

**FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA
DEPARTAMENTO DE LITERATURA INGLESA Y NORTEAMERICANA**



Universidad de Sevilla

TESIS DOCTORAL

**CRIMINAL LITERATURE AND
THE RISE OF THE NOVEL**

PILAR DE LOS ÁNGELES PEÑA GIL

DIRECTORA: DRA. DÑA. MERCEDES SALVADOR BELLO

Sevilla, Octubre de 2015

**To the very many who gave me oxygen
when I was breathless.
With a special thanks to
Mercedes and Oisín
for their unconditional support.**

Contents

Conventions	6
Introduction	7
Theoretical Aspects	15
1. Defining the Novel	15
2. The Rise of the English Novel Reconsidered.....	28
2.1. The Romance and the Novel. From Clara Reeve to Michael McKeon	30
2.2. The Eighteenth Century and the Sociological Changes Giving Way to the Rise of the Novel. Ian Watt.....	37
2.3. Innovation through Tradition. John Richetti and Lennard Davis. Northrop Frye and the Theory of the Modes	45
2.4. Theories Relating the Rise of the Novel with Criminality and the Broadside Tradition	50
3. Criminal Literature, a Historical Perspective.....	53
3.1. Criminal Writings in the Middle Ages.....	57
3.2. Robin Hood and the Criminal as a Sympathetic Character.....	60
3.3. Chapbooks and Jest-books.....	63
3.4. Spanish Picaresque Narrative and Rogue Literature.....	71
3.5. The Rise of a Native Criminal Genre	79
3.5.1. Conny-cathing Pamphlets	80
3.5.2. The Domestic Tragedy.....	87
3.5.2.1. Drama and Executions.....	94

3.6. Early Criminal Biographies.....	101
4. The Eighteenth Century and the Rise of Crime.....	107
5. The Female Criminal	115
Text Analysis	122
1. Proto-journalistic and Legal Writings	123
1.1. Ballads and Broad­sides	124
1.2. The pamphlet.....	138
1.3. <i>Old Bailey Session Papers</i> and the Ordinary’s <i>Accounts</i>	145
2. From the Gallows to the Stage. Dramatic Works.....	163
2.1. <i>The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham</i>	166
2.2. <i>The Roaring Girl</i>	196
3. Criminal Biographies.....	213
3.1 <i>Long Meg of Westminster</i>	213
3.2 Multiple Versions of a Life. <i>The German Princess</i>	222
4. <i>The Fair Jilt</i>	234
5. <i>Moll Flanders</i>	256
Conclusions	277
Works Cited	288

Conventions

Due to the length of most of the primary sources titles, they have been named as such in footnotes the first time they are mentioned. In order to avoid an excess of footnotes, the parenthetical citation has been preferred for in-text citation. For a number of reasons—variety of texts, several works by the same author, similarity of some of the titles—the year of the quoted work has been included so as to add clarity. In dramatic works, however, the year has not been incorporated to reduce the length of the in-text citation. For electronic sources, only the URL has been written down in footnotes, since most of the quoted texts belong to two online collections, the Word on the Street, from the National Library of Scotland, and the Proceedings of the Old Bailey. Their references have not been repeated in the Works Cited section.

Introduction

This project arises after the consideration that in the twenty first century there is still no definite theory on the origins of the English novel in spite of the many attempts that have been carried out to trace them. Such a complex subject has given rise to many studies, with no conclusive hypothesis so far. After comprehensive reading and analysis, I have realised that it is not possible to establish the origins of the English novel as such, since it stemmed from a complex mesh of genres and subgenres. For this reason, the present thesis is going to focus on a particular subgenre of the novel: the one that offers a criminal as a protagonist, which has been given here the name of the criminal novel. There has been necessary to apply a new term to works prior to the rise of crime fiction with Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), since the novels by Daniel Defoe or Henry Fielding which narrate the story of an offender do not fit into the category of crime fiction. They are precursors, but, at the same time, they are inherently different. The main protagonist is a criminal, who is neither purely a hero nor a villain, but a figure whose main aim is to teach the readership a moral lesson. This subgenre of the early novel presents very limited specimens—mainly limited to the production of Defoe—yet it has a huge repercussion in present day literature and culture in the English language.

Since it is a relatively new concept, my first goal is to try to delimit the object of analysis and propose a valid theory of its origins. In order to confirm my theory, I will establish a logical connection between the sociology, history and literature of a crucial time for the development of the novel, the period encompassed between the end of the sixteenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. Thus, I will try to

prove that the criminal novel derives from a native oral and written literature which, even though it was influenced by picaresque narrative, it relies mostly in a long-tradition of criminals' adventures that permeated the popular British culture. This dissertation intends to shed some light in how such a widely read genre nowadays as it is crime fiction might have unfolded from criminal narrative, from the relationship between criminality and its representation in literature.

I have taken Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* as the first instance of this type of novel and drawn a line back as to establish the corpus of works as well as the circumstances which exercised an influence on the writer to create such a work. As it will be explained further on, this type of novel is mostly derivative of early forms of journalism, represented by broadsides, pamphlets and other similar documents that spread the news prior to the emergence of the newspaper in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, fact and fiction are difficult to discern in both novels and their non-literary ancestors as writers' imagination permeated these proto-journalistic¹ documents. Ernest Bernbaum writes that "in the field of journalism, in that of literature, and in the twilight zone between them, we find from the days of Elizabeth

¹ Journalism as such does not take place until the eighteenth century. However, it is obvious that before the emergence of the newspaper with the format that we nowadays attribute to it, there were other ways of spreading written information. Even if it is not proper journalism according to today's standards, it will be referred as such, as proto-journalism or pseudo-journalism. Nevertheless, none of the three terms are really accurate, since the writers did not consider themselves journalists. Besides, the aim was both to inform and entertain at the same time, leaving as much space for true facts as for invented additions. In any case, the different types of documents had to be delimited. To distinguish legal or administrative writings from the ones complying with a more informative nature, the second ones will be referred to as "proto-journalistic" writings.

to those of the Georges the flourishing of imposture” (1914: 79).² Therefore, the fact that Defoe’s production encompasses both news and novels, facts and fiction, is not haphazard. Just as nowadays authors combine their contributions to newspapers with the production of their own fictions, some of the early novelists were hybrid writers, half way between journalists and novelists. Defoe made a very intelligent move, masking his invention as reality. In a world overpopulated by imagined fabrications that claimed to be authentic, it was difficult to sell a “true historie” as a real one. But Defoe managed to succeed with his *Moll Flanders*, probably because journalistic writings were as tainted of falsehood as his novel was of truth.

Thus, the origins of journalism are tightly linked to the origins of the English criminal novel. Therefore, the hypothesis here proposed is that criminal novels sprang from a non-literary source which gradually moved into the literary sphere. These proto-journalistic documents were mostly broadsides, but there were also other types of news and crime-related papers, such as ballads, pamphlets, sermons and court proceedings. Before any novel sprang from their influence, they had already been adapted into literature in a variety of forms, from conny-catching pamphlets to dramatic works, with tragedies and comedies that had a criminal as the main character.

For that reason, even if this dissertation is concerned with the origins of the criminal novel, a wide range of texts need to be examined in order to establish a sound theory. But before text analysis is carried out, it is necessary to devote some pages to theoretical aspects, the main one being the attempt to define what a novel is. Thus,

² Ernest Bernbaum, *The Mary Carleton Narratives. 1663-1673. A Missing Chapter in the History of the English Novel*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.

this thesis will review previous theories on the origins of the English novel so that they provide a framework of traditional and innovative approaches to the subject. Special attention will be devoted to those studies that relate crime and the novel. A historical perspective on the evolution of crime in writings will be offered next, in order to build a background on the treatment that offenders and their offences have had from the Middle Ages until the eighteenth century. Picaresque and the relevance it had for English readers will be dedicated a chapter so as to demonstrate that it is not the main influence for the criminal novel, despite many studies pointing out that it was its precursor.

This dissertation has been divided in two main parts: first, the theoretical concerns will analyse all the above questions; and second, the text analysis. The various documents have been divided in several categories, responding to their nature. The first group, those labelled as proto-journalistic and legal writings include ballads, broadsides, *Session's Papers* and the *Ordinary's Accounts*. They will illustrate their diversity and evolution from the simplest narrative forms of telling about the lives and deeds of a criminal, to the most complex ones, such as the pamphlet entitled *Newes from Scotland*. Written by King James VI, it evidences the relevance of criminals' writings as well as its repercussion in the everyday life of a country, since it is still a referent in present-day Scotland. Due to the extensive number of broadsides, pamphlets and ballads, the texts have been selected by prioritising early pieces based on female criminals. Instances from the nineteenth century have been chosen too in order to as to examine how the genre evolved.³

³ The materials belonging to this first group of primary sources have been gathered from the National Library of Scotland, mainly. Most of them are single sheets of paper or pamphlets which lack

Proto-journalistic and legal writings will be followed by two dramatic works: *Arden of Faversham* and the *Roaring Girl*. The anonymous *Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham* (1592) brings a true crime into the stage for the first time in history. Then, Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (1611)⁴ stages the life of the famous London offender Mary Frith, alias Moll Cutpurse.⁵ As an illustration of criminal biographies, the lives of Long Meg of Westminster and Mary Carleton have been chosen for their notoriety. There are numerous accounts about their actions but there has been a preference for older editions, selecting the 1635 and 1663, respectively.⁶ Aphra Behn's novella *The Fair Jilt* (1688) represents a step further in the evolution of the criminal novel subgenre. Behn has to be acknowledged for having created a fully fictionalised criminal character, although her work is not a novel but a novella. On the other hand, Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) contributes the first instance of a proper novel in the criminal genre. The analysis of Defoe's work will bring to a close the study of the evolution of crime narrative from the lyrical ballad to the novel.

The incorporation of two plays to the corpus of works for this research responds to their essential role in the development of the subgenre. *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham* has been included as a very early example of the fictionalisation of real

numeration. Therefore, in quotations there will be no reference to any page number. Thanks to the increasing digitisation of documents, remote access to the Bodleian Library and the Old Bailey archives has been made possible. Also Samuel Pepys' compilation of ballads has proven essential for this study. For these texts I have used Leslie Shepard's reprint.

⁴ The full title of the play is *The Roaring Girl or Moll Cut-Purse, As it hath lately beene Acted on the Fortune-Stage by the Prince his Players*.

⁵ She is sometimes called Mal Cutpurse, as well.

⁶ These editions have been analysed and compared, so reference is made to the various versions. Yet the oldest ones are preferred for the text analysis since they might have served as an influence on the others. Nevertheless, most of these accounts come from oral tradition and in most cases, it is difficult to know which of the versions is closer to the original narrative account.

criminals while *The Roaring Girl* illustrates the life of the well-known cross-dressing thief. Mary Frith, the protagonist of the latter play, had her life retold in many ways. Most of them have been lost but there are still instances of her as a protagonist. Nevertheless, the play has been preferred over the prose versions as it is the earliest and most relevant document that has come down to us.⁷ Besides, in order to prove my hypothesis, it is necessary to understand how the phenomenon that took place in narrative had already taken place in drama.

The study of a comedy and a tragedy gives way to the analysis of how the topic of criminality could be dealt with in various approaches. In domestic tragedies, true criminal cases were represented on the stage a century before they were fictionalised in narrative. Apart from adding weight to the theory, proving thus that criminals jumped from fact to fiction in the three literary genres, *Arden of Faversham* and *The Roaring Girl* are very early clear examples of how real people became characters for the sake of teaching and entertaining an audience that incorporated crime as part of their contemporary society. Furthermore, the domestic tragedy was a short-lived literary subgenre which was spatially limited to Britain. It therefore serves to illustrate one of the goals of this dissertation: to prove that the connection between crime and the rise of novel is a phenomenon that took place in Britain before anywhere else.

To narrow down such a comprehensive study, writings with female offenders have been preferred to those in which the protagonist is a male criminal. There are substantial differences between male and female outlaws in the way they acted, in the punishment inflicted on them, and in the manner in which their crimes were reported.

⁷ There is a record of an older play, from 1610, *The Madde Pranckes of Mery Mall of the Bankside* by John Day, but it has been lost. Therefore, the oldest account we have from Mary Frith's life is *The Roaring Girl*.

Women who broke the law were rarer and thus more interesting from a sociological, historical and literary point of view. Women offered a morbid tinge to the narratives. Women were not supposed to be violent and rule-breaking by nature; those who behaved in a non-standard manner were generally considered monstrous. The stories about women's crimes became very popular among the readership. These readers escaped everyday life through the adventures of those characters they despised but admired at the same time. Female criminals reinforced this idea of escapism because they were even more detached from reality than their male counterparts. Hence, those women who left an imprint in literary and non-literary texts have been used in this thesis as illustrations of the different stages which were necessary for criminals to become the protagonists of novels. The first four criminals—Alice Arden, Mary Frith, Long Meg and Mary Carleton—correspond to real women who entered literature for being famous offenders. The last two, Miranda in *The Fair Jilt* and Moll Flanders, are purely fictional characters. In *Moll Flanders* fact and fiction intermingle in such a way that the product of a writer's imagination is taken for real, though. It is this final text where tradition and innovation find a balance, making it possible for a new genre to arise from an old cultural heritage.

Blending literary theory, journalism and history, this research can then be classified as multidisciplinary. The focus on feminine characters places it in the field of gender studies, too. Leslie Shepard's opening sentence in *The Broadside Ballad* is illustrative of this dissertation's approach. She describes her own study as being "designed as an introduction to a fascinating field that links together a number of separate studies, ranging from English Literature to Social Sciences" (1962: 17). Likewise, this analysis of the origins of the English criminal novel needs to be multidisciplinary, digging into

diverse but complementary fields. Literature is, after all, the written imprint of a particular culture, and the study of the criminal novel opens a window on the British cultural past and present.

All in all, the texts analyses that I have carried out in this dissertation will help to conclude that the close relationship existing between journalism and literature roots back to the sixteenth century with the dramatic precursor of the domestic tragedy and is fully established with the emergence of the novel.⁸ Nowadays not only crime fiction but many other subgenres use real events as sources for novels or screenplays, which sell even better with the label “based on a real case”. It is thanks to that close association between the novel and proto-journalistic accounts that the English criminal novel emerges at that particular time and place. I propose to study a set of literary and non-literary works in order to analyse how they relate to each other. The presentation of the texts will be done in chronological order so as to appreciate better the different stages up to the novel. The time scope of the selected texts dates back to the sixteenth century but also moves forward until the nineteenth century, with some pamphlets and broadsides from that time. If we consider the eighteenth century as the official start of the novel, it is necessary to look backwards but also forwards in order to appreciate how both journalism and the novel continue to be of mutual influence until their definite separation.

⁸ This link between journalism and literature at the inception phase of the English novel has already been pointed out by Lennard Davis in *Factual Fictions* (1991). However, it is necessary to retake his study and to expand it as Davis focused on the novel in general and not on a specific subgenre. Contrastingly, the present investigation will be centred exclusively on those documents that focus on the outlaws of society, people who decided to base their lives on crime.

Theoretical Aspects

1. DEFINING THE NOVEL

The main obstacle encountered by scholars when investigating the origins of the English novel is the definition of the novel itself. As a constantly evolving genre, the novel as we know it today was not the same when it appeared from the first time. For that reason, in this study the novel makes reference to that form of fiction narrative that started to take shape at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Back in the eighteenth century the novel was simply a new form of extended fiction, although whether it was an innovation or an evolution from previous genres is one of the controversial aspects when defining the novel. In any case, making use of J. Paul Hunter's words "whether there was a new literature or not, most observers thought that there was" (1990: 11),⁹ which is what matters in the end. An artistic production does not exist without its perception. If eighteenth-century society thought that there was a new kind of literature because writers claimed it and critics defended it, then there was a new genre. That product as such, that type of fiction which emerges as a response to a particular need during a specific period is the object of this analysis, thus leaving aside modern conceptions of novels and a variety of subgenres. Consequently,

⁹ J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels. The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990.

the characteristics that apply to the early novel—or solely to the criminal novel as a specific type—cannot be extended to other forms of the novel.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the term “novel” was used to designate a wide range of prose writings. Aware of the need of novelty in the book market, writers tried to provide their public with something new, hence the term “novel”. As the label “novel” was usually associated with popular narratives, it became attached to a wide range of prose writings; romances, popular tales and short fiction in general were also called “novels” in order to be included in this new trend. Delarivier Manley, for instance, in the preface to the first part of her *Secret Stories*, establishes the difference between “a True History” and the writing of an author who “composes a History of his Fancy”. She establishes the main differences between the romance and the novel in the following terms:

These little Pieces which have banish'd *Romances* are much more agreeable to the Brisk and Impetuous Humour of the *English*, who have naturally no Taste for long-winded Performances, for they have no sooner begun a Book but they desire to see the End of it: The Prodigious Length of Ancient *Romances*, the Mixture of so many Extraordinary Adventures, and the great Number of Actors that appear on the Stage, and the Likeness which is so little managed, all which has given a Distaste to Persons of good Sense, and has made *Romances* so much cry'd down, as we find 'em at present. (Williams 2010: 33)¹⁰

Curiously, the type of fiction she was writing was closer to romances than to the so-called “true histories” but she nevertheless wanted to dissociate her literary productions from the romance tradition as these pieces were no longer fashionable

¹⁰ Ioan Williams, *Novel and Romance 1700-1800. A Documentary Record*. London: Routledge Revivals, 2010.

and conveyed an idea of being second-rate literature from both the reading public and the authors themselves.

To the difficulty in delimiting the object of study, we have to add the great variety of former studies on the origins of the English novel together with a lack of unified opinion when it comes to defining what a novel is. As early as 1785, Clara Reeve attempted to set boundaries to the novel as a genre by establishing what it was not. Her main aim was to distinguish it as a separate genre from the romance. Reeve published a study of this topic under the title *The Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries, and Manners; with Remarks on the good and bad Effects of it, on them respectively; in a Course of Evening Conversations*.¹¹ In this work she explains that from the moment novels made their appearance, the first scholarly efforts to determine their nature quickly spread, too.

Nevertheless, the novel did not spring out *ex nihilo*. Reeve herself wrote Gothic novels, which are clearly derivative from the romance tradition. There is an obvious correlation between former fiction and the novel since, as J. P. Hunter notes, “no single word or phrase distinguishes the novel from romance or from anything else, and to settle for ‘realism’ or ‘individualism’ or ‘character’ as the defining characteristic diminishes the very idea of the novel and trivializes the conception of a literary species” (1990: 22-3). Certainly, the novel arises within the context of continuity from previous genres but there have to be certain characteristics that make it different from other types of literature. Hunter explains that if the novel had developed from romance, it would share most of its characteristics, when in fact it does not. However,

¹¹ Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries, and Manners; with Remarks on the good and bad Effects of it, on them respectively; in a Course of Evening Conversations*. Colchester: W. Keymer, 1785.

this affirmation needs to be clarified, as there are novels indeed which derive from romances.

The question of the definition of the novel retakes the idea that it is not possible to limit the concept of the novel in general. What is true for some of them does not apply to others. Probably, because of this, there is still no unity of criterion on the rise of the English novel despite the attempts to produce a unified theory. Likewise, there is not just one definition of novel, although for the purpose of this dissertation Hunter's ideas are the most accurate because they apply to the object of this analysis, the novel with a criminal as a protagonist.

Hunter lists nine essential features that any novel must comply with.¹² These are contemporaneity, credibility and probability, familiarity, rejection of traditional plots, tradition-free language, individualism and subjectivity, empathy and vicariousness, coherence and unity of design, and finally, inclusivity, digressiveness and fragmentation, or what he calls, "the ability to parenthesize" (1990: 24). Hunter's characteristics will help to separate the so-considered novels from earlier tradition, as in the case of novellas. They will be referred to now so as to define the object of analysis of this dissertation, i.e. the criminal novel. Also, they will be brought to this analysis later on in order to highlight the differences between Behn's *The Fair Jilt* and Defoe's *Moll Flanders*.

The great innovation of the novel was the contemporaneity of its events. It used the discourse of facts characteristic of journalistic writings and made it its own,

¹² Most of Hunter's characteristics would not apply to present-time subgenres. For instance, nowadays crime narrative is subdivided into crime fiction and true crime, and few of Hunter's features would apply to science-fiction. Hence, the definition of a novel or a criminal novel makes reference to what was considered a novel at the turn of the eighteenth century.

reducing the time and space distance between the novel and its readership. Unlike romances or even former novellas—which were short fictions but usually referred to as novels by some critics—, the novel was not set in distant places but most commonly in Britain or with British characters. By using a familiar location or a familiar character, the fictional story was made credible and probable. In fact, most of the early novels assured readers that they were examples of factual events that had been transcribed by an editorial hand. The characters moved in recognisable spaces, the narration even added specific details about them, such as street names, so that readers could easily visualise where the actions took place. Hunter adds an important note regarding this requirement: “credibility seems the essential quality for readers to experience in entering a novel and probability the essential quality once they are inside the fictional world” (1990: 23). In the case of Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, Lemuel Gulliver travels through lands that are very similar to his own country in many aspects. This way the reader is familiarised with the types of societies that he is reading about even if there are talking horses in them. The reading audience knew of merchants and travellers who encountered different cultures and people alien to their own. Seen in this light, *Gulliver’s Travels* did not seem shocking when it was first published. The first novelists soon understood the importance of creating a realistic atmosphere. If they wanted to engage readers, they had to make their narration so familiar to them that it could be perceived as part of their actual lives. *Gulliver’s Travels* was taken as a real account. At a time when all accounts were considered truthful, the most unbelievable descriptions were taken as real. Imaginary worlds had been left behind with the romance tradition and the reading public believed that there was no place for fictional events. Hence the usual insistence of writers on the idea that their works were based

on facts that had happened to someone they knew personally or even to themselves. Imagination and the taste for it revived again with the romantic writers, who rejected the principles proclaimed by the Enlightenment. But the early eighteenth century was the time of rationalism; everything could be explained, even if from our contemporary view it seems nonsensical to believe that there was a land in which horses were more intelligent than human beings.

The first novelists took great advantage of people's eagerness to read real events. At a time when it was difficult to separate fact from fiction even in the news, the line between the two was thinned. The general need to believe in real narratives led journalists and novelists to insert false pieces of news and events. There were publications that described extraordinary creatures that had been born or discovered. When they could be suspected of being an editorial invention, the trick to make the stories credible was just to place them in a familiar environment. If extraordinary characters or events were given a location and a temporal setting contemporaneous to the readers, the fraudulent piece of news was usually taken as real. For instance, as late as the nineteenth century, there appeared in the news that a woman with a pig's head—the "Pig-Faced Lady, of Manchester-Square"—was one of the neighbours of London. She was not someone living in a distant place but in the well-known Manchester Square. Credibility also benefited from false testimonies, as the headlines illustrate: "Drawn from the information of a female who attended on her" (Shepard 1973: 183).¹³ If someone could approve of the veracity of the events, then it was assumed to be real. Because of this, every early novel began with the statement that

¹³ Leslie Shepard, *The Broadside Ballad. A Study in the Origins and Meaning*. London: Herbert Jenkins, 1962.

the writer knew or met someone who was acquaintance with the characters in the story. The novelists' word was taken for truthful without questioning the veracity of the narration the same way that the journalist's pig lady had to be real; otherwise it would not appear in a piece of news.

Leslie Shepard affirms that "the printing of false news of murder or scandal at a time when genuine news was scarce" was common (1962: 81). The reading public wanted news, and the more extraordinary and morbid, the better. They did not bother to question that of all the men in Britain Moll Flanders met and fell in love with her brother. The extraordinary was part of the ordinary and this allowed writers and journalists to insert figments of their imagination in their narratives as long as they seemed plausible. Romances and early fictions described all kinds of fantastic happenings, but these were usually discredited for not being real. The boundary between earlier fiction and the novel was established by the introduction of the known element.

Aphra Behn's prose works have been argued to be proper novels. However, Hunter's characteristics of familiarity, probability and credibility are not met in these works. *The Fair Jilt*, which will be subject of analysis in this dissertation, is set in Antwerp and involves a series of characters that belong to the nobility and royalty. Even if Antwerp could be known amongst its readers, the characters, Miranda and Prince Tarquin, were foreign in terms of culture and social status. They did not belong to the common readers' microcosm represented by nearby streets. *The Fair Jilt* might have engaged numerous readers, but not as many as the stories with familiar locations and characters could attract. Whereas Moll Flanders is a character born and raised in the streets, moving freely in the London underground, Miranda contrives her

Machiavellian plans within her palace walls in a spatial setting that most common people could not place—even if it were across the channel. Behn’s work is close enough to being a novel, but its far-away location and its high-class characters make it distant from Hunter’s principles with which I agree.¹⁴ Accordingly, Behn’s work should rather be called “novellas” instead of novels although, as stated above, this is still subject of discussion for some critics. In the present thesis, Behn’s prose works are conveniently regarded as novellas, being simply shorter than a novel and not meeting all the characteristics that here have been observed in early novels.¹⁵

The novel arises at a moment of rupture of conventions. The big city began to emerge, physically and as a concept. Mass migration from the countryside to the cities made an impact in the conception of the individual and his or her need to progress. The society that was emerging at the end of the seventeenth century was significantly different from that of the preceding period. Whereas a minority of wealthy citizens had questioned their lives and futures in previous times, towards the end of the seventeenth century, a mass of villagers pushed to find their place in society, fighting for a spot in the better accommodated classes. Their need for social and economic improvement could only be satisfied by the rise of the bourgeoisie, an emerging class not just restricted to merchants and traders but extended to the whole household who came along with them. Maids such as Moll Flanders not only became aware of their situation in society but also that their position was movable. They felt the need of

¹⁴ The distant locations and idealised characters reappear again in the nineteenth century novel, but it is worth reminding that it is the early novel that is herein discussed.

¹⁵ The OED defines a novella in the following terms: “Originally, a short fictitious narrative. Now (usually): a short novel, a long short story”. It quotes from Aphra Behn’s *Rover* (1677) as the first time that the word is recorded with that meaning: “If the Play of the Novella were as well worth remembering as Thomaso, they might have as well said, I took it from thence”.

educating themselves in order to find a better life prospects. There are many instances of young maids who were in the same situation as Moll Flanders. Many of them belonged to a rural environment or to the lower classes. They moved to the urban sphere in search for an alternative way of life. Writers were well aware of this new type of society. The population needed a literature that could be representative of their time, one in which they found themselves mirrored by stories of similar individuals with understandable queries, needs and expectations.

The social evolution went hand in hand with the emergence of highly individualised characters in literature. They were no longer types, representing human nature as a whole, with their virtues and vices; they were unique. They could be similar to the readers, but they were distinctive enough not to be taken as types. They spoke for themselves without any need of a narrator that intruded their thoughts and their speeches. They overtook the writers' centrality becoming first-person narrators and choosing themselves what to tell and what to leave aside. Authors moved to the background after a brief introduction to the characters and the circumstances in which they encountered them or their story. This personal perspective of events created empathy for the first-person narrator, which also narrowed the distance between narrative and readers. The reading public became so close to the narrator in these works that they could easily identify with them, even if they were rogues or criminals who would have acted against their own interests. The novel allowed a dialogue between reader and character, in which the former was made a confidant of his or her confessor's best kept secrets. In criminal literature, the offenders disclosed their crimes in a way that it resembled the confession made to the priest, so that after writing their story they could achieve a common pardon by the reading audience. They

became admired anti-heroes that would fulfil the readers' most dark desires of freedom and fearless actions.

Yet the characters' version of the story was, of course, completely subjective. It was their own vision of the world that was transmitted to the readers, who had no need to know to what an extent the characters' stories were true or false. But there was a need to believe that the events were true; otherwise the magic of the narration would have disappeared by that suspension of disbelief. The first-person narrator removes objectivity from the story but it enriches it with numerous personal perspectives.

The language was equally modified as to become personal. An important advance in characterisation comes from the characters' distinctive way of expressing themselves. Rough maids, such as Moll Flanders do not speak in the same way as the innocent Pamela. In criminal literature, many canting terms¹⁶ or criminals' slang were introduced. Canting dictionaries sprang to meet the needs of a reading public that was not familiarised with the numerous underground terms that were used in their favourite readings. New topics, narrative perspective, language, and a renewed relationship between reader and characters were all introduced as indicative of a new genre. The novel arising at the beginning of the eighteenth century marked a past and

¹⁶ In Middleton and Dekker's *Roaring Girl*, for instance, there are passages in which the underworld characters speak in canting terms with translation provided by Moll Cutpurse, who acts as the mediator between the criminals and the gentlemen. In this play, canting serves as a way of unmasking Trapdoor. If he could cant it meant that he was related to pickpockets and other offenders. Likewise, in the accusation pamphlet that John Carleton writes against his wife, Mary Carleton, the German Princess, he says that "she, with Crocodile teares, and in a canting style, began to recollect her Adventure" (1663: 5). He is implying in this description, that apart from being false, she is also a criminal. Canting had those connotations and the seventeenth century readership knew it.

a future in the world literature. An accurate presentation of imaginary reality that fused with reality itself in an imitation of everyday life and with an emphasis on the individual became trademarks of a tradition that has developed until the present time.

The novel provided eighteenth century literature with a new discourse of narration. In the case of criminal literature, former stories were episodic and fragmented whereas the novel preferred a “unity of design”, as Hunter calls it. *Moll Flanders* seems episodic, resulting in a succession of events in the story of a criminal. However, there are references to previous events and characters. As her life progresses, she meets characters that she had known at an earlier stage. There are allusions to the past and to the future that makes this work differ from previous fragmented stories. Yet, that early novels are more unitary than previous forms does not mean that they had achieved that unity of plot that is observed in nineteenth-century novels. Stories are still fragmented and there are many digressions within the main plot, with loops that go backwards and forwards, as if the narrators were interrupting themselves to add personal comments or had forgotten elements that were essential to the main story line. This narrative device is remnant of the oral and popular literature, which used such formulae in order to engage the audience and remind them of events that had formerly taken place. These parentheses, nevertheless, were sometimes aimed at, thus adding freshness and improvisation to the narration. As stated above, the proximity between reader and narrative ensured the success of this type of writing. The fact that first-person characters introduced digressions in their discourse made the readers feel as if they were being addressed. Digressions were used profusely during the early stages of the novel. Delarivier Manley harshly criticises them in the preface to her *Histories*:

to please the Variety the Taste of the Reader, [novels] mix Particular Stories with the Principal *History*, which seems to me as if they reason'd; in Effect the Curiosity of the Reader is deceiv'd by this Deviation from the Subject, which retards the Pleasure he wou'd have in seeing the End of an Event; it relishes of a Secret Displeasure in the Author, which makes him soon lose Sight of those Persons which whom he began to be in Love; besides the vast Number of Actors who have such different Interests, embarresses his Memory, and causes some Confusion in his Brain, because 'tis necessary for the Imagination to labour to recal the several Interests and Characters of the Persons spoken of, and by which they have interrupted the *History*. (Williams 2010: 25)

From her point of view, the novel wants to limit the long stories of the romances, but by introducing digressions it distracts readers from the main line of action.¹⁷

Related to this idea of a new discourse of narration is the theory outlined by Robert Mayer in his *History and the Early English Novel* (1997).¹⁸ He establishes that the novel emerges when the discourse of fiction is intermingled with the discourse of history. The majority of the early novels are based on real documents, whether they have to do with crime, a person's life written in letters or an uncommon journey recounted in diary form or published in broadside publications. The language they use is thus taken from real histories, transferring reality content to invented stories through the discourse of fact. Mayer believes that Defoe's way of writing was crucial for the development of the novel:

Defoe's texts serve as clear markers of both what was becoming untenable within the discourse of history and of what was becoming central to the

¹⁷ Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) is a mockery of this form of digression which was overused in the first novels. Sterne blended the romance and the novel structures and he made fun of both, emphasising those characteristics that were most representative of both the romance and the novel at the same time that it became an anatomy of these two forms of narrative.

¹⁸ Mayer, Robert, *History and the Early English Novel: Matters of Fact from Bacon to Defoe*. Cambridge: C.U.P., 1997.

emergent form of fictional writing that would come to be called the “novel”. His narratives embodied the crucial shifts effected within these discursive fields when, first, fiction ceased to be a legitimate means of historical representation and, second, prose fiction successfully established the claim—pressed insistently for at least a hundred years—that “matters of fact” constituted the material out of which that fiction would be formed. (1997: 229)

Those stories, like *Moll Flanders*, which were based on real events, sold more than the purely fictional ones. Defoe’s success comes from the fact that he used and mastered the historical discourse as a journalist, and when he transferred that discourse to fictional works, he created a new way of writing fiction, which would become the novel.

It has to be added, as well, that the novel is constructed around the key idea that writers develop through their work. Novels are normally “more explicitly ideological than most literary species, testimony both to their representational quality and their subjectivity, and even when their ideological loyalties are uncertain or obscure, their ideational heritage is almost always clear” (Hunter 1990: 23). Indeed, the first novels have a very clear ideology that writers wanted their readers to absorb. Most of them presented a high moral content that authors intended to transmit to society through an entertaining story. Their main aim was didactic, then.

Most of Hunter’s defining features of a novel were already present in the earliest stages of the genre. These idiosyncratic elements were a literary innovation in early eighteenth-century England and made the novel become a separate genre from previous fiction. But some of these characteristics were not completely new for the reading public; they had long been used by pamphleteers and ballad makers, the only difference between broadsides and novels being the length of the latter as opposed to the former. The migration of their usage from non-literary to literary writings took

place with relatively no effort on the writers' behalf. Authors claimed to be accounting for criminals' lives, acting as mere editors of authentic texts. Some of them, in fact, just moved from non-fiction writing to fiction, so swiftly that the shift was not immediately noticed.

Different techniques, such as the use of first-person narration, a wealth of details, a direct form of address to the reader or digressions, amongst others, were new conceptions in literature but not in proto-journalistic writings. They were used by authors with perfect awareness of the sense of proximity which would be created between their work and its readers. Besides, these techniques added veracity to the texts, supporting an author's claim of authenticity. If the style seemed populist, non-literary and old-fashioned, it simply responded to a preconceived plan of attracting readers to the new genre with the promise of continuity in a long-standing successful tradition.

2. THE RISE OF THE NOVEL RECONSIDERED

Traditionally, the novel has been said to derive from the romance. Clara Reeves's *A Progress on the Romance* (1785) exemplifies this scholarly stance, as she regards the novel as the continuation of the romance tradition. She believes that the novel reacted against its precursor although it had evolved from it. Clearly, there are novels that continued the romance line, that being the case of the first novel widely recognised as such,¹⁹ Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605 and 1615), which proves to be an

¹⁹ The consideration of Cervantes's *Quixote* as a novel is not universal, though. L. Davis argues that it is a genreless piece of writing, "a tribute to uniqueness and individuality, a defiance of discourse" (1997: 12).

unavoidable link between romance and the novel. Cervantes's mockery on the romance was soon equated to a new form of writing that departed from tradition but left it behind to become a new genre in which the sense of realism was a must.

Since the first critics showed their concern with establishing the origins of the novel, there have been other attempts to establish them and to ascertain a sound theory of why and when this literary genre emerged. For half a century, Ian Watt has been the indisputable father of the modern theory on the origins of the English novel after the publication of *The Rise of the Novel* (1957).²⁰ He paid attention to the socioeconomic changes that took place during the eighteenth century as being determinant for the rise of the novel in England. Watt laid the foundations for further studies and, as in the case of the romance as the novel's ancestor, Watt's theory had many followers but also many detractors.

Reeve and Watt's have been considered traditional approaches on the rise of the English novel, as opposed to more recent or innovative ideas on the subject. This affirmation does not exclude other influential critics and theories, but in terms of transcendence, their works have been very influential for later analysis. Any discussion on the origins of the English novel takes Watt as a starting point, either to criticise his point of view or to acknowledge his ideas. Reeve, on the other hand, despite having carried out a very innovative study, was not considered until later on. She encountered the problem of being a woman who was establishing her critical point of view in a male-dominated field.

²⁰ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel. Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1957.

Both of them are key figures in the theory of the rise of the novel since more innovative theories stem from them. Michael McKeon, for instance, defends the link of the English novel to the romance while contemplating the relevance of non-literary ancestors, such as ballads and pamphlets.²¹ Lennard Davis, on the other hand, disassociates the romance from the novel, emphasising the role of proto-journalistic writings²² whereas John Richetti strongly criticises Watt's point of view for not considering previous narratives, especially women writers and their contribution to the rise of the novel.²³

Finally, Northrop Frye's theory of the modes is worth of mention due to its relevance for this dissertation, since different genres are going to be considered.²⁴ Frye establishes that a particular mode does not correspond to a specific genre but it is shared by several genres. For instance, romance and tragedy are written in high mimetic mode whereas comedy and the realistic fiction are written according to the low mimetic mode. Each of these critics and their theories will be paid special attention in order to have a better understanding of the current status on relation to the origins of the criminal novel.

2.1. THE ROMANCE AND THE NOVEL. FROM CLARA REEVE TO MICHAEL MCKEON

²¹ Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel. 1600- 1740*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1988.

----- *Theory of the Novel, A Historical Approach*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000.

²² Lennard S. Davis, *Factual Fictions. The Origins of the English Novel*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.

²³ J. J. Richetti, *Defoe's Narratives. Situations and Structures*. Oxford: O.U.P, 1975.

----- *Popular Fiction Before Richardson. Narrative Patterns 1700 – 1739*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

----- *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*. Cambridge: C. U. P., 1996.

²⁴ Northrop Frye. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2000.

Reeve's *Progress of Romance*, written in dialogical form, has Euphrasia as the main character defending the idea that novels were a new genre completely different from romances. She aimed "to point out the boundaries of both: and lastly to present to the reader's eye a selection of the best writings of both kinds" (1785: vi). Euphrasia pleads that "no writings are more different than the ancient *Romance* and modern *Novel*, yet they are frequently confounded together, and mistaken for each other" (1785: 7). Euphrasia's thought illustrates Reeve's opinion that the novel sprang up from the romance, as a natural evolution thereof and in opposition to a genre that was viewed as decadent. From her point of view, the novel appeared in response to the modern times. Quoting Euphrasia, "the word *Novel* in all languages signifies something new. It was first used to distinguish these works from *Romance*, though they have lately been confounded together and are frequently mistaken for each other" (1785: 110). The novel, according to her, is "a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written" (1785: 111). Therefore, if her words are taken as representative of the general thought at the time, the novel was equated to the concept of modernity still at the end of the eighteenth century. There are but two objections to be made to Reeve. First, the type of fiction that she wrote, the Gothic novel, is indeed derivative of the romance. Second, a genre that had been called "novel" for more than a century was not precisely new.

