic activity was probably due more to the reemergence of the figure of the Bow Street runner in academic social history and popular culture than to *Richmond*, though the appearance of the 1976 paperback reprint edition of the novel perhaps played some role.

Meanwhile, the Bow Street runner had continued to circulate in fact and fiction, though, again, probably owing little to *Richmond*. In 1837, only eight years after the Bow Street officers were replaced by the metropolitan police service, the *Penny Magazine*, in an article on 'The Municipal Government of the Metropolis', spoke of the Bow Street officers as a romantic but outdated and already almost forgotten body:

... we need not regret that the good old Bow Street officer is no more. We have fallen on better times, when it has been proved to be unnecessary to maintain a system of police espionage and acquaintance with thieves, and to uphold a practice of compounding felonies, in order to check crime. These things are going out; and it is to be hoped that they will be soon as completely numbered with the tings that were as is the mounted highwaymen.<sup>22</sup>

In 1838, Charles Dickens had two ineffective runners, named Duff and Blathers, appear in his 'Newgate novel', *Oliver Twist*. The Bow Street runner was introduced in the United States, where in 1884 the prolific dime novelist Gilbert Jerome published *Dominick Squeek, the Bow Street Runner; or, An English Detective in America*. In 1888 Percy Fitzgerald published a collection of factual anecdotes entitled *Chronicle of Bow Street Police Office: with an Account of the Magistrates, 'Runners', and Police, and a Selection of the Most Interesting Cases* (2 vols, London: Chapman and Hall). In the 1920s the popular and prolific novelist Jeffrey Farnol (1878–1952), one of the founders of the popular 'Regency romance' genre, created a runner named Jasper Shrig who appeared in *The Loring Mystery* (1925), *The Jade of Destiny* (1936), and *Murder by Nail* (1942). In 1930 Gilbert Armitage published a factual *History of the Bow Street Runners 1729-1829* (London: Wishart and Co.). In 1942, Samuel Duff McCoy (1868–1964), Princeton-educated journalist, biographer and novelist, published a story entitled 'The Bow-Street Runner' in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. In 1956 the manuscript *Memoirs* of runner Henry Goddard were published (London: Museum Press). In the 1950s and 60s the runners appeared in a number of academic studies of crime and policing, as part of a renewed movement of social history. This work may have instigated the 1976 Dover paperback reprint of *Richmond*, with an introduction by the energetic compiler, E. F. Bleiler. The figure of the academic histories was popularized for young readers with Charles Buchanan's short 1992 English publication *Bow Street Runner* for the 'Key Stage 2' educational series, designed for pupils aged seven to eleven.

These versions likely inspired a wide range of others in popular culture. There was a 1960s London rhythm and blues band called Bo Street Runners, so named for their covers of compositions by the American Bo Diddley. Jeffrey Farnol's pipe-smoking runner Jasper Shrig appeared in the 1964 BBC television series, *Detective*. There was a psychedelic rock band called Bow Street Runners from Fayetteville, North Carolina, who produced one record in 1970, which slowly garnered a small cult following. There is currently a British indie band called the Bow Street Runners, who affect a form of Edwardian dress and play music somewhat reminiscent of the 1960s band the Kinks. The 1974 British film comedy *Carry on Dick*, in the double-entendre laden 'Carry On' series, depicted Dick Turpin, perhaps England's most famous criminal, pursued by the head of the runners, Sir Roger Daley and two of his officers, Desmond Fancy and Jock Strapp. In England, the Bow Street Runner pub in Hove, another of the same name in Tamworth and the Bow Street Runners tavern in Rugeley apparently aim to recreate the louche ambience of Regency London. In 1999 a team calling themselves the Bow Street Runners competed in the Hastings, England, half-marathon. They did this only two years after they (or perhaps a team with the same name) had participated in the London, England, 'Grand Monopoly Pub

Crawl Challenge’, which required teams to drink in at least one pub located in as many streets as possible found in the English version of the ‘Monopoly’ board game. The 2005 BBC television film *Sweeney Todd* featured a Bow Street runner named Matthew Payne. In 2006 a web-log or ‘blog’ appeared on the internet entitled ‘Diary of a Bow Street Runner’, critical of British penal policy and ostensibly written by a former United Kingdom police officer now living in Australia and working as a security officer.<sup>23</sup> The Bow Street runner seems to have a life of his own.