From Reeve onwards, there have been many theories relating or disassociating the novel from the romance. In 1894 Walter Raleigh affirmed that the romances which

reached Britain in translation were too adorned.²⁵ In his opinion, they had little left of the eleventh century ones which still preserved the spirit of the “*jongleur* oral narrative” (1911: 2). He believes that “the influence of the Crusades, and the development of early feudal manners into the richly decorative chivalry of the later Middle Ages, transformed and elaborated the romances before they became English” (1911: 3). In France, oral narrative and written elaborate epics had in common their folk origins, thus enabling the lower classes to maintain the sense of belonging in the romance. Contrastingly, in Britain the sources were different. When they reached Britain, romances were no longer part of the oral but written tradition. They were the so-called “French heroic romance.” They had love adventures as an essential element so they were translated, imitated and adopted by the British during the Elizabethan period. Famous and very influential romances for the future development of the English novel were Sir Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia* (c. 1580)—*The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* in its full title—and Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen* (1590, 1596). These long narratives made them selective in terms of readership. They could only be purchased and read by the upper classes. The realities they described were distant; their characters, detached. Due to these associations and prejudices, authors who wanted to write popular literature in Britain moved away from the romance model.

Technology also helped to set a definite line between romances and the novel. The popularisation of printed texts marked the difference between medieval romances and the emerging genre. Although romances were still published well into the eighteenth

²⁵ Raleigh, Walter. *The English Novel. A Short Sketch of its History from the Earliest Times to the Appearance of Waverley*. London: John Murray, 1911.

century, an air of ancient genre was pinned to them. They were associated to manuscripts and knighthood; they belonged to old times, to an old-fashioned tradition. At the same time, the rejection of the romance came along with the search for a new form of literature as the exploration for the new self that needs to materialise an abstract conception. The new—the novel or, the modern—, was the original, the innovative and the creative. *Novel o nouvelle*²⁶ became the key term for a new concept of literature that could represent the individual and the enlightened taste of the era. The same way, *novel* came to be the magic word for writers to gain new readers. William Congreve, for instance, includes in the title of his *Incognita: Or Love and Duty Reconcil'd* the clarification that it is “A Novel”. He considers important to clarify the differences between the romance and novel, so in his Preface, he describes them in the following terms:

Romances are generally composed of the Constant Loves and invincible Courages of Hero's, Heroins, Kings and Queens, Mortals of the first Rank, and so forth; where lofty Language, miraculous Contingencies and impossible Performances, elevate and surprize the Reader into a giddy Delight, which leaves him flat upon the Ground whenever he gives of, and vexes him to think how he has suffer'd himself to be pleased and transported, concern's and afflicted at the several Passages which he has Read, viz. these Knights Success to their Damosels Misfortunes, and such like, when he is forced to be very well convinced that 'tis all a lye. Novels are of a more familiar nature; Come near us, and represent to us Intrigues in practice, delight us with Accidents and odd Events, but not such as are wholly unusual or unpresented [*sic.*], such which not being so distant from our

²⁶ Nowadays, “nouvelle” is associated to a short narrative, but in its origins, the three terms, novella, novel and nouvelle were used interchangeably.

Belief bring also the pleasure nearer us. Romances give more of Wonder, Novels more Delight. (1922: 5-6)²⁷

Congreve extends this distinction by comparing romance and the novel with tragedy and comedy, being both dramatic forms but significantly different. He equates romances to “lye[s]” because their narrations are difficult to believe, whereas novels’ intrigues are closer to the readers’ knowledge of the world, even if some of them are unusual (1922: 6).

But this change in taste had already been experienced by the romance itself. During the seventeenth century, both European and British romances appealed to *vraisemblance* which, according to McKeon, was associated to the “quasi-Aristotelian probability” (1988: 54). He claims that the writers of the time “were able to overlook the incompatibility of Aristotelian probability and the claim to historicity as much as they did because they tended to read the *Poetics* through the spectacles of empirical epistemology” (1988: 54). In any case, the romance inherited many of the characteristics of classical literature. They were in vogue until the readers’ tastes changed and more truthful stories prevailed. The French heroic romance was thus substituted by the *nouvelle*, a melange of memoirs, secret histories, *romans à clef*, and *chroniques scandaleuses*, which claimed that the facts they narrated responded to the truth. Delarivière Manley, for instance, states in the title page of her *Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians* that the story was “Faithfully Translated from the Italian Copy now lodg’d in the *Vatican* at *Rome*.”²⁸ The novellas written by Manley and

²⁷ William Congreve, *Incognita: Or Love and Duty Reconcil’d. A Novel*. H. F. B. Brett-Smith, ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1922.

²⁸ Delarivière Manley, *The secret history of Queen Zarah, and the Zarazians; Being a Looking-Glass for ---*
----- *In the Kingdom of Albigion Containing the true reasons of the necessity of the*

other seventeenth-century authors were indebted, without any doubt, to the romance and its tradition despite their paradoxical scorn for it. The distant scenarios and characters remained while the chivalric adventures moved from the outer world to the inner self, a feature that was already present in the French heroic romance, whose reading was dual as its heroes were always the object of physical and psychological battles.

The theory of how the romance purposely shifted to present more current topics and how from there the novella, *nouvelle* and the novel sprang has been disputed. While McKeon justifies the link between the novel and the romance, Davis is a strong detractor of the idea of the inherited characteristics from the romance in the novel. The latter scholar believes that “the writer of *nouvelles* saw himself as primarily a historian and not a poet” while the writer of romances saw his art not “as technique or realism but as a censoring device which stands in opposition to factuality and truthfulness” (1991: 33). There is but an objection to be made to this affirmation. Most of the writers of *nouvelles* knew that what they were writing was fiction and their mastery was to disguise it as truth. At a time when the labels were confusing and the promise of real stories opened each narrative’s preface, writers who wanted to develop a more realistic tradition found it very difficult. Defoe himself, in his preface to *Moll Flanders* complains that “The World is so taken up of late with Novels and Romances, that it will be hard for a private History to be taken for Genuine” (1971: 1).²⁹ He tries to separate his “true story” from romances, but also from former novels,

Revolution that lately happen'd in the kingdom of Albigion. Faithfully translated from the Italian Copy now lodg'd in the Vatican at Rome, and never before Printed in any Language. Albigion, 1705.

²⁹ The edition of *Moll Flanders* which has been used as primary text and from which all quotations have been extracted corresponds to the Oxford edition, edited by G. A. Starr, 1998.

which had proven for over fifty years that they did not differ as much from their ancestors, after all. It is not until the eighteenth century with the publication of *Moll Flanders* that the veil of the ideal world is supplanted by a purposefully ugly truth, with its faults and imperfections. It is then that the novel, as opposed to the *nouvelle* or the *novella*, arises.

The influence of the romance in the English novel therefore entails the consideration of the type of novel. The European romance, which had evolved from oral narrative, came to imprint an influence on the European novel and certain types of English novels derivative from continental models. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, for instance, is clearly indebted to the romance.³⁰ In the family tree of the novel, the romance is just but a branch, one of the traditions to which the novel is indebted. The native oral literature in Britain, mostly represented by traditional ballads, developed into a variety of novel-like subgenres, the criminal novel amongst them. Novelists who chose this more popular line of literature wisely decided to continue a way of writing that had proved successful with a high number of readers. It is no coincidence that the first crime novelists wrote in a similar fashion to ballads, broadsides and other non-literary writings. They copied the style in them in order to attract the readers of those mass-sold genres. By continuing with a long-standing tradition, success was almost guaranteed. Yet criminal narrative and its precursors will be the object of analysis in the next chapter. Before it, other significant theories in the origins of the English novel will be discussed.

³⁰ In fact, the protagonist's name is a reference to Sidney's Pamela in the *Arcadia*.

2.2. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THE SOCIOLOGICAL CHANGES GIVING WAY TO THE RISE OF THE NOVEL. IAN WATT

There are no records of the reading population in the late seventeenth-century Britain, but what is certain is that there was an increasing interest in reading. However, there is no agreement in the growth of literacy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Alan Downie, for instance, claims that more books were sold before the late seventeenth century and after the early eighteenth century, that is, before and after what is considered the period of the emergence of the novel. McKeon, on the other hand, believes that the invention of the press and the cheaper manufacture of books that it brought along favoured the educational revolution that raised the levels of literacy to unknown standards. It is nevertheless difficult to measure the extent of growth because most studies are based on the number of signatures and the fact that a person could sign does not necessary mean he or she could read and actually read regularly (McKeon 1988: 50-51). In any case, the sales of books undoubtedly increased as regards to the preceding century. Consequently, there had to be considerably more readers by the mid-eighteenth century than in the early seventeenth century.

The popularisation of the printed material allowed books to be published at a more reasonable price, thus enabling the rise of extended long fictions. Their publication by chapters also made them more affordable. Even if their printing became cheaper, it was yet expensive for the majority of the readership to acquire a whole book. With a growing reading public and a distribution of printed material, the novel found its perfect conditions to appear. Also the passing or abolition of certain laws, such as the protectionist printing legislation, helped to encourage the emergence of the novel. Circulating libraries made their appearance in the mid-eighteenth century

with the first one established in Edinburgh in 1725, followed by others in Bristol, Bath and London. They were a response of the middle classes and their eagerness to read books without having to invest vast amounts of money. Their main users were women, who had more leisure time and for whom reading became a very fashionable activity. The significant reduction in the costs of reading did not only popularise it, but also allowed reading to stop being a group activity to move into the private sphere. Circulating libraries helped reading in becoming a personal experience, changing thus the concept of literature, but also the way of narrative, which became an intimate dialogue between the reader and the writer. Yet circulating libraries were much criticised precisely because of the accessibility that women had to books, especially novellas and romances. In Richard B. Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1725), Sir Anthony exclaims that "a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge! It blossoms through the year!" (I. ii, 225-27).³¹ This character, in his conversation with Mrs. Malaprop, exemplifies the general opinion in the eighteenth century that women were corrupted by these readings which made them think about romantic relationships when marriage was an economic contract between families.

Even if the stories of scandalous and complicated love affairs were popular, as the eighteenth century progressed, readers demanded material related to contemporary affairs; they were interested in analysing the implications of the social change they were experimenting. The novel suited perfectly this purpose. As crime was one of the main concerns of the age, extensive fiction and non-fiction works were

³¹ Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Rivals*. Tiffany Stern, ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2004.

written on this basis.³² There was a huge demand in criminals' lives, which pushed the genre up as the favourite reading of the public. Lincoln B. Faller, in his work *Crime and Defoe*³³ defends this idea, as it can be observed in the in the following extract:

In situating Defoe's pseudo-criminal biographies within and against the forms and conventions that governed the writing and (presumably, too) the reading of actual criminals' lives, I will speculate on what, or rather how, they may have meant to their original audience—an audience whose needs, values, concerns, and habits of reading (for readers, too, play a role in the creation of literary genres) encouraged the "rise" of what we've come to call the novel. (1993: xiii)

Faller explores the reasons why criminal biographies became so popular in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. He argues that the narratives show "a powerful array of social, political, religious and moral concerns" (1993: xiii) that suited perfectly the reading public of the time. The provision of a new kind of narrative was due to the demands of the readers, but before that, to the anticipation of writers, who sensed the kernel of a new type of society.

The rise of the bourgeoisie has frequently been associated with the rise of the novel. However, this new social class as well as the relevance that they were acquiring in daily life has also been questioned by J. Alan Downie.³⁴ This scholar separates the emergence of this "middle class" from the appearance of the novel arguing that the English society in the seventeenth century remained hierarchical. He adds that it was

³² Henry Fielding published his *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers and Related Writings* in 1751 as a response to an increasing worry at the numerous thefts in the country. For further reading, see Malvin R. Zirker's *An Enquiry in The Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding*, Oxford: O.U.P., 1988.

³³ Lincoln B. Faller. *Crime and Defoe. A New Kind of Writing*. Cambridge: C.U.P., 1993.

³⁴ Alan J. Downie, "The Making of the English Novel". *Eighteenth Century Fiction*. Vol.9.3. April, 1997, p. 249-266.

in the eighteenth century when the conception of a new rising class started. Yet, Downie acknowledges that a new kind of professional individuals had already appeared towards the late seventeenth century. However, he does not consider this group of professionals as a unified class due to their lack of common purposes and institutions (1997: 250).

Nevertheless, even if this emerging middle class did not have in mind that they were something alien to an already established society—even if they lacked the common aim and institutions which Downie mentions—this group of people was certainly different and new. Whether they are called bourgeoisie, middle class or any other given label, they were a significant group which changed the social structure in England, as well as the development of the country's culture. The literary taste changed. This readership demanded a new kind of literature. They wanted to read about affairs that were of their interest, and they found in broadsides and accounts of criminal lives something of uttermost importance. The current class was formed, amongst other professions, by merchants, tailors, lawyers, bankers, magistrates, clerks, tradesmen, and their respective wives—who were to play an important role in the rise of the novel. The new professions were, because of their trade, most interested in the affairs that were taking place around them, especially those that had to do with crime. Middle-class wives, found themselves in a comfortable socioeconomic situation and with plenty of time to devote to the popular activity of reading.

In *Moll Flanders*, there are numerous examples which indicate that the majority of Defoe's readers belonged to this emerging middle class. Conscious of this, the author addresses them continuously. Moll gives advice to the readers about many aspects of city life and how to avoid being the victim of criminals. For instance, she

explains how to prevent being robbed by pickpockets in shops or by burglars in their homes. She also comments that it is easy to rob in a recently opened shop: "It was always reckoned a safe job when we heard of a new shop, and especially when the people were such as were not bred to shops" (1721: 228).³⁵ She adds as well that now readers know this and those who have shops "will be visited once or twice at their beginning, and they must be very sharp indeed if they can prevent it" (1994: 228). She gives some advice that might be of detrimental to her colleagues is the world of crime but she considers that the readers need to know: "not of the kindest sort to the fraternity, 'tis certainly a key to the clue of a pickpocket's motions, and whoever can follow it will as certainly catch the thief as he will be sure to miss if he does not" (1971: 233). Thus, in spite of not making a favour to her old comrades, Moll helps the reader to avoid theft. She explains that had the woman whose watch Moll steals, "as soon as she felt the pull, not screamed out as she did, but turned immediately round and seized the next body that was behind her, she had infallibly taken [her]" (1971: 233). The purpose of this comment is to give hints on how to catch a pickpocket and to elude robbery.

These quotations from *Moll Flanders* illustrate that Defoe knew that most of his readers belonged to the middle classes. As Faller notes, "Defoe's novels have been read as relatively simple indices to the concerns and problems of the "rising" middle classes in the early eighteenth-century England, as vehicles for an emerging, particularly "bourgeois" ideology (1993: xiii). All in all, it could be said that Defoe had a clear audience in mind, people who may have been interested in his writings and who

³⁵ All quotations from *Moll Flanders* have been extracted from G. A. Starr's edition. Oxford: O. U. P., 1998.

would pay for them. The question of a new social class is then, from my point of view a very clear one. There was a new type of society which authors saw as potential consumers of the new type of literature.

In his referential *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), Ian Watt proposes that the English novel emerges as a gradual assimilation or adoption of the new values incorporated into literature. From his point of view, the novel is the aftermath of the changes taking place in eighteenth-century society. He links the rise of the middle class, the rise of literacy and the rise of the novel as the consequence of one another. He points out to a “denotative type of language” (1957: 27) similar to that of the reportage and journalism, and the specification of time and space as the main elements responsible for the novel’s realist milieu.

Urban development favoured the rise of the novel as another icon of modernity and the city. In a first stage, London became the centre of this new world, thus contributing to establishing a literary canon. The novel represented the expression of the metamorphosis from the Middle Ages to the early modern period, as Mikhail M. Bakhtin once stated.³⁶ For Bakhtin, as for Watt, the novel meant a complete rupture with the previous literary forms, becoming the revolutionary product of a society that was self-conscious of its modernity. For that reason, many of the early novels were set in London or its surroundings, a location that the authors knew well as most of them lived or had a close connection to the city.³⁷

³⁶ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, “Epic and the Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel”. McKeon, Michael, ed. *Theory of the Novel. A Historical Approach*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 320-331.

³⁷ Bakhtin links epic to oral tradition but “only the novel is younger than writing and the book” (321). As many other critics, before and after him, he defends the idea of modernity in the novel, but at the same

Watt emphasises as well the role of individualism in the rise of the novel, as opposed to a more collective human being. The moral worth of the individual is especially noticeable in women. With the 1753 Marriage Bill, “a civil contract between individuals” (1957: 150), women were given a status that allowed them to exercise their free wills to choose who to marry but also what to read. It is true that novels are populated with household details, but this was a tendency that was commonplace during the first half of the eighteenth century. Also, when Watt produced his theory, he determined that the first official novel in the English language had been Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela*.

Watt’s work, though highly admired for half a century, has been very much criticised for having narrowly focused as he left behind former fiction. He affirms that the first novelists were Swift, Richardson and Sterne, without considering the importance of former fiction or other writers and texts that might have contributed to the rise of the novel. For this reason, his ideas were challenged towards the end of the twentieth century. Post-Watt approaches argue that, by contrast, the emergence of a new genre does not imply a drastic rupture with the preceding traditions. On the contrary, what contributed to the popularity of the novel was the fact that it continued a long-standing successful type of narrative which was already part of the readers’ everyday life.

Despite the many significant ideas included in Watt’s work, I also have to disagree with his classification of novels, since this thesis defends that *Moll Flanders* is the earliest example of crime novel in English language with its publication in 1722.

time he claims that “the novel’s roots must be ultimately sought in folklore” (330). As it is normally the case with the studies on the origins of the English novel, it is not possible to be determinant because the novel is such a complex genre that cannot be studied as a whole.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to acknowledge that Watt's theory was a rather comprehensive one and it has been the starting point of many other studies of the rise of the English novel. Social changes definitely lead to the emergence of the new genre, although they were not the only determining factor. The eighteenth century was an age in which many changes took place. There was a shift in all the spheres that surrounded the citizens' lives, such as in politics, religion, economy, and, above all, society. Obviously, these disciplines found a way to be analysed in literature, being popularised by writers such as Defoe, who showed his engagement with his own time in his masterpiece *Moll Flanders*. The character of Moll, being born around 1613, experienced some of the most tumultuous years in England's history, including the Civil War and Interregnum. Defoe reflects in his work the anxiety of the time by giving the novel a dual discourse of both Moll's time and the years when it was written. As Melissa Mowry states, "Moll's retirement from a similarly tumultuous personal history suggests a crude parallel between her life and the life of the nation" (2008: 99). Britain was experimenting many changes, too. It needed to settle down in order to become the world's leading nation, a fact that occurred towards the end of the eighteenth century.

It is not surprising, thus, that at a time with so many changes and a new reality that redefined itself constantly, the novel was welcomed as the answer to many anxieties and unsolved questions. The readership embraced this new form of literature as representative of their time as no other genre in the past could do anymore. A shape shifter in its origins, the novel adjusted itself to the constant evolution, almost as a living being that needed to accommodate itself to the environment and to those who surrounded it. This way, the different types of novels sprang, suiting a variety of

tastes, economic classes and realities. It is no pure coincidence that the novel emerges in the eighteenth century, nor is it that Defoe's *Moll Flanders* has been considered by many critics as the first modern English novel, either.

2.3. INNOVATION THROUGH TRADITION. JOHN RICHETTI AND LENNARD DAVIS. NORTHROP FRYE AND THE THEORY OF THE MODES

Watt's approach on the rise of the novel was very soon challenged by those that considered the novel as indebted to previous tradition. Unlike Watt, Michael McKeon, Lennard Davis and John Richetti, just to name some of the most relevant critics for the present study, emphasise the indebtedness to the form and subjects offered by earlier narratives. McKeon acknowledges the importance of the romance, as it has been pointed out above. Davis highlights the relevance of lyrical ballads in the rise of the English novel. Finally, Richetti points out the centrality of shorter narratives, mostly amatory fiction which had been highly disregarded as minor literature by former critics.

McKeon and Davis defend similar arguments, as they emphasise the importance of previous non-literary readings, such as ballads and chapbooks. McKeon explains how news and their "double epistemological charge: the credible claim of objective historicity, and the claim demystified as a 'romance' convention in disguise" (1987: 50). Also, he mentions how certain laws helped to push the emergence of the novel, such as the abolition of protectionist printing legislation. The invention of the press and the cheaper manufacture of books favoured higher standards in education. This idea of literacy has been contested by other scholars. But, in any case, if the sales of books increased, there had to be more readers by mid-eighteenth century than in

the 1600s. He highlights the dichotomy that chapbooks seemed to have been bought by common people and the middle class—because of the lack of revision that they presented—but they were in fact purchased by everyone. He also notes that by the evidence of subscription lists, an important number of readers belonged to the nobility and gentry.

On the other hand, Richetti believes that early writings by women were the trigger for the novel to appear.³⁸ In their novels, women writers depicted a clash between classes, the aristocratic and the bourgeois, so representative of the period; yet they also wrote with the sheer aim of providing entertainment for their reading audience. The general thought that their literature was not serious but purely entertaining made them second-class writers at the time. Authors such as Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley or Eliza Haywood were looked down by their male counterparts and a large number of the male readers. Their novels were labelled as scandalous, as most of them dealt with impossible love affairs. They were accused of being romances, full of falsity and lies in order to make the narrative more exciting.

Richetti's ideas are supported by many critics, especially in gender studies. Josephine Donovan,³⁹ for instance, defends the realism in women writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She asserts that Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, who wrote *Sociable Letters* (1664) with the principle of imitation of reality in mind. She states that "Early English theorists of the novel critiqued the romance from the point of view of everyday realism" (1999: 2). Yet, as it

³⁸ John Richetti, *Popular Fiction Before Richardson. Narrative Patterns 1700 – 1739*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

³⁹ Josephine Donovan. *Women and the Rise of the Novel. 1405-1726*. MacMillan Press Ltd.: London, 1999.

has been pointed out above, these novellas were much indebted to the romance. Even if Donovan defends that the novellas written by these women writers were realistic, the reality they applied to then was very limited, as readers did not identify with characters that were leading a life very different to theirs. As in the characters of romances, they lead a life that readers would have liked for themselves, but they inhabited a world that was still too distant from the factual truth that surrounded them. The relevance of Manley, Haywood, and Behn—among others—importance in the development of the novel is unquestionable. From my point of view, their work could not be labelled as novels yet, but their novellas meant a step forward in the evolution of the English novel.⁴⁰

The hypothesis here defended is the importance of the influence of non-literary works such as journalistic, legal accounts and similar documents in the rise of the novel. Untying its link to the romance in order to join its roots to those of journalism was already done by Lennard Davis in *Factual Fictions* (1997). He affirms that the eighteenth-century novel emerges mostly influenced by the journalistic tradition which dates back to the sixteenth century with the ballads, which were verse accounts of a

⁴⁰ According to Donovan,

women contributed to the formation of this inherently subversive genre by articulating their own critical voice and particularizing their own circumstances in order to resist misogynist reifications that cast them as objects within the dominant discourse of sexual exchange. They thereby helped to fracture the univocal discourses that dominated in pre-modern eras, establishing the kind of dialogical counterpoint that was essential to the emergence of the novel (1999: 12).

Indeed, I agree with the importance that women writers had for the evolution and development of the novel. They managed to make their stories very personal ones. However, there was still much to be done in terms of making readers fully engage with the narration.

recent happening. He follows Foucault's theories, envisioning the novel as a discourse.

In his own words,

The novel, as such, is seen not as a biological entity, nor a convergent phenomenon, but as discourse—that is, in Foucault's usage, the ensemble of written texts that constitute the novel (and in so doing define, limit, and describe it). This ensemble by no means includes only novels and literary criticism, but may include parliamentary statutes, newspapers, advertisements, printer's records, handbills, letters, and so on. In opening the field in this way, it is possible to trace a discourse which may be considerably wider, with different limits and rules than our modern conceptions of fiction and the novel would allow us to apply to the eighteenth century. (1991: 7)

Davis's idea of the origins of the novel represents a revolutionary stance, since by attending to the discourse there is a wider field to trace the possible influences that contributed to the rise of the novel. It is Davis's train of thought that has been taken as a starting point for this dissertation. His idea that the discourse of fiction and the discourse of fact were purposely fused generated the hypothesis that Defoe's *Moll Flanders* must derive from a non-fictional tradition rather than picaresque fiction, as it has been traditionally assumed. The same can be said of the other first novels, which claimed to be real facts that had been edited for the purpose of sharing with the reading public some kind of moral or an unbelievable event. Travel narratives fitted perfectly in an era of exploration and discoveries. Nevertheless, the literary precursors of all of them are not the same. For instance, travel narratives are still indebted to the romance. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, only criminal narratives have been selected.

In *Factual Fictions*, Davis also points to the disengagement between the continental novel and the British novel in its origins. Again, I can only partially agree to

this. Depending on the type of novel, continental influence significantly varies. His statement holds true for the criminal novel, though, which finds no direct connection with continental models. It seems to be linked to Spanish and French picaresque but, as it will be explained in section 3.4, this resemblance is but superficial.

Finally, Northrop Frye's ideas should be taken into consideration in this chapter, since they can shed light on this discussion. In one of his essays, "Historical criticism: theory of modes", Frye analyses and classifies the different literary genres by going back to the classics and the traditional Aristotelian division. He also examines the types of characters corresponding to the different literary modes. These modes do not correspond exclusively to a particular kind of genre, but they are shared by prose, poetry and drama alike. For instance, the high mimetic mode equally corresponds to "drama, particularly tragedy, and national epic" whereas "a new kind of middle-class culture introduces the low mimetic, which predominates in English literature from Defoe's time to the end of the nineteenth century" (2000: 34). In the *low mimetic* mode, corresponding to comedy and realistic fiction, "the hero is one of us: we respond to a sense of his common humanity and demand from the poet the same canons of probability that we find in our own experience" (2000: 34). Frye's ideas have been used here to compare the domestic tragedy to ballads and the early criminal novel. Tradition considers three different genres—drama, poetry and prose—but Frye's theory of the mixture of genres makes perfect sense. They are not separate from each other but they exercise an influence on one another. The early criminal novel is not just derivative from criminal ballads, but it has more affinities to domestic tragedy than to the picaresque.

All in all, previous criticism, in a larger or smaller scale, has contributed to set the foundations for this research. Just as Davis's theory relies on Michel Foucault's notion of discourse of fact and discourse of fiction, this investigation stems from Davis's idea that the novel is generated from a mixture—or even an intended confusion—of facts and fiction, news and novels. Davis, like Richetti, notes the importance that chapbooks, broadsides and pamphlets had for the development of the novel. Yet, these authors devote but a few pages to study the relationship between criminality and the novel. My approach will take a step further from them, since it acknowledges their contribution but goes beyond them so as to establish a solid hypothesis on the origins of the English criminal novel. On the other hand, this thesis offers a broader approach than these scholars' previous analysis, since the time span considered here comprises over two centuries and the texts examined are not only narrative but also drama and lyric. It can be said that, unlike previous studies, it tries to determine the origins of a specific type of novel, studying in depth all the possible influences that might have contributed to its appearance and evolution.

2.4. THEORIES RELATING THE RISE OF THE NOVEL WITH CRIMINALITY AND THE BROADSIDE TRADITION

The connection between crime and the novel has already been pointed out by several critics, who have examined broadsides and other proto-journalistic materials as possible precursors of the English novel. To begin with, Lincoln B. Faller contributes to this field of study with a comprehensive analysis on the relationship between crime and *Moll Flanders* with two different books that have been very helpful for this

research, *Crime and Defoe* and *Turned to Account*.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Faller's research is limited to the figure of Defoe and his fiction.

Hal Gladfelder, however, provides a more general study on the relationship between criminality and narrative. In his study, he

seek[s] to explain the connections between criminality and an emerging narrative congeries—the various extended fictions that came retrospectively to be seen as making up the early novel—which over the course of the century moved into a position of cultural centrality despite the frequent marginality and lowness of its subjects. (2001, xi)⁴²

Apart from providing an insightful research of criminal affairs, Gladfelder focuses on Defoe and Fielding as writers who made of crime the subject of their writings, incorporating ballads, last words and sermons to their novels. This scholar acknowledges the importance that proto-journalistic writings had for the development of the novel, disassociating picaresque from any of the native writings on criminals, considering them different types of literature.

In the field of picaresque studies, the work of Frank W. Chandler has been very influential. His *Literature of Roguery*,⁴³ although more than a century old, has had an important impact on current investigations. Chandler provides a very comprehensive analysis of the literature with criminals as protagonists. His study initiates with the very first writings found in the English language and extends to what he calls “roguery in recent fiction” (1907: 469). Taking into account that *The Literature of Roguery* dates

⁴¹ Lincoln B. Faller, *Turned to Account. The Forms and Functions of Criminal Biography in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-century England*. Cambridge: C.U.P., 1987.

⁴² Hal Gladfelder, *Criminality and narrative in Eighteenth Century England*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001.

⁴³ Frank W. Chandler. *The Literature of Roguery. 2 Vols*. London: Archival Constable & Co., 1907.

from 1907, “recent fiction” is not that recent, though. Chandler links picaresque to the early novel. He studies *Moll Flanders*, *Colonel Jack* or *Roxana* within the picaresque tradition. As it is argued in this dissertation, these novels are not purely picaresque. Rogue literature uses comic characters and situations to entertain the reader. The so-called picaresque “novels” are episodic and there is no definite ending, which contributed to creating sequels in many of them, even by different authors. Also, the rogue is not a criminal. There are no major crimes in picaresque and there is never a moralising purpose. But all these ideas will be dealt at length properly in a separate epigraph. Even though his proposal has been left behind by more modern approaches, Chandler’s work is still a crucial reference in studies which analyse novels with criminals as protagonists, such as the present one.

In sociological and historical matters related to criminality, the publications of J. A. Sharpe have been of great help to this investigation.⁴⁴ This scholar examines crime in Britain in different periods, offering monographic studies on the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. He pays special attention to the changes that took place in society in that period, looking into the main reasons for an increase in crime at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Sharpe also illustrates the topic with selected reprints from the British Museum in his *Crime and the Law in English Satirical Prints 1600 – 1832* (1986). These are satiric plates which accompanied crime stories. Sharpe’s

⁴⁴ J. A. Sharpe. *Crime and the Law in English Satirical Prints 1600 – 1832*. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986.

J. A. Sharpe, “Crime and Punishment”. *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*. H. T. Dickinson, ed. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002. Pp. 358- 365.

----- *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750*. Harlow: Longman, 1984.

----- *Crime in Seventeenth-century England*. Cambridge: C.U.P., 1983.

----- *Early Modern England. A Social History 1550-1760*. London: Arnold, 1987.

conclusions are fundamental to understand crime and its punishment in the periods predating the rise of the English novel and contemporaneous to its early years, when the novels with a criminal as a protagonist proliferated.

Even if the relationship between criminality and the origins of the English novel has been extensively studied, these scholarly works mainly focus on separate aspects of the topic; they do not offer an overall idea of how the process of the rise of criminal fiction took place. Because of the lack of a definite theory, this dissertation considers the relationship between criminality and literature in order to take a step further from former analyses, intending to offer a unified perspective in a sole work. Besides, it focuses mainly on the female criminal, since most studies have considered male and female characters alike. Apart from delimiting the object of research, the prominence given to the female outlaw responds to the fact that her relevant role in this literary subgenre has not been sufficiently studied.

3. CRIMINAL LITERATURE, A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The choice of criminal narrative for this investigation responds to the genuine English element that is found in this subgenre. Few countries other than the English speaking ones show such an interest for felons and their offences.⁴⁵ Criminal writings are a keystone for the development of the English novel as well as for the building up of one of its most popular reading categories nowadays: crime fiction. Ever since the popularisation of the detective novel in the nineteenth century, the British world has

⁴⁵ There are later novels with a criminal as a protagonist, such as the classic *Crime and Punishment* (1866) by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. However, the difference in publications between the English-speaking literature and the rest is impressive. The detective novel, which originates from the criminal novel, is likewise originally an English narrative.

been primarily producer and consumer of crime stories. It is a very old cultural heritage, too. Criminal literature in Britain is such a traditional and ancient genre only to be matched by legends and folktales. As the crime fiction writer Mary Higgins Clark stated in an interview, crime is in human beings' essence ever since Adam and Eve, whose progeny's crime was the first one in the history of Christian people.⁴⁶

Very early in history, criminals transcended their real individualities to become pseudo-fictionalised characters, being granted the sympathy of the reading public that their personae had been neglected. The case of Robin Hood is a famous but ambiguous illustration of this phenomenon due to the lack of proof of his real existence. However, there were many other true criminals that became literary characters. In the sixteenth century, conny-catching pamphlets described the way citizens were robbed or tricked by a wide variety of professionals of crime that proliferated in cities and rural areas. In 1592 Robert Greene published *The Defence of Conny-Catching*, a compilation of the most frequently used tricks to steal in London. It was meant to be a helpful warning against roguery. However, it started a tradition of conny-catching pamphlets in which the deeds of a criminal were narrated. Around the same period, the domestic tragedy—a purely British product not to be paralleled anywhere else in Europe—staged true murders which had taken place in the preceding years, recreating the circumstances in a similar way in which nowadays television series entertain the masses with true-based crime accounts.

⁴⁶ This interview is published in the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*, “El crimen es nuestra esencia desde Adán y Eva” which translates as “Crime is our essence since Adam and Eve”, accessed on the 10th of November, 2013. <http://www.elmundo.es/cultura/2013/11/08/527d378a63fd3d423c8b4570.html>. In this interview, Clark also affirms that in order to write crime stories she reads the news, looking for real cases that might inspire her to write fiction. Almost four centuries after the relationship between proto-journalistic accounts and literature started, the same connection remains.

Criminal literature in Britain comprises both literary and non-literary works, such as ballads, tales, biographies but also criminal records, laws, court proceedings, sermons or last-dying speeches. These texts were broadly read although they have customarily been undervalued, as they were traditionally labelled as low literature for the masses. However, the relevance of criminal literature, as other popular genres, needs to be assessed not only for its long-term permanence but also for its contribution to the English language literary corpus. A genuinely English genre, criminal literature inspired the rise of popular literary works, such as bandits' accounts, criminals' pseudo-biographies or native original plays. As criminals jumped out of administrative papers into more literary pieces of writing they acquired a different status. They became sympathetic anti-heroes that ventured to steal and cheat in order to provide readers with laughter and adventures. In a society where the poorest classes were neglected the benefits that the upper ranks enjoyed, someone that stole from or even killed a landowner was acclaimed amongst the crowds.

Prominent criminals turned into celebrities either for their "restorative" actions or their gruesome crimes, which were widely censored but avidly read. These stories, trials and executions were closely followed by a large amount of the population who even accompanied them on their last ordeal towards death. Capital punishments gathered thousands of witnesses who also were the readership of criminal ballads and pamphlets in which the felons' speech was transcribed. The morbid audience saw executions as festive occasions, celebrating the death of criminals when these involved famous outlaws. It is not uncommon then that a correspondence between executions and theatrical performances was developed in the early eighteenth century. The ritual way in which executions took place, with a procession from prison to the gallows, a

speech on the scaffold and the pre-established roles of the executioner, parson and felon made the act resemble a play on the stage. It is a striking but effective comparison, taking into account that the authorities aimed at indoctrinating a citizenship that was becoming too keen on crime. However, the effect that the authorities achieved was quite the contrary, as public executions and the literary repertoire related to them became more and more popular.

As it has been pointed out above, criminal accounts granted their protagonists sympathy, devotion and, most importantly, the benefit of long-lasting communal memory. Whereas the protagonists of proto-journalistic or legal accounts were quickly forgotten, the lives and deeds of those offenders who became part of the literary corpus were remembered hundreds of years after their deaths. Some of these malefactors became the protagonists of new works, their stories being remade so many times that they eventually acquired the status of icons or myths. Criminal stories are so tightly associated to British culture that the history of a particular village, town or city cannot be understood without them.

But criminal literature did not remain a British phenomenon, as it transcended the initial geographic limits with the colonization phenomenon. Transportation became an alternative punishment for offenders; many felons were taken to New England and with them, criminal literature crossed the ocean, too. In the hands of a predominantly Puritan population, texts related to criminals became the perfect instrument to control and indoctrinate scattered people on the new wild territories of the British Empire. Court proceedings such as the Salem witch trials still have an echo nowadays.

All in all, criminals, executions, and the literature generated around them—whether facts or fiction, narrative or drama—had an impact on British culture and its popular expression: the novel. Hal Gladfelder has analysed the connections between criminality and what he calls “emerging narrative congeries”, which were “the various extended fictions that came retrospectively to be seen as making up the early novel” (2001: xi). All the writings that will be dealt with in this chapter—even if they are dramatic texts—made a contribution to the rise of the novel with a criminal as a protagonist. It is no coincidence that in the preceding decades to the rise of the English novel these texts, which had been viewed as low literature for so long, “moved into a position of cultural centrality despite the frequent marginality and lowness of its subjects” (Gladfelder, 2001: xi). Therefore, the present chapter is an attempt to shed light on the history of criminal writings and its evolution from the Middle Ages up to the eighteenth century in order to see the direct connection between criminality and literature, between edicts against vagabonds and the criminal novel. This section analyses the figure of Robin Hood as the first sympathetic character, but also the first instance of a mixture between fact and fiction. Also, chapbooks, jest-books and picaresque narrative illustrate the influence that continental models have had for the criminal subgenre until a native tendency emerges with Robert Greene’s *Conny-Catching Pamphlets* and the domestic tragedy *Arden of Faversham*, both dating from 1592.

3.1. CRIMINAL WRITINGS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The earliest records we have of criminals in documents date back to the seventh century. These are legal writings on the restriction of wandering chapmen, beggars or

robbers. They are very scarce and of not much relevance as they are only informative of a situation and as a result of general concerns about their spread. Monarchs tried to regulate criminality, as it was the case of the Viking-origin King Canute (1016-1035) of Danish origin. Chandler, who provides a study of the literature of roguery from its very origins, makes the following remark:

Canute, in order to check increasing roguery, demanded of every male above twelve years of age an oath that he would neither be a thief nor be cognizant of the theft; and the Normans, retaining this vow together with the best of the Saxon edicts against vagabondage and crime, imposed severe penalties upon grave-robbers and offenders against the forest laws. (1907: 44)

These eleventh-century laws that Chandler makes reference to represent some of the first writings in which a concern with criminality can be appreciated. They also evidence the measures to put outlaws under control. The eleventh-century *Leis Wilhelmi* or the twelfth-century *Leges Henrici Primi* and the legal tract known as *Glanwill* tried to regulate in written documents the offences that were considered crimes. By the twelfth century, murder stopped being punished by paying a compensation or *wergild*. Yet the difference between manslaughter, homicide, and murder was still blurry. It is not until the end of the twelfth century onwards that a separation between the three offences is established.

Larceny was already distinguished from robbery in the Anglo-Saxon period. This crime implied the seizing of goods without the owner's awareness while robbery meant that there was violence involved. Until the twelfth century, those who were suspected of having committed larceny could pay compensation to the victim, without any sort of trial. However, as explained above, King Canute's concern about thievery

resulted in the hardening of the existing laws. With the changes that he introduced in the legal code, if a person accused of larceny had been proved to be a culprit on several occasions, he or she could be executed as a repeat offender.⁴⁷ These legal documents are the first instances of criminals in writings. Despite of their administrative content, they had an important impact in folk literature, planting the seeds for the massively read genre-to-be.

In literature, criminals were first represented when medieval drama emerged with virtues and vices as characters. An ancestor of the criminal subgenre can be found in the Vice and the Devil, which are typical characters of morality plays. Yet, these archetypes were quite undefined, representing the wicked but humorous criminal. Whereas the Devil developed into the antagonist or villain, Vice tended to be a much more sympathetic character, becoming the foolish rogue of later works. Here it can be seen the kern of the two different sets of characters that would be the protagonists of crime fiction and rogue literature. While criminals can be understood as derivative of the devil, rogues are more connected to vice.

It was not until Geoffrey Chaucer's contribution to English literature that the roguish character was introduced in English Literature. In the *Canterbury Tales* the knaves are normally merry people playing pranks on corrupted churchmen. These are usually portrayed with humorous notes that emphasised their shortcomings, accentuated by a mild criticism. Chaucer's main aim was mockery and humour, so his criminals were not real offenders, either. They were never taken to court or tried by

⁴⁷ For more information on Anglo-Saxon laws, see J. G. Bellamy, *The Criminal Trial in Later Medieval England. Felony before the courts from Edward I to the Sixteenth Century*. Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1988. pp. 57-92.

authority but their punishment came normally in the form of ridicule and laughter when being exposed by other characters. For instance, in the “Reeve’s Tale”, the miller is a thievish character although his actions are not considered strictly criminal but roguish instead. Both the miller—who stole grain from his customers—and the students—who wanted to make him pay by lying with his daughter and wife—belong to the picaresque tradition, not to criminal records. Readers were amused by the knavery of the students and their plot to take vengeance on the miller. Justice here was a popular one with the only purpose of entertainment. It can be concluded that the portrayal of villains and criminals in medieval literature is usually sympathetic. The works of this period do not reflect evil characters that break the laws in order to obtain a social or economic profit, for revenge or for the sake of it. There can be antagonists in romances, but they are secondary characters and not central to the story; there are no wicked protagonists. The same can be said of the early modern period. The great criminal character of the age,⁴⁸ Robin Hood, is remembered for his stealing from the corrupt aristocrats in order to feed an oppressed and impoverished population. In these literary works, this character is clearly not a villain but a hero.

3.2. ROBIN HOOD AND THE CRIMINAL AS A SYMPATHETIC CHARACTER

As it is well-known by the popular stories of Robin Hood and some other friendly outlaws, highwaymen and robbers soon became acclaimed characters in folk songs and narratives. The anti-hero soon turned into the hero in these stories. Yet

⁴⁸ Robin Hood is a character rooted in medieval tradition although he later evolves in Renaissance works.

Robin Hood's notoriety is not only legendary; he complies with quite an important role in English literary history for two main reasons. First, he is the earliest native British roguish character. While Chaucer's pilgrims were strongly influenced by European literary tradition, Robin Hood was the hero which common people could identify themselves with. Multiple legends him about sprang in a very short period of time, his popularity outlasting to the present day. Thus, May-songs and popular games are tightly connected to this figure to the extent that even nowadays Sherwood festivals are still celebrated in honour to the mythical figure. Second, and more importantly, Robin Hood was the first of a series of literary characters whose deeds were a mixture of reality and fiction. The Robin Hood cycles were the earliest illustration of literature with criminals as central characters. Chandler writes that "[b]efore the middle of the fifteenth century he had been labelled as an actual personage of the thirteenth, and later historians assigned him to the twelfth" (1907: 54-55). A halo of mystery surrounds the figure of Robin Hood. The most sustainable proof of his existence is the name of "Robert Hod" or "Robinhud" in the 1226 court records of the York Assizes. According to experts, there seems to be a link between the literary figure and this woodland thief (Holt, 1990: 9).⁴⁹

That the literary character might have been based on a real criminal seems plausible if we take into account that this kind of literature developed from royal edicts to folk tales and ballads. However, the eleventh century tales—which seem to have circulated word of mouth narrating the deeds of the “prince of thieves”—were lost due to their oral and popular nature. We are cognizant of them because of later

⁴⁹ J. C. Holt, “The Origins and Audience of the Ballads of Robin Hood,” *Past and Present* 18 (1960), 89-110.

references to some well-known characters in different sources; but it is not until the late fifteenth century that Robin Hood is first mentioned in a written ballad. Consequently, the existence of these early tales can be presumed but not proved. The York Assizes court records have been preserved and remain the only tangible evidence, since any possible contemporary written legend has been lost.

P. Valentine Harris and Joseph Ritson agree that “Robin’s avowed enmity to the Church was sufficient reason why the monkish chroniclers of England did not mention him” (1951: 15).⁵⁰ This is but a hypothesis with little foundation since, again, the data we rely on are insufficient to determine the existence of the famous character.

The earliest complete ballad we have is *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode*, printed by Wynken de Worde around 1495. It is a compilation of stories that must have circulated about the bandit. *A Lytell Geste* is quite a late work if we consider that oral narratives could have been circulating from the thirteenth century onwards. According to Harris, “from internal evidence it appears that part of the story at least dates from earlier than 1400” (1951: 15), as inferred from references to known people and events. This again cannot be ascertained but everything indicates that oral ballads had been circulating for over two centuries. By the seventeenth century, the literary corpus was consolidated and had expanded, with further numerous exploits attributed to Robin Hood. In a 1662 pamphlet, Hood is said to be “descended of the noble Family of the Carlee of Huntington”. He is also thought as someone “out-lawed by Henry the Eight for many Extravagancies and Outrages” (1662:3⁵¹), the leader of a forty or fifty bandit

⁵⁰ P. Valentine Harris. *The Truth about Robin Hood. A Refutation of the Mythologists’ Theories, with New Evidence of the Hero’s actual Existence*. Linneys of Mansfield, 1951.

⁵¹ Numeration is my own as the pamphlet pages are not numerated.

gang. The pamphlet exhibits a “true Account” label in its title page, trying to convince readers of the veracity of the exploits narrated.

Despite the little evidence of a real person behind the myth, Robin Hood as a character has become the most international bandit of the British countryside. Whether he existed in reality or was the figment of the abused peasants’ imagination he cannot be denied to have initiated a relationship between criminals and fictionalised characters is a very old one. His figure also confirms that the audience was quite fond of this type of characters as their stories developed quickly and proliferated. It makes sense that outlaws were iconic figures among the lower classes. These bandits made the richest the aim of their trickery, providing the poorest with some good laugh and fantasy about the idea of an antihero that could level their world to that of the powerful.

3.3. CHAPBOOKS AND JEST-BOOKS

Chapbooks and jest-books were collections of folk literature deriving from the oral tradition which were put into writing. Being a wide range of varied texts, chapbooks contained as many topics as those found in ballads, such as nursery rhymes, legends, folk tales or love stories. Jest-books were very similar to chapbooks—in fact, many times the two terms are often used interchangeably. Yet they differed in the comic element that jest-books added. Their aim was to provoke laughter on the readers’ behalf. There are several collections of chap-books and jest-books. They were compiled mostly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many jest-books and chap-books have been lost for the lack of literary value that they were considered to have. John Ashton, a nineteenth-century antiquarian, made a great contribution to the

genre. He collected ballads and chap-books, which were edited and later on published in compilations. His work made the preservation of this part of English folk literature possible. Some chap-books and jest-books made of criminals their main characters. Numerous stories circulated around prominent criminal figures such as Robert the Devil or Friar Bacon.

Robert the Devil was a truly evil character of French origin. The legend has it that Robert, duke of Normandy, who was born after his mother promised his soul to the devil if she could beget a child. From his early years Robert proved a bloody assassin, his first victim being his school master. After becoming the leader of thieves and killers, he repented of his behaviour and travelled to Rome in order to ask the Pope for salvation. He became an exemplary knight, defending the Romans and Christianity from heathen Saracens. In the end, he was redeemed of his sins and he married the Emperor's daughter. First recorded in a thirteenth century romance, this story became very popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries crossing borders and being adapted in diverse ways. It became the source for later romances, prose narratives, novels and even an operetta by W. S. Gilbert which has little to do with the original legend. The importance of *Robert the Devil* remains in the establishment of a pattern that will be later on followed in novels with a criminal as a protagonist: salvation through repentance. This became a favourite ending for criminals in literary fiction, even if, as in Robert's case, their crimes were usually atrocious.

Friar Bacon was a less bloody character. His story is very similar to that of Doctor Faustus, in which the main protagonist seeks knowledge through the dark arts. Friar Bacon is reminiscent of the Doctor Faustus tales that circulated in Germany in the fifteenth century. However, unlike the German character, his legend does not seem to

be grounded on real events. Introduced in England by Christopher Marlowe's play *Dr. Faustus*, the character of the scholar related to black magic became very popular during the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, Friar Bacon's story cannot be said to develop under Marlowe's influence, since it is known to have been circulating during the early Elizabethan period, prior to Marlowe's play (Lavin 1969: xvi).⁵² Probably both of them had an English common source, deriving from the German stories. Unfortunately, this is just an assumption as there is no trace of such a common origin. There exist later compiled ballads and romances on the legend of Friar Bacon. Yet earlier ones have been lost. The most popular version is probably Henry Morley's.⁵³ He reprinted a version of the romance, together with that of Robert the Devil. Also, Robert Greene popularised the story in his play *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1627).

The figures and narratives of Robert the Devil and Friar Bacon are just two examples of the widespread repertoire of criminal stories that circulated in Europe during the Middle Ages. In fact, most of this rogue literature is not native to the British Isles. The majority of the stories that narrated the fortunes and misfortunes of travelling rogues were of continental origin. Till Eulenspiegel, in German literature—known as Howleglass in the English version—, and Lazarillo de Tormes, from the Spanish tradition, were taken as models of rascals to develop in the Isles.

Jest-books, the humorous version of chapbooks, were also of European background tradition, deriving from Latin works, such as Poggio Bracciolini's *Liber Facietiarum*. Despite the significant continental influence—most of them were actually translations from French, Flemish and Latin—, there is a jest-book which is for the

⁵² J. A. Lavin, ed., *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. London: New Mermaids, 1969.

⁵³ Henry Morley, ed. *Early prose romances. Reynard the fox. Friar Bacon. Robert the devil. Guy of Warwick. Virgilius. History of Hamlet. Friar Bush*. London, 1889.

most part original and exclusive to the British Isles: *A Hundred Merry Tales*. Printed in 1526 by John Rastell, it seems to have been compiled from folk oral stories that circulated mainly through Britain. P. M. Zall sees it as “the closest thing we have to a distinctively native English jestbook. It is relatively untouched by alien influences and seems to be attempting for a colloquial English style” (1963: 8).⁵⁴ Zall defends that *A Hundred Merry Tales* is significantly different from European jest-books, especially in what concerns the realism of some anecdotes.

Some other jest-books were mere translations, such as Thomas Deloney’s *Mirroure of Mirth* (1583), a translation from Bonaventure *Des Periers’ Nouvelles Recreations et Joyeux Devis* (1558). The original is a collection of stories and fables that became very popular in France and other European countries. Deloney even keeps the French air in the title, although he takes a step further from the jest-book format by making it closer to prose fiction. He seems concerned with the artistic form of the tales that makes *Mirroure of Myrth* more self-conscious as a literary piece of work.

There are not many of these jest-books that feature women as protagonists. Yet there are enough of them to establish that women who broke the rules and behaved in a manner that did not correspond to their gender caused an added humorous effect to the narrations. The most notorious female characters were the widow Edith, Mother Bunch and Long Meg of Westminster. *Westward for Smelts* (1620), by Kinde Kit of Kingstone,⁵⁵ does not have a woman as a protagonist but a

⁵⁴ P. M. ZALL, *A Hundred Merry Tales and Other English Jestbooks of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963.

⁵⁵ The complete title of the book is *Westward for Smelts, or, The Water-Man’s fare of mad merry Western wenches whose tongues, albeit like Belt-clappers they neuer leaue ringing, yet their tales are sweet, and will much content you*. London: Printed for John Trundle, 1620.

group of them. It is a compilation of short stories along the lines of the *Canterbury Tales* but whose tales are told by high-spirited women. The narrator and author, a soldier in “the waterman’s garrison of Queen-hive” (1620: 6) meets a group of “Westerne fishwives, who, having made a good market, with their heads full of wine, and their purses full of coine were desirous to go homeward” (1620: 7). The narrator introduces each fishwife with a description in verse, followed by their tales in prose. The main topic is marriage and the wives’ supremacy over their husbands, who are usually outwitted by the former. The fishwife of Richmond summarises the overall idea that this group of women have of their female counterparts. In her tale, she compares the woman in her narration with Amazons, “who out of a brave minde cut their husbands throates, and so made themselves rulers of themselves” (1620: 46). Even the soldier who is taking them to Smelts, has to accept these women’s supremacy over him. Towards the end he mentions: “hearing her speaking but reason, agreed to be ruled by her, and therefore gave her the name of Captaine” (1620: 63). There is obviously a note of mockery in calling her “Captaine”, but he has to admit her authority because what she was right in her arguments.

Westward for Smelts is of the interest for this thesis for another reason: the intended confusion of fact and fiction in the figure of the author. Below the title, it appears “Written by Kinde Kit of Kingstone”. It is not known if Kinde was a real person or if it responds to a fictional name. *Westward for Smelts* is the only work he produced and there are no further records of him. It seems more plausible that this author is an invention. He defines himself as an unemployed soldier: “I being in the waterman’s garrison of Queen-hive (wherof I am a souldier) and having no employment” (1620: 6). He speaks ironically about his doing in Queen-Hive. He spends his time and his money

in the Red Knight, an inn where he is offered the job of taking the fishwives to Kingstone. But he speaks of this inn as a “valiant and hardy champion”, as the reader only knows the Red Knight is a tavern because of a footnote. He compares the inn and the alcoholic beverage found there as the most powerful knight, who has never been defeated:

if they yeeld to him in the right of his conquest, he taketh from them a certaine summe of money, according to the time that they have held out: but if they scorned to yeeld, hee not onely taketh from them their goods, but likewise with his sore blowes he taketh from them their sences, making them often to fall at his castle gate for dead, voiding at the mouth abundance of filth caused by his strokes. (1620: 6-7)

In a Quixotic manner, the tavern turns into a castle and the wine or ale into the knight, which will always defeat everyone who challenges it. Because of this metaphor and the intended confusion that it generates, it is unclear if the author and narrator is in fact a soldier or just a boatman. In the Prologue, he addresses the reader, stating that he has written the work with the aim of entertaining: “for thy pleasure have I (this once) left my oare and stretcher, and stretched my wit, to set downe the honest mirth of my merry fare fishwives” (1620: 2). If he is to be believed, he must have stopped his rowing to become a writer, changing his oar for “freshwater poetry” (1620:2).

Walter Smith’s *XII. mery Jestes, of the wyddow Edyth* (1525),⁵⁶ tells the story of the widow Edith, a precursor of the female rogue. She is a very early example of the traveller who makes a living out of tricking the greedy and incautious. Her favourite

⁵⁶ Carew W. Hazlitt, ed., *Shakespeare Jest-books; Comprising Merie Tales of the Mad Men of Gotham. XII Mery Jestes of Widow Edyth. Pasquils Jestes, with Mother Bunches Merriments. The Pleasant Conceits of Old Hobson. Certayne Concepts and Jeasts. Taylors Wit and Mirth. Conceits, Clinches, Flashes and Whimzies*. London: Willis and Sotheran, 1864.

victims are the servants of those rich men who want to marry her thinking her of fortune, too. The widow Edith initiates a tradition of women who use female charms together with their ability for disguise in order to seduce men and obtain their fortunes through marriage. There are reminiscences of the widow Edith in the stories that circulated about Mary Carleton, the German Princess, who became famous after a well-known lawsuit for making her husband believe she was rich; and Moll Flanders, who used the same technique to survive in life.

Even if widow Edyth derives from picaresque stories, she presents a difference with these. This character constitutes an innovation in literature since, even if she is modelled on the German Howleglas, “the text is not serial but cumulative” (Munro 2006: 8).⁵⁷ Also, in this work there are instances of real people that had been fictionalised. Walter Smith was Thomas More’s servant. He took advantage of the notoriety of his master to describe the different members of More’s household, “blurring the line between *historia* and *fabula*” (Munro 2006: xviii). The stories need not be necessarily true, but by including More in them, Smithe added a reality component to them. Besides, it started a tendency that it will be determinant in the rise of the English novel: the factual component.

Pasquils Iest: With the Merriments of Mother Bunch (1635)⁵⁸ is another miscellaneous collection of stories and anecdotes. There are several editions and jest-books with independent stories of Mother Bunch, which indicates that she was a

⁵⁷ Ian Munro, ed., “A womans answer is neuer to seke”: *Early Modern Jestbooks, 1526-1635.* Vol. 8, in Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott, eds. *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works. Series III. Essential Works for the Study of Early Modern Women: Part 2.* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006.

⁵⁸ In Hazlitt, 1864.

popular character. According to Owen Davies, she was “a well-known London ale-house hostess” (1999: 133).⁵⁹ The earliest edition with stories of her own is the 1685 *Mother Bunch Closet’s Newly Broke Open*. Her narratives present her as an old woman, giving advice to young girls, particularly as regards the search of a husband or how to behave with them. She is some sort of bawd, who mixes her experience of old woman that has married three men with minor witchcraft for the fulfilment of her aims. Davies classifies *Mother Bunch Closet’s* as a fortune-teller chapbook (1999: 312). In a way, it is. Maybe it was so successful because it gave remedies and recipes for the search of love. Also, the protagonist was perceived as a local character that lived in the readership’s immediacies, so she was to be trusted.

Finally, *The Life of Long Meg of Vvestminster* (1635) recounts the exploits of this female rogue on her arrival in London. It is composed of eighteen stories, each of them independent from the others. Meg was a well-known figure in seventeenth century London, but her fame spread when her exploits started to be written down. Narrations of her tricks appear well into the eighteenth century. According to Munro “a ballad about Long Meg was licensed in 1590 and a Long Meg play was apparently performed in 1594 by the Lord Admiral’s Men, but neither has survived” (2006: xxvi). Had they been preserved, it would have been extremely useful to prove the relationship between ballads, narrative and drama. Unfortunately, as it is usual with many of these compositions, they have not come down to us. *Long Meg of Westminster* will be discussed in depth in the text-analysis section, as its protagonist has proved to be very influential in the development of the character of Moll Flanders as well as for her part in the development of the criminal novel.

⁵⁹ Owen Davies, *Witchcraft and Popular Literature. 1736-1951*. Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1999.

Towards the middle of the seventeenth century, jest-books stopped being popular; they became less original and started mirroring the most successful picaresque stories, which, like jest-books, were either translations or imitations of Spanish or French titles. In a way, jest-books did not stop their publication, they just blended with the more modern tendencies which were picaresque stories or rogue fiction. They were to become a great European success, making of rogues and picaros the central figures of their narrations.

3.4. SPANISH PICAESQUE NARRATIVE AND ROGUE LITERATURE

The term “rogue” alludes to the anti-heroic protagonist in picaresque novels. Picaresque—from the Spanish “picaresca”—or rogue literature has been pointed out as the most direct ancestor of the novel, especially the novel which is the object of study in this thesis, the one which has a criminal as main protagonist. There is a long tradition that supports argument. Sir Walter Scott was one of the first scholars to pinpoint the connection between the English novel and picaresque and still nowadays there are many critics that have acknowledged a direct relationship between the two narrative genres. The picaresque novel has been given especial attention in this dissertation in order to prove that, even though it might have influenced the English novel in its early stages, the latter does not derive from the former.

Many critics still see an evolution from picaresque novels into modern novels, though. Richard Bjornson, for instance, affirms that “Daniel Defoe was writing in a

tradition which translations and imitations of Spanish picaresque novels had helped to establish" (1979: 188).⁶⁰ Also, Margaret Schlauch states that

to find the major channel of fiction reaching to our own age we have to follow the sequels of the jest-book tradition. Having received fresh nourishment from Spanish realism, especially the picaresque, that tradition was able to flower in English works to which the term realism may be applied, at least in a limited sense. (1963: 246)⁶¹

Schlauch is right in affirming the strong indebtedness of the English novel to jest-books. Nevertheless, the influence from picaresque literature was not as transcendental as it is traditionally believed. As this dissertation claims, the English criminal novel inherited elements from different traditions, picaresque being just one of them but not the most significant one. In my view, the criminal subgenre rather derives from non-literary sources. Being verisimilitude with real-life criminals and accounts a major feature with an evident moral purpose, this type of novel is closer to non-literary than to literary narratives. However, because of the long-standing view that picaresque was the predecessor of the criminal novel, it is necessary to provide an analysis of the affinities and differences between rogue fiction and the criminal novel. Likewise, in this chapter, several female rogues are going to be discussed comparing them to Moll Flanders with the aim of establishing a distinction between picaresque literature and the criminal subgenre.

There are few studies of picaresque as exhaustive as Chandler's *Literature of Roguery* (1907). He analyses the literature of roguery from its early beginnings up to

⁶⁰ Richard Bjornson. *The Picaresque Hero in European Fiction*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979.

⁶¹ Margaret Schlauch. *Antecedents of the English Novel. 1400-1600 (from Chaucer to Deloney)*. Oxford: O. U. P., 1963.

the early twentieth century, when he published his work. He there defines the picaresque novel in the following terms:

as conceived in Spain and matured in France, the picaresque novel is the comic biography (or more often the autobiography) of an anti-hero, who makes his way in the world through the service of masters, satirizing their personal faults, as well as their trades and professions. (1907: 5)

Just as jest-books, picaresque stories aimed at prompting the readers' laughter at the expense of the rogues' tricks. In England, these were grafted onto jest-books and mixed with different subtypes, such as the Italian novella and the traveller's tale, as well as the criminal biography. In Walter L. Reed's view, "the [English] picaresque novels were generally treated as more comic versions of the popular criminal biographies or as more circumstantial versions of the Elizabethan jest-books and conny-catching pamphlets" (1984: 95). Consequently, humour is an indissoluble element when discussing picaresque. Because of its link with jest-books, it was likewise viewed as a kind of sub-literary form opposed to the more formal and serious narratives, represented, mostly, by the romance.⁶²

However, there is little native picaresque narrative in the British Islands. The Spanish picaresque began to make an impact on English literature by the third quarter of the sixteenth century, when the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) was published in English. It was translated into English just twenty-two years after its publication in Spanish by David Rowland of Anglesey and it was very influential for the

⁶² The romance has also been claimed to be the origin of the novel. However, as this dissertation analyses the criminal novel, romances have to be left out of the discussion. Apart from those narrating the stories of Robert the Devil or Friar Bacon, there is no other romances worth of mention since their characters were rarely criminals or low class rogues. The values they defended were completely opposite to the ones exposed by the anti-heroes that some rogues became.

literature of the time. The earliest example of British picaresque following the Spanish model is Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). As this type of narrative proved successful, numerous tales resembling the Spanish ones were published in England during the last decades of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth. An instance of this mimetic tendency is James Mabbe's *The Rogue* (1622), mirroring Mateo Aleman's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (published in two volumes: 1599 and 1604, respectively). But the genre did not evolve any further. Unoriginal in its plot, Richard Head's and Francis Kirkman's *The English Rogue* (1665) became one of the most prominent publications, marking the full assimilation of the rogue subgenre into English. Kirkman's relevance in the genre is accounted by *The English Rogue's* translations and its establishment as a reference for further picaresque tales, such as the imitative *The French Rogue: or, The Life of Monsieur Ragoue de Versailles* (1672). *The English Rogue* represents the culmination of the incorporation of this foreign genre into the English culture.

More influential than any of the preceding was John Skelton's tale of *Jack Miller*, the complete title of which is *How master Skeltons miller deceyved him manye times by playing the theefe, and how he was pardoned by Master Skelton, after the stealinge awaye of a preest oute of his bed at midnight* (1567).⁶³ This compilation of thieveries and pranks in the figure of the miller is thought to have been even more acclaimed than the Spanish *Lazarillo*, the miller himself being a traditional figure of knavery as it was already observed by Geoffrey Chaucer in his *Reeve's Tale*. Many ballads are thought to have circulated narrating the tricks that millers performed in

⁶³ W. Carlew Hazlitt, ed. *Merie tales, newly imprinted and made [by] Master Skelton, poet-laureat, 1566-7*. London, Willis and Sotheran, 1866.

order to deceive and steal from their masters.⁶⁴ Some of these tricks were compiled by Skelton, accounting for a whole narration which flowed, connecting the different jests and robberies between them in a single account of the miller's unavoidable knavery. However, most of these ballads have not come down to us. The same destiny endured the different editions of the *Merie Tales* by Skelton. Being so successful, it is unthinkable that there was only one edition issued. It can be assumed, thus, that the rest of the publications must have been lost.

Amongst the Spanish picaresque novels, the most interesting samples for this study are those titles which have female rogues as their protagonists. *La pícaro Justina* (1605) by Francisco López de Úbeda, *La hija de Celestina* (1612) by Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo, together with Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's *La niña de los embustes* (1632), and *La garduña de Sevilla* (1642) are the most popular examples of the genre. Not all of them were known in Britain by the time that Defoe's *Moll Flanders* was published. Yet, *La Pícaro Justina* was without any doubt read in eighteenth-century England since it was translated into English by John Stevens in 1707.

There is a series of characteristics that are common to the four Spanish rogues mentioned above. They are women, and in their roguish ways they are sometimes similar to their male counterparts. Like men, these knavish heroines have low morals, show no mercy and try to advance in society in any way they can. Moll Flanders is quite similar to them in that aspect. She is only interested in her own survival and social thriving; she shows no scruples when attaining her aims. However, the Spanish rogues never use physical violence; they are astute and ingenious, since, as women, it

⁶⁴ As W. Carlew Hazlit explains in his edition of *Skelton's Tales*, "*Jack the miller, or Jack Miller*, appears to have been used at a very early period as a familiar phrase. All millers were *Jacks*, it seems, even in the time of Richard II. And from the earliest period, rogues *ex officio*" (1866: 22-23).

is the main resource upon which they depend. Being physically weaker and less intimidating than men, they have fewer opportunities as thieves. But thanks to their dexterity, they steal, trick and manage to survive. They do not normally use weapons nor are they killers. On the other hand, they all tend to be very pretty and that is, precisely, their main weapon to attain their goals, which are usually to become rich and to prosper in a society that denies women the capacity of thinking for themselves. The same could be pointed out about Moll Flanders. She is conscious of her natural beauty and she uses her feminine charm both to attract wealthy men as well as to mislead suspicions of robbery towards her. She commonly dresses as a gentlewoman in her adventures, thus preventing the victims' possible mistrust.

The female protagonists of Spanish picaresque normally achieve their main goal through marriage. They usually intend to marry a man who can grant them a life of commodity and wealth. They approach their potential victims pretending to be ladies, just as Moll Flanders, who establishes her residence in Bath when looking for a wealthy husband who could turn her into "a gentlewoman."⁶⁵ The Spanish rogues likewise seek old husbands, who may give them the opportunity to inherit their money in a short period of time. But they do not normally fall in love with those rich men; they just use them as a means of obtaining their objective. At the same time, they usually keep young lovers who may satisfy their need for love, and who can entertain them with

⁶⁵ During the Early Modern period, Bath became a fashionable spa town. It attracted the wealthy classes, who looked for the benefits of the spring waters and the relax that the thermal town offered them. But also Bath attracted many people who were eager to make connections. Amongst them, there were numerous women and men hunting for a good match. R. B. Sheridan's comedy of manners *The Rivals* offers a brilliant analysis of the social debate around marriage with Bath as the perfect setting for it.

gifts and attention (Rey Hazas, 350 – 51).⁶⁶ They tend to be infatuated at the end of their adventures, as is the case with Justina and Rufina, but these men are not normally the wealthy husband they need to prosper in society. Justina, for example, ends up happily marrying the rogue Guzman de Alfarache. The same happens to Moll Flanders, who falls in love with men who are not so convenient to her. Just like Justina, Moll spends the rest of her days with her husband, Jemy, also a criminal.

Yet, despite these evident parallelisms, central characters in English criminal fiction eventually end up rehabilitating after truly repenting and accepting social rules. That is, for instance, the case of Moll and Jemy. They accept the rules of society after their repentance while the Spanish characters remain rogues for life. In fact, in my opinion, a strong argument against the consideration of picaresque narrative as the direct ancestor of the English novel strikes in the difference of characters in one genre and the other. Chandler contrasts them with the following words:

At the onset roguery must be distinguished from villainy. The latter is the creature of malice, if not of pathological conditions; its evil proceeds to extremes. The former is less vicious; it regards rascality with humor, or explains it as the result of social environment. Between the two no hard and fast line can be drawn; for the rogue may vary from the practical joker bent on mere mischief to the swindler and the highwayman; while the villain, like Hamlet's uncle, may smile and smile, or lingo carol a drinking song. Nevertheless, the distinction remains generally imperceptible . . . the contrast between every rogue and villain, hinges less upon the relative venality or atrocity or deed committed than upon the rascal's and the author's point of view. (1907: 1-2)

⁶⁶ Antonio Rey Hazas, *Deslindes de la novela picaresca*. Málaga: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Málaga, 2003.

Indeed, villainy hangs in the perspective of both the rascal and the author, but I would also add the reader, who interprets the work and thus establishes a difference between a criminal and a rogue. After all, the meaning given to a literary piece is an interaction between writer and reader, so it is subject to interpretation. Because of the comic aim of picaresque, it normally portrays characters that are more pranksters than criminals. These are witty and ingenious people who resort to trickery as a means of surviving in a society where they had to find their own place. They are thus presented as “clever heroes who outwitted a series of vain, pompous, dishonest, and wealthy people” (Backscheider 1990: 40).⁶⁷ However, they are not serious professional criminals; they never kill their victims nor are they punished for their trickeries. In Skelton’s work, the character of Jack Miller, is “worthie to be hanged: for thou doost excell all the theeues that euer I knew or heard of” (Hazlitt 1866: 33), but he is eventually pardoned. Contrastingly, criminals commit capital offences for which sooner or later, they are punished.

Also, in genuine picaresque literature, the rogue remains a rogue. Knaves do not change in terms of social status or stop their knaveries by repenting from their actions. All in all, picaresque characters were conceived to trigger a smile on the readers’ faces. They did not intend to serve as a moral example of the type of behaviour that had to be censored. Furthermore, a great part of the readership would consider them heroes, since many of them acted in a Robin-Hood manner, fabricating their own idea of justice by robbing the rich and punishing them. On the other hand, the characters that criminal novels produced were not rogues. They were rather based on real-life models

⁶⁷ Paula Backscheider. *Moll Flanders. The Making of a Criminal Mind*. Woodbridge: Twaine Publishers, 1990.

of offenders whose biographies and stories circulated in legal and proto-journalistic accounts. The aim they served to was likewise different; they were used as a paragon to warn the readers against following the wrong example. Because of this, criminals and the writings related to them, whether literary or non-literary, fulfilled a didactic purpose that is absent in picaresque literature.

3.5. THE RISE OF A NATIVE CRIMINAL GENRE

So far, the literary corpus that has been examined in this dissertation has either been of legal nature or of continental influence. The only exception has been the Robin Hood stories, which form part of native literary tradition. During the Middle Ages, the literature that was generated in Britain revered continental tendencies. Even when some of it was relevant for the development of the criminal novel, it was not until the Early Modern period that this type of subgenre started its germination. As it has been explained above, picaresque or rogue literature is not considered to have derived into the English modern novel. Instead, there were other genres that were more akin to British taste for portraying situations closer to the readers, narrating crimes that had taken place in real life, incorporating descriptions of places that were well-known amongst the audience.

Parallel to the popularity of chap-books, jest-books, and similar narratives of European origin—all of them broadly termed “picaresque”—was the rise of an English native subgenre. During the final years of the fifteenth century, a change in literary taste took place. The Modern Period brought along a new interest in topics and characters that were closer to the readers in terms of location. Narratives about far-away sceneries were left aside in favour of British settings, with familiar surroundings

that readers could easily recognise in their mental maps. Jest-books and chap-books had already initiated this tradition. In Kit's *Westward for Smelts*, for instance, as the characters move along the Thames, some of the nearby locations, such as Devonshire, Lambeth, or Hampton, are mentioned. Their final destination is Kingston. The tales that the Fishwives tell happen in their—and the readers'—vicinity. In the case of the Fishwife of Twitnam, she tells the story of a king, not a foreign king but Oswald, who was king of Northumbria during the seventh century. He founded the Lindisfarne Monastery and was canonised. Thus, the story of a native local and king is probably more engaging than if he had been a foreigner.

The year 1592 marks this change in literature, as the publication of Robert Greene's *Conny-catching Pamphlets* coincided with the entry of the anonymous play *Arden of Faversham's* in the Stationers' Register. Both works are pioneers in making of Britain the setting of their stories. Also, they are determinant in the rise of the English criminal novel as they added two of its most important elements: the mimesis of reality in literature and the double purpose of teaching and entertaining at the same time.

3.5.1. CONNY-CATHING PAMPHLETS

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, conny-catching pamphlets were published and immediately became a complete literary success. In Chandler's words, a "conny, cony, conie, or coney was the cant term applied to the silly victim of London rogues" (1907: 95). Conny-catching pamphlets were then the accounts of citizens that had been fooled by pickpockets and tricksters. In 1592 Robert Greene collected some

of the stories and published *The Defence of Conny-Catching* to make the respectable citizens aware of the most common tricks used by thieves in order to fool their victims. It was an unprecedented publication in terms of its realism and practicality, since in origin it aimed at purely unmasking the frauds of tricksters in order to prevent them. A continental antecedent was the German *Liber Vagatorum*, a compilation of stories of different wandering people and the tricks they had to perform in order to survive, had been published around 1510. However, the German tales are closer to the picaresque tradition than to the conny pamphlets. In this collection, only two of the stories are known to be true. Greene's pamphlets, on the contrary, were based on authentic anecdotes that had as a main purpose to warn conies of the dangers in the big city.

Greene described the tricks but he also provided specific terminology for the crimes and people involved, becoming a forerunner of the later eighteenth-century canting dictionaries. The following example is found in *The Second Part of Conny-Catching*:

In Lifting Law.

He that first stealeth, the Lift.

He that receiues it, the Markar.

He that standeth without and carries it away, the Santar.

The goods gotten, Garbage. (Greene 1591: 17)⁶⁸

The terms that Greene explains might have been unknown for readers, who did not normally belong to the underworld since, as said above, Greene's target audience was the victims and the common people. Therefore, he needed to explain the tricksters'

⁶⁸ Robert Greene, *Second part of Conny-Catching. Containing the discovery of certaine wondrous Coosenages, either superficialle past ouer, or vtterlie vntoucht in the first*. London: 1591. The numbering is my own one because the document is not enumerated. Only the first and second pages are marked with 3 and 4.

ways but also their language. In a sense, his work resembles that of a journalist who mingles in the underworld in order to describe the atmosphere, the people and their argot. Greene's *Conny-Catching Pamphlets* are a very early instance of the relationship between journalism and literature, which seems to have emerged hand in hand with crime and developed with it. Nevertheless, there are critics such as G. R. Hibbard, who believe that Greene's main goal was not "to warn or to teach, but to entertain" (1951: 34).⁶⁹ Certainly, *Conny-catching Pamphlets* were not merely objective descriptions but Greene added anecdotes that prompted a smile on the readers' face. This same didactic purpose was claimed by the first novelists, too; they did not wish to entertain their reading public, but to instruct them. Therefore, for the first time in the history of criminal writings, we find a relevant literary ancestor of the early novels. The accurate reflection of reality, describing real people in specific locations, which Greene used to warn his readers, was also a distinctive element in the early novels.

The Defence of Conny-Catching was a success in terms of readers but, most importantly, its relevance lies in the initiation of a genre that would develop into criminal pamphlets and broadsides. With the compilation of oral stories in this book, Greene went beyond the mere writing down of facts; he moved on from "an account of rogues's tricks to the more interesting business of using rogues as anti-heroes in fiction" (Chandler 1907: 98). From the very beginning, Greene shows himself very critical towards this type of characters:

They glut themselves as Vipers vpon the most lothsome, and detestable sinnes, seeking after folly with greedinesse, neuer doing any thing that is good, till they be trust vp at Tiburn: and then is a most wholesome Mithridate made of them,

⁶⁹ G. R. Hibbard, ed, *Three Elizabethan Pamphlets*. London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1951.

for by their deaths others are forewarned for falling into the like enormities.

(1591: 4-5)

Yet another contradicting aspect in Greene is that despite his stated disgust towards criminals exposed in the introduction, a certain note of sympathy—and even admiration for their cunning—is appreciated. In the *Third Part of Conny-Catching*, one of the stories deals with the robbery of a horse. Greene described how the “priggar,” the person who stole the horse, made some changes on the horse’s appearance, such as adding marks or a star on its forehead, and managed to resell this same horse to its previous owner. His story goes beyond the description of the trickery as he continues explaining how the priggar sent a letter to the horse’s owner to explain to him how he had been fooled: “[he] sent the Gentleman word that he had his horse againe that he lost, onely he had given him a mark or two, and for that he was well rewarded, hauing twentie marke for his labour” (Greene 1591: 11). This anecdote seems very unlikely to have happened in reality, but it gives Greene the chance to make a simple conny-catching story into a more elaborate narrative. It adds humour but it also helps to develop the story as the priggar is finally sent to the gallows because the letter acted as a proof of his doings.

Greene showed a more explicit sympathy towards the robbers in a tale in *The Second Part of Conny-Catching*. In the story entitled “Of one that came to buy a knife and made first proof of his trade on him that sold it,”⁷⁰ Greene narrates how a cutler

⁷⁰ The story of the cutler also appears in *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage*, but Greene thought it should be amended. He thus published that the same anecdote again in his *Second Part of Conny-Catching*, stating that

This tale, because it was somewhat misreported before, upon talk had with the poor cutler himself, is set down now in true form and manner how it was done; therefore is

was commissioned to make a knife and to deliver it to his customer, who would pay him dearly for the service. However, in the end, it turned out that the customer was a cutpurse who severed the cutler's purse with his own-made knife. There is, again, use of humour and irony from the title of the story until its conclusion. When the cutler boasted of his highly-priced work in front of his neighbours he realised that his purse had disappeared. Greene concludes with the following sentence: "Let the poor cutler's mishap be the example others, that they brag not over-hastily of gain easily gotten, lest they chance to pay now as dearly for it as he did" (Hibbard 1951: 56). In this last sentence it can be inferred that Greene takes sides with the nip since, in a way, the cutler deserved punishment for his excess of boasting. H. Hibbard believes that the reason why Greene sympathised with criminals was because they aimed mostly at merchants and their goods. The newly born middle-class arose unaffectionate feelings amongst those who, like Greene or Nashe could not enjoy the wealthy status of merchants despite being in possession of a university degree (1951: 16).

Finally, Greene added such realistic details to the stories that he made them not only very close to his readers, but also very vivid. He described the movements of his characters in detail, as in the following account:

there no offence offered, when by better consideration, an thing may be enlarged or amended, or at least the note be better confirmed. (Hibbard 1951: 56)

Greene justifies this repetition by promising that the new version is a more comprehensive and accurate one than the one included in the first publication. It might have been the case that the cutler complained of the lack of accuracy that the tale presented. Pretending that the victim is offended by the unfaithful retelling of the story could be a resource that Greene uses to add veracity to his work. However, as this is the only instance, it is most probably true that the cutler claimed a rectification in the tale. His story, even if they are inventions derived from the oral transmission, has most certainly a real basis.

going down Paul's Chain, left the gentleman made a cony going up towards Fleet Street, sorry for his new counsellor and friend and wishing him good luck in the fight; which indeed was with nothing but wine pots, for joy of their late gotten booty.

Near to St Dunstan's Church the gentleman remembered himself and feeling his pocket so light had suddenly more grief at his heart than ever happen to him or any man again. (Hibbard, 1951: 63)

Just as Defoe does with Moll Flanders and her wandering around the streets of London, Greene describes the itinerary that conies and nips take. In fact, some of the main characteristics that the criminal novel develops are already noticeable in Greene's work. Consequently, Greene's *Conny-Catching Pamphlets* can be confirmed to be the first relevant predecessor of the novel with a criminal as a protagonist.

Greene's work became so successful that it inspired new publications on this subject. Thomas Deloney moved a step forward. He was a ballad writer and compiler who expanded the genre into longer narrative accounts. He published works such as *A proper new Ballad, briefely declaring the Death and Execution of 14 most wicked Traitors, who suffered death in Lincolnes Inne feelde neere London: the 20 and 21. of September. 1586*. This ballad relates the execution of fourteen people accused of high treason against the Queen. He focuses just on the execution day, describing how they were punished. Although Deloney was highly regarded as a writer of execution ballads, his most famous creation was literary. His most famous piece, *The Plesant Historie of Iohn Winchcomb, in His yovnger yeares called lack of Newbery* (1596),⁷¹ had more than fifteen editions during the seventeenth century.

⁷¹ The consulted edition corresponds to a later reprint: *The Plesant Historie of Iohn Winchcomb, in His yovnger yeares called lack of Newbery, the famous and worthy Clothier of England: declaring his life and loue, together with his charitable deeds of great hospitality; and how he set continually fiue hundred*

Deloney's work narrates the life of John Winchcomb, a tailor who gets married to his lady, a widow who falls in love with him, discerning better suitors such as the parson, or the tanner. John's modesty and acknowledgement of his lower social status makes his narration very similar to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. As in Pamela's situation, John does not want to marry his lady and she ends up tricking him into church. Chandler compares *John Winchcomb* with Croce's *Vita di Bertoldo*. He praises Deloney's use of realism, "for Delony gives his reader pictures of actual weavers and cobblers and their merry or heroic doings where the Italian had been content with rehabilitating *fabliaux*" (1907: 71). Deloney describes the society of the moment in a very accurate way. He focuses on the marital transaction between John and his widow lady, and then between John and his own maid. For this study, it is a relevant narrative due to the realistic features it displays and because it illustrates the transition of a ballad writer into a fiction writer. Yet thematically it is not related to criminality and therefore it will not be subject of further discussion. In any case, Deloney and Greene marked the beginning of two very important aspects for the rise of the English criminal novel: the relationship between facts and fiction and the characterisation of real people in literature. With the following instance, the domestic tragedy, this transition is consolidated when well-known criminals' lives are represented on the stage in order to re-enact their crimes for the entertainment of the masses.

poore people at worke, to the great benefit of the Common-wealth: worthy to be read and regarded.
London, 1619.

3.5.2. THE DOMESTIC TRAGEDY

The same year that Robert Greene published *The Defence of Conny-Catching* (1592), a play based on a famous murder, *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham*, was inscribed in the Stationers' Register. As anticipated at the beginning of this dissertation, the analysis of the domestic tragedy responds to the fact that it is a native and unique subgenre. Its main topic is the recreation of authentic crimes committed in the domestic environment. The domestic tragedy illustrates how crime made its way into literature for the first time, thus paving the path for criminal fiction.

The domestic tragedy presented crimes directly drawn from ballads and pamphlets, recreating real cases of murder in the household. They marked the beginning of a realistic era due to the veracity of the cases exposed. On the other hand, the domestic tragedy also exemplifies Northrop Frye's theory of the modes in which realistic fiction and this type of drama are interconnected because both represent the low mimetic mode. The domestic tragedy is relevant, as well, to establish a parallelism between theatre performances and executions, since this association was intended and exploited by both playwrights and the authorities.

Frye separates domestic tragedy from the traditional tragedy as ascribes specific characteristics to this subgenre. He calls it low mimetic tragedy and states that in this subtype pathos is substituted by sensationalism. In his words,

in low mimetic tragedy, pity and fear are neither purged nor absorbed into pleasures, but are communicated externally, as sensations. In fact the word "sensational" could have a more useful meaning in criticism if it were not merely an adverse value-judgement. (2000: 38)

Indeed, these tragedies are sensational or sensationalist because they look to move the audience's feelings by reproducing a crime in which, normally, the main character is the victim. Frye speaks of heroes in tragedy and our compassion for them based on pathos. He writes that "pathos presents its hero as isolated by a weakness which appeals to our sympathy because it is on our own level of experience". He further explains that the central figure of pathos is normally identified with a woman: "we have a whole procession of pathetic female sacrifices in English low mimetic fiction from *Clarissa Harlowe* to Hardy's *Tess* and James' *Daisy Miller*" (2000: 38). This is usually the case in literature from classical tradition until the Naturalism movement, in which the woman acts as hero but also as victim.

However, protagonists of criminal narratives that I have selected for this study are not victims. *Moll Flanders* is definitely not a victim. She is portrayed as a real hero who, despite her adverse circumstances and her wrong choices, is able to amend her doings and move away from the fatal destiny of a criminal. She is a strong, determined confident woman who pursues her goals to achieve happiness. From her early years, she was resolute to turn into a gentlewoman and a gentlewoman she becomes in the end. Likewise, the woman selected as representative of the domestic tragedy is not a victim but a criminal. *Alice Arden* is another example of a self-assured woman who is able to kill to reach her purpose. The characters in domestic tragedies are thus unsympathetic; they are no longer rogues but proper criminals who commit outrageous murders in their home context. Therefore, *Arden of Faversham* has been preferred over the other tragedies for two main reasons: it is the oldest of the domestic tragedies and, unlike the others, the woman is the criminal.

As in the instance of bandits' legends, ballads, jest-books, and the popular literature analysed so far, many domestic tragedies have been lost because they were likewise believed to be a low genre, suitable for the lower classes and not worth keeping for future readers. Those remaining are controversial in terms of classification because this categorisation varies. Although there are diverse taxonomies, most critics agree that the following can be categorised as domestic tragedies: the anonymous *Arden of Faversham* (1592) and *Warning for Fair Women* (1599), Robert Yarrington's *Two Lamentable Tragedies* (1601), Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, George Wilkins's *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (1606) and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608). L. C. Orlin, for instance, includes the anonymous *Fair Maid of Bristow* (1605) whereas H. H. Adams considers Rowley's, Dekker's and Ford's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) as the last instance of such a subgenre. He also includes John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633) and Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (1657) as part of the genre, although he acknowledges that in the case of the latter two, they have elements of romantic tragedy.⁷² Apart from the plays listed above, there were other domestic tragedies which have been lost. Numerous titles were recorded in the Stationers' Register, some of which could have been fallen under this subgenre of Elizabethan drama.⁷³ Yet, despite a heterogeneous classification and the loss of many works, certain characteristics can be established from the surviving ones.

The main feature that defines a domestic tragedy is the closeness with which they follow the accounts described in the ballads and sermons from which they were extracted. As H. H. Adams notes, "the typical domestic tragedy followed a pattern, the

⁷² For this dissertation, they fall out of the classification of domestic tragedies as both of them are set in Italy and their tragedies happen within a noble household.

⁷³ For further reference, see Adams, pp. 193-203.

sequence being: sin, discovery, repentance, punishment, and expectation of divine mercy" (1943: 7).⁷⁴ This is precisely the pattern observed in criminal ballads and pamphlets when they narrated a particular crime. It is also the model that the criminal novel will follow later on. It can be affirmed that the domestic tragedy is closer to ballads and the criminal novel than to traditional tragedies. When Frye describes his theory of the modes, he separates the mimetic tragedy in two: high and low. High mimetic tragedy is the classical one, which complies with the Aristotelian rule of unity whereas low mimetic tragedy is the one represented by the domestic tragedy. Frye explains it in the following way: "we notice that while tragedy may massacre a whole cast, pathos is usually concentrated on a single character, partly because low mimetic society is more strongly individualised" (2000: 38). In fact, the victim is but one, Arden, but the deaths are also extended to his murderers when they are executed. The audience must have felt that justice have been made. This feeling is the *pharmakos* Frye talks about. He says that *pharmakos* "appeals to the kind of relief we are expected to feel when we see Jonson's Volpone condemned to the galleys, Shylock stripped of his wealth, or Tartuffe taken off to prison" (2000: 45). The audience will have certainly cheered when the criminals were punished. These characters represented types whose vices were shared by many, so they portrayed the Everyman of the morality plays, to which the domestic tragedy is indebted. "Had it not been for the moralities, domestic tragedies could not have come into being, for the early homiletic dramas accustomed audiences to dramatic traditions necessary for domestic tragedy" (Adams 1943: 73). According to Adams, "the most important of these

⁷⁴ H. H. Adams. *English Domestic Or, Homiletic Tragedy. 1575 to 1642*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.

traditions was the use of the common man as protagonist for a tragic story” (1943: 73), because although in most plays they made allusion to specific people that had to do with the crime committed, the characters were outlined with such common features that they could have been anyone else. In *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, actually, characters do not receive a name, but they are called Husband, Wife, or Servants, making allusion to the role they have within the family scope.

The domestic tragedy that is going to be analysed in this dissertation does not comply with Frye’s theory in his entirety, since there is no hero in it. There is no clear victim, either, as Arden is suggested to be an unsympathetic character. Of all of them, *Arden* is the one that has a truly female criminal as a protagonist, as in the others women are either the victims or the accomplices⁷⁵ whereas Alice Arden is considered the main plotter and killer, the one who convinces Mosby to take part in the plan. *Arden of Faversham* was entered in the Stationers’ Register only forty-one years after Arden’s wife had commissioned and contributed to the murder of her husband. She wanted to get rid of him in order to share her life with her lover, who also took part in the crime. The story had been well-known because of the status that the Arden couple enjoyed in the area, but also due to the combination of morbid and supernatural elements that it included. In spite of the forty one years that had elapsed, the villainy was still recent in the collective mind at the time of the play’s performance. Probably due to the familiarity with the plot the play was a success. The Elizabethan audience was eager to see the staging of a crime that happened in their—or their progenitors’—

⁷⁵ In *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), for instance, Anne Sanders was convinced to betray her husband and have sex with another man by the other female offender, Anne Drury. She was tried and executed because she did nothing to prevent her husband’s murder at her lover’s hand, but she is not the criminal mind behind it.

life time, in their own country and that involved common characters instead of royal families. Before the play was staged, ballads probably circulated narrating the murder and its plotting, so that the theatre-goers of that time might have had in mind the gruesome details of the murder. But as usual with oral materials, they have not been preserved. The crime was so famous that Raphael Holinshed included the account in his *Chronicles* (1577, 1587). He is supposed to have based his knowledge on the circulating papers at the time or maybe orally transmitted ballads. However, only a later ballad, *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of Faversham* (1633), has been preserved, published forty-one years after the entry in the Stationers' registration and eighty-two years after the crime was committed, which means that it was still evocative of a transcendental tragedy.

Like *Arden of Faversham*, most English domestic tragedies were based on true crimes, which were probably told repeatedly in ballad and pamphlet format until a playwright adapted the facts for the theatrical stage. The only exception seems to be Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), where no record based on a real account has been found (Lieblein 1983:181).⁷⁶ Authentic events, recentness and locality in this new native tendency made both conny-catching pamphlets and the domestic tragedy acclaimed novelties in the English letters panorama. Both of them derive from the proto-journalistic subgenre which included ballads, pamphlets and similar writings.

The transition from news into literature was made swiftly thanks to the mimicking technique that writers developed. When *Arden of Faversham* is compared

⁷⁶ Leaneore Lieblein. "The context of murder in English Domestic Plays. 1590-1610". *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol 23 (2), Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (Spring, 1983), pp. 181-196.

to Holinshed's *Chronicles* or *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of Faversham*, the closeness of the literary text to the non-literary ones is astonishing. The playwright faithfully reproduced the circumstances of the murder, as well as the different attempts to murder Thomas Arden. Very little was left to imagination as the play turned out to be a representation of what was said to have happened in Arden's crime. As was the case of early novels, when readers thought they were simply presented with extended journalistic pieces, *Arden of Faversham's* audience did not have in mind that they were watching any artistic representation. From their perspective, domestic tragedies just conveyed the recreation of the crimes so that they could visualise how the events had taken place. From this intended resemblance it follows that the connection between criminal ballads and literature proved so successful that from the late fifteenth century onwards this link gave birth to new native literary products. The moral lesson intended in both non-literary as in literary writings on criminals is the main characteristic that relates them.

At the turn of the century, however, Jacobean tragedy departs from the structural and thematic pattern that they should comply with, marking the end of domestic tragedies (Lieblein, 1983: 196). Before the closure of the theatres the domestic tragedy had already died out, having lived a very short existence of less than twenty years. On the contrary, pamphlets on criminals' lives and their blood-thirsty crimes became increasingly fashionable in the seventeenth, eighteenth and even nineteenth centuries until executions stopped to be understood and advertised as a form of entertainment.

3.5.2.1. DRAMA AND EXECUTIONS

The domestic tragedy is the outcome of the crucial relationship between drama and public executions. Punishment was a key aspect for crime literature to consolidate. They have been compared to drama because they followed specific standards. Execution days were considered festivities in which spectators shared the last hours of the criminals to be hung. Offenders paraded in carts from the prison to the gallows, accompanied by hundreds of people who, at the execution place, would stand or sit on open galleries, depending on their economic status. This structure resembles theatres with the seat at the back and the groundlings standing at the front. Nearby windows could be rented in order to have a better view of the hangings. In their own way, executions were very similar to a drama performance as this chapter intends to illustrate.

To understand executions and the literature generated around them, it is necessary to draw attention to three important landmarks in London, as they are Old Bailey, Newgate, and Tyburn. Both Old Bailey and Newgate were at the Roman wall that delimited the City of London whereas Old Bailey was the courts where the proceedings took place.⁷⁷ It was situated next to the Medieval Newgate Gaol, on Old Bailey street, hence its name. Newgate prison, named after the gate in which it was located, became subject of many legends and stories, being feared by the criminals of

⁷⁷ Both Newgate and Old Bailey were destroyed in the Great Fire of London (1666). They were rebuilt and modified many times. However, they are no longer existent to the present-day visitor. Newgate closed in 1902 and was demolished in 1904. Curiously, its form grounds are nowadays occupied by the new Old Bailey, currently called The Criminal Court.

the time as a synonymous of hell on earth. Many later criminals were fated to be involved in the underworld when their mothers brought them to life within the gaol's walls. But if Newgate was feared, Tyburn, the gallows, was the final destination for many of the felons. Their exact position was in nowadays Marble Arch, on the North-eastern corner of Hyde Park.⁷⁸ Tyburn was a landmark in London from 1196 until the end of public executions in 1868. Almost six centuries of capital punishment at Tyburn made it a symbol of the same. In 1571 the Tyburn Tree was erected. It was a triangular structure that could hold up to 24 prisoners hanging at the same time. It became to be known for its euphemism of "the Fatal Tree."⁷⁹ Elisabeth I made good use of it with the multitudinous executions of Catholics and traitors.

At the peak of public capital punishment, "75,000 people are thought to have been executed in the century 1530-1630" (1994: 6), as Gatrell notes.⁸⁰ If his calculations are right, it comes up to more than twenty people per day, which is an impressive amount. Executions rates declined as soon as transportation was seen as an alternative to the gallows and a solution to the settlements in the colonies. But criminals were still hanged in large numbers nonetheless. Towards the end of the eighteenth century there was an increase in capital punishment, a response to the increase in crimes and a harsher policy to act as deterrent for future offenders.

On executions day, which were always on Mondays and normally public

⁷⁸ Its original site is marked by a stone plaque to commemorate the many deaths that took place there.

⁷⁹ It is referred by that name in many pamphlets, among them in "The German Princess Revived", where it is said that "none certainly ever Surrendred their Breath at the *Fatal Tree*" (1684: 1).

⁸⁰ V. A. C. Gatrell. *The Hanging Tree. Execution and the English People. 1770-1868*. Oxford: O.U.P., 1994.

holidays,⁸¹ prisoners were transported on an open cart in a sort of procession from Newgate to Edgware Road, where Tyburn gallows were located. They were allowed to stop at any of the bars on the road to have a last pint before dying.⁸² At their arrival at the gallows, outlaws were welcomed by thousands of viewers. Open galleries were built there for those who could afford to be sitting during the “show,” which proves that the audience responded to a variety of classes. Felons were presented to the masses so that they could recognise those who up to that moment were mostly known in writings and oral stories. Offenders were booed or cheered; they were also thrown rotten vegetables on their way to the gallows and at the place itself.⁸³ Information about their lives and crimes was distributed prior to the executions’ day in order to gather the most numerous audience as possible. Normally, court proceedings were published after the trials took place and, at the day appointed for their death, a broadside or pamphlet was issued, to remind the audience who these criminals were. At an average of twenty executions per day, the citizenship could lose track of whose turn it was or what crimes were charged to them.

Execution parades resembled the pageants on which morality or mystery plays were represented, with actors on top of carts followed by the audience in a symbolic

⁸¹ The bank holidays being established on Mondays can be related to the sense of festivity that Mondays had in Great Britain.

⁸² This tradition might be the origin of the popular saying “one for the road. Executions permeated the culture of the British Isles to the extent that even nowadays there is a big emphasis about them. There is no single historic tour in Edinburgh that does not take you to the main places of execution, as there were the pillory, the gallows and the jail. In fact, a famous pub located next to the old gallows is called “The Last Drop”, an intended pun to the last drink that prisoners were allowed to but also their last fall.

⁸³ It seems that this tradition originated in the punishment context and was transferred to the theatrical stage, and not the other way around.

representation of an itinerary in a person's life. Likewise, convicts sentenced to death would leave the prison heading towards the scaffold in a meaningful journey towards the end of their lives. They were accompanied, by thousands of people that would witness their final hours. According to V. A. C. Gatrell:

Scaffold gatherings could be very substantial. After each Old Bailey sessions the routine strangulation of footpads, burglars, and horsethieves would attract 'several thousand' to Tyburn or Newgate. But when murderers, traitors, famous thieves, or rich men hanged, the numbers compared with the 100,000 or so who over several days attended Bartholomew Fair. They matched or exceeded those attending famous political meetings. (1994: 56)

As Gatrell mentions, some of them were so famous that they gathered thousands of people who went to see the parade or the execution act because these criminals were considered celebrities. In John Amy Bird Bell's execution,⁸⁴ in 1831, "there were not fewer than eight thousand persons present" (Pelham 1841).⁸⁵ The late date indicates that public executions continued to be very popular until they were abolished in 1868. The execution parade is mentioned, for instance, in a sixteenth-century ballad, *The Araigment, and Execution, of a wilfull and obstinate Traitour, named Eueralde Ducket, alias Hauns*⁸⁶:

⁸⁴ John Amy Bird Bell's story will be later on discussed for being a relevant case in the history of crime, executions and crime literature. He was the last young boy to be executed in Britain, at the age of fourteen years old.

⁸⁵ Candem Pelham, *Chronicles of Crime; OR, The New Newgate Calendar. Being a Series of Memoirs and Anecdotes of Notorious Characters who Have Outraged the Laws of Great Britain from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*. London: Printed for Thomas Tegg, 1841.

⁸⁶ The pamphlet *The Araigment, and Execution, of a wilfull and obstinate Traitour, named Eueralde Ducket, alias Hauns: Condemned at the Sessions house for high Treason, on Friday, being the 28. of Iuly, and executed at Tiborne, on Monday after, being the 31, day of the same Moneth. 1581* was gathered by

On Monday being the 31. of Iuly, he was brought to Tyborne the appointed place of Execution, being drawn from the prison of Newgate, upon a humble, and godly preachers all the way exhorting him.

The preachers could be understood literally, as clergy men normally accompanied the offenders to soothe their fears and hear last hour confessions. However, the writer could be making reference to the attendants, who would be shouting at the convicts. These parades remained popular until the end of public executions.

Convicts were well-acclaimed figures, some of them paragon to modern celebrities. Shani D’Cruze and Louise Jackson support this view arguing that “the popular culture of the early eighteenth century, voiced in canting ballads, associated thieves with bravado” (2009: 45).⁸⁷ Pieces of their clothes or the rope they had hanged from were kept as tokens. They were examples of people that had overcome life’s adversities by trying to find a way out. They had stolen, extorted or killed for the sake of survival or to improve in a society that denied any sort of privilege to those born among the lower classes.

Aphra Behn illustrates this iconic aspect of criminals in *The Fair Jilt; or The History of Prince Tarquin and Miranda*. When Prince Tarquin is condemned to be beheaded and the executioner blows his scimitar, the sawdust that was covering the scaffold was impregnated with his blood. According to the narrator, the response of the crowd was the following: “murmurs of sighs were heard from the whole multitude,

M. S. London: John Charlewood and Edward White in 1581. It is kept in the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

⁸⁷ Shani D’Cruze and Louise A. Jackson, *Women, Crime and Justice in England since 1660*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

who scrambled for some of the bloody Saw-dust, to keep for his memory” (Behn 1886: 46). In this case, simple sawdust is kept as a token of the executed. In other instances, as in the execution of the infamous William Burke, the body-snatcher, “a struggle took place among the officials present for scraps of the rope with which he had been hanged, shavings of his coffin, and other relics of a similar character” (Pelham 1841: 183).⁸⁸ There is a coincidental resemblance with saints in the relic keeping but an intended one in the way their deeds were told, since criminals’ stories are derivative of saints’ lives narrative.⁸⁹ In many instances, criminals’ are made the subject of pity by telling how their ill fate took them to the wrong path.

The fact the gallows were so popular was not only due to the people’s morbidity; the authorities were interested in making these punishments massively attended. Public justice was thought to be effective as a means to discourage future offenders, making them consider the dreadful end for those who took the path of crime. However, far from curbing more crimes, executions were very popular to watch because people enjoyed them; as aforesaid, they were considered festive occasions. In 1868 public executions were abolished since the authorities acknowledged that they were not really a deterrent to other criminals. They continued within the Newgate walls until 1964, when the last of the hangings took place.

Executions have been compared with the theatre because the audience was provided with a catharsis similar to that experienced with dramatic performances. The same way that morality plays tried to produce catharsis on the audience through the

⁸⁸ Burke’s death mask and other memorabilia, such as a wallet made out from his skin are still one of Edinburgh’s Surgeon’s Hall’s attractions.

⁸⁹ For further information, see McKeon, 1988: 96-113.

representation of crime and punishment, executions followed the same pattern of salvation through repentance. Criminals, executioners and parsons were like characters on top of the stage whereas the audience was basically the same that attended popular playhouses. All social classes participated. Criminals normally delivered a speech in which they repented from their crimes and warned from the evil ways that had led them to that situation. These moralising speeches with a moral intention—which were later on compiled as “Last Dying Speeches”—resembled an actor’s monologue at the closing of a play. Ballads and pamphlets, whether narrating criminals’ lives or reproducing last dying speeches, did not only act as publicity and lure of the executions that would take place but also as a reminder that crime always pays.

It is difficult for a modern mind to imagine that Early-modern English population enjoyed executions so much and, of course, that an established “performance” and speeches on top of a scaffold were identified as dramatic elements. However, there is no doubt of this intended relationship by the associations between reality and fiction, executions and the theatre; in the audience’s mind a strong connection between the two activities was built. However, there was a striking difference: death was real.

To conclude, it has to be highlighted that the connection established between crime, executions, related documents, and the native literature that sprang from them, was an on-going process that lasted for many years. In almost three centuries of criminal records, the literature that executions generated was extensive. Even though the quality of these texts varies, they cannot be considered literary pieces of good quality. In any case, these texts are of extreme importance for the topic of the present

dissertation. They were published in numerous quantities, a fact that evidences the morbidity of the reading public in a way that could only be deemed as low-class entertainment. Yet, the truth is that such an impressive amount on sales can only mean that most individuals in the British Isles and its colonies developed a taste for criminal stories.

3.6. EARLY CRIMINAL BIOGRAPHIES

As discussed above, the fictionalisation of real events first took place in the theatre because of the similarity prompted by the scaffold and the stage. Although early broadsides related to outlaws and executions, criminal biography can be considered a late subgenre. According to Lincoln B. Faller, “for Defoe and his original audience, criminal biography was a well-established but relatively recent phenomenon, not something of long inheritance” (1993: 4). The earliest illustrations are from the beginning of the seventeenth century, but they cannot be said to be a consolidated genre until the middle of the twentieth century. The staging of crimes and the popularity that domestic tragedies acquired paved the way for longer prose accounts. Probably the Puritan ban on theatres in 1642 pushed the transfer of criminals from one genre to the other. An extremely successful subgenre as it was the domestic tragedy was abruptly abandoned. Yet the readership demanded to know more about the details of certain crimes or to be given further information on their protagonists’

backgrounds and motivations. It is not accidental that the forced decline of the domestic tragedy coincided with the beginning of the extended criminal fiction.⁹⁰

These biographies, written in a sermon-like form, had the felon as first-person narrator and pursued a moralising goal. One of the best known of those early biographies was “The Life and Death of Gamaliel Ratsey, a Famous Theefe of England” (1605), probably written by Thomas Pavier. This real-life outlaw is still quite a comic character resembling the ones offered in jest-books or conny-catching pamphlets but he represents a significant step towards a longer and individualised narrative. Criminal biographies only became popular in the mid-seventeenth century when writers and editors realised of the interest of readers in these narratives while acknowledging the difficulties to stage them. They acquired different formats. They could appear as a collection of lives and deeds of the most infamous criminals, or as monographs, if the offender himself or herself was famous enough. That was the case of the texts that will be analysed further on. The German Princess and Long Meg of Westminster were so well-known outlaws that they gave rise to several publications about them.

Criminal biography made its way through the literary scene almost at the same time journalism was beginning to dawn. Hence, the beginnings of both phenomena are closely interconnected, since both stem from a common original source, which was the ballad. The second half of the seventeenth century witnessed the outspread of newspapers as we know them today, including several pages, news about important and recent events, and advertisements. They also incorporated criminal biographies within their pages. Daniel A. Cohen believes that “English newspapers had turned to

⁹⁰ The last of the so-considered domestic tragedies is Rowley’s, Dekker’s and Ford’s *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) while the first proper criminal life is *Long Meg of Westminster* (1635).

crime accounts to attract readers as early as the mid-seventeenth century, and the papers that proliferated during the late 1690s and thereafter often provided extensive coverage of crimes, trials, and executions” (2003: 15).⁹¹ That they included crime as an essential element in their editorials is true, but crime was just part of them as it was part of everyday life in Britain. The introduction of gruesome stories corresponded mostly to a reading taste that editors took advantage of in order to increase their sales.

With the advent of the British Empire, colonisers rapidly started to spread their culture, taking with them the literature to new territories. North America settlers—and transported felons—brought with them the readings in vogue in the motherland at the time. New England experienced a quick development of the printing industry that rapidly distributed pamphlets and broadsides narrating the lives of criminals. Conversion narratives, trial reports, newspaper stories, crime novels and similar accounts of the deeds of felons could be read all over the colonies. Execution sermons and last dying speeches turned out to be the preferred ones among this kind of writings, although a variety of genres sprouted. According to Daniel A. Cohen, “during the late seventeenth century, when ministers still dominated the local print culture, the first publications served as instruments of religious authority” (2003: ix). Puritans, who had emigrated in vast quantities, became very fond of the so-called “criminal conversion narrative”, in which the criminals underwent a spiritual transformation, repented of their sins and became exemplary Christians. During the eighteenth

⁹¹ Daniel A. Cohen, *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace. New England Crime Literature and the Origins of American Popular Culture, 1674-1860*. Oxford: O.U.P, 2003.

century, sermon-like forms suffered a change of perspective, with felons gaining their own voice to tell their stories in the first person.

One of the earliest and best known criminal accounts was that of the Salem trials for witchery which took place in Massachusetts in the years 1692 and 1693. Twenty people were executed, but more than two hundred were accused.⁹² As Bernard Rosenthal writes,

few topics in American culture have received the broad attention received by the Salem witch trials. The subject of scholarly tomes, films, television shows, folklore, and newspaper cartoons, and the vehicle for countless metaphors of oppression and persecution, Salem has had a powerful hold on American imagination. An event that by some European standards of witchcraft persecutions would be relatively minor in its magnitude has achieved an archetypal status in our own country and in others. (1993: 1)⁹³

As he states, they became very famous not only in the new but also in the old continent, but it was thanks to the literature generated around them. The film and television shows and newspaper cartoons came with the twentieth century, as well as most scholar investigations. Yet the Salem trials trigger such an interest due to their survival in literature through the centuries.⁹⁴ This is, precisely, what marks the difference between this case and other witch hunts. Whereas Britain's greatest witch-

⁹² For a viewing on the trial transcripts, see the online source "The Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project: <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/texts/transcripts.html> or Bernard Rosenthal's *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*. Cambridge: C. U. P., 2009.

⁹³ Bernard Rosenthal. *Salem Story. Reading the Witch Trials of 1692*. Cambridge: C. U. P., 1993.

⁹⁴ Some of the earliest literary adaptations of this case are John Neal's Rachel Dyer, the poem "The Weird Gathering" (1831), by John G. Whittier, or the anonymous *The Salem Belle: A Tale of 1692*, published in 1842. One of the cases most famous literary interpretation is Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953), which uses the account as an allegory of Senator Joe McCarthy's hunt for communists and left-wing sympathisers.

trial in North Berwick⁹⁵ has almost been forgotten outside of Scotland, the Salem case is known worldwide.

Criminal biographies contributed not only to the creation of a new type of fiction but also to the retention of real cases that would have been otherwise lost in time. Gatrell discusses the case of John Amy Bird Bell, who was 14 years old when he was tried and executed in 1831 for murder. His death had barely any coverage in newspapers even when he was an exceptional case, a young victim of the gallows. Gatrell describes the case as follows:

The Times's report was only a few inches long; in other papers the case went unnoticed. A penny broadside was published for the London streets, but it used the story to advise readers to 'keep from evil ways'. This scant attention was odd, given the rarity of child-hangings after 1800. Although there were famous hangings of youngsters in the later eighteenth century, none other than Bell's has been attested in the early nineteenth. There should have been some fuss. But were it not for Wakefield's fiction, Bell would have disappeared from history as quietly as he did from life. (Gatrell 1994: 4)

It is then thanks to the transformation of a real person into a literary character what ensures Bell's story acknowledgement in the present time. Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the author of this criminal narration, paradoxically humanises Bell more than journalists did in newspapers just by treating the boy as a character.

The step from real person into literary fictional being probably helped readers to detach themselves from such a thorny issue as the execution of a teenager. Thus, the

⁹⁵ North Berwick Witch Trials have been the most important witchcraft trials in Britain due to the high number of suspects and because this case was commissioned by King James VI himself. A whole chapter will be dedicated to this case as an example of trial report which had a special figure involved, as it was the king himself.

author could appeal to the audience's empathy in an easier way, causing a reflection on the topic from a supposedly unreal situation. Fictionalised stories proved to be more powerful than simple facts for two main reasons. On the one hand, there was an audience that was eager to read more stories about the people that they had seen die on the scaffold. On the other hand, many political and religious leaders were convinced that they could reduce crime if criminal stories were widely read. Both sides helped the appearance, development and distribution of numerous crime narratives during the seventeenth century.

According to Faller, two kinds of criminal biography appeared at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. The difference between them is their purpose. Whereas the first one "seeks to reintegrate the criminal into the social and moral order, to smooth over the disruptive effects of his behaviour, to digest whatever cruelties he may have committed", the other "heightens his disruptiveness, invents and amplifies cruelties, presenting a fractured, etiolated, absurd, and often frankly fictitious version of his life and character" (2008: 194). Both types of biographies gave way to the novel, establishing their criminal protagonist either an example to avoid or to follow. *Moll Flanders*, for example, belongs to the first type of criminal biography, introducing a repenting felon who, at the end of the narration, is able to rehabilitate and be part of society again. It is after repentance when the criminal receives her reward, having a complete life, with the stability of a family and an economic status that allows her to live quite comfortably.

The second variant also found its way in the beginnings of the novel. Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* could be an example of it. In this case, the criminal's abilities and wit to commit crime are praised and the whole book is presented as an ode to the famous

outlaw, exalting his image. In the end, he is punished because of his crimes and finds death in execution by those for whom he worked once. Yet, the whole novel's tone is of admiration rather than criticism towards his behaviour.

It can be concluded that early biographic stories meant a significant step towards the criminal novel. The closure of theatres might have marked the development of this new genre in narrative. Or maybe stories in ballads, broadsides and pamphlets found their natural way to become longer narratives by their readers' appeal. What matters is that from the middle of the seventeenth-century onwards, a new way of recounting the deeds of criminals becomes the best-seller of the time, situating offenders as the preferred characters. Well-known authors incorporate them in their corpus of works, joining this successful tendency. Aphra Behn writes two novellas with female outlaws in them. *The History of a Nun* and *The Fair Jilt; or The History of Prince Tarquin and Miranda* take many elements from the criminal biography and evolve into more elaborate tales, with protagonists that weave a net of conspiracies and Machiavellian machinations. Nevertheless, Behn's works, as well as Defoe's novels, are essentially fictional criminal biographies which benefit of the popularity and credibility of the grounds which previous narratives settled for them.

3.7. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THE RISE OF CRIME

The eighteenth century was an era of changes. With the industrial revolution, a massive exodus from the countryside to the main cities and towns took place. Towns and cities all over Great Britain became overpopulated, London being a unique city in Europe in terms of population. The cities offered what could not be found in the

countryside. The emerging bourgeoisie made its appearance as a class that fitted perfectly the city's spirit, which in turn changed to accommodate an environment that was more bourgeois in taste. Chaotic medieval centres gave way to ordered town planning, with matching Neoclassical buildings and squares which reflected the prevailing rationalism of the era.

Consumer goods were on the rise, such as clothing. In order to be part of the new growing class, there were many who used clothes as a passport to a better life. This way, the emergence of the bourgeoisie provided an opportunity for poorer classes of improving their social status by marriage or carrying out a profession. Many felons did not only enter the world of crime so as to escape poverty, but also to become rich enough and play a part in a social class which was not yet well defined.

As it could be expected, a massive exodus to the cities brought along not only poverty and bad conditions for the people who could not find a job but also crime and pillage by those who were suffering the harshest consequences of overpopulation and the lack of benefits. Although it is true that robbery, for example, did not only occur in urban areas, it must be acknowledged that "as the eighteenth century progressed, crime became an increasingly urban phenomenon, with both levels of prosecution and evidence of organized criminality becoming more marked not only in [big cities], but also in smaller towns" (Sharpe, 1987: 361).⁹⁶ Crimes in the rural environment were more punctual whereas in the city, criminality became part of the everyday life activity.

As Paula Backscheider has noted, "the movement of the population into the cities as the rural economy faltered meant that waves of unskilled, naïve men and women

⁹⁶ J. A. Sharpe. *Early Modern England. A Social History 1550-1760*. London: Arnold, 1987.

became the victims and then the perpetrators of crime” (1990: 1). There was a generalised idea that the future was in big urban areas, when it really was quite the opposite. People became detached from their natural environment, bringing dehumanising along. As Backscheider has pointed out, rural men and women metamorphosed from their naïve role of victims into the active criminals that the eighteenth century came to know.

It is quite significant that the word ‘slum’ was coined in the eighteenth century⁹⁷. In the growing industrial towns, housing was being put up hurriedly and with no regard to sanitation. Daniel Defoe said of Edinburgh’s Old Town that “Tho’ many cities have more people in them, yet, I believe, this may be said with truth that in no city in the world do so many people live in so little room as at Edinburgh” (1727: 33).⁹⁸ Taking into account that there were many buildings which reached the twelve floors, it is easy to imagine Defoe’s shocked vision of the Scottish capital when he visited it in 1706. Similar conditions took place in London, where its poorer inhabitants piled up in warrens of narrow streets. This way of living and the lack of employment brought crime along. Naïve people who, like Moll Flanders, had no other aspiration than to become a ‘gentlewoman’ to ascend in the social scale became frustrated with the lack

⁹⁷ According to the OED, the word ‘slum’, first recorded in 1812, is of cant origins and it can be defined in the following terms:

A street, alley, court, etc., situated in a crowded district of a town or city and inhabited by people of a low class or by the very poor; a number of these streets or courts forming a thickly populated neighbourhood or district where the houses and the conditions of life are of a squalid and wretched character.

⁹⁸ Daniel Defoe. *A Tour Thro’ the whole Island of Great Britain, Divided into Circuits or Journies, giving a Particular and Diverting Account of Whatever is Curious and worth Observation, Viz.* Vol. 3. “Introduction to the Account and Description of Scotland.” London, 1727.

of opportunities that were offered to her. Then they saw crime as their only way out from poverty and misery.

Of all cities it was London the one who attracted more people looking for a better future. It was during the eighteenth-century that London became a political, financial and social capital with a population of 700,000 inhabitants. As there was an increasing demand for domestic service jobs, many young women travelled to the city looking for a better future. Moving to the big town or city provided women with the freedom that they lacked back at home, where they were controlled by their parents and brothers until they got married, only to be then at the service of their husbands. Nevertheless, there were not enough jobs for all of them.

Crime was thus on the rise. Actually, it could be categorically affirmed that in London or Edinburgh, the narrow relationship between criminality and urbanization was a consequence one of the other. With so many people coming to the cities to work and finding no job or connections to the world they had known before in the countryside, many were left with the only way of living they could make: pick-pocketing, stealing, burgling, prostitution, etc. But many men and women preferred this way of life than going back to the countryside. By the mid-eighteenth century social analysts agreed that London presented a unique law and order problem. The corpus of offences and laws trying to rule them grew incredibly. There were certainly ample opportunities for crime there, especially property crime, both in the streets and wealthy homes, while prostitution flourished and—as the career of Britain's first great

criminal, Jonathan Wild, had shown—London could be the scenery of relatively sophisticated organised and professional crime (Sharpe, 2002: 361).⁹⁹

Criminal offence in the eighteenth century in the United Kingdom differed from nowadays concept. Debtors, murderers, prostitutes, housebreakers, street robbers, or adulterous women, among others, were considered offenders. Ian A. Bell's asserts that criminals constituted a class in themselves; a sort of professional specialisation could be found among them, without interference between different specialists. They even had their own language. According to this diversity of crimes, there was as well a variety of crime writing but, as Bell points out, "any attempt to round them up in two discrete groups is inevitably over-prescriptive and becomes too schematic . . . the writing about crime goes beyond the individualised biographical model" (1991: 62).¹⁰⁰ He mentions as well John Richetti's idea that the biographical criminal pattern falls into the religious motives of "fall, sin, and repentance or damnation" (Richetti, 1992: 59).¹⁰¹ Most criminals, according to the criminal ballads and writings, repented though, as they would not have served as an example otherwise.

As a consequence of growing crime, the legal system was widely developed during the eighteenth century as well. With so many forms of criminality, the legal machine had to look for new solutions. Punishment was often extreme, being bloody, unpleasant and deadly most of the times. It took place in public places so as to set an example among the population of where crime could lead to and thus dissuade them

⁹⁹ J. A. Sharpe. "Crime and Punishment". *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*. H. T. Dickinson. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002. Pp. 358- 365.

¹⁰⁰ Ian A. Bell. *Literature and Crime in Augustan England*. London: Routledge, 1991.

¹⁰¹ It echoes H. H. Adams' sequence of "sin, discovery, repentance, punishment, and expectation of divine mercy" (1943: 7), established for the domestic tragedy and, as it was proven in that chapter, also applied to criminal ballads.

from taking that path. At the same time, it persuaded those already on it to repent and abandon their lives of sin. Many of the convicts were hanged, flogged or transported. The legal code was often reformed during the eighteenth century, so as to offer solutions to the crime wave. It became so cruel that during the nineteenth century it earned the nickname of “Bloody Code”. The so-called Black Act was passed in 1723—a year after the publication of *Moll Flanders*—and it included the most extensive increase in the number of offences classified as capital in that century.

The last public hanging took place on the 26th of May, 1868, before The Capital Punishment Amendment Act was passed. Executions continued to be a source of discipline for a variety of crimes but they were confined to prisons until capital punishment was completely abolished in 1998. Yet while punishment was open to the general audience, executions were impregnated with a social sense. They were considered both as a source of entertainment and as a way of social redemption for the criminal. Moreover, they set a clear example of the consequences that crime could bring along. The didactic aim of executions went hand in hand with the purpose of last dying speeches and criminal biographies. According to Faller “at least as far back as the Tudors, public executions in England offered criminals –or could impose upon them– the opportunity to speak to the assembled crowd. By Defoe’s time these speeches had become highly ritualized affairs” (1993, 8). They were meant to act out as a moral example of a life of sin and crime which ended up in repentance but, unfortunately, also on the scaffold. As Sharpe explains,

crime had long been a matter of interest to the popular press. Pamphlets describing horrible murder, and other especially newsworthy crimes had been published since the Elizabethan era, and continued to flourish over the eighteenth century. They were joined by more compendious works describing the lives of highwaymen,

murderers and other notorious criminals, and, as the century progressed, by a wide range of literary treatments of crime and criminals. (2002: 364)

In England there was thus a tradition of criminal accounts as well as a general interest on the part of the audience or reading public. It is no wonder that as crime grew, executions increased and, consequently, the literature generated around them took off.

From the late seventeenth century onwards, there appeared more journalistic accounts with the regular printed narratives of the proceedings of the Old Bailey sessions. They served as material for more literary works that would emerge from about 1750. Newspapers also printed frequent stories of criminal accounts that had taken place on the same day. Through the local press, victims tried to broadcast their losses while they alerted the public of the danger encountered on the streets. They provided evidence of many crimes but, as well as nowadays, more crimes were committed than those that were reported. In these accounts it can also be seen the collective hysteria and panic that surrounded the eighteenth century society, who could not understand how such a criminal wave had emerged.

As there was a general concern on the abundance of crime during the period, major works were written with the attempt of analysing crime, its causes and its possible remedies. One of the most relevant works of this type may be Henry Fielding's *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers, and some Proposals for Remedying this Growing Evil*, published in 1751. Eighteenth century people thought that they were living an unprecedented crime wave and they were eager to know and were curious to read about criminals. A morbid appetite grew among the reading public of the age, which made them devour everyday stories on criminals' biographies.

This diffusion of criminal accounts was made thanks to the development of the printing technology. The popularisation of newspapers and broadsides made the circulation of criminals' stories quick. The weekly journals increased their coverage of ordinary accounts, pamphlet lives and collections such as Alexander Smith's *A Complete History of the Lives and Robberies of the Most Notorious Highway-Men, Footpads, Shop-Lifts, and Cheats, of Both Sexes*, since they were what interested the contemporary readers (Backsheider, 1990: 2). Defoe took into account this eagerness in knowing about criminal lives and began to publish extensively on crime and criminals. *Applebbe's Journal*, a paper to which Defoe is thought to have contributed, specialised in the lives and trials of pirates and felons. The fact that such books by Defoe and others sold well shows that the subject matter of *Moll Flanders* was of real interest to his contemporaries.

It should be finally added that crime in the eighteenth century was not a matter of concern only during that time and for Defoe's contemporaries. Nowadays there are still many theories that try to explain the rise in criminality throughout the eighteenth century. For instance, Gwenda Morgan and P. Rushton have pointed out, that

On the causes of crime, theories of the social origins of criminality which stress collective social and economic circumstances such as poverty jostle with doctrines of personal autonomy which emphasise individual responsibility. The presence of large outcast populations—the "underclass" of today is viewed with the same wariness as the wandering poor of earlier centuries—raises the same questions: whether the limits of society's moral consensus are reached when so many are excluded from normal social life. Such moral diversity was inevitable in a class society. Yet for many poor victims of crime in any century,

the poverty of the criminal's background is not a matter of sympathy: rather, they have always felt a strong need for the law's protection. (1998: 3)¹⁰²

This might explain why the eighteenth century is so fascinating for scholars in multiple disciplines. It was an era of many social, economic and literary changes, among others. Important British cities, as London or Edinburgh, shaped themselves in the way we know them today, with their main architectural innovations but also with their unique character given by the people who populated their streets. A proper understanding of this crucial moment in history leads to a better analysis of our society. Hence, most of our current socio-economic problems are derivative of those generated in the eighteenth century, social exclusion and crime among them.

6. THE FEMALE CRIMINAL

Even if there have always existed female criminals, up to the eighteenth century they were not normally as notorious as men. With the rise of crime at the turn of the century there was an increase in the amount of female offenders. They also acquired a new role as professionalised thieves and took part in gangs and associations of pickpockets. Until that moment, the woman who was taken to justice had to respond to accusations of whoring, witchery or infanticide,¹⁰³ which were typically female offences in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. Whoring was normally the first step into criminal activity. When industrialisation happened, many women

¹⁰² Gwenda Morgan and P. Rushton. *Rogues, Thieves and the Rule of Law. The Problem of Law Enforcement in North-East England, 1718-1800*. London: Routledge, 1998.

¹⁰³ Most of the instances that have been selected from literary texts were women whose first sin was sexual. Once their virtue was ruined they moved into prostitution, thievery or even murder. At the same time, they were called witches because of their wrong doings, even if they were not involved in sorcery and superstition.

moved to the city from a rural environment escaping from poverty in search for a better life. They were attracted to the possibilities that the metropolis could offer to them.

A large proportion of the women who migrated to the cities started their days as maids who being young and naïve became perfect targets of their masters' indecent proposals. They were convinced to become their mistresses with the promise of a future marriage and a life together. Once they were abandoned, they easily moved from the arms of a man into the ones of another, seeking for protection. Eventually, once they lost their youth and innocence, they ended up becoming prostitutes. Such is the story that Moll Flanders narrates. But Moll's pseudo-autobiography is nothing but a reflection of the many cases that took place at the turn of the century. Jails were full of women that had begun their days as naïve mistresses and had ended up as professionalised criminals. Once they entered the prostitution world, it was relatively easy for them to move into thieving from their own customers. Pawnbrokers offered these women the possibility of earning extra cash by selling the stolen items without enquiring their origin.

Prostitutes frequently stole from their customers. Through pawnbrokers, who often acted as their advisors, they found a connection to other women and men who worked as well in the underworld. They felt thus part of a community which fulfilled their need of belonging after the sense of alienation left first, when moving from the country into the metropolis, and second, when they were abandoned by their first lovers. They frequently became associated to male thieves through a sentimental relationship, thus moving from whoring and occasional thieving into organised

crime.¹⁰⁴ A couple could form a gang, even when they had children, who eventually came to take part in the 'family business'. Single women and widows could also survive on their own resorting to theft, prostitution and trickery. In young age they used their beauty, while when they aged they had to resort to their intelligence. Many of them used their experience to instruct younger women and help them in the "business". They frequently moved from active thieves and prostitutes to pawnbrokers or bawds.

Prior to the eighteenth century, it is difficult to find women in the Ordinary's Accounts or proto-journalistic writings. This could respond to the fact that they did not normally commit crimes considered as high offence. Women are not prototypically murderers. They are not strong, so they have to resolve to use either their body or their dexterity and intelligence. Women were more keen to disguise than men. They could not run as fast as a man pursuing them, so they changed their clothes when

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Wild, for instance, worked with a woman, Mary Milliner, who was his partner in love and business. In the Newgate Calendar their relationship is described in the following terms:

In this prison was a woman named Mary Milliner, who had long been considered as one of the most abandoned prostitutes and pickpockets in the town. After having escaped the punishment due to the variety of felonies of which she had been guilty, she was put under confinement for debt. An intimacy soon commenced between this woman and Wild, and they had no sooner obtained their freedom than they lived under the denomination of man and wife. By their iniquitous practices they quickly obtained a sum of money, which enabled them to open a little public house in Cock Alley, facing Cripplegate church.

Milliner being personally acquainted with most of the depraved characters by whom London and its environs were infested, and perfectly conversant as to the manner of their proceedings, she was considered by Wild as a most useful companion; and indeed very materially contributed towards rendering him one of the most accomplished proficients in the arts of villainy.

The Newgate Calendar, in its digital version can be accessed on <http://www.exclassics.com/newgate/ng175.htm>.

committing robberies in order to mislead possible witnesses. They frequently disguised as men. By hiding the fact that they were women they had high chances of not being identified if caught in any of their criminal activities. Also, they normally masked their identity pretending to be high-class customers in order to avoid suspicion in shops. Besides, if they were in search of a husband, an appearance of rich widows brought them a higher success. As Morgan and Rushton state, “statistical overviews of modern female criminality identify gendered patterns of crime in which women’s actions appear less violent and less threatening than those of men” (1998: 95). Women’s crimes, apart from being fewer, are also of a lower relevance and thus published in a lesser degree. However, as the eighteenth century advances, women start to become the protagonists of many of the thefts and burglaries that take place in London and other big towns all around the British Isles. Morgan and Rushton assert that, “although relatively little involved in violent robbery and burglary, women turned up in large numbers, particularly before the lower courts, prosecuted mostly for stealing clothes, household goods, or valuable materials such as cloth” (1998: 208). Sharpe has analysed the amount of thefts committed in Durham and Northumberland during the eighteenth century and he states that “nearly a third of those accused of theft at the assizes and quarter sessions were women” (2002: 360).¹⁰⁵ Women took thus another section of the daily life that up to that point was mostly reserved for men.

The reason behind the increase in feminine criminality during the eighteenth century is due to the poor socioeconomic circumstances that they found themselves in. They had much to do with women’s incorporation into organised crime. As it has

¹⁰⁵ H. T. Dickinson, ed. “Crime and Punishment”. *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002. Pp. 358- 365.

been pointed out above, female criminality in cities and towns has been associated with migration patterns that resulted in female-dominated urban populations. Women outnumbered men in many urban centres in England as a result of migration from rural areas. When they left the countryside to live in town, they experienced a greater independence from male dominance. The city and the town offered opportunity, diversion and relative freedom from patriarchal constraints. Pat Carlen notes that “a recurrent theme in the relatively few autobiographies and biographies of women criminals is the women's disdain and active dislike for the constricting social roles that have been systematically ascribed to women through the ages” (1988: 18).¹⁰⁶ Women resorted to crime when their other options did not work. The disenchantment of arriving to the metropolis and finding out that there were not so many jobs and possibilities as they thought led them to the path of crime. Ambitious women, such as Moll Flanders wanted more than a poorly paid employment. Therefore, crime was the solution to the needs they have in order to escape the patriarchal system that they found themselves in. It provided them with a way of having the financial and therefore total control of their lives.

There was a big difference between men and women offenders. Women had the possibility of being with pregnant, and they used this natural disposition to try to get a pardon from the authorities. It was quite frequent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for women found with child to receive some kind of special treatment. As Bell explains, “women might be reprieved of capital offences if they could prove they were pregnant –‘pleading the belly’ as it was known- and they often had their sentences lessened by the ‘pious perjury’ of courts deliberately understating

¹⁰⁶ Pat Carlen. *Women, Crime and Poverty*. Oxford: O. U. P., 1988.

the gravity of offences” (1991: 99). Being pregnant did not always save them from the gallows, as many times authorities waited until the child was born and then they were executed. But nonetheless convicts tried their best to get pregnant as their last chance to salvation.

Apart from that special deference towards women, they were pretty much treated in a similar way as men. Bell writes that “women who stepped out of the line and were apprehended might be hanged, transported, burnt in the hand, flogged, pilloried and treated with the full severity of the penal code when circumstances dictated, just like men” (1991, 98). Transportation became quite fashionable during Defoe’s time, and he proves to be a defender of this measure, as it can be inferred from his novels. Both Moll Flanders and Colonel Jack repent and recover a life of morality and virtue after being transported.

Female criminality—other than whoring and infanticide—was seen as deviant and against women’s nature. Female criminals were thought to be masculine since criminality was not supposed to be a feminine characteristic.¹⁰⁷ This type of women was thought to have some kind of psychological deviance, since to be related to a life of sin was against their motherly instinct. Having a profession, especially, if that profession was in the criminal world, was not thought to be a female activity. According to John Rietz, “the roles of woman and criminal were perceived as mutually exclusive” (1991: 183).¹⁰⁸ From a present-day perspective Carlen and Worrall add the following consideration:

¹⁰⁷ Moll Cutpurse, above other offenders, became so-well known because of her travestite appearance. She was frequently portrayed smoking a pipe and in men’s apparels.

¹⁰⁸ John Rietz. “Criminal Ms-Representation: *Moll Flanders* and Female Criminal Biography”. *Studies in the Novel*, 1991 Summer; 23 (2): 183-95.

Female criminals have been consistently portrayed down the ages as peculiarly evil and depraved, and as unstable and irrational. Often their irrationality is linked to their biological and their psychological nature. Paradoxically, they have been depicted as unfeminine and hence unnatural (Lombroso and Ferrero 1895) or all-too-feminine (Pollak 1950). More modern sociologists of deviance were also guilty of making similar assumptions by claiming that female deviance was mainly sexual in nature (Cohen 1955). Yet the overwhelming evidence from the studies under review is that women offenders, whose offences are, for the most part property crimes, are largely economically motivated. (1987: 18)¹⁰⁹

Whether their motivation was economical or purely rebellious, what it remains true is that the dichotomy of woman and criminal made them very attractive to the readership, who saw them as outsiders. They were rare and, therefore, they needed to be analysed and understood. Both fiction and non-fiction writers started giving more protagonism to female offenders, out of personal interest and because they realised that there was a market for it. The following analysis of documents will illustrate this affirmation.

¹⁰⁹ Pat Carlen and Ann Worrall. *Gender, Crime and Justice*. Philadelphia: Milton Keynes, 1987.

Texts Analysis

After the theoretical clarifications, the second part of the dissertation examines samples from so as to try to prove the hypothesis that the criminal novel derives from proto-journalistic writings. In a first instance, these early forms of journalism, together with legal and religious documents, such as sermons, will be explained, so as to understand better a complex genre. They also have in common the way they expand outlaws' biographies as soon as publishers understood that they were best-sellers. Several extracts will be provided to illustrate each typology, apart from the pamphlets, which could be compilations of several criminals' lives. In this instance, only one pamphlet will be analysed, *Newes of Scotland*, where a witchery case and trial of many suspects is told in detail. It provides the story of several criminals. Besides, it is a very interesting sample since it was written by the king.

Two drama works will follow so as to clarify how the transition of administrative and informative documents became literature. The domestic tragedy, *Arden of Faversham* (1592), and the comedy *The Roaring Girl* (1611) give evidence on how the transposition from fact into fiction took place. These two instances prove how the fictionalisation of law offenders and the popularity that the representation of their crimes acquired happened earlier on a stage than in narrative. Their prose counterpart is the extended criminal biography, of which two other examples are provided. *Long Meg of Westminster* (1635) and *The German Princess* (1663) and are the best instances of these lives due to the fact that they were probably the best-known female criminals, together with Moll Cutpurse, protagonist of *The Roaring Girl* and of whom several biographies were written.

The next step in characterisation of offenders is illustrated by *The Fair Jilt* (1688), as the first instance of a purely fictional character which is promoted as a real person's life. Aphra Behn's great contribution to the subgenre of crime narrative also counts with another work, *The History of a Nun; Or the Fair Vow-Breaker* (1688). Finally, *Moll Flanders* (1722) will conclude with the aim of this dissertation, to prove that is the first novel written in English language and that it derives from native sources rather than picaresque models, initiating a subgenre within narrative that will have many twists from the eighteenth century until the present time.

1. PROTO-JOURNALISTIC AND LEGAL WRITINGS.

Most criminal writings that have been preserved date back to the seventh century, when the first documents concerning criminality are found. They are mostly proto-journalistic and legal documents. They represent two different approaches from which a criminal's life can be narrated. Proto-journalistic writings covered the life, deeds, last speech and execution of a particular person whereas legal writings exposed the legal procedures that had taken place around a person who had been condemned to death. In these last ones, accusations and procedures were narrated together with a brief account of each person's life, so both texts are truly similar.

The writings included in this section within the label of proto-journalistic are ballads, broadsides and pamphlets. Normally, these documents were not exclusively dedicated to a single individual but to a group of people who were to be executed on a day. Rarely were executions individualised but they took place when several felons had to be punished, so they were collective acts. Likewise, there were no monographic

works on a particular criminal until his or her fame had grown up to an extent that the prospective readership made it justifiable. Proto-journalistic and legal writings coexisted in time because their contents as well as their addressees did not coincide. This chapter aims at establishing their typologies, the similarities and differences between them as well as their relevance and influence on the rise of the criminal novel.

1.1. BALLADS AND BROADSIDES

The newspaper, as we know it today, emerged during the second half of the seventeenth century but did not become popular until the early eighteenth century. In prior times, alternative vehicles of information accounted for the most important happenings while they still pursued an entertainment goal. Ballads were already called novels in the sixteenth century because of the recentness of the accounts they narrated (Davis 1991: 46). They were oral compositions to be sung, each one with a different tune, normally indicated after the title. They were of different kinds, depending on the topic they dealt with. Some of them were amorous while others were political; they could be written in humorous, satiric or a serious tone. One of the most popular types of ballad was the one relating a criminal's life, crimes and execution. In these chants, the criminal sung about his or her crimes, repented of his or her evil life and warned the audience not to follow his or her example.

Originally perpetuated by word of mouth, many ballads survive because they were compiled on broadsides or larger publications. Leslie Shepard, who has devoted an exhaustive study on the origins and the relevance of ballads, affirms that "the

broadside ballad, then, was a kind of musical journalism, the forerunner of the popular prose newspapers, and a continuation of the folk tradition of minstrelsy” (1973: 21).¹¹⁰ Even if they were not sung anymore, they kept their lyric element when they were transcribed into the paper.

Many of them were written down in broadsides or broadsheets,¹¹¹ where their number of verse expanded. Normally folded in two and printed in its four sides, the broadside was a linking form between past, present and future ways of news spread. Like ballads, they were sold at the gallows by street criers for an insignificant amount of money, so that they could be purchased by any participant in the execution viewing. They could include a woodcut illustration of the crime committed or the criminal being executed either at stake or at the scaffold so as to make it more attractive to the morbid reader. They developed from verse into prose and they expanded so as to include some words that the criminals launched to their audience as their last speech. They were known at the time as 'canting ballads' or 'canting pamphlets'; the term *canting* making allusion to the kind of language that thieves and other criminals used and which was reproduced or made up in these last speeches. Broadsides became essential in distributing information about coming executions and the coverage of the same, including a more detailed account than the one in ballads because of its larger extension.

¹¹⁰ Leslie Shepard. *The Broadside Ballad. A Study in the Origins and Meaning*. London: Herbert Jenkins, 1962.

¹¹¹ Here, they will be used indistinctively. There is nonetheless certain controversy as to whether these two terms make reference to the same type of document. MacMaurtrie establishes that broadsides were not unfolded and just written on one side, whereas broadsheets were written on both sides. For further information, see Shepard 1962: 62.

Finally, pamphlets, which were almost contemporary to broadsides, provided a third type of format. They were larger and included more than just one account. They derived from the ballad and benefitted of their popularity, allowing them to even include advertisements and grow to such an extent that they were almost books, sometimes consisting of over fifty pages. They could be of proto-journalistic, religious or legal nature, although in most of them, there are elements of the three disciplines, as they were not clearly delimited and religion was part of justice as much as criminals' lives was a political propaganda as well as entertainment for the population. The options for readers were varied as these three forms of proto-journalism coexisted in time, providing, later on, a cheaper alternative to the newspapers.

The earliest and the simplest compositions, lyrical ballads, suited perfectly the role of entertaining at the same time that they spread news, even amongst the illiterate, since as they were sung, they were catchy and easy to remember. The tune was normally indicated under the title. Some of them still preserve the refrains, such as the following example:

A New Song of Mallinger

OR,

The Female-Deer-Joy tricked of her Maiden-Head.

To a New Irish Tune.

As I went to Mallinger Fair

with my Battel of Bear,

I met with young Peggie,

who's Beautie (*sic*) was clear.

Ratting a rew

Ratting a Rew re rew re rew rerew,

Rating a Rew re rew re rew re rew,
Fa re rew re rew re reen
Fa re rew re rew re reen,
Hay bew Hoi baen,
Ratting a rew.

Her Eyes they were black,
and her Face it was clear;
Her Lips was like Correll,
and white was her hair.
Ratting a rew, &c.¹¹²

In this example, at the end of each stanza there is the indication of refrain repetition, a common device in songs and other oral compositions.

Although they originated as comic or tragic compositions resembling songs and poems, ballads gradually referred more broadly to any kind of topical or popular verse, which could cover any topic despite the incongruence of singing about infanticide or other unpleasant issues.¹¹³ They retained their oral aspect because of the need of making them easy to remember, as many of them had a moralising intention. Eventually, their lines turned into prose, although verse compositions were still written for another century. Thanks to the effort of diplomats or scholars, such as Samuel Pepys or Thomas Bodley, they were assembled and preserved in libraries¹¹⁴. Otherwise, it is quite probable that they were lost with the time due to the triviality of their topics and their temporary purpose. The most popular topics were the praise to

¹¹² Broadside ballad entitled 'A New Song of Mallinger', from the NLS digital collection. <http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/14542/transcript/1>, accessed on the 29th April, 2013.

¹¹³ They are incongruent and unpleasant from a present-day perspective. During their time they were the equivalent of sensationalist stories in tabloids or television programmes.

¹¹⁴ The collections kept in Cambridge and Oxford are of extreme importance, not only because of the number of ballads they include but also because of the early dates of the same.

the monarch, criminality, religion, and the discovery or birth of abnormal people, mainly children that had been born with an interesting deformity. The following example dates from 1637 and is already written in prose:

The Two inseparate brothers. OR

A true and strange description of a Gentleman (an Italian by birth) about seventeene yeeres of age, who hath an imperfect (yet living) Brother, growing out of his side, having a head, two armes, and one leg, all perfectly to be seen. They were both baptized together; the imperfect is called *Iohn Baptist*, and the other *Lazarus*. Admire the Creator in his Creatures. To the tune of *The Wandering Iewes*.

(Shepard, 1973: 17)

News about malformations was of special interest, as it can be accounted by the huge number of ballads and broadsides that cover the subject.

Criminality arose special expectation, too, proving the morbid taste of an audience that influenced the new publications. In the defence of this eager-for-criminals audience it has to be said that at a time when executions occurred almost on a daily basis, it was normal that criminal accounts draw so much interest.¹¹⁵ Shepard, in her *History of Street Literature* (1973), explains to what extent street life, executions and criminal ballads were intrinsically related and played an important part of everyday life during the sixteenth century:

Ever since the growth of towns and cities, the street and the market-place have been the great theatre of the people, the stage for comedy and tragedy. In

¹¹⁵ Criminals' lives could have been for the people at the time what yellow press is for nowadays society.

medieval times, the folk passion plays were acted out by strolling players, blending verses from oral tradition with the magic of primitive stage technique. At other times the streets and public places have seen the dimly understood remnants of old folk festivals and processions. For centuries the great real-life dramatic spectacle of the streets was the public execution, staged with a sweating cast of thousands and the horrifying vulgarities of dishonourable death. (1973: 36)

Subsequently, it is understandable that if executions were a daily life activity, narrations about those criminals' lives and deeds were of daily consumption, too.

As explained above, there were many sympathetic criminals who, by the time they were punished, had gained both the audience and the writers' support. This is understandable since many of the hands who contributed to broadsides and pamphlets were so immersed in the underworld that they were almost part of them. Daniel Defoe, for instance, had contact with several criminals while he was imprisoned, becoming fond of them, as he proved by both his writings of their lives and the extended fictions that there were his early novels. Writers such as Defoe did not only think in the criminal as a profitable character, but they truly sympathised with them, as it is perceived in the texts. There was a variety of styles to narrate the lives of those outlaws. As Gatrell expresses it,

the tone of these communications was far from uniform. The felon's game death, the ironic approbation of it, the inversion and subversion of the law's rituals, the sentimental tears which sometimes flowed, the execration of but secret wonderment at the murderer, the capacity to assimilate and cope with such horrors and even to approve of them—all these crowd responses had correlatives and sources in street culture. But if there was a dominant tone, it was a sardonic or mocking tone. (1994: 119)

The mocking tone gave these writings a sympathetic perspective, but it also made life and death be perceived in a trivial way. Criminals risked their life every day and capital punishment was the end to their adventures for many of them. But it was a way of life that made ordinary people enjoy the reading of offenders' exploits, so even when the ending was a sad one and there was a moral intention, the sardonic or mocking tone that Gatrell mentions was still present.

Even though ballads, broadsides and pamphlets are considered the forerunners of modern newspapers, the concept of 'news' was somewhat different to the idea that our modern mind has of the retransmission of information. At the time, news were "either true or fictional events, quotidian or supernatural occurrences, and affairs that may have been recent or several decades old" (Davis, 1997: 50). Even though sometimes the events related were supernatural, they insisted on the veracity and recentness of the facts. In many criminal ballads, the criminals themselves were the ones who told their lives until the moment of their death, which seems quite improbable. The ballad entitled "The Last Words of James MackPherson Murderer", presents the convict narrating his live and sins until the very moment he is going to be hanged.

Than wontonly and ratingly
I am resolv'd to die
And with undaunted Courage I
Shall mount this faull Tree.¹¹⁶

As it can be appreciated by his last his words, the convict seems to have finished writing his ballad just before climbing to the scaffold, which seems quite improbable.

¹¹⁶ Broadside ballad entitled 'The Last Words of James MackPherson Murderer', from the NLS digital collection, <http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/14482>.

But to solve the problem of the readers' distrust at this mixture of facts and fiction, readers were prompted to visit the publisher's office where they could have a look at the original documents on which the narrated accounts were based. Or that is, at least, what they were promised.

In order to illustrate this not very trustworthy aspect of ballads, the following example is provided. This ballad is found on the edited edition of Samuel Pepy's:

A Monstrous Shape. Or a shapeless Monster. A Description of a female creature borne in Holland, compleat in every part, save only a head like a swine, who hath travailed into many parts, and is now to be seene in LONDON, Shees loving, courteous, and effeminate, and nere as yet could find a loving mate.

(Rollins 1922: 449)¹¹⁷

This piece of news is interesting in more than one aspect. First of all, to show how any abnormality was considered "news" and not just events of extreme importance, as it would be the association that nowadays correspond to the same term. It seems more like a circus or a freak show advertisement rather than a piece of news, but this proves that "news" had the sense of "novelty", something extraordinary in the sense that it was outside the ordinary events. Besides, it also certifies how doubtful the veracity of the contents included in ballads could be. There is no need to check on the truth of such an announcement; even if this woman had a monstrous head, it is impossible that it was a pig's head. The ballad is illustrated with a woman holding a fan in her hand and a pig's head, an image more suitable of a comic book than of a newspaper illustration. Nevertheless, it seems that the readers may have believed these deformities to be true because in 1815 there is another broadside published with the title "Fairburn (Senior's)

¹¹⁷ H. Rollins, ed. *A Pepysian Garland. Black-Letter Broadside Ballads of the Years 1595-1639*. Chiefly from the Collection of Samuel Pepys. Cambridge: C. U. P., 1922.

Portrait of the Pig-Faced Lady, of Manchester-Square. Drawn from the information of a female who attended on her.” And it must have been a popular one, since the reprint is the “Second edition, with additions” (Shepard: 1973, 183).

Many of these ballads included accompanying woodcut illustrations, a few of them depicting the reader observing the events, thus decreasing the distance between reader and text. They acted as a device to attract readers, who would pay attention to the illustration before reading the usual long titles.¹¹⁸ However, most of these woodcuts were not original; they were expensive and therefore used to illustrate ballads, pamphlets, broadsides or even books. They tended to comply with a general topic and they reproduced the image of it, as an easy way to classify the type of ballads or the content included in them.

The woodcut in a ballad called “Damnable Practices” is representative of how illustrations worked. This ballad, which tells the story of Doctor Lamb and his witchcraft practices, uses as illustration the famous Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* print of the scholar encircled in a set of inscriptions and a book in his hand while the devil appears from the floor next to him.¹¹⁹ “The Tragedy of Doctor Lamb” dates back to 1628, the year when Doctor Lamb was killed by the street mob for his supposed practices. Marlowe’s play is from 1620,¹²⁰ from which it can be assumed that the illustration served as an intended parallelism between both characters. Taking

¹¹⁸ There is a very interesting collection of illustrations depicting crimes in ballads in J. A. Sharpe’s *Crime and the Law in English Satirical Prints 1600 – 1832*, extracted from the *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*.

¹¹⁹ This ballad belongs to the Pepys’s collection and it is reprinted in H. E. Rollins’s *A Pepysian Garland* (1922: 276-282).

¹²⁰ Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* was first published in 1604 but the famous print is from the frontispiece of a 1620 edition.

advantage of the well-known Doctor Faustus, popularised by Marlowe's play, the printer's intention was probably that of attracting buyers and making obvious from the start what kind of tragedy it was.

Ballads normally used a first-person narrator, which was quite innovative at the time, although in some instances, such as in "A monstrous shape", which describes the woman with a pig's head, the narration is in the third person. In this case, the narrative voice was probably changed in order to give veracity to the fact that such an extraordinary creature existed. This intended need of separation between reader and writer is presumably the reason behind third person narration in romances, for instance. The characters that are depicted in epics did clearly belong to a different reality than the readers that followed their adventures. However, in ballads, the first person narrator gave readers the impression of inclusion, of belonging. This way, readers felt closer to the narration and, hence, more identified. It is the same technique used in illustrations with the reader represented in them; the reassurance that what is being told is part of the audience's reality. The turning of the reader into the story's direct addressee was a step that definitely changed the narrative perspective, being later on adopted by the early novels because of the same sense of closeness and immediacy that provided to ballads.

Ballads expanded into broadsides by a spatial need. Folded in four parts, they enabled the possibility of publishing longer ballads or several narrations at once. Most of them were written in prose, published to be read rather than to be listened to. They were cheap, so they were still affordable by the lower classes. Sold in the streets for a penny—20 pence in today's money—their headlines were cried out by hawkers,

chapmen and street criers. As in the case of single-sheet ballads, broadside stories which reported dark and abominable crimes were the most popular ones.

Because broadsides had more space than single-sheet ballads, they tended to include longer titles. A typical broadside would start with the title followed by the subtitle, which was in fact a summary of the accounts narrated in a very attractive manner in order to engage the interest of the readers. They were frequently very sensationalist, appealing to the readers' morbidity to catch their eye. This can be observed in the following extract, belonging to the case of Thomas Sherwood and Elizabeth Evans, published in 1635:

Murder upon Murder, Committed by *Thomas Sherwood*, alias, *Coutrey Tom*: and *Elizabeth Evans*, alias, *Canbrye Besse*: The first upon M. *Loe*, The 2. Of M. *George Holt* of *Windzor*, whom inhumanely they kild neare *Islington* on the 22. day of January 1635. The last upon M. *Thomas Claxton* of *London*, whom mercilessly they murdered upon the second day of Aprill last past, neare unto Lambs Conduit on the back-side of Lolborne, with many other robberies and mischiefs by them committed from time to time since Midsomer last past, now revealed and contest by them, and now according to Judgement he is hangd neare to Lambs Conduit this 14 or Aprill, 1635. To the terror of all such offenders. (Rollins, 1922: 431)

The subtitle ends with a quite striking sentence: "to the terror of all such offenders". Hence, this piece of news complies with different purposes: to tell of the future hanging of Thomas Sherwood, to inform of the crimes committed, and to warn similar criminals of the punishment that awaited them. The early novel also adopted this way of advancing a summary of the plot in the title page, which not only included the title, but as well, a subtitle as in the above examples.

The virtue, or rather, the loss of virtue, is a recurrent topic in ballads, broadsides, criminals' lives and stories that have a woman as a protagonist. There were many instances of women who were seduced by gentlemen with the prospect of a better life. From that moment onwards their lives were ruined. Most of them ended as prostitutes; some of them moved into thieving and even murder when finding themselves in extreme situations. One crime led them to another one, until they met punishment. The majority of these women did not reach old age, dying victims of the gallows or venereal diseases. The broadside "Life, Sufferings, and Death of Janet Fleming",¹²¹ for instance, tells the very representative case of a young woman who is seduced and driven into prostitution:

Daughter of a respectable Farmer near Dunse who was seduced by a profligate young Nobleman - brought to Edinburgh, and kept in the great-estep'ndour or some time and then cruelly deserted and thrown upon the town where, after passing through the numrous vicissitudes of a wicked life she at last fell a victim to disease and died in a noted house in James's Square. With a copy of an Interesting Letter she wrote to her aged parent, a few days before her death an account of their Visit to her miserable abode, and a copy of Verses found under her pilow after her decease.

Janet Fleming, as the subtitle of the broadside explains, did not die by execution, but of an illness, probably a venereal one as it can be understood by the following reference: "[she underwent] all the pains of loath some disease, which persons seldom escape whose lives are spent in acts of debauchery. At last, worn out by the fatigues of a wicked and vicious life, she lay down on that fatal bed from which she would never

¹²¹ Broadside entitled "Life, Sufferings and Death of Janet Fleming", from the NLS digital collection, <http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/15461>.

rise in life". Her punishment, in this case, is divine one, a response and a moral lesson to young women that could find themselves in the same situation. The letter and the verses she writes to her parents are but a commonplace strategy that the editor uses as a warning to young ladies.

A woman's honour is a woman's all
You're lost for ever if perchance you fall;
In this, wit, fortune, beauty, form, and mind,
You give like atoms to the whistling wind.

All worth, all pleasure, is with honour lost,
A truth which thousands witness to their cost;
The fate of women deeply we deplore.
They fall like stars that set to rise no more.

The broadside ends thus with that striking reminder of the importance of honour. These final verses are reminiscent of the ballad tradition. The rhyming couplets make it easier to the reader to remember what the writer has as a teaching goal, that everything of value "is with honour lost".¹²²

Apart from those women who lost their virtue and ended their days in the gallows, there was another type of female criminal who were not that innocent or repentant. "The Crafty Maid's Policy", for instance, tells the story of a highway woman who tricked a gentleman in order to get his horse.

Come listen awhile and I'll sing you a song
Of three merry gentlemen riding along.

¹²² Janet's case will be further on deeply analysed and compared to Moll Flanders' because of the many parallelisms that their lives present.

They met a fair maid, unto her did say,
"We'll afraid this cold morning we'll do you some harm."

"Oh no, kind sir," said the maid, "You're mistaken
To think this cold morning will do me some harm
There's one thing I crave that lies twixt your legs
If you give me that, it will keep me warm."

"Then since you do crave it, my dear, you shall have it,
If you'll come with me to yonder green tree.
Then since you do crave it, my dear, you shall have it,
I'll make these two gentlemen witness to be."

So the gentlemen lighted and straightway she mounted,
And looking the gentlemen hard in the face,
Saying, "You knew not my meaning, you wrong understood me."
And along she went galloping down the long lane.

"Oh gentlemen, lend me one of your horses,
That I may ride after her down the long lane.
If I overtake her, I'll warrant I'll make her
Return unto me my own horse again."

But soon as this fair maid she saw him a-coming,
She instantly then took a pistol in hand,
Saying, "Doubt not my skill but you I would kill,
I'll have you stand back or you were a dead man."

"Oh, why do you spend your time here in talking?
Oh, why do you spend your time here in vain?
Come give her a guinea it's what she deserves
And I'll warrant they'll give you your horse back again."

"Oh no, kind sir, you're vastly mistaken,
If it is his loss, well, it is my gain.
And you were a witness that he give it to me."

And away she went galloping over the plain.¹²³

This song, still sung nowadays, proves that a long standing tradition of ballads, crime, and storytellers not only managed to permeate in the rise of a new genre, the novel, and a new form of spreading information, journalism, but it also still remained faithful to its own nature of entertainment.

1.2. THE PAMPHLET

Broadside ballads proved so successful that they were compiled in pamphlets, which in the case of criminal ballads, joined several criminals' lives or different episodes in the life of a criminal. Pamphlets were unbound books. They were popular amongst the middle and upper classes, since their longer narrations required a higher level of literacy. Ministers were common writers of the pamphlet to spread their moral ideas but they had the most varied contributors to the genre. Even King James VI is author of a pamphlet on the witch trials that took place in Scotland in 1591. With the title "Newes from Scotland, Declaring the Damnable life and death of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in Ianuary last 1591", it gives full account on the witch hunt episodes that took place in Edinburgh and East Lothian. It will serve as a perfect example for this type of proto-journalistic writing since it combines the main aspects which are of interest for this dissertation: criminality, narrative and transcendence.

¹²³ The Crafty Maid's Policy dates from the 1850s, when it was first written down, but it is surely an early ballad, having passed through generations by word of mouth, as many others.

As in the case of the criminals' ballads analysed before, although the authoritative hand is King James's, this pamphlet was probably written by its publisher on the King's behalf. Its title page reads as follows:

Newes from Scotland, Declaring the Damnable life and death of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in Ianuary last 1591.

Which Doctor was regester to the Diuell that sundry times preached at North Barick Kirke, to a number of notorious Witches.

With the true examinations of the saide Doctor and Witches, as they vttered them in the presence of the Scottish King.

Discovering how they pretended to bewitch and drowne his Maiestie in the Sea comming from Denmarke, with such osher wonderfull matters as the like hath not been heard of at any time.

Published according to the Scottish Coppie.

AT LONDON. Printed for William Wright.

Just as the preceding broadside ballads and the later novel, pamphlets incorporated a subtitle after the main title, as it can be seen in the above title page. The subtitle works as a way of making the content of the pamphlet more attractive. It makes the reader curious about the events that the narration retells. These circumstances that led to this witch trial were very well-known, in any case, since they correspond to the largest law suit of witchery in Britain. Around seventy men and women from different parts of Southeast Scotland were accused of having practised devilish pacts to make the king shipwreck.

King James VI of Scotland—he was not the monarch of England and Wales yet—had sailed to Copenhagen in order to marry the Danish princess. After the wedding, as

they navigated back towards Scotland, they encountered such a strong storm that they had to land in Norway, where they remained until the waters calmed down. They blamed the storm on several of the citizens of North Berwick, Edinburgh and Leith, particularly Agnes Sampson, the eldest witch, who confessed under torture that she had established contact with the devil and had tried to bewitch the King to death:

She confessed that she tooke a blacke Toade, and did hang the same vp by the heeles, three daies, and collected and gathered the venome as it dropped and fell from it in an Oister shell, and kept the same venome close couered, vntill she should obtaine any parte or peece of foule linnen cloth, that had appertained to the Kings Maiestie, as shirt, handkercher, napkin or any other thing which she practised to obtaine by meanes of one *Iohn Kers*, who being attendant in his Maiesties Chamber, desired him for olde acquaintance betweene them, to helpe her to one or a peece of such a cloth as is aforesaide, which thing the said *Iohn Kers* denyed to helpe her too, saying he could not help her too it.

And the said *Agnis Tompson* by her depositions since her apprehension saith, that if she had obtained any one peece of linnen cloth which the King had worne and fouled, she had bewitched him to death, and put him to such extraordinary paines, as if he had beene lying vpon sharp thornes and endes of Needles. (16)

But she did not succeed in this intent of killing the King, so she had to try harder, next time with a cat—which is an animal that is commonly associated to the Devil.

Moreouer she confessed that at the time when his Maiestie was in Denmarke, she being accompanied with the parties before specially named, tooke a Cat and christened it, and afterward bound to each parte of that Cat, the cheefest partes of a dead man, and seuerall ioynts of his bodie, and that in the night following the saide Cat was conueied into the midst of the sea by all these witches sayling in their riddles or Cities as is aforesaide, and so left the saide Cat right before the

Towne of Lieth in Scotland¹²⁴: this doone, there did arise such a tempest in the Sea, as a greater hath not beene scene: which tempest was the cause of the perrishing of a Boate or vessell comming ouer from the towne of Brunt Iland to the towne of Lieth, wherein was sundrye Iewelles and riche giftes, which should haue been presented to the now Queen of Scotland, at her Maiesties comming to Lieth.

Againe it is confessed, that the said christened Cat was the cause that the Kinges Maiesties Ship at his comming fourth of Denmarke, had a contrary winde to the rest of his Ships, then being in his companye, which thing was most strange and true, as the Kings Maiestie acknowledgeth, for when the rest of the Shippes had a faire and good winde, then was the winde contrarye and altogether against his Maiestie: and further the saide witche declared, that his Maiestie had neuer come safelye from the Sea, if his faith had not preuailed aboue their ententions.

(1591: 16-17)

The pamphlet, despite being mostly of legal origin in order to justify the punishment inflicted on these people, also acts as religious propaganda. It emphasises the faith that the King had, which was what kept him alive.

In these trials, other people are accused of witchery in the confessions of those involved. Dr Fian is pointed out, together with Agnes Sampson, as one of the instigators. In fact, he is the main witch, as his name is the only one mentioned in the title of pamphlet.¹²⁵ His story is here used to exemplify how even in the most of the official documents fact intermingled with fiction despite the emphasis made on the veracity of the events. As the printer addresses the reader, he asks “thee to accept it for veritie, the same beeing so true as cannot be reprobud” (1591: 6). Of course in such

¹²⁴ Lieth, modern spelling Leith, is nowadays a neighbourhood of Edinburgh. It was once an independent town, site of the main Scottish harbour. That way, by saying that Agnes Sampson placed the cat offshore in the Leith area, it is assumed that her intention was that the King never reached port.

¹²⁵ See above on page 131-2.

a law suit, beliefs intervened as much as resolute proofs of culpability, which in this case those evidences were but the confessions under extreme torture that this group of people had summoned a sea storm.

In general, the events narrated can be trusted to be true in the aspects concerned with the examinations—which describe cruel instruments of torture, such as the boots or the Pilliwinckes (thumbscrew)—, not so much in the confessions that were extracted under torture. These, as in the case of Dr Fian, seem more proper of oral narrative than of a true account. His accusation is based on his attempts to put a spell on a young lady so that she fell in love with him. He asked her brother, who was a pupil in the school he taught, to steal three hairs of hers and to bring them to him. But the girls awoke and their mother, who was a witch as well, imagining the doctor's intentions, gave her son three hairs of a cow as if they were her daughter's. As soon as Dr Fian had the hairs, the cow went to where he was and started following him: "made towards the Schoolemaister, leaping and dauncing upon him, and following him forth of the Church, and to what place soeuer he went, to the great admiration of all the Cownes men of Saltpans, and many other who did beholde the same" (1591: 21-24). It proved thus that Dr Fian had used the cow's hairs to make witchery. The story seems more proper of the Canterbury Tales than of a trial report. It is placed after the torture is described, so it could be thought to be a comic relief after such bloody description of the prisoner's sufferings.

However, the cow's story is but another proof of Dr Fian's culpability as well as a way of incriminating the suspected criminals, making them dangerous also for the

common people, in this case, young maidens. The printer is aware of how unbelievable it may sound and thus he justifies the truthfulness of it:

This strange discourse before recited, may perhaps giue some occasion of doubt to such as shall happen to reade the same . . . But to answer generally to such, let this suffice : that first it is well known that the King is the child and seruant of God, and they but seruants to the deuill, hee is the Lords annointed, and they but vesselles of Gods wrath : he is a true Christian, and trusteth in God, they worse than Infidels, for they onely trust in the deuill, who daily serue them, till he haue brought them to utter destruction. (1591: 29)

In case of doubt, the accounts have to be taken as true because it was the King himself who attended the interrogatories and wrote down this pamphlet. He was on God's side whereas the condemned were on the devil's one. That must have been enough reason to believe it.

King James VI carried out an extensive fight against witchery. It is believed that during his reign more than 3000 people were accused of witchery just in Scotland alone.¹²⁶ However, in the pamphlet, apart from giving clues on how to identify witches, a long section is devoted to torture. It is not very clear if the intention was discouraging others from such practises or to appeal to the morbidity of the readers, since so much detail seems unnecessary. Of Geillis Duncane it is said that they tormented her "with the torture of the Pilliwinckes vpon her fingers, which is a greeuous torture, and binding or wrinching her head with a corde or roape, which is a

¹²⁶ The space nowadays occupied by Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh used to be where the Nor' Loch (North Lake) was located. When it was drained during the second half of the eighteenth century, many human remains appeared lying on its bottom. According to a plaque at the Castle Esplanade, more than three hundred witch trials took place at the Nor' Loch, where the accused were put into the water, with their toes and thumbs tied together, to see if they could float. Most of them sunk, obviously, being declared innocent, then, but dead at the time, nonetheless.

most cruell torment also" (1591: 8), Dr Fian, after several torments, "lastly he was put to the most seure and cruell paine in the world, called the bootes" (1591: 18), at which point he confessed. However, when he escaped and is recaptured, they punish him even harder. The writer seems to be taking pleasure in relating the torture:

hee was commaunded to haue a most straunge torment which was done in this manner following.

His nailes vpon all his fingers were riuened and pulled off with an instrument called in Scottish a *Turkas*, which in England wee call a payre of pincers, and vnder euerie nayle there was thrust in two needels ouer euen up to the heads.

(1591: 27)

Each of the described torments is announced to be "a greuous torture", "the most cruell torment", "the most seure and cruell paine in the world" or "a most straunge torment". However, the most morbid description of the punishment is given in the doctor's final torture:

his legges were crushte and beaten together as small as might bee, and the bones and flesh so brused, that the bloud and marrowe spouted forth in great abundance, whereby they were made unseruiceable for euer. (1591: 28)

It is difficult to believe that there is any need in such a detailed description of the instruments and the way of torture. It can only be concluded that it was due to an interest both on the writer and on the audience's side.

King James's pamphlet on the North Berwick witches and their bloody trials have been relevant up to the present time. It has generated around it numerous legends in East Lothian. In 2012, Agnes Sampson became the protagonist of ghost stories in the

Edinburgh Dungeons during the Halloween celebration. Her name and doings are still remembered. Shakespeare's witches in *Macbeth* had to be placed in Scotland¹²⁷ as part of this witchcraft tradition that continues up to the present day, permeating the written and spoken culture. Nowadays, there are many ghost tours in Edinburgh which retell the North Berwick witch trials, together with the lives, deaths and crimes of other local criminals. Once more, a real fact becomes part of literature; in this case, King James's pamphlet is a very current example of how a piece of legal literature has developed into oral narrative with reminiscences of popular culture. After all, a ghost tour guide surrounded by a group of tourists does not differ very much from a hawker engaging the crowds with the latest news.

1.3. OLD BAILEY SESSION PAPERS AND THE ORDINARY'S ACCOUNTS

King James pamphlet is a very famous instance of a trial report, or more specifically, the summary report of several trials, since they extended in time as some of the said witches incriminated more people. Trial reports, session papers and the *Ordinary's Account* all refer to a corpus of legal writings. This type of documents, despite the formality that surrounded them, had a similar moral purpose than proto-journalistic documents. They originated as a popular reading genre when, in 1670s, executions and the process leading to them brought along an impressive interest in the

¹²⁷ In Scotland the witchery tradition is a very important one. It was not until 1951 that the 1735 Witchcraft Act was finally repealed. The last person to be prosecuted for witchery was Helen Duncan in 1944. In a similar account to that of the North Berwick coven, Duncan was accused of having conjured the ghost of a dead sailor who perished at the HMS Barham during World War II, whose sinking was a military secret. She was condemned to 9 months of imprisonment as she was considered dangerous and potentially too knowledgeable while the allies were planning the D-Day landings.

lives, crimes, and fates of the offenders. Criminal biographies were in demand, so printers began to publish accounts of the trials.

The earliest and probably the most representative of the trial report genre are the *Old Bailey Session Papers*, which by 1700 were the best-known and acclaimed of all trial accounts. They narrated strictly the trials taking place at a particular day in the Londoner court of Old Bailey. These reports were so acclaimed that they continued to be printed for more than two hundred years, becoming very profitable for their publishers.

There was another type of documents derived from trial report. The so-called *Ordinary's Accounts* were reports by the chaplain—also called the ordinary—at Newgate prison in which the last moments and dying words of the convicts hanged at Tyburn were added to the mere legal aspects. These *Ordinary's Accounts* had a moral intention. They normally included a sermon that became more prominent as the format proved successful. The *Ordinary's Accounts* do not really differ much from the *Old Bailey Session Papers*; they are longer as they expanded on the criminal's lives and the sermon. They even included criminals' documents, such as letters, and added innovations, such as last dying words in the form of a poem. Nevertheless, there is differentiating aspect in both of them: the *Old Bailey Session Papers* have the criminals and the legal process as the main protagonist whereas in the *Ordinary's Accounts* the Ordinary takes relevance and places himself as the main figure. The chaplain's role becomes more prominent at the same time that the *Accounts* are expanded and the main focus was on indoctrinating their readers.

Although both *Session Papers* and the *Accounts* are equally relevant in the rise of the English novel, it is mostly from the last ones that the novel mimics its moralising

intention since the first ones are more functional and purely descriptive. Lincoln B. Faller defines them in the following terms: “the session papers list[ed] defendants trial by trial, the substance of their indictments, and the disposal of their cases, and the Ordinary’s *Accounts* [gave] no more than a paragraph or two to each criminal mentioned” (1993: 4). In the early *Session Papers* there was barely any information about the felons whereas the *Accounts* were more complete in terms of additional facts about the convicts. Hence, the *Accounts* were more attractive for readers, whose interest made these papers more elaborate.

Both *Session Papers* and the Ordinary’s *Accounts* followed a pre-established structure. *Session Papers* from 1670s onwards opened by listing the people to be judged, followed by a brief description of the crimes committed and the punishment they would receive. There was a sermon previous to the execution. It accounted for the criminals’ behaviour while they were on the scaffold, emphasising how pious they were and whether they were penitent or not. The *Session Papers* concluded with the execution and a formula warning the public to take example of those criminals’ final days. This structure can be seen in the following extract, which belongs to the “CONFESSION AND EXECUTION Of the Eight Prisoners suffering at TYBURN On Wednesday the 30 August 1676”, followed by the convicts’ name and the promise of “Giving a full and satisfactory Account of their Crimes, Behaviours, Discourses in Prison and last Words (as neer as could be taken) at the place of Execution”. Within the title page there appeared also a commonplace warning sentence to those that might be related to the underworld: “Published for a Warning to all that read it, to avoid the like

wicked Courses, which brought these poor people to this shameful End". The place, date and printer closed the title sheet.¹²⁸

On the first page, it can be read a description of the circumstances under which the execution took place:

At the Sessions held for London and Middlesex, August the 23, 1676. there were in all Sixteen persons Condemned to be hang'd for several great and notorious Crimes: And though, for the most part, they were persons that all-along, both at their Apprehension, Imprisonment, and Tryals, carried and behaved themselves with too much Confidence, yet when Sentence of death came to be pronounced upon them (which was done in a most pathetick Oration and a Gravity suiting the solemnness of the occasion, by that worthy person whose Charge it was) it could not but much affect the hearts of all present to hear the sad Cries and doleful Lamentations which these miserable Wretches made, begging and importuning the Court of mercy, when their own repeated offences had excluded it, and left room for nothing but Judgment.

As it can be appreciated, the discourse was aimed at the readers' emotions in order to make them share the feelings that the audience at the scaffold could have had. However, according to the writer, they are not to be pitied because of their repetitive crimes, which have "left room for nothing but Judgment". His point of view is that they have found themselves in that situation because they deserve it, and hence the warning sentence to those that could have been in the same position.

In certain proceedings, the criminal could be reprieved. In the above example, eight out of sixteen felons were pardoned. It reads: "Yet so great has been the Clemency of his gracious Majesty (the Fountain of all Terrestrial Mercy as well as of Justice) that Eight of these desperate Malefactors were Reprieved from death". When

¹²⁸ From *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, August 1676 (OA16760830), <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA16760830>.

pardon was granted the convicts' story ended there. Nothing else was said on their lives or crimes for which they had been tried, unless they were famous offenders. Nevertheless, as in every account some of the condemned prisoners were executed, the structure with the felons' crimes and the homily at the end remained.¹²⁹

The other Eight that suffered their Names and Offences were as follows:

Thomas Moore and James Parker, convicted for stealing Goods of a person of Quality at Cue in Surrey; and though they were here only indicted for Felony, because they were taken with the Goods of a person of Quality at Cue in Surrey; and though they were here only indicted for Felony, because they were taken with the Goods, by one that knew them to be Theives, in Aldersgate-street, the same day the Fact was done, yet it appeared to the Court to be a Burglary too in the said County of Surrey. These Two upon their first apprehension, were put into Bridewel, and sent aboard a Ship by their consent, whence they runaway; and being retaken on a new score, were now sound guilty: the latter of them was transported for the like Tricks about five years ago, and by trifling now with the Court before he would plead forced them to commit him to the Press, where, before he would recant his obstinacy, he was very much bruised, so that without further Execution, 't was much doubted whether he would have survived.

These two prisoners had already been pardoned of capital punishment by being transported, but because they run away and committed further crimes, they found themselves once more facing death.

This *Paper* continues with the description of the other felons, explaining the crimes they had committed and why they had to be executed. A whole page is dedicated then to describe how ministers offered their help to put them into good

¹²⁹ Of all the *Session Papers* which have been analysed for this dissertation, there has not been any example in which all the convicts had been pardoned.

terms with God, because it was him who they had offended the most: “what they died for was the least of their Transgressions against the Laws of God; having otherwise by multiplied Offences justly provoked the Divine Vengeance against themselves”. The emphasis was normally on religion and how criminals broke earthly but also heavenly rules. The conclusion serves to emphasise the warning effect these documents pursued:

And so suffered according to their Sentence: And may their lamentable Examples warn all others that saw the same, or shall here read it truly related, deter them from those wicked Facts and Courses, which brought these unhappy Wretches to this sad, deplorable, and ignominious End.

This ending tended to be a cliché, and it is repeated in a similar way in most *Session Papers*.

As the *Old Bailey Session Papers* proved to be successful publications, their length began to increase. They included more detailed descriptions of the crimes committed as well as a brief biography of each criminal. The Ordinary took prominence, making these reports his own; they always started with the formula: THE ORDINARY of NEWGATE his ACCOUNT and followed a quite repetitive structure. They tended to begin with the criminal’s birth and family background; then, they moved on to the illustration on how the person had fallen into a life of crime, giving an account of the best known or most horrid crimes that he or she had committed. After that, the criminal’s capture was described, putting special emphasis on his or her imprisonment and good behaviour while in prison. Finally, there was an exposition of the main highlights during the trial—speeches included—, the court’s sentence and execution,

confession and a plea for God's mercy. At the end, as previously, there was normally a homily whose intention was moralising.

Aside from initial and final warnings to the readers with the aim of preventing future criminals, the *Accounts* also included a sermon with a strong moralising effect. The sermon, which was placed in the *Session Papers* towards the end of the document, was moved to the beginning in the *Ordinary's Accounts*, thus giving weight to the Ordinary. This chaplain, who had probably been the author of the *Session Papers*, too, now placed himself at the opening of the pamphlet drawing attention to his work as editor.

The following example serves to illustrate the description of the *Accounts* as well as to point out the difference between the *Session Papers* and the *Ordinary's Accounts*. However, as this extract highlights, there is an emphasis on the Ordinary's role right from the start: "THE ORDINARY of NEWGATE his ACCOUNT, Of the Behaviour, Confession, and dying Words of the Malefactors who were Executed at Tyburn, on Wednesday the 11th of this Instant, September, 1728".¹³⁰ In the *Session Papers* and early *Accounts*, as in "THE CONFESSION AND EXECUTION Of the Eight Prisoners suffering at TYBURN on Wednesday the 30 August 1676" the Ordinary was not such a central figure. In the previous instance, the title was followed by "VIZ" and the name of the eight executed felons. Moreover, in the *Session Papers* the title page was composed by a very big heading, the names of the criminals, a sentence explaining

¹³⁰ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate's Account, September 1728 (OA17280911)*, <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA17280911>.

the contents, i. e. the “Crimes, Behaviours, Discourses in Prison and last Words”,¹³¹ together with a warning to the audience or readers and the publishing data. Contrastingly, in “THE ORDINARY of NEWGATE his ACCOUNT” of 1728, the criminals are not that prominent. Their names appear only after the constitution of “His Majesty’s Comission of the Peace” is fully explained. The sermon follows, spreading over the first two pages:

When under Sentence, they were instructed in the necessity of being holy, as God is holy, and blameless in all manner of Life and Conversation; for he who cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them who diligently seek him; and without Holiness no Man can see the Lord, Heb. 12, 14. I show’d’em, that it was not sufficient to believe that God made and preserv’d the World, or that Jesus the Son of God vail’d himself with our Nature, and therein suffer’d and died for our Sins; for the Devils believe and tremble, St. Jam. 2, 19.

The quotation corresponds to the beginning of the sermon, which concludes with the emphasis on the consequences that breaking the law has, i. e. capital punishment, and even “eternal Death, if Repentance, by the Grace of God, prevent it not”. This idea of salvation through repentance is borrowed by the novel, which expands it into having a life of joy and wealth.

Due to their success, the *Ordinary’s Accounts* began to include advertisements at the end. They could publicise anything, such as remedies, as in the account on the 14th March, 1722, where, after the felon’s poem, “A Water that perfectly cures the Itch, or any Itching Humour, in a few Days, without necessity of Purging, or the dangerous Use

¹³¹ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate’s Account, August 1676 (OA16760830)*, <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA16760830>.

of Mercury”¹³² is advertised. Publishers of these accounts took advantage of this attainment including publicity of new publications, amongst them, their own books with compilations of these *Accounts*. In the following example, the introductory title is followed by a number of criminals listed. The famous Jonathan Wild is among them. After the felons have been named, an attractive description of the forthcoming volumes is included:

With a great Number of diverting TRIALS of Whores, for robbing of those that pick’d them up; and several other remarkable ones for the Highway, Rapes, Murders, Burglaries, &c.

Both Volumes containing upwards of Five hundred Trials; among which are upwards of seventy Trials for Murder, near Sixty of Whores for privately stealing, upwards of one Hundred for the Highway, about Thirty for Rapes; the rest being for Frauds Forgery, Burglary, Sodomy Bigamy, Shop-lifting, Riots Misdemeanors, Receiving Stollen Goods, Single Felonies &c. &c. &c.

N. B. These Trials are not only very necessary for all Lawyers, Justices of the Peace, Clerks of the Indictments, and other Persons concern’d in Prosecutions, &c. but are very useful and entertaining to the Generality of Readers.¹³³

As it can be noted in the last sentence, the addressees of the volumes are both specialists of the legal system and common readers. The aim responds thus to both an entertaining and descriptive one, as it is commonplace with this type of writings. The following advertisement is a clear example of this double goal. It corresponds to the

¹³² *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, March 1722 (OA17220314), <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA17220314>.

¹³³ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, October 1737 (OA17371005), <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA17371005>.

second edition of *Moll Flanders* which appears in the *Ordinary's Accounts* from the 18th July, 1722:

ADVERTISEMENT.

On Monday next will be Publish'd, the Second Edition of

THE Fortunes and Misfortunes of the famous Moll Flanders, &c. who was born in Newgate, and during a Life of continu'd Variety for Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was twelve Years a Whore, five times a Wife, (whereof once to her own Brother) twelve Years a Thief, eight Years transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew Rich, lived Honest, and died a Penitent. Written from her own Memorandums. Printed and sold by W. Chetwood at the Cato's Head in Russel-street, Covent Garden; and T. Edlin at the Prince's Arms over-against Exeter Exchange in the Strand. Pr. 5s.¹³⁴

It is thus assumed that the readers of the *Ordinary's Account* would be interested in reading *Moll Flanders*, a book which provided readers with the double function of entertainment and moral teaching, with a criminal who they could sympathise because she became a model in the end. Again, fact and fiction intermingled: a fiction book which appears in a formal document as it was the *Ordinary's Accounts*, with the assertion of having been "written from her own Memorandums". In this case, the line between fact and fiction is so subtle that it is almost imperceptible.

Trial reports started being so widely read that their number of pages increased by the demand they experienced. The *Ordinary's Accounts* turned from six-page pamphlets during the second decade of the eighteenth century into more than fifty pages long by 1730s. As in the case of broadsides, in many instances an appendix was

¹³⁴ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate's Account, July 1922 (OA17220718)*, <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA17220718>.

added including letters and poems by the convict. The Ordinary always claimed that these poems and letters were written by the prisoners. Yet, most of the times, their subject matter together with the educated vocabulary and complicated verses, clearly indicate that the author was the Ordinary himself. The following example is illustrative of this. The religious prayer in verse form suits better the Ordinary's rather than of the felon's speech.

Before he died, he show'd me several Stanza's which he had Written, and seem'd to take a particular Delight in; the following I took of him the Morning of his Death.

O Heavenly Father, God most dear,
vouchsafe a tender Eye,
On Me a wretch, who prostrate here
Beneath thy Footstool lye.
Distill thy tender Oil of Grace,
into a griev'd Breast,
And let the Drops of Love efface
My Wickedness confest.
My vexed Soul depressed low,
With careful clogs of Pain,
In humble sort most humbly sues
Thy pity to obtain.
The blessed God I've much displeas'd
By pleasuring my Mind;
Too long I have my God forgot,
Too much to Earth enclin'd.
But now I sigh, alas I sob,
And sadly do lament,
That ever my licencious Life,
So wickedly was spent.
Restore to Life my sinful Soul,

Lest with my Body it die,
So to thy Mercy shall my Tongue
Sing Praise eternally.¹³⁵

The poem, in the first person, had a striking effect on the reader. Yet, the begging of soul's salvation became such a commonplace that the poem cannot be but another of the many formulas in these documents.

Letters were also popular additions in the *Accounts*. The following instance of a prisoner's letter has a quite religious subject matter, as in the above poem. It is an indication likewise that this letter was most probably written by the Ordinary.

Honoured Father and Mother,

THE uneasiness I give you, is more Terror to me then the thoughts of Death, but pray make your selves as easy as you can, for I hope I am going to a better Place, for God is my Refuge and my Strength, and my helper in time of Tribulation, and pray take Care of my Brother now whilst he is Young, and make him serve God, and keep him out of bad Company; if I had served God as I ought to have done, and kept out of bad Company, I had not come to this unhappy Misfortune, but I hope it is for the good of my Soul, it is good I hope what God has at present ordained for me, for there is Mercy in the foresight of Death, and in the time God has given me to prepare for it; a natural Death might have had less Terror, for in that I might have wanted many Advantages which are now granted me. My trust is in God, and I hope he won't reward me according to my Deserts; all that I can suffer here, must have an End, for this Life is short, so are all the Sufferings of it, but the next Life is Eternal. Pray give my Love to my Sister, and

¹³⁵ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate's Account, March 1722 (OA17220314),* <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA17220314>.

desire her not to neglect her Duty to God. I hope you are all well as I am at present, I thank God.

So no more at present from your unhappy and undutiful Son,

JAMES O'BRYAN.¹³⁶

Apart from the references to his family, the letter is very similar to a sermon which had been written in the first person. Here, the condemned emphasised that if he had been more faithful to God, he would have had a different ending. God's mercy on the imminent death is also highlighted. As it can be appreciated, there are certain patterns that are repeated in all these examples, which prove that they have many chances to have been written by the same hand. The next instance is not a religious document but the vocabulary that the offender uses seems too learned to belong to a servant girl, which again reinforces the theory that these letters and poems were just additions made by the ordinary in order to attract readers and warn them with the criminal's "own words":

SIR,

YOU can't but know that Sadness is the Rack of an Affliction not to be expressed, a Judgment more prejudicial than the wor'st Revenge from an Enemy's Hand, it is like a venomous Worm, which not only Consumes the Body, but eats into the very Soul: It is a Mouth that feeds on the very Marrow and Vitals, a perpetual Executioner, torturing the Soul, and exhausting her Spirits. So, Sir, if Conscience has touched you in the least; It must certainly leave Sadness on your Spirits; and as it behoves every one at their last Hour to die in Peace with God and the World. I freely forgive you and all the World.

¹³⁶ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, November 1730 (OA17301116), <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA17301116>.

Sarah Malcolm.

Feb. 26th, 1733.¹³⁷

The extract is loaded with Latinate words, such as “venomous”, formal expressions, as “Sadness is the Rack of an Affliction not to be expressed”, and metaphors, such as “It is a Mouth that feeds on the very Marrow and Vitals”, very unlikely to have been in the normal diction of Sarah Malcolm, a servant.

By the time of *Moll Flanders's* publication, pamphlets, broadside ballads, sermons, newspapers and session reports of trials had been widely purchased in London for decades. Any trial, including criminal cases, might have attracted coverage and publication because of the fame of its participants or the morbidity of its events. Actually, part of their success was based on the morbid fascination that the reading public felt for the forbidden and grotesque. People were attracted to gruesome events, especially if they had shocking consequences or if they included details of human suffering. Take, for instance the following example from the *Old Bailey's Ordinary's Account*,

A True ACCOUNT of the BEHAVIOUR, CONFESSION, AND Last Dying SPEECHES Of the Criminals that were Executed at TYBURN, On Monday the 23d of October, 1693.

Mary Compton, Condemned for murdering 4 Children put out to her to nurse, which she wilfully starv'd, that she might take more in their room. I visited her, when she first was committed to Newgate; I spent a considerable time with her, after the publick duties of the Sabbath were ended, she then being sick in her Bed. I counsell'd her to call to mind the evil course of her Life. She reply'd, that

¹³⁷ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate's Account*, March 1733 (OA17330305), <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA17330305>.

she had been a great Sinner, but would not confess any particular sin, and denied the starving of any Child. She came not to the Chappel, till convicted of murdering four Children. I endeavoured to make her sensible of that horrid and barbarous crime, but she still denied it, saying only, that she had been a great sinner, and in many ways had provokt God, and that he had justly laid her under his heavy wrath. She yet remained secure that she should neither be condemned, nor dye for the said murtherous practices. Being askt before her execution, in what condition her soul stood before God, she still was insensible of her crimes, proved evidently against her. She said, that her peace was made with God, which words she utter'd in a most trembling manner, to the amazement of those who heard her presume of Gods mercy upon so slight grounds.¹³⁸

The murder of children was seen as a horrendous action. In other cases, the description of how murder took place is given in full account. Moreover, executions and punishments were also detailed in order to satisfy the reader's morbid taste. In many aspects, these legal religious documents seemed motivated by an ironic or dramatic interest, more than a legal one. The insistent denial of Mary Compton's crimes could have had a literary intention, provoking a tension in the reader and suspense into the narration.

To sum up, the main difference between *The Old Bailey Session Papers* and the *Ordinary's Accounts* was the author's perspective. The *Old Bailey Session Papers* are usually more objective. They merely relate the trial; they do not necessarily impose a narrative structure that responds to the unfolding of the character of the criminal, the events of the crime, and the consequences of both. They do normally follow a more secular ideology, which is that of law. By the end of the seventeenth century, the criminal trial became a sophisticated cultural institution which developed so as to

¹³⁸ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online, Ordinary of Newgate's Account, October 1693 (OA16931023)*, <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?ref=OA16931023>.

provide structures for publicly, verbally examining events and characters of the recent past which were accused of being punishable. The participants were declared guilty or non-guilty and they were imposed a sanction. The facts occurred were then narrated in the trial, when they were judged as truthful or false, so there was no need of publishing them in a different context.

Pamphlets remained popular for over a century. Chandler has the opinion that their popularity decayed after 1730:

By 1730 the popularity of the separate criminal pamphlet was on the wane. Newspaper notices, collected chronicles of crime, and elaborate fictions like those of Defoe tended to supply its place with the vulgar, while to the middle and upper classes literary periodicals offered a more refined and salutary entertainment.

(1907: 164)

Chandler is right in his concern that longer narratives became competitors of the broadsides and shorter narratives, but the extensive number of criminals' accounts from 1730 onwards that I have found during this investigation seems to contradict Chandler's affirmation. After the rise of the English novel, they coexisted for over a century.

With the passing of time, earlier formats of information, such as ballads, pamphlets and broadsides, merged in the newspaper as a natural evolution. They inherited the informative function of previous forms together with some of the key aspects that had made them successful amongst their readers. Newspapers made use of what Davis calls the "median past tense", which was an intermediate past between the past tense of the narratives and the present tense, popularised in dramas, ballads, oral language and poetry. This type of narration gave the accounts a sense of

immediacy and a kind of continuity to the events. Like in the ballads' case, "the reader becomes, through the process of reading news, a participant in that external reality" (Davis, 1997: 74). Even if newspapers acquired a more formal aspect, the reader could still perceive them as more elaborate ballads or broadsides, since the style remained basically the same. This way, the reading audience was more deeply involved in the facts narrated than if the journalists had acquired a more detached position. News was closer to readers so there was inevitably a connection between readers and facts narrated. Davis mentions how a merchant whose ships might have been attacked by pirates would have seen the news from a different perspective, as he was personally affected by the information (1997: 74). Readers and writers became part of the process of the spread of information, rather than newspapers accounting for news themselves.

This new format contained not only information but also advertisements, which had expanded from their first appearance in the *Ordinary's Accounts*. They consisted of more than one folded page, which made them considerably more expensive than ballads or broadsides and hence just affordable by the middle and upper classes. Price increased also as a result of the Stamp Act passed in 1712. Newspapers were imposed a high taxation with the intention of making them disappear because they were becoming a political weapon. As a consequence, newspapers could only be afforded by the higher classes, which made them cover the range of news that would be of interest to those individuals. Subject matters such as the arrival or disappearance of ships—an issue of extreme relevance for merchants, as mentioned above—, the progression of any war in the world, news concerning the Royalty, foreign alliances and other political issues are persistent in the early newspapers.

On the contrary, minor local news, morbid, bloody or comic accounts were relegated to pamphlets or broadsides, which continued to be rich in contents and readers. They were left aside from newspapers columns as they were understood to be lower subjects of the interest of lower people. They remained independent publications whose readers found gruesome bloody narratives thrilling and entertaining. Yet this separation of topics in newspapers and other publications does not mean that criminal accounts were not covered in newspapers. Crimes were normally discussed when the case was well known or was a fairly unusual offence. As pointed out above, newspapers coexisted with broadsides, pamphlets and the *Ordinary's Accounts* for over a hundred years until, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, public executions came into question for their anti-humanitarian nature.

When public executions were finally abolished in 1868 all the literature that had been generated around them disappeared, too. Those documents which had narrated the prisoners' last hours at the gallows were disregarded for the report of cruelty that they embodied. Trial reports slowed down their publication as executions occurred on a fewer basis and were restricted to the prisons. The interest of the reading public in prisoners whom they could no longer see in procession died out. Criminal literature stopped gathering the interest of readers. Trial reports became more purely legal. In the 1780s they still opened with a sermon, although the figure of the *Ordinary* was gradually replaced by the attorney. Instead of providing biographical accounts of the felons they described how the trial had taken place, quoting the witnesses' testimonies. The criminals' behaviour or speech was no longer important and the emphasis on the moment of execution was completely removed. The verdict

came at the end of the accounts. The accused could be found guilty or non-guilty, and the sentence, in the case of guilty, was normally death or whipping whenever it was specified. Criminal reports became either tedious and too long or excessively short to be of the interest of the general public, their usage being restricted to legal matters. The sermon disappeared gradually. By the end of the eighteenth century the emphasis was purely in the trial, with the shift of emphasis from criminals or the Ordinary to witnesses and the attorneys.

On the other hand, broadsides with criminals' lives were still published until the 1870s. The National Library of Scotland possesses many exempla of later ones, but they are mostly lyrical ballads. This way, broadsides ended their days the same ways they started, by providing their readers with poetic compositions.¹³⁹ The final disappearance of the broadside coincides with the rise of tabloids, their direct inheritors. The News of the World, for instance, dates back to 1848, coinciding with the decline of criminal accounts on broadsides and pamphlets. Tabloids used contents that had proven successful for the previous proto-journalistic writings. They published the same gruesome and bloody type of news that had satisfied the morbid taste of previous readers. In a way, the spirit of ballads, broadsides—or broadsheets—and the Ordinary's *Accounts* is still present in the current society in a type of press that even though it is disregarded as cheap journalism it is still extensively read.

¹³⁹ Well-known ballads such as "Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond" are found in the collection comprising broadsides from the 1880s or 1890s.

2. FROM THE GALLOWES TO THE STAGE. DRAMATIC WORKS

Due to the association between the scaffold and the stage, criminal cases were first adapted into drama works before they were fictionalised in narrative. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, when the works by Shakespeare and Marlowe populated the stage, the domestic tragedy or murder-play made its irruption in the theatrical scene with the innovative offer of a more realistic type of drama. It set the murder in the household environment, where a crime, normally a passionate one was committed. This type of tragedy relied in common characters rather than noble or royal heroes and villains, so it soon became popular amongst the audience. The anonymous but Shakespeare-attributed *Arden of Faversham* (1592)¹⁴⁰ is the earliest example of this subgenre which in spite of being popular did not last long. *Arden of Faversham* is a key work in the present dissertation as it proves the relevance of ballads for the development of new genres in Britain. It exemplifies that even if most of the ballads written in the sixteenth century have not survived up to the present day, some of the events they narrated have reached the modern reader thanks to literary works.

Yet, domestic tragedies coexisted with more comic varieties of the lives of criminals. After the analysis of *Arden*, an insight will be offered on Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton's *The Roaring Girl, Or Moll-Cutpurse* (1611). Moll Cutpurse was a sympathetic character for the audience at the time, and the treatment she had in the many pamphlets and broadsides that told her life was humorous. *The Roaring Girl*

¹⁴⁰ The given date is that of the play's entrance in the Stationers' Register, since the date of composition is unknown. It could have been written in the 1580s taking into consideration that Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* is from 1577 and that the play is mostly based on it. If, as some scholars, such as M. L. Wine, defend, that the play is based in the second edition of the *Chronicles*, then this date could be narrowed to the last years of the 1580s up to 1591-2 (Wine, 1973: xl-xli).

offers a different perspective to the treatment of a criminal in a drama work, a different approach to which Defoe's *Moll Flanders* is likely indebted. Moll Cutpurse's fame led to the writing of several works on her deeds, including extended narratives that will be discussed in the next chapter. But her life, as far as we can tell by the texts that have arrived to our present day, was first interpreted by playwrights. This reinforces the idea that it was easier to fictionalise criminals' accounts on the stage rather than in prose.

The two plays are very different in nature, one of them being a tragedy, the other a comedy. Yet they are equally relevant for the theory of the criminal novel here exposed, since they represent key elements in the development of real criminals into literary characters. Regarding the female offenders, they also impersonate two opposed type of women. Literature has represented Alice Arden as the Machiavellian murderer whereas Moll Cutpurse embodies the transvestite, bawd and pickpocket figures. The crimes and the way their stories are told are radically different. They also engage with the audience in a different way. On the one hand, Alice Arden is an unsympathetic character, a criminal that transgresses her role of wife and woman. On the other hand, Moll, although she also infringes the codes that are expected of her feminine role, is characterised without proper malice. She is presented as unique, different to the rest of the women. Moreover, it is implied that her turning into crime is nothing but her response to her nature and circumstances, in order to fit in a society in which the only possible position for an independent manly woman was the underworld. The insight into both plays, the analysis of their female characters and the comparison with documents which can give evidence of the real facts and people

will be another step towards the understanding of how the criminal novel starts its fabrication.

2.1. THE TRAGEDY OF MASTER ARDEN OF FAVERSHAM

The Lamentable and True Tragedy of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent (1592) represents a notorious crime which circulated word of mouth for many years. Its resonance comes not only from the gruesome murder of one of Faversham's best known characters, but mostly from the supernatural imprint that it left in the village and made this piece of news expand. The story tells that the place where Thomas Arden's body was abandoned was marked for over two years by a lack of grass that marked his silhouette. As Raphael Holinshed accounts:

This one thing seemeth verie strange and notable, touching maister Arden, that in the place where he was laid, being dead, all the proportion of his bodie might be seene in two yeares after and more, so plaine as could be, for the grasse did not grow where his bodie had touched: but betweene his legs, betweene his armes, and about the hollownesse of his necke, and round about his bodie, and where his legs, armes, head, or anie other part of his bodie had touched, no grasse grewed at all of all that time. So that manie strangers came in that meane time, beside the townesmen, to see the print of his bodie there on the ground in that field. (Holinshed, 1973: 159)¹⁴¹

This extraordinary fact made curious people from the county of Kent and beyond to travel to Faversham in order to see this "miracle", taking the details of the murder back to their original hometowns.

¹⁴¹ R. Holinshed, et al. *The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*. Second edition. 1587. The pages concerning Arden's murder have been reprinted in M. L. Wine's *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham* for the Revels Plays collection, pp. 148-59. The extracts from the *Chronicles* correspond to this reprinting, the page number indicated for quotations belonging to Wine's edition and not to the *Chronicles* itself.

It is quite probable that several ballads and/or pamphlets spread the news of the murder and the miraculous imprint. Nevertheless, most of these documents have disappeared. We have still some which can be contrasted to the play to see how a real crime develops into literature. *The Wardmote Book of Faversham* is the official account of how the events took place. It is contemporary to the murder. Also, details of the case can be found in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1577 first edition; 1587 second edition), John Stow's *Annals of England* (London, 1592; 1631), in Thomas Heywood's *Troia Britanica* (London, 1609, p. 162), and in John Taylor's *The Unnnaturall Father* (*Works* [London, 1630], p. 140), where he states that the crime was still very present for the English people. Finally, there is also a later ballad that retells the crime from Alice Arden's perspective, *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of Faversham* (1633)¹⁴². That year the third quarto of the play was published, too.

The texts that are going to be taken into account for this analysis are three. First, *The Wardmote Book of Faversham*, because it is the immediate record of the murder, and it is also the most objective one. The main text is, however, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, as it seems that the playwright or playwrights¹⁴³ stick to the facts as they are told in

¹⁴² Extracts of this ballad are likewise taken from Wine's edition of *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham*, reprinted in the Appendix IV, pp. 164-170. It has been transcribed from the unique copy in the Roxburghe Collection (vol. III, p. 156) in the British Museum. As Wine writes, "the ballad was part of a collection entered in the Stationers' Register on 8 July 1633; it was printed separately that year as a broadside, in black letter, for Cuthbert Wright" (1973: 164). In Wine's reprint there is an indication of a woodcut, but it does not appear there. He explains that "the same woodcut used as the frontispiece to the 1633 third quarto of *Arden of Faversham* also heads the ballad" (1973: 164).

¹⁴³ There are critics who believe that the authorship of *Arden of Faversham* corresponds to more than one hand, due to repetitions and lack of coherence in the various scenes. See Wine, 1973, pp. lxxxi-xcii.

them. Likewise, the ballad, in the description of the various murder attempts, follows both Holinshed's *Chronicles* and the tragedy. The ballad, despite being a later one, is going to be considered due to its lyrical form, as well as because of its point of view, that is the one of the felon who narrates the facts in the first person.

Thomas Arden's murder was a well-known, as it can be accounted for by the many references in the above texts but mostly because of the treatment given to the same in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, which put together all the relevant episodes in the history of the British Isles. Although it was a private matter, Holinshed decided to dedicate some pages to the domestic crime because of its resonance in different parts of the realm. He justifies the inclusion of Arden's murder in his *Chronicles* in the following way:¹⁴⁴

The which murther for the horribleness thereof, although otherwise it may seeme to be but a priuate matter, and therefore as it were impertinent to this historie, I haue thought good to set it foorth somewhat at large, hauing the instructions deliuered to me by them, that haue vsed some diligence to gather the true vnderstanding of the circumstances. (1587: 148)

Private issues came thus to be public ones by the interest they awoke in the audience. In a similar way, personal stories became part of a literary genre that up to that time it was only concerned with matters that had little impact in the everyday life reality.

If Arden's murder was committed in 1551 and Holinshed wrote the account down close to 1577, the story is believed to have circulated in the streets for those twenty-six years. Although the case could have been made known word of mouth, the

¹⁴⁴ The crime was a well-known one not only for its gruesomeness and supernatural elements, but also because the people involved were related to the nobility and had been involved in a scandal of favouritism regarding the abbey lands after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538.

likeliest possibility is that the murder details were told in ballads and pamphlets. Holinshed might have compiled his data from them and then, the playwright could have used Holinshed's *Chronicles* together with other written and oral literature available at the time, as there are details that do not appear in any of the written accounts and that could either respond to the playwright's imagination or to oral stories. Wine suggests that some aspects in the play might have been taken not from the *Chronicle* itself but from the glosses in the margins of the 1587 second edition (1973: xl-xli). Some other aspects in which the play departs from the source material are marked by the fact that *Arden of Faversham* is a literary work, so some liberties have been taken.

The story is as follows. On the 15th of February, 1551, Thomas Arden, former Mayor of the village of Faversham in Kent, was murdered at his wife's behest. Alice Arden was having an adulterous relationship with Mosby, her stepfather's steward, and wanted to get rid of her husband. Mosby was attracted not only by Alice Arden's charms but also by her economic and social position. Her stepfather was Sir Edward North, "the Clerk of the Parliament and Treasurer of the Court of Augmentation created by the King to deal with the distribution of the confiscated Church property" (Holt 1970: 1)¹⁴⁵. As Holinshed suggests, Thomas Arden was so benefitted from his arranged marriage to Alice that he consented her infidelity:

although (as it was said) Arden perceiued right well their [Alice and Mosby's]

¹⁴⁵ Anita Holt has dedicated an exhaustive study on the crime of Faversham, explaining many facts that are essential to understand the play the way it was understood in the age, with concerns that escape the current reader, such as the antipathy that Arden generated amongst his neighbours. For further reading see Holt, *Arden of Faversham. A Study of the Play first Published in 1592*. Faversham: The Faversham Society, 1970.

mutuall familiaritie to be much greater than their honestie, yet bicause he would not offend hir and so loose the benefit which he hoped to gaine at some of hir freends hands in bearing with hir lewdnesse, which he might haue lost if he should haue fallen out with hir: he was contented to winke at hir filthie disorder, and both permitted, and also inuited Mosbie verie often to lodge in his house.

(1587: 148-9)

From Holinshed's point of view, the cuckoldry was irrelevant to Arden as long as he could maintain his social position thanks to Alice's favouring acquaintances. From the chronicler's words it can be inferred that Arden wanted to make his wife happy, even inviting Mosby "to lodge in his house". In several occasions, Holinshed reminds the reader of the greedy person that Arden was. When he tells about the land controversy that led many inhabitants of Faversham to hate him, Holinshed includes a gloss on the margin which reads: "Arden a couetous man and a preferrer of his priuat profit before common gaine" (1973: 157). Holinshed here emphasises how Arden detached himself from the community by working on his own profit instead of the communal one.

Thomas Arden was a quite an unpopular character in Faversham because of land disputes. First, he was given the terrains formerly belonging to the Abbey of Faversham when the suppression of monasteries and confiscation of Church properties took place under Henry VIII. The first beneficiaries of these lands were Sir Thomas Cheney and Sir Edward North. North was Alice Arden's stepfather, so when she got married to Thomas Arden, who was North's clerk, Arden received not only a dowry but also North's favours, being named Commissioner of the Customs of the Port of Faversham. He was also granted some of the lands belonging to the former abbey, which he little by little enlarged by dispossessing other owners from them. This is the dispute that is made reference in both Holinshed's *Chronicles* and in the play. Greene, a

character in the play, is representative of the many enemies that Arden made by land dispossession.

Nevertheless, there were more reasons to make Thomas Arden an unsympathetic character, though the playwright chooses not to mention them in order to equilibrate the balance between the characters. M. White argues that “the dramatist’s awareness of the degree of hostility towards the character that these public actions would arouse in the audience probably accounts for his decision to leave out other examples of Arden’s covetousness found in *Holinshed*” (1984: xii). The instances of Arden’s greed that White mentions can refer to the fair problematic. Thomas Arden was named Major of Faversham in 1547. He took advantage of his position in power to acquire more properties and privileges. An annual fair took place alternatively in the abbey lands and in town, each year the money going to the hosting venue. However, in 1549, when it was the town’s turn to lodge the fair, Arden decided to have it in the abbey—most of its lands belonged to him—, becoming a non-grata person for the neighbours of Faversham (See Holt 1970: 1-2, for more information of this topic).

Holinshed is biased towards the character when he mentions the fair controversy, once he has told how Arden is murdered:

The faire was woont to be kept partlie in the towne, and partlie in the abbeie; but Arden for his owne priuat lucre & couetous gaine had this present yeare procured it to be wholie kept within the abbeie ground which he had purchased; & so reaping all the gaines to himselfe, and bereauing the towne of that portion which was woont to come to the inhabitants, got manie a bitter cursse. (1973: 157)

The chronicler introduces this comment when Alice is asking for help to look for his husband. It is not much related to the facts that are accounted for in that moment of

the narration, but it seems that he thinks necessary to inform the reader about this controversy and why Arden has gained so many enemies. In any case, Holinshed, by adding this informative parenthesis and describing Arden as “couetous” highlights the greedy aspect that has driven Arden into that situation.

Towards the end Holinshed makes another allusion to his appropriation of fields that were taken from other neighbours thanks to his favoured position:

Which field he had (as some haue reported) most cruellie taken from a woman, that had beene a widow to one Cooke, and after married to one Richard Read a mariner, to the great hinderance of hir and hir husband the said Read: for they had long inioied it by a lease, which they had of it for manie yeares, not then expired: neuerthelesse, he got it from them. (1973: 159)

In a way, Holinshed blames Arden for his own murder, by creating hatred towards him. Consequently, the *Chronicles* do not grant Arden the role of innocent victim, nor does the play. The portrayal of the character in the later is less critical, though. For instance, the abbey lands controversy are not situated at the centre of the conflict, although they are a continuous reminder to the audience of the reasons why Arden has created enemies among the other neighbours. Mosby opens the debate with the following lines:

The Abbey lands whereof you are now possessed
Were offered me on some occasion
By Greene, one of Sir Anthony Ager’s men.
I pray you, sir, tell me, are not the lands yours?
Hath any other interest herein? (i, 293-297)¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ All the extracts quoted from *Arden of Faversham* belong to the Wine’s edition of the play.

Greene himself also makes allusion to this conflict when he appears on stage for the first time. He goes to Arden's house in order to talk to him about the lands. The character of Greene embodies some of Holinshed's thoughts, which were also the preconceived idea about this person at his life time:

Greene. Pardon me, Mistress Arden; I must speak,
For I am touched. Your husband doeth me wrong
To wring me from the little land I have.
My living is my life; only that
Resteth remainder of my portion.
Desire of wealth is endless in his mind,
And he is greedy-gaping still for gain;
Nor cares he though young gentlemen do beg,
so he may scrape and hoard up in his pouch. (i, 469-477)

Greene is describing a person with no pity towards those who beg, someone who can take the little the others have so that he can satisfy his greed.

Contrastingly, in the opening scene the playwright presents a husband who is suffering on the account of his wife's infidelity. When Thomas Arden and his friend Franklin appear on the stage, Franklin tries to cheer Arden up noticing his distressed state. He tells his friend about the granting of the abbey lands to Arden by the Duke of Sommerset:

Franklin. Arden, cheer up thy spirits and droop no more.
My gracious Lord the Duke of Sommerset
Hath freely given to thee and to thy heirs,
By letters patents from his majesty,
All the lands of the Abbey of Faversham.
Here are the deeds,
Sealed and subscribed with his name and the king's.

Read them, and leave this melancholy mood.

Arden. Franklin, thy love prolongs my weary life;
And, but for thee, how odious were this life,
That shows me nothing but torments my soul,
And those foul objects that offend mine eyes—
Which makes me wish that for this veil of heaven
The earth hung over my head and covered me.
Love letters passed 'twixt Mosby and my wife,
And they have privy meetings in the town. (i, 1-16)

This is the first impression that the playwright wants to imprint in the audience's mind. Arden is a man, who, despite becoming richer by the lands that his friend brings him news about, cares but for the loss of his wife's love. He might have gained the hatred of other villagers, but the emphasis is in the cuckoldry of Arden and the villainy of Alice and Mosby, who do not even hide their love affair.

Franklin is a key character in the play. He is an invention of the playwright that complies with certain narrative techniques that are very interesting in this tragedy. First of all, Franklin acts as a commentator, inserting in the play the author's opinion. He adds an outsider's perspective to the historical accounts. He is the biggest variation to Holinshed's *Chronicles* or any of the other factual documents; he introduces a different perspective to the events. In the last of his glosses, Holinshed blames Arden to have sought his own ill-fated end: "God heareth the teares of the oppressed and taketh vengeance: note an example in Arden" (1973: 159). He implies that Arden's murder was God's justice because his greed had led to many families' misfortune. Thus, Franklin's second function is that of being Thomas Arden's only friend, in order to highlight some positive aspects of the character. As Arden says to Franklin, "thy love prolongs my weary life; / And, but for thee, how odious were this life" (i, 9-10). Franklin

is the only character who shows sympathy for Arden. He acts as a balance for a personage that despite being the victim does not gather empathetic feelings.

Finally, Franklin embodies as well the editorial voice that is so present in proto-journalistic writings. He is the observer and commentator, sometimes impartial, some other times on the side of his friend Arden, pitying him as a victim of cuckoldry, treason and murder. Moreover, Franklin is the first character on the stage, presenting the case with its protagonists. He explains how the crime has been committed by pointing out at the clues that incriminate the murderers. In Holinshed's account, the mayor is the person who discovers the body of Arden and "they"—since it is not specified who in particular, but it is assumed to be the neighbours—"found the rushes sticking in his slippers, and marking further, espied certeine footsteps, by reason of the snow, betwixt the place where he laie, and the garden doore" (1973: 157). In the play, this important role is given to Franklin, who has led the audience through the whole case, from the beginning to its end. Franklin concludes the play with his epilogue, a speech in which he gives moral advice to the audience. He reinforces thus his role as the narrator, reminding the audience that crime always pays:

So shall the growth of such enormous crimes,
By their dread fate be check'd in future times.
Of Avarice, Mosby a dread instance prove,
And poor Alicia of unlawful Love. (Epilogue, 63)

These last lines are much indebted to broadside ballads and legal literature, such as the *Ordinary's Accounts* and the *Sessions' Papers*. It sums up the two sins that the criminals committed: avarice and unlawful love, which leads them to a greater transgression as it is murder. All in all, Franklin adds a narrative voice to the events in a probably intended

resemblance to the *Session Papers* and the *Accounts*.

In the play, as in the *Ordinary's Accounts*, there is a list of criminals with diverse punishment applied to them. Apart from Alice and Mosby, who are designers of the plan to murder Arden, there are many other people involved. They could be divided into two groups, the dwellers of Faversham and the professional criminals who kill in exchange of money. But also, they can be subdivided into murderers and helpers, as not all of them are involved to the same degree. The male criminals who live in Faversham are a painter called Clarke, Greene and Michael. The painter, as Holinshed describes him, "had skill of poisons, as was reported" (1973: 149). Alice resorts to poisoning as a first attempt to kill her husband. The only interest for the painter to help Alice and Mosby is because he has been promised Mosby's sister in marriage if he accomplishes his macabre mission. Greene is very happy to help Alice with her plan as killing Arden fulfills his own personal revenge. Michael, Arden's servant, is in love with Mosby's sister, too. Holinshed writes that "the cause that this Michael conspired with the rest against his maister, was: for that it was determined, that he should marrie a kinswoman of Mosbies" (1973: 151). However, in the *Chronicles* nothing is said about the painter's woo.

This sister of Mosby's, who does not receive a name in Holinshed but is just referred as "a kinswoman of Mosbies" (1973: 151) and "his sister" (1973: 158), is called Cyslye Pounders in *The Wardmote Book of Faversham*.¹⁴⁷ In the play, she is blended with the other female character involved in the crime, one of Alice's maids, called

¹⁴⁷ In *The Wardmote Book of Faversham* names appear otherwise written. For instance, Arden is called "Ardern" while Shakebag is "Loose Bag". There is likewise more information, providing name and surname for Michael, Mighell Saunderson and a name for Greene, which is John.

Elsabeth Stafforde (1973: 161), in *The Wardmote Book* and lacking a name in Holinshed. The reader of the *Chronicles* is not given information concerning their involvement in the crime—nor additional information is offered in *The Wardmote Book*—, only that they are executed. Holinshed informs that the maid “pitifullie bewailing hir case, and cried out on hir mistres that had brought hir to this end, for the which she would neuer had forgiue hir” (1973: 158). The playwright blends these two women with minor roles in the murder in the character of Mosby’s sister, Susan, who becomes Alice’s maid, too. She is the excuse that Mosby has for visiting Arden’s house: “And, Arden, though I now frequent thy house, /’Tis for my sister’s sake, her waiting-maid (l. 333-34)”. Mosby argues thus that he has no interest in Alice, since the only reason for him to be around Arden’s house is Susan. Susan plays a very small role, though. She complies with the female helper role, but she barely has interventions.

The professional criminals are Black Will, a soldier who “committed manie robberies and heinous murthers in such as trauelled betwixt Bullongne and France” (Holinshed, 1973: 150) and George Shakebag, “his companion” (1973: 153). Bradshaw describes Black Will in the following terms:

For such a slave, so vile a rogue as he,
Lives not again upon the earth.
Black Will is his name. I tell you, Master Greene,
At Boulogne he and I were fellow soldiers,
Where he played such pranks
As all the camp feared him for his villainy.
I warrant you he bears so bad a mind
That for a crown he’ll murder any man. (ii, 3-11)

Black Will is a real criminal, acquainted with the underworld. He is a mercenary who

kills for money. He says to Greene that he would “. . . have thy own / father slain that thou may'st inherit his land, [they]'ll kill / him” (i. 88-90), to which Shakebag agrees “Ay, thy mother, thy sister, thy brother, or all thy kin.” (i. 91-92). Shakebag, who has no protagonism in the *Chronicles* nor in the *Wardmote Book*, is also portrayed as a proper criminal in the play. When he is trying to hide after Arden's murder, he kills a widow who refuses to lodge him: “as she followed me, I spurned her down the stairs, / And broke her neck, and cut her tapster's throat; / And now I am going to fling them in the Thames. (xv, 8-10).” Both Black Will and Shakebag belong to the type of criminals that do not show any scruples, real mercenaries of the many that populated the highways and the London underground.

But there is also another executed person that, according to Holinshed, is innocent. He is an inhabitant of Faversham called Bradshaw, who is involved in the murder by introducing Blackwill to Greene, as he was an old acquaintance of his from the army. Holinshed does not seem to agree with the verdict for this man. He devotes several lines to him, whereas for the other accused there is but the naming of the punishment:

mistres Arden accused Bradshaw, vpon occasion of the letter sent by Greene from Grauesend, (as before ye haue heard) which words had none other meaning, but onelie by Bradshaws describing of blacke Wils qualities; Greene iudged him a meete instrument for the execution of their pretended murder. Whereto notwithstanding (as Greene confessed at his death certaine years after) this Bradshaw was neuer made priuie; howbeit, he was vpon this accusation of mistres Arden, immediatlie sent for to the sessions, and indicted, and declaration made against him, as a procurer of blacke Will to kill maister Arden, which proceeded wholie by misvnderstanding of the words conteined in the letter which he brought from Greene. (1973: 158)

Holinshed believes his involvement in the murder to be a misunderstanding and he defends his innocence based on his accidental engagement in the plot, only necessary to contact Black Will. In the play, Bradshaw makes a point in stating that he was related to Black Will in the past, but no more in the present time: "O Will, times are changed. No fellows now, / Though we were once together in the field; / Yet thy friend to do thee any good I can" (i. 15-17). Therefore, the playwright believes Holinshed's defence of Bradshaw to be true and portrays him as an innocent victim.

Of all the characters, the one who deserves a comprehensive analysis is Alice Arden. She is the female criminal that is the interest of this thesis, and, furthermore, she is differently portrayed in the several documents. Hence, she provides a very interesting illustration of how a real person can turn into a character and how her role varies depending on the use that wants to be made of her.

In the ballad *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of Faversham* (1633), Alice Arden complies with the repentant role of those who are about to be executed. She takes full blame of her husband's murder, cursing herself for all the harm that she has caused:

Ay me, vile wretch, that euer I was borne,
Making my selfe vnto the world a scorne:
And to my friends and kindred all a shame,
Blotting their blood by my vnhappy name. (l. 1-4)

This later ballad, published the same year that the Third Quarto of the play was issued, changes the audience's perspective of Alice Arden. By writing in the first person about herself she is able to make the readership sympathise with her cause, even if she has been the main executer of the crime. Her words of loathe to her husband, for instance,

give her some credit that she was a woman in love:

Vnto a Gentleman of wealth and fame,
(One Master *Arden*, he was call'd by name)
I wedded was with ioy and great content,
Liuing at *Feuersham* in famous *Kent*. (l. 5-8)

There are other examples through the ballad in which she expresses her affection for Thomas Arden. Take, for instance, when she exclaims “my sweet *Arden*” (l. 70). In *Arden of Faversham*, however, she says she despises Arden and only loves Mosby.

But, if I live, that block shall be removed;
And Mosby, thou that comes to me by stealth,
Shalt neither fear the biting speech of men
Nor Arden's looks. As surely shall he die
As I abhor him and love only thee. (137-141)

In the play Alice devises the plan to kill her husband so that she and Mosby can be together. Contrastingly, in the ballad, she claims that Mosby, with his “sugred tongue”, ensnared and made her commit the horrible crime:

In loue we liu'd, and great tranquility,
Vntill I came in *Mosbies* company,
Whose sugred tongue, good shape, and louely looke,
Soone won my heart, and *Ardens* loue forsooke. (l. 9-12)

In the tragedy, too, she blames Mosby once for his ensnaring tongue. She accuses him of having performed witchcraft on her to gain her love. However, the following speech takes place when she is feeling despised by Mosby, so she is angered.

Have I for this given thee so many favours,

Incurred my husband's hate, and—out alas!—
 Made shipwreck of mine honour for thy sake?
 And dost thou say, 'Henceforward know me not'?
 Remember, when I locked thee in my closet,
 What were thy words and mine? Did we not both
 Decree to murder Arden in the night?
 The heavens can witness, and the world can tell,
 Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,
 'Fore I was tangled with thy 'ticing speech,
 Arden to me was dearer than my soul—
 And shall be still. Base peasant, get thee gone,
 And boast not of thy conquest over me,
 Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery.
 For what hast thou to countenance my love,
 Being descended of a noble house,
 And matched already with a gentleman
 Whose servant thou may'st be? And so farewell. (l. 187-204)

From these verses, it can be inferred that Alice feels spiteful at Mosby's rejection, what originates such an enraged speech. But she reveals that it was her who locked Mosby in her closet and emphasises that the agreement was mutual: "What were thy words and mine? Did we not both /Decree to murder Arden in the night?" (l. 192-193). Therefore, Alice is contradicting herself when she implies that Mosby convinced her to murder her husband.

Mosby, on the other hand, shows some decency when he insist in keeping the oath he has made to Arden of not being interested in his wife.

Mosby. It is unpossible, for I have sworn
 Never hereafter to solicit thee
 Or, whilst he lives, once more importune thee.
Alice. Though shalt not need; I will importune thee.
 What? Shall an oath make thee forsake my love?
 As if I have not sworn as much myself
 And given my hand unto him in the church!
 Tush, Mosby! Oaths are words, and words is wind,

And wind is mutable. Then, I conclude,
'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath.
Mosby. Well proved, Mistress Alice; yet, by your leave,
I'll keep mine unbroken whilst he lives. (l. 429-440)

Mosby seems to be a man who keeps his word, whether to Alice or to her husband. That gives him some credit, which contrasts with Alice's falsehood. Her fidelity clashes with Mosby's word-keeping when she makes allusion to her vows at Church and mocks Mosby for wanting to keep an oath. It is "childish", according to her.

The characters in the play, in the ballad and in *The Chronicles* differ slightly in their portrayal. However, it is mostly in Holinshed's account where Alice's malice is emphasised. She makes her the main responsible in her husband's killing. In the gloss to the following extract he writes "O importunate & bloudie minded strumpet!":

But yet Mosbie at the first would not agree to that cowardlie murthering of him, but in a furie floong awaie, and went vp the abbeie street toward the flower de lice, the house of the aforenamed Adam Foule, where he did often host. But before he came thither now at this time, a messenger ouertooke him, that was sent from mistres Arden, desiring him of all loues to come backe againe to helpe to accomplish the mater he knew of. Herevpon he returned to hir againe, and at this comming backe, she fell downe vpon hir knees to him, and besought him to go through with the matter, as if he loued hir he would be content to doo, sith as shee had diuerse times told him, he needed not to doubt for there was not anie that would care for his death, nor make anie great inquirie for them that should dispatch him. (1973: 154)

Whereas in *The Wardmote Book* the writer is objective and does not emit any judgement about the criminals, Holinshed puts the stress on Alice Arden as the major conspirator while leaving Mosby the role of the man who is convinced by the evil

temptress. It can be concluded that from Holinshed's point of view, the woman personifies temptation since this is the image that he projects of her. Alice Arden is seen as a direct descendant of Eve, who convinced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. The same way, Mosby cannot say no to her proposal of murdering Arden when she falls upon her knees and convinces him that everything will be alright. As in Adam and Eve's myth, both of them sin but she is the one who is criminalised. When Mosby is about to be executed, he exclaims: "Fie upon women! –this shall be my song" (xviii, 34). It is precisely this point of view of the woman as a temptress and originator of the crime that the playwright reflects, too. In the play, she is even called "serpent" in scene VIII, line 42.

But what for that I may not trust you, Alice?
You have supplanted Arden for my sake
And will extirpen me to plant another.
'Tis fearful sleeping in a serpent's bed (viii, 39-42)

Mosby is the one who compares her to a snake, but previously she has also been characterised in similar terms by her husband, who makes a parallelism between Alice's vices and Hydra's heads:

But she is rooted in her wickedness,
Perverse and stubborn, not to be reclaimed;
Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds,
As reprehension makes her vice to grow
As Hydra's head that plenisht by decay. (iv, 9-13)

In fact, Alice's vices multiply as the play progresses, revealing her rotten nature. The parallelism between Alice and the religious and classical depiction of evil helps to form in the audience the idea of this despicable woman.

Alice seems capable of anything to carry her plan out. She defames Arden's honour when she tells Greene that he abuses her and keeps the company of prostitutes:

Alice. Ah, Master Greene, be it spoken in secret here,
I never live good day with him alone.
Hard words, and blows to mend the match withal.
And, though I might content as good a man,
Yet doth he keep in every corner trulls. (i. 492-497)

The criminal proves to be a good liar, since she makes Greene pity her and make her the promise of improving her living condition: "But frolic woman! I shall be the man / Shall set you free from all this discontent" (i. 510-11). He takes the bait, as she has plotted, and she rejoices about her victory, telling Mosby "All this goes well. Mosby, I long for thee / To let thee know all that I have contrived." (i. 535-36). Thus, apart from being characterised as a temptress, Alice personifies the strong-willed woman, a sinner who does not respect God's or man's laws and who becomes a magnificent liar in order to obtain what she wants.

There are a couple of instances in which she is not sure about the plan, though. She enters scene VIII "holding a prayerbook", as indicated in stage directions. It is this scene where she backs down. She begs Mosby to forget about their plan. "Forget, I pray thee, what hath passed betwixt us, / For now I blush and tremble at the thoughts" (viii, 68-69), she exclaims. She also blames the magical power that she says Mosby exercises upon her: "I was bewitched. Woe worth the hapless hour / And all the causes that enchanted me!" (viii, 78-79). However, despite her regrets and remorse, they carry on with the plan because she is so in love with Mosby that he becomes her

religion, her God. The prayerbook that she was holding at the beginning of scene VIII is used as a symbol of this fervous love:

Look on me, Mosby or I'll kill myself;
Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look.
If thou cry war, there is no peace for me;
I will do penance for offending thee
And burn this prayerbook, where I here use
The holy word that had converted me.
See, Mosby, I will tear away the leaves,
And all the leaves and in this golden cover
Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell;
And thereon will I chiefly meditate
And hold no other sect but such devotion. (viii, 112-122)

Alice's promise is a complete blasphemy, as she intends to substitute God's word by Mosby's. However, it gives the reader the idea to what an extent she is madly in love with him to the point of renouncing her religion and thus condemning herself well before killing her husband.

In any case, the character of Alice Arden as depicted in *Arden of Faversham* is a very complex one. Her character contrasts with those of the two professional killers, Shakebag and Black Will, who never have a shred of remorse in their intentions. She shows weakness, she has doubts. She claims that she wouldn't kill Arden if she had a chance to be with Mosby:

Alice. Yet nothing could inforce me to the deed
But Mosby's love. Might I without control
Enjoy thee still, then Arden should not die;
But, seeing I cannot, therefore let him die. (273-276)

The passionate love she suffers forces her to kill; otherwise she would not have devised such a plan. Therefore, Alice might be a female villain, a perfect liar, a murderous temptress, but she is not the remorseless murderer. She is portrayed in a very realistic way. She is a woman who wants to get rid of her husband in order to marry her lover. She would do anything for love the same way that Shakebag and Black Will would do it for money. Even if she seems evil, the playwright creates the character as a woman in love who stops being rational and does not even pay attention to religion anymore. Her life is love-driven to the extent of making her lose her mind. She claims that “Had chaste Diana kissed him, she like me / Would grow lovesick and from her wat’ry bower / Fling down Endymion and snatch him up” (xiv, 149-151). So if Diana would have done it, how could she resist to her sole idea of being with Mosby for life.

All in all, Alice is a wonderfully portrayed offender. She is not a flat character in which only her evil thoughts and doings are emphasised. On the contrary, she has doubts and she wonders if to proceed with her plan, not because she might be caught, but because she is not such a determined murderer as she seems to be at the beginning. As the play evolves, the character of Alice Arden develops itself in order to represent the real criminal, with her motivations, fears and regrets. The play, as no other of the documents, depicts the very interesting figure of the first female criminal in English literature.

Despite the differences introduced in the play to turn the tragic event into a piece of literature, *Arden of Faversham* follows the basic structural and thematic pattern of criminal ballads and pamphlets, as it can be ascertained by the comparison with Alice Arden’s ballad. The critic H. H. Adams stated that the structure of a domestic tragedy follows a logical sequence of events: “sin, discovery, repentance, punishment,

and expectation of divine mercy” (1943: 7)—of those, sin, repentance and punishment for the crime committed are part of any ballad, as it has been illustrated in the previous chapter. Both *Arden of Faversham* and *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of Faversham* comply perfectly with Adam’s sequence. However, there is another aspect to consider previous to the offence or “sin”, as the critic calls it. Before the crime is committed the circumstances that lead to that sin or crime are normally presented. This background details are necessary to situate the audience in the criminal and victim’s antecedents, since these factors are the ones leading to the offence. As stated above, “unlawful love” and “avarice” are the two main reasons for the murder. Alice Arden wants to kill her husband in order to be a free woman and marry Mosby, whereas Mosby is after the money and social status that Arden’s lands may bestow him when marrying Alice. Once the problematic is presented, the main characters—and criminals—are introduced.

The sin is the murder itself, or the several murder attempts, which illustrate the disposition of the conspirers to kill Arden at any expense. When Arden is finally murdered, the mercenaries fly away while the villagers of Faversham try to continue with their lives in order to avoid suspicions. Alice pretends to be worried about her husband not being at home. The discovery takes place when killers are identified by incriminating blood stains that do not go away, making Alice desperate: “the more I strive, the more the blood appears!” (xiv, 257) and the footprints that have been marked in the snow. Franklin directly accuses Alice of having killed her husband:

I fear me he was murdered in this house
And carried to the fields, for from that place
Backwards and forwards may you see

The print of many feet within the snow.
And look about this chamber where we are,
And you shall find part of his guiltless blood;
For in his slipshoe did I find some rushes,
Which argueth he was murdered in this room. (xiv, 392-399).

Just as a detective, Franklin analyses the clues and concludes that Arden has been killed by his wife and accomplices in his house, where he finds the blood-stained knife and cloth.

As in ballads, Providence also seems to be part of domestic tragedies. God's intervention in the way of some miraculous event protects the victims or accuses the criminals. This was a resource widely used in morality plays, too.¹⁴⁸ In the case of *Arden of Faversham*, the unwashable blood stains indicate that the crime has been committed at his own house, incriminating his wife in the first place. Besides, there is a body that "the more [Alice] sound[s] his name, the more he bleeds" (xvi, 4). The blood that is impossible to wash and the bleeding corpse are elements that could be natural, as blood stains are difficult to remove and a person who, according to Holinshed, has been given "seuen or eight p[r]icks into the brest" (1973: 155) will bleed for some time. But, by the way the protagonists express these facts, they seem providential.

In the last scenes, the elements that Adams marks as repentance, punishment and expectation of divine mercy follow one another but in a different order as the one that he establishes. First, the various criminals repent: "Forgive me, Arden; I repent me now" (xvi, 7) exclaims Alice as soon as she sees her husband's body. Mosby's last words are "bear me hence, for I have lived too long" (xviii, 35). Then, they ask for divine

¹⁴⁸ For further information on the relationship between domestic tragedies and morality plays concerning Divine Providence, see Adams, pp. 18-38.

mercy. Alice, for example, begs: "Leave now to trouble me with worldly things, / And let me meditate upon my Saviour Christ, / Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed" (xviii, 9-11) whereas Susan cries: "seeing no hope on earth, in heaven is my hope" (xviii, 36). Finally, punishment is ordered by the mayor.

Leave to accuse each other now,
And listen to the sentence I shall give:
Bear Mosby and his sister to London straight,
Where they in Smithfield must be executed;
Bear Mistress Arden unto Canterbury,
Where her sentence is she must be burnt;
Michael and Bradshaw in Faversham must suffer death. (xviii, 26-32)

While Franklin comments on the type of punishment that each of them receives:

Thus have you seen the truth of Arden's death.
As for the ruffians, Shakebag and Black Will,
The one took sanctuary and, being sent for out,
Was murdered in Southwark as he passed
To Greenwich, where the Lord Protector lay.
Black Will was burnt in Flushing on a stage;
Greene was hangèd at Osbridge in Kent;
The painter feld, and how he died we know not. (Epilogue, 1-8)

He points out that the punishment that Shakebag obtains is not an earthy but a divine one. This has been already highlighted in some ballads, such as the Janet Fleming one, in which a life of sin leads her to develop an illness from which, after many sufferings, she dies. As in that ballad, Franklin here emphasises that the "Lord Protector" intervened to have Shakebag murdered and thus punished for trespassing the divine law.

Adams's structure can be observed in *The Complaint and Lamentation of*

Mistresse Arden of Faversham, too, although the first element that appears is repentance, as it is proper of a ballad:

Ay me, vile wretch, that euer I was borne,
Making my selfe vnto the world a scorne:
And to my friends and kindred all a shame,
Blotting their blood by my vnhappy name. (l. 1-4)

She regrets she was ever born, because she has caused so mischief as she is going to proceed to narrate. To those four verses, the presentation of the conflict follows:

Vnto a Gentleman of wealth and fame,
(One Master *Arden*, he was call'd by name)
I wedded was with ioy and great content,
Liuing at *Feuersham* in famous Kent.

In loue we liu'd, and great tranquillity,
Vntill I came in *Mosbies* company,
Whose sugred tongue, good shape, and louely looke,
Soone won my heart, and *Ardens* loue forsooke.

And liuing thus in foule adultery,
Bred in my husband cause of iealousie,
And lest the world our actions should bewray,
Wee did consent to take his life away. (l. 5-16)

As explained above, in this ballad, Alice takes whole responsibility for the death of her husband and appears in these lines as a sinner who repents. She acknowledges that it is her fault, after all, that she kept Mosby's company and thus her love for Arden diminished to the extent of plotting his death. After explaining her reasons, Alice moves on to the sin, narrating the several murder attempts, such as cooking the poisonous broth, which was the first one:

Into this Broth I then did put the same,
He lik't it not when to the boord it came,
Saying, There's something in it is not sound,
At which inrag'd, I flung it on the ground. (l. 21-24)

The ballad follows the same structure in the diverse attempts that the play exposes. Both seem to be derived from Holinshed's *Chronicles*, as the order is exactly the same.

After "sin", in Adams' sequence, "discovery" follows. In the ballad, God is who uncovers their sin: "For God our secret dealings soone did spy, / And brought to light our shamefull villany" (l. 167-68). Nothing is said of the mayor, who finds out the corpse. But it is understandable because a ballad needs to be shorter and therefore avoid unnecessary information. In the *Ordinary's Accounts*, for instance, the religious purpose was more relevant than the actual details of the cases. In this ballad, likewise, the mention to God and his omnipresence is preferred to the real facts.

The ballad proceeds with the description of the different punishments:

His wife at *Canterbury* she was burnt,
And all her flesh and bones to ashes turn'd.

Mosby and his faire Sister, they were brought
To *London* for the trespasse they had wrought,
In *Smithfield* on a gibbet they did die.
A iust reward for all their villanie,

Michael and *Bradshaw*, which a Goldsmith was,
That knew of letters which from them did passe,
At *Feuersham* were hanged both in chaines,
And well rewarded for their faithfull paines.

The painter fled none knowes how he did speed,

S[h]akebag in Southwarke he to death did bleed,
For as he thought to scape and run away,
He suddenly was murdered in a fray.

In *Kent* at *Osbridge*, *Greene* did suffer death.
Hang'd on a gibbet he did lose his breath:
Black-Will at *Flushing* on a stage did burne,
Thus each one came vnto his end by turne. (l. 171-188)

As it can be observed, punishment is given a special emphasis, dedicating many verses to explain how each of the offenders died. Finally, the last of the elements, “expectation of divine mercy”, closes the ballad when Alice enounces a prayer so that God intercedes for her and the rest of the executed, “Praying the Lord that he his grace will send / Vpon us all, and keepe vs from all ill. Amen say all, if’t be thy blessed will” (l. 190-192). Since salvation in this world is no longer possible she could only be saved in eternity.

Alice’s last words, with which the ballad also concludes, are reminiscent of last-words speeches, only that hers could not have been uttered on the scaffold before dying because the ballad was written almost a century after she was executed. Because of this, there is an interesting change of narrative perspective. The first person narrator shifts to a third person one on line 169.

And then by Justice we were straight condemn’d,
Each of vs came vnto a shamelesse end,
For God our secret dealings sooned did spy,
And brought to light our shamefull villainy.

Thus haue you heard of *Ardens* tragedy,
It rests to shew you how the rest did die:
His wife at *Canterbury* she was burnt,

And all her flesh and bones to ashes turn'd. (l. 165-172)

This change of narrator can respond to the impossibility of speaking about how the different criminals were executed when she died before some of the others. After the conclusion of the punishments in line 188 "Thus each one came vnto his end by turne", the first person narrator retakes the report. "And thus my story I conclude and end, / Praying the Lord that he his grace will send" (l. 189-190). She regains her first-person narrator voice in order to make the pray herself. Her words have thus a higher impact in the audience.

From the structural point of view, it can be affirmed that Adam's sequence, which was established for the domestic tragedy, is also present in the ballad. It may be thought that being a later ballad, *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of Faversham*, respects the play's narrative order. However, if any ballad is analysed in terms of structure, it can be concluded that it is the domestic tragedy which takes the structural pattern of ballads and not the other way around, since ballads were earlier and that sequence predated domestic tragedies. It can be thus ascertained that the elements which Adam's points out as essential in a domestic tragedy are derivative of the ballad structure. In Holinshed, however, despite being the most likely source for both the play and the ballad, these elements are mixed. He begins his account describing Arden and presenting the conflict. He then continues explaining the murder attempts. Yet, Michael's reasons to kill Arden are only introduced after Black Will is presented. Also, after Arden is killed he adds in a gloss: "Arden a couetous man and a preferrer of his priuat profit before common gaine" (1973: 159), which illustrates his explanation of the controversy over the fair. He inserts this parenthesis at the climax of

the narration, once Arden is killed. Above all, in Holinshed's account criminals do not repent and the moralising is ambiguous. He uses Arden's example to warn the readers about greed: "God heareth the teares of the oppressed and taketh vengeance: note an example in Arden" (1973: 159). He refers to Reede's land being expropriated from him and his wife, whose tears cursed Arden's fate.¹⁴⁹ This last reflection of why a victim is killed is nowhere in criminal literature. In ballads or pamphlets, whose aim was to act as deterrent for future criminals, there is no opinion as such, implying that the victim could have provoked the situation.¹⁵⁰

Thus, not only the structure but also the intention differs in Holinshed, the ballad and the play. Holinshed tells the accounts putting an emphasis on the greedy nature of Arden, which triggers the hatred of his neighbours. Therefore, his wife, that vile woman that he conceives,¹⁵¹ finds no difficulty in killing her husband with the help of some of them. It could be understood that both characters deserve their terrible endings because of their rotten nature. The play is similar to the ballad in this aspect, criminalising the woman, who is, after all the main executer of the action. But both the ballad and the play present her as a repentant woman, after all, as a humanised

¹⁴⁹ In the play, it is Reede and not his wife who meets Arden in the ferry to Shippey and curses him:

And ask of God, whate'er betide of me,
Vengeance on Arden or some misevent
To show the world what wrong the carl hath done.
This charge I'll leave with my distressful wife;
My children shall be taught such prayers as these.
And thus I go but leave my curse with thee. (XIII, 48-53)

¹⁵⁰ In the play, Reede appears before Arden is killed, which builds up the hatred that his neighbours felt for him and gives way to the curse that might have put Providence against him. Holinshed, by placing Reede's wife's lament in the final part of his narration, highlights the merciless person that Arden was.

¹⁵¹ It is important to note here that *The Wardmote Book* does not record that Alice stabbed her husband.

criminal who is not purely evil.

It can be concluded thus that the English domestic tragedy is a very early example of the use made of real facts described in literary as well as non-literary documents. Holinshed's *Chronicles* and the ballad *The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of Faversham* provide enough information to account for the relationship between writings about criminals. The following conclusions can be extracted from the former analysis. First, even if the play follows Holinshed's *Chronicles*, the domestic tragedy of *Arden of Faversham* is closer to the ballad in terms of structure, following the sequence of criminals' accounts in broadsides, pamphlets or legal writings. Hence it derives that by imitating such a fixed order in the narration of the lives and deeds of criminals, the playwright has intended a parallelism between street and legal literature and his work. Second, the moralising of the audience is both present in the play and the ballad, concluding with powerful reminders that crime always pays and that the offenders should repent before meeting God's judgment, which is the real one. Characters are punished for the flesh and soul sins. Mosby's deadly sin has been avarice whereas Alice's is lust. These spiritual offences have led them to murder, breaking thus the most important of the Commandments. All in all, in *Arden of Faversham*, the horrible crime committed in the domestic environment helped to create a moralising literature that will evolve during the seventeenth century to the next popular genre: the novel.

2.1. THE ROARING GIRL

Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton's *The Roaring Girl or Moll Cut-Purse, as it hath lately beene Acted on the Fortune-Stage by the Prince his Players* (1611) is another very interesting instance of how playwrights exploited the interest in crimes and criminals in order to make literature out of them. In this case, instead of a well-known criminal case, Dekker and Middleton make use of the fame of the cross-dressing pickpocket Mary Frith, alias Moll Cutpurse, to write a play based on her. *The Roaring Girl* is a comedy, dramatically different to *Arden of Faversham*, not just in the type of drama but also in the portrayal of the female character. Even in its title page it is strikingly different. It presents a cross-dressed woman smoking a pipe, probably the features that best characterises Moll. Rather than dealing with the topic of crime, it explores the human being made into a character in an attempt to share her life and ideas with the audience. Moll provides a very early sample of an androgynous character in literature and Middleton and Dekker use her persona to give crime a different perspective. Her crime is then breaking the rules of social behaviour, which was a punishable offence in seventeenth-century England. Moll dresses as a man, behaves as a man and, speaks as a man and, most dangerously, thinks as a man, allowing herself the freedom of speaking her mind.

Dekker and Middleton justify their choice of such a low topic because they argue that tragedies are no longer fashionable:

Only we entreat you think our scene
Cannot speak high, the subject being but mean.
A roaring girl, whose notes till now never were,
Shall fill with laughter our vast theatre:
That's all which I dare promise—tragic passion,

And such grave stuff, is this day out of fashion. (Prologue, 7-12)

The playwrights state their intention from the start; they want to entertain their audience by writing about a current person “whose notes till now never were”. They claim their originality by emphasising that nobody has written about her yet. There is no moralising intention or teaching principle in the way they present their work in the prologue. Yet through the play some innovative ideas are presented, especially related to the status and freedom of women. This play is therefore relevant for the present dissertation since it introduces a new type of female offence in a very feminist way.¹⁵² This opinion is not shared by some critics, though. Jane Baston, for instance, is very critical with the interpretation that Dekker and Middleton make of Mary Frith. In her opinion, they “rehabilitate” her to make her fit certain standards:

As the title page presages, the play *The Roaring Girl* recuperates Moll's defiance. She is reinvented to become a mere translator rather than an interpreter; a singer harmonizing inequalities rather than a roarer protesting them; and finally a riddling rhymster rather than an articulate spokeswoman. By the end of the play Moll has been recuperated into the network of social relations. She can now be dismissed as a "good wench" (V.ii.225)-a description that subsumes Moll into

¹⁵² Moll Cutpurse has served as an influence for future literary characters, whether in the underworld, as Moll Flanders, or in later feminist literature. Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* can be said to derive from this very outspoken woman who defies the social conventions by moving between the man and woman self. Also, Ellen Galford reinterprets Moll as a lesbian in her novel *Moll Cutpurse. Her True Histoy*. (Edinburgh: Firebrand books, 1985). The narrator is the invented lover of Moll, who writes the novel because she “feel[s] the time has come to yield up that secret. Or all that will be left to keep alive Moll's memory will be the fabrications of *men*” (1985: 12).

existing class and gender hierarchies and so ensures her rehabilitation into the existing patriarchy. (1997: 332)¹⁵³

However, the interpretation I offer of the woman made into a character is that of a criminal, not rehabilitated, but still defying and roguish. The reading offered by the playwrights will be complemented by the later criminal biography, *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith. Commonly Called Mal Cutpurse* (1662).¹⁵⁴

Taking Moll's life as the central plot line, the playwrights devise a parallel story in which she plays her role as a pimp. Sebastian, Sir Alexander's son, is in love with Mary Fitzallard. They are engaged until Sir Alexander's changes his mind, thinking her unsuitable for his son. He thinks he could find a wealthier woman for Sebastian. But Sebastian, who is truly in love with Mary, decides to deceive his father, making him believe that he loves Moll Cutpurse. Parallel, there is a third plot line with the characters that are in charge of several businesses, such as the sempster's shop, the feather's shop or the apothecary's shop. They, set in their shops, fulfil the role of adding the city atmosphere to the play.

Moll Cutpurse, or Mary Frith, was born around 1550. From an early age she started dressing herself in man's clothes, for which she was well-known all around London. In her case, it was not a disguise when pickpocketing, but she made of her clothes her sign of identity. In the play, Sebastian talks of her in the following terms:

. . . There's a wench
Called Moll, mad Moll, or merry Moll, a creature

¹⁵³ Jane Baston, "Rehabilitating Moll's Subversion in The Roaring Girl." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 37, No. 2, Tudor and Stuart Drama (Spring, 1997), pp. 317-335.

¹⁵⁴ The full title is *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith. Commonly Called Mal Cutpurse. Exactly Collected and now Published for the Delight and Recreation of all Merry disposed Persons*. London, Printed for W. Gilbertson and the Bible in Giltspur-Street without Newgate, 1662.

So strange in quality, a whole city takes
Note of her name and person. (i, 94-97)

As he says, she was famous in the city of London for her peculiarities. While Sebastian praises her quality and notoriety, Mistress Gallipot defines her more neutrally: "Some will not stick to say she's a man, and / some both man and woman" (iii, 189-190). Sir Alexander, on the contrary, depicts her in pejorative terms:

A creature, saith he, nature hath brought forth
To mock the sex of woman. It is a thing
One knows not how to name, her birth began
Ere she was made. 'Tis woman more than man,
Man more than woman, and (which none can hap)
The sun gives her two shadows to one shape;
Nay more, let this strange thing walk, stand, or sit,
No blazing star draws more eyes after it. (ii, 127-134)

Sir Alexander criticises her duality, her androgynous nature, making evident that such a woman is strange and because of it, she draws attention. Sir Davy calls her "a monster! 'Tis some monster!", to what Sir Alexander answers "she's a varlet" (ii, 135). Clearly, a woman who cross-dresses and has the behaviour of a man can be nothing else but a freak of nature.

She is also the object of mockery. Trapdoor, who is at her service by Sir Alexander's request of spying her, calls her directly "my brave captain male and female?" (vii, 170). However, the feeling that Dekker and Middleton want to transmit in their play is that of admiration for this unusual woman:

GOSHAWK 'Tis the maddest, fantasticaest girl: —I never knew so
much flesh and so much nimbleness put together!
LAXTON She slips from one company to another like a fat eel between
a Dutchman's fingers: — [*aside*] I'll watch my time for her.

Laxton is in fact attracted to her and tries to gain her favours offering her money in exchange.

The play echoes Moll's fame. Sir Alexander, when he hires Trapdoor to spy on her, makes the following remark:

SIR ALEXANDER Didst never, as thou walked about his town,

Hear of a wench called Moll, mad merry Moll?

TRAPDOOR Moll Cutpurse, sir? (ii, 199-201)

Despite of her "Cutpurse" nickname, what makes her famous is her gender ambiguity. In the third scene, when she enters the scene, she is described wearing "a frieze jerkin,¹⁵⁵ and a black safeguard" (2001: 243),¹⁵⁶ the first one belonging to the male wardrobe while the second one is a feminine item of clothing. At her first appearance she's represented as an androgynous woman. In scene IV, she is also characterised by her clothes by the tailor, who refers to her breeches: "I forgot to take measure on you for your new breeches" (IV, 70). This item of clothing is as well part of men's apparels.

¹⁵⁵ The OED provides the following definition of jerkin:

A garment for the upper part of the body, worn by men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; a close-fitting jacket, jersey, or short coat, often made of leather. Since c1700 used in literature mainly historically, or in reference to foreign countries; and some dialects for a waistcoat, an under vest, or a loose jacket. Whence in modern use, usu. a sleeveless jacket or waistcoat.

"Frieze" is a woollen cloth, so she is wearing a woollen jacket that men commonly used in the sixteenth century.

¹⁵⁶ According to the OED, a safeguard is "an outer skirt or petticoat worn by women to protect their clothing, esp. when riding".

Sir Alexander reacts to the idea of a woman wearing breeches, not because of her transgression, but because of the threat to man's position and authority: [aside] Hoyda, breeches! What, will he marry a monster / With two trinkets? What age is this? If the wife go in breeches, / the man must wear long coats like a fool. (IV, 71-73)¹⁵⁷

Thus, the real monstrosity of Moll's appearance and way of acting is that she is defying conventions imposed by men, questioning thus their authority. If it were just her outfit, which was already a crime, she would be but a transvestite. The main danger she represents is the way she acts and speaks.

In scene III, when she first appears, Goshawk and Greenwith invite her to have some tobacco. Also, she proves she knows how to use a sword by challenging Laxton and stabbing him. Contrastingly, when she threatens him after he has made advances to pay her in exchange of her sexual services, she gives a highly feminist speech, noting that she is no man, but a woman who defends women's rights. She explains why is she going to attack him:

To teach thy base thoughts manners. Thou'rt one of those
That hinks each woman thy fond flexible whore,
If she but cast a liberal eye upon thee,
Turn back her head, she's thine; or, amongst company,
By chance drink first to thee, then she's quite gone,
There's no means to help her; nay, for a need
Wilt swar unto thy credulous fellow lechers
That thou art more in favour with a lady
At first sight than her monkey all her lifetime.
How many of our sex, by such as thou
Have their good thoughts paid with a blasted name

¹⁵⁷ Breeches are trousers that come just below the knee, but it is worth noting that the OED registers the expression "*to wear the breeches*" which, when said of a wife means "to assume the authority of the husband; to rule, be 'master.'"

That never deserved loosely or did trip
In ath of whoredom beyond cup and lip?
But for the stain of conscience and of soul,
Better had women fall into the hands
Of an act silent than a bragging nothing,
There's no mercy in't. what durst move you, sir,
To think me whorish?—A name which I'd tear out
From the high German's throat if it lay ledger there
To dispatch privy slanders against me.
In thee I defy all men, their worst hates
And their best flatteries, all their golden witchcrafts,
With which they entangle the poor spirits of fools:
Distressed needlewomen and trade-fallen wives—
Fish that needs must bite or themselves be bitten—
Such hungry things as these may soon be took
With worm fastened on a golden hook:
Those are the lecher's food, his prey. He watches
For quarrelling wedlocks and poor shifting sisters,
'Tis the best fish he takes. But why, good fisherman,
Am I thought meat for you, that never yet
Had angling rod cast towards me? 'Cause, you'll say,
I'm given to sport, I'm often merry, jest:
Had mirth no kindred in the world but lust?
O, shame take all her friends then! But howe'er
Thou and the baser world censre my life,
I'll send 'em word by thee, and write so much
Upon thy breast, 'cause thou shalt bear't in mind:
Tell them 'twere base to yield where I have conquered.
I scorn to prostitute myself to a man,
I that can prostitute a man to me!
And so I greet thee.

[*Moll stabs at Laxton*] (v, 67-108)

In this speech we are presented with Moll's revolutionary ideas. She might be dressed as a man, hits as a man, but speaks as a very modern woman. To an early seventeenth-century audience, though, that outspoken attitude would have been related to manly power and female defiance. Mary Frith is thought to have appeared in *The Roaring Girl* performing her own character. As Knowles explains in a note to the *Epilogue*, "the real Mary Firth did appear (possibly in this play) on the Fortune stage in 1611" (2001: 411). In the *Epilogue*, in fact, her presence is announced in order to act as an advertisement for future performances:

The Roaring Girl herself, some few days hence,
Shall on this stage, give larger recompense,
Which mirth that you may share in, herself does woo you,
And craves this sign: your hands to beckon her to you.

As it is well-known, women were forbidden to take part in a theatrical representation. Therefore, if she had turned up on stage, she would have been, once more, defying the social and legal norms of the seventeenth-century society.

As it has been mentioned while discussing the female criminal, a woman who transgresses the roles expected of her was thought as unnatural, a monster as Sir Davy calls her. In Early Modern England, women who sought their independence, especially economic, had no other way than entering the underworld in order to achieve their freedom. Ellen Pollak makes an analysis of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century woman in fiction. She notes that "positioned at the site where individualism intersected with the residual operation of feudal structures within the family, women thus occupied a contradictory position within early modern capitalism" (2008: 148-

149)¹⁵⁸. She discusses the roles of Moll Flanders and Roxana, but the same could be applied to Moll Cutpurse. She is perceived as an alien because she is a woman who is no longer constrained by a patriarchal medieval society. Moll explains to Laxton in the third scene that she is not interested in marriage, as it will mean the end of her freedom:

MOLL Sir, I am so poor to requite you, you must look for nothing but
thanks of me, I have no humour to marry. I love to lie o'both sides
o'th'bed myself and again o'th' other side. A wife, you know, ought
to be obedient, but i fear me I am too headstrong to obey, therefore I'll
ne'er go about it. (iv, 34-38)

Therefore, Moll represents a very modern envision of womanhood and independence, which is the side of the offender that Dekker and Middleton are interested in showing in their literary work. In different parts of the play she states that she needs no man, for instance, she questions Sir Alexander's security that she would have agreed to marry his son. "He was in fear his son would marry me, / But never dreamt that I would ne'er agree!" (xi, 216-217). Sir Alexander never doubted that if his son proposed, she would have said yes since it was not common for a woman to reject a wealthy suitor. Her revolutionary ideas put her in a position of a strange being, yet she enjoys the playwrights' sympathetic treatment, as it is appreciated at the end of the play, when she gives a lesson to all.

Apart from the crime of invading male authority, Moll proves that she is part of the underworld by the many references to the so-feared gallows, as well as by the

¹⁵⁸ Ellen Pollak, "Gender and fiction in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*", in John Richetti, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe*. Cambridge: C.U.P., 2008.

frequent use of canting terms. For instance, when Laxton is arranging to meet her for a sexual encounter she mocks him by making references to Tyburn:

LAXTON Prithee, sweet, plump Moll, when shall you and I go out o' town together?

MOLL Whither? To Tyburn, prithee?

LAXTON Mass, that's out o' town, indeed! Thou hangest so many jests upon thy friends still—I mean honestly to Brentford, Staines, or Ware. (iii, 248-253)

The verb “hang” is likewise repeated through the play. Above, it is used as a pun, but in some other occasions, its meaning is literal. Sir Alexander’s following speech is a clear illustration of it:

all hangs well, would she hung so too,
The sight would please me more than all their glisterings:
O, that my mysteries to such straits should run,
That I must rob myself to bless my son. (viii, 36-39)

The allusions to the capital punishment by hanging relate her to criminals and their punishment, although she was never hung. Nevertheless, what characterises her as belonging to the underworld, as above, is her language. In scene x, when she is surrounded by her fellow rogues, she performs an exhibition of the completely foreign language that canting terms can be for those who do not belong to the criminal world:

TEARCAT Pure rogues? No, we scorn to be pure rogues, but if you come to our libken, or our stalling-ken, you shall find neither him nor me a queer cuffin.

MOLL So, sir, no churl of you.

TEARCAT No, but a ben cove, a brave cove, a gentry cuffin.

LORD NOLAND Call you this canting?

JACK DAPPER Zounds, I'll give a schoolmaster half a crown a week, and teach me this pedlar's French.

TEARCAT Do but stroll, sir, half a harvest with us, sir, and you shall gabble your bellyful. (x, 156-165)

Neither Jack Dapper nor Lord Noland show signs of understanding the canting language, but both admire it. Jack is even eager to learn this alternative way of communicating. As said above, language depicts characters, and rogues are identified in this scene by the use they make of the canting terms. Trapdoor is unveiled, having been recognised as pertaining the same world that Moll belongs to.

MOLL Come, you rogue, cant with me.

SIR THOMAS Well said, Moll. [*To Trapdoor*] Cant with her,
sirrah, and you shall have money, else not a penny.

TRAPDOOR I'll have a bout if she please.

MOLL Come on, sirrah.

TRAPDOOR Ben mort, shall you and I heave a booth, mill a ken,
or nip a bung, and then we'll couch a hogshead under the
ruffmans, and there you shall wap with me, and I'll niggle
with you.

MOLL Out, you damned impudent rascal!

TRAPDOOR Cut benar whids, and hold your fables and your
stamps! (x, 165-175)

This secret exchange that has passed by between Moll and Trapdoor is not only unintelligible by the audience, but also by the other characters. Lord Noland asks her to translate their argument:

LORD NOLAND Nay, nay, Moll, why art thou angry? What
was his gibberish?

MOLL Marry, this, my lord, says he: 'Ben mort', good
wench, 'shall you and I heave a booth, mill a ken, or nip
a bung?' Shall you and I rob a house, or cut a purse?

(X, 176-180)

So Trapdoor has proposed her to engage in some offence or otherwise, as Moll explains, to have sex: "And then we'll couch a hogshead under the ruffmans.' / And

then we'll lie under a hedge" (x, 182-183). But Sir Beauteous still does not understand, so Moll needs to clarify it:

MOLL 'And there you shall wap with me and I'll niggle with you', and
that's all.

SIR BEAUTEOUS Nay, nay, Moll, what's that 'wap'?

JACK DAPPER Nay, teach me what 'nigging' is, I'd fain be nigging.

MOLL 'Wapping' and 'nigging' is all one. The rogue my man can tell
you.

TRAPDOOR 'Tis fadooing, if it please you. (x, 185-190)

There is no further explanation, but the editor notes that fadooing means "fucking" (Knowles 2001: 408). That is the reason why Moll gets so upset at Trapdoor. Later on in this scene she asks him to sing a song in order to illustrate how canting sounds, so they both sing the following:

*A gage of ben Rome booze
In a boozing ken of Romeville
Is benar than a caster,
Peck, pannam, lap, or poplar,
Which we mill in Deuce-a-ville.
O, I would lib all the lightmans.
O, I would libe all the darkmans,
By the solomon, under the ruffmans,
By the solomon, in the harmans.
And scour the queer cramp-ring,
And couch till a palliard docked my dell,
So my boozy nab might skew Rome booze well.
Avast to the pad, let us bing,
avast to the pad, let us bing.* (x, 94-207)

Moll translates it in the following lines,

*A rich cup of wine,
O, it is juice divine,*

*More wholesome for the head,
Than meat, drink, or bread.
To fill my drunken pate
With that, I'd sit up late,
By the heels would I lie,
Under a lousy hedge die.
Let have a slave have a pull
At my whore, so I be full
Of that precious liquor—* (x, 233-243)

Moll speaks freely of drinking, sex and crime. Dekker and Middleton have thus characterised her as the cross-dressed woman who defines herself by her clothes, acts and words. Likewise, she is depicted as belonging to both worlds, bridging the criminal and the conies' one. Jodi Mikalachki notes that her "cross-talking" gives her a strategic position in London.

Like her cross-dressing, Moll's translating allows her a certain license to move between the rogues of the London suburbs and the gentlemen and lords who visit the City. Although it argues a familiarity with street culture that might put her on the wrong side of the law, Moll's "cross-talking," like her cross-dressing, paradoxically entrenches her yet further with gentlefolk and aristocrats.

(1994: 119)¹⁵⁹

Certainly, the aspect that is highlighted of her persona in *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith* (1662)¹⁶⁰ is her role as intermediary.

In the 1662 criminal biography of Mary Frith, which was made up of many of the stories circulating about her, the editor introduces some biographical notes and

¹⁵⁹ Jodi Mikalachki, "Gender, Cant, and Cross-talking in "The Roaring Girl," *Renaissance Drama*, New Series, Vol. 25, Renaissance Drama and the Law (1994), pp. 119-143.

¹⁶⁰ *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith. Commonly Called Mal Cutpurse. Exactly Collected and now Published for the Delight and Recreation of all Merry disposed Persons.* London: 1662.

opinions about her, following by her supposed diary in which she explains in the first person how she established herself as a pawnbroker:

In my house, I should have told you, I set up a kind of *Brokery* or a distinct factory for *Jewels, Kings* and *Watches*, which had been pinched or stolen any manner of way, at never so great distances from any person; I might properly enough call it the *Insurance Office* for such Merchandize, for the Losers were sure upon Composition to recover their Goods again, and the Pyrates were as sure to have good ransome, and I so much in the Grosse for Broakege without any more danger; the *Hue and Cry* being always directed to me for the Discovery of the Goods not the *Takers*. (1662: 43)

Moll emphasises that her role was essential in order to help the victims recover their lost goods. She never told who the “takers” were, so that granted her the trust of the offenders. She exposed the goods in her house, using her windows as shop windows to show what materials she had. Also, if anybody enquired her about a stolen item, she could investigate where it was in order to get it back for a small fee. She speaks very proudly of her work because it helped to regulate the thieving activity:

So that I may be said to have made a perfect regulation of this *threivish Mystery*, and reduced it to certain rules and orders, which during my administration of the Mistressship and Government thereof, was far better managed then afterwards it was; nor were the Robberies so frequent nor so grievous then as when my Discipline was cast off, and this sort of Cattel left to themselves. . . (1662: 45)

However, she was once denounced and taken to the constable by a man whose watch had been robbed and found it exposed in her window (1662: 62-63).

Nonetheless, according to her own diary, the only time that she was actually punished was due to her cross-dressing rather than her criminal activity. She binds together the punishment for her manly clothes to her activity, though. This was the

only way she could be put to penance since she could not be charged of any other offence.

While I thus raigned, free from the danger of the Common Law, some promoting Apparator set on by an adversary of mine, whom I could never punctually know, cited me to appear in the Court of the *Arches*, where was an Accusation exhibited against me for waring undecent and manly apparel. I was advised by my Proctor to demur to the Jurisdiction of the Court, as for a Crime, if such, not cognizable there or elsewhere; but he did it to spin out my Cause, and get my Mony; for in the conclusion, I was sentenced there to stand and do Penance in a White Sheet at *Pauls Cross* during morning Sermon on a Sunday. (1662: 69)

As she tells, it was not a crime that had been punished before, but she complied with the sentence in order to be left alone in her other business.

The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith has not been considered for an exhaustive analysis due to its late date, since it was published fifty-one years later than *The Roaring Girl*. For the criminal biography chapter two other offenders have been preferred in order to add variety to the whole analysis. It is a very interesting text, though. It presents a woman who is very intelligent, feminine and independent. From the point of view of the writer, the fact that she dressed as a man was not an indicator that she was not feminine. He sees her as purely androgynous. She is, as he describes her,

not to be guided either by the reservedness and modesty of her own Sex, or the more imperious command of the other; she resolved to set up in a neutral or Hermaphrodite way of Profession, and stand up on her own leggs, fixed on the basis of both Concerns and Relations; like the *Colossus of Female* subtely in the wily Arts & ruses of that Sex; and of manly resolution in the bold and regardlesse Rudenesses of the other, so blended and mixed together, that it was hard to say whether she were more cunning, or more impudent. (1662: 26)

She is described in admiring terms for being a woman who stood up “on her own leggs”, i.e., for being independent and challenging. As Dekker’s and Middleton’s representation, she is a woman who stands up to male authority but does not lose her female character. She is presented as vain by the author of her faux autobiography: “nor were the Ornaments of my house less curious & pleasing in Pictures, then in the delight of Looking Glasses, so that I could see my sweet self all over in any part of my rooms” (1662: 80). She likes looking at herself in mirrors, therefore, she is proud of her image. Her mixed character is blamed on astrology: “there is a prevalent power of our Stars which over rules all . . . and this I have said to be *Mercury* in conjunction with, or rather in the house of *Venus* at her Nativity” (1662: 9). Mercury is the god traditionally ascribed to thieves and Venus is the goddess of beauty and love. Therefore, in Moll both criminality and womanly features are combined, as it is going to be the commonplace of female offenders. Most of them are said to be beautiful and dexterous in their law-breaking behaviour.

But *The Life and Death of Mary Frith* is relevant to this dissertation in another vital aspect. Even when she makes references to romances, Don Quixote or some picaresque figures, such as “*Seignior Gusman, and the Spanish Tribe of Cheaters*” (1662: 27), she separates herself from picaresque and romance tradition:

I had forgot to tell you the place of this my *dwelling* which slipt me the rather, because few men need to be told where the *Exchange* or *Cheapside* Standard stands, since my Habitation was little lesse Famous; but since that particular is very requirable, and to shew you I was no *Lady Errant* or this Story a *Romance*, know ye that I lived within 2 doors of the *Globe* Tavern in *Fleetstreet* over against the Conduit, where I dispensed justice likewise among the wrangling Tankard-bearers, exchanging often their burden of Water for their burden of Beer as far the lighter . . .

(1662: 47-48)

She lives in a specific place, somewhere that everyone could recognise. She is not the character of a place in La Mancha, or a wanderer that goes through different cities. Her house could be visited if the readers wished to. She might have been made into a character and some stories about her invented, but she was a real person who did not want to be compared to literary figures of the above narratives. This is crucial for the history of the criminal novel: there is an intended separation from picaresque and a link to previous native literary writings. *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith* echoes Greene *Conny-Catching Pamphlets*, among many others similar texts. The following extract is a clear example of it:

I was grown of late acquainted with a new sort of Thieves called the *Heavers*, more fitly *Plagiaries*, whose Employment was stealing of *Shop Books*, the manner thus; They would cruse up and down a Stall when the Master was at Dinner or other way absent, about *Drapers* or *Mercers* especiall, whose Books lie commonly neer the Door upon a Desk; and upon the turning of the backs of the Servants, who are commonly walking to and fro, snatch it off and be gone with an intent only on some redemptory Money upon its Delivery, for which they had the Convenience of my Mediation, which was ordinarily no less then three or four Pieces award, for the pains the Thief had taken, for I proceeded alwayes by a *quantum Meruit*: the Apprentices willing to give any thing rather then their selves and their Parents should be liable to make satisfaction. . . for so great a damage happned by their Carelesnesse. (1662: 67-68)

She explains how this “new sort of Thieves” is called and how they act. She describes their modus operandi in order to warn readers for the next time they might encounter those *Heavers*. Therefore, Mary Frith’s biography, which has often been linked to picaresque and is said to be the major influence for Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* is closer to native criminal pamphlets and conny-catchers writings than to the Spanish rogue

narrative. But more proof of this will be provided in the next section dedicated to criminal biographies.

All in all, the character of Moll Cutpurse in both the play and the pseudo-autobiography explores the implications of being a female criminal: the woman who enters the world of crime is a transgressor, a defiant of male authority and a vindicator of her own freedom. In the previous play, Alice Arden becomes a murderer in order to be free to marry the man she loves. She was subject to her father's choice; she had to meet the expectations which due to her class and gender were imposed to her. Similarly, Mary Frith finds her way to escape a patriarchal society by using men's tools: their clothes, language and manners. The fact that Mary Frith's transgendered nature found many interpretations in literature is precisely because her gender transgression was materialised by her cross-dressing. She was the epitome of the rebellious woman, who not only sought her independence in a man-centred world, but also embodied the man appearance defying all rules.

3. CRIMINAL BIOGRAPHIES

1.1. LONG MEG OF WESTMINSTER

Even if Long Meg of Westminster is closer to the jest-book and chapbook tradition, her character and the writings about her are relevant for this study in as much she becomes the first instance of a female offender who poses doubts about her true existence. There are many pamphlets about her or where she is mentioned, what indicates that she was a popular character from the late sixteenth century through the whole seventeenth century, with chapbooks dated as late as 1880. Little is known about her, other than she was a very big woman, that she served at an inn in

Westminster and that she took part in the war against France, in Boulogne, “probably as a laundress”, according to Patricia Gartenberg (1983: 49).¹⁶¹ She came to London to be a maid, but her mistress soon realised that she could be of much use serving at the inn, where she could put up with customers unwilling to pay. After she returned from France, she married a soldier and established a public house in Islington, where the rumours circulated that it was in fact a brothel.

Even if the general opinion is that she must have been real, there are no solid proofs of her existence. Bernard Capp has been the only critic who has provided testimony that she lived. He quotes from the Bridewell Governors, where she presented herself in an attempt to clean her name against the accusations that she was a bawd:

Margaret Barnes otherwise called Long Megg came into this house the xvii of May for that she was accused to be a common Bawd and desyred to come to make a purgacion. But when she came, the matter was so vehemently iustified agaynst her, that she could not denye the same and so departed with sham[e] because she was before promysed to go and come safely. (1998: 302)¹⁶²

According to the chapbooks, she started a business. In the 1635 text, chapter XVI is concerned with “how she kept a house at Islington, and what rules she had there to be observed” (1635: 16b).¹⁶³ She had to impose norms after the visit of the constable because her house “was spoken of” (1635: 16b). This establishment, if it was in fact a

¹⁶¹ Patricia Gartenberg, “An Elizabethan Wonder Woman: The Life and Fortunes of Long Meg of Westminster”. *The Journal of Popular Culture*. Vol. 17 (3). Pp. 49-58. 1983.

¹⁶² Bernard Capp, “Long Meg of Westminster: A Mystery Solved”. *Notes and Queries*. Vol. 45 (3). 1998. pp. 302-304.

¹⁶³ *The Life of Long Meg of Westminster: Containing the mad merry pranks shee played in her life time, not onely in performing sundry Quarrels with diuers Ruffians about London: But also how Valiantly she heaued her selfe in the Warres of Bolloingne*. London: Printed for Robert Bird, and are to be sold at his shop in St. Laurence lane, at the signe of the Bible. 1635.

brothel, was her only connection to criminality but this cannot be inferred from the pamphlets.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, at the time, she was not considered a criminal, even if she was also a cross-dresser; yet she was never accused or tried for that reason.

The first narration of her life seems to have been first published in 1582.¹⁶⁵ However, this one is lost, being its most popular copy the extant 1635 text. There was also a play with the title *Long Meg of Westminster*. It is missing but there is a record by Henslow where it states that it was acted by the Admiral's Men at the Rose between 1595 and 1597. The main text used in this analysis is therefore *The Life of Long Meg of Westminster* (1635), since it is the oldest edition preserved. It tells the deeds of Long Meg, starting from the moment in which she moves to London to serve at a house until she dies.

This text presents deviations regarding the line of investigation and the previous texts selected. The first striking difference is the index that appears after the writer's prologue. In it, there is an indication of the episodes with a summary of the pranks that Meg played on her victims. There are eighteen chapters in total, the last one of which narrates how Meg being ill is visited by a friar, who tries to convince her to do penance for her sins. In order to have met with the structure of criminal's proto-journalistic writings, Meg should have repented. Instead, she devises a prank to make fun of the friar and get his money. The chapter ends the same way as any other episode, so there is no coda to her adventures. The structure, the purpose and the type of comic

¹⁶⁴ Capp provides testimonies of several women accused of prostitution that were acquainted with Long Meg and lodged in her house, but he has been the only critic to prove this accusation.

¹⁶⁵ The EEBO records this publication of 1582 and refers to the title page where that date is inscribed. However, the rest of the text is noted to belong to a 1650 edition with the explanation that the title page and the colophon have been forged. The British Library considers it from 1650 and lists no manuscript from 1582 in its catalogue.

character make of Meg a picaresque figure rather than a criminal. Nevertheless, her role in this study is important for two reasons. First, she is a relevant rogue in English native literature; she's the female Robin Hood whose existence is more than probable. Second, by contrasting her character to those of the other studied female offenders the differences between rogues and criminals stand out.

The text's episodic structure is clearly marked from beginning to end. In the first chapter there are a few references to her origins, the author describing that she "was borne of very honest and wealthy parents" (1635: 4b). He also makes reference to her nickname of Long Meg, explaining that she was thus called due to her "excesse of heighth" (1635: 4b). Yet from this introduction the text moves quickly to tell of her first anecdote, which took place when she left her home town, which is not even mentioned, "to serue, and to learne City fashions" (1635: 4b). Father Willis, who is the carrier that takes Meg and other friends to London, is the first of her victims—or punished characters, if it is considered that Meg tries to make justice on the victims of the powerful. The carrier tries to charge the women too much and ends up paying some angels to them instead. Nonetheless, Meg proves that she is a just woman when she meets Father Willis again and she restores to him the money that has been stolen by two thieves.

These episodes about her life follow each other chronologically but there is not a strong cause-effect relationship between them. Her landlady and Father Willis are the only two characters who appear in more than one episode. Also, there is no moral purpose whatsoever. The only intention of the writer is to make his readers laugh. Maybe for this purpose Long Meg is not so much the agent but the instrument to cause laughter. Patricia Shaw notes that

these episodes are comic precisely because the victors are women: such episodes protagonised by men would not, of course, be funny, the essence of humour being, precisely topsy-turvydom, and in a patriarchal society, that a woman should physically overmaster a man, is topsy-turvydom with vengeance!

(1996: 148)¹⁶⁶

A woman who beats men and pulls them by the ears was funny for the readership. Dressing up as a man and carrying weapons are part of her characterisation, although being so big and strong she could engage in physical combat in any moment of need, clad as a woman, which is emphasised by the references made to her loose hair.

The Life of Long Meg of Westminster is narrated in the third person although sometimes the author introduces