### Notes

1. For an account of Colburn, see the Introduction to Gaspey’s *George Godfrey* in this series. Dates of advertisements for the publication of *Richmond* are at ‘British Fiction 1800–1829: A Database of Production, Circulation and Reception’: <http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/titleDetails.asp?title=1827A069> (accessed 17 November 2007).
2. *Richmond: Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Runner*, introduction by E. F. Bleiler (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1976), pp. ix–x.
3. M. Adams, ‘Thomas Gaspey’ in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 116: *British Romantic Novelists, 1789–1832*, ed. B. K. Mudge, p. 120.
4. The *Memoirs of Vidocq* formed volumes 25–8 in the series; the earliest recorded French edition, titled *Mémoires de Vidocq, chef de la police de sûreté*, is from 1828–9, though there may have been an earlier one.
5. For a survey of the issues of policing in this period, see L. Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law and Its Administration from 1750*, 5 vols (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1957), vol. 2: *The Clash between Private Initiative and Public Interest in the Enforcement of the Law*, parts 2–4, and vol. 3: *Cross-Currents in the Movement for the Reform of the Police*.
6. C. Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf and New York, NY: St Martin’s Press, 1991), pp. 19–20.
7. House of Commons, *Report from the Committee on the State of the Police of the Metropolis* (1816), pp. 137–45.
8. House of Commons, *Report from the Select Committee on the Police of the Metropolis* (1822), p. 21.
9. L. Radzinowicz, ‘Trading in Police Services: An Aspect of the early 19th Century Police in England’, *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 102:1 (November 1953), p. 30.
10. C. Emsley, *Policing and Its Context 1750–1870* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 62–3.
11. House of Commons, *Report from the Select Committee of Criminal Commitments and Convictions* (1827), p. 6.
12. House of Commons, *A Bill to Enable Rectors, Vicars, and Other Incumbents of Ecclesiastical Benefices and Livings, to Commute Their Tithes by Agreement with the Owners of Lands* (1827), p. 2.
13. R. Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute* (London and New York, NY: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), ch. 3, ‘The Corpse as Commodity’; Tim Marshall, *Murdering to Dissect: Grave-robbing, Frankenstein and the Anatomy Literature* (Man-

- chester and New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 1995), ch. 1, 'The Dead Body Business'.
14. J. Gifford [A. Wellier], *Gifford's English Lawyer; or, Every Man His Own Lawyer: Containing a Summary of the Constitution of England, Its Laws and Statutes*, 11th edn (London, 1825).
  15. *Newgate Monthly Magazine*, 2 (October 1825), p. 90.
  16. *Economist and General Adviser*, 11 (31 July 1824), p. 171.
  17. M. Clapson, *A Bit of a Flutter: Popular Gambling and English Society, c. 1823–1961* (Manchester and New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 1992), ch. 2, 'Gambling, culture and economy in England, c.1823–c.1906'.
  18. See the entry in the Oxford English Dictionary for 'estate', section 'fourth estate'.
  19. R. Herbert, C. Aird and J. M. Reilly (eds), *Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999).
  20. Boileau-Narcéjac [P. Boileau and T. Narcéjac], *Le Roman policier* (Paris: Payot, 1964).
  21. The historical, critical and theoretical literature on detective and crime fiction is extensive, but see H. Haycraft, *Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story* (New York, NY and London: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1941); G. Grella, 'Murder and Manners: The Formal Detective Novel', in *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* (autumn 1970), pp. 30–49; J. Symons, *Mortal Consequences: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1972); G. Most and W. Stowe (eds) *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory*, (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983); Herbert, et al. *The Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing*.
  22. *Penny Magazine*, 31 (January 1837), p. 37.
  23. <http://bowstreetrunner.blogspot.com/> (accessed 23 October 2007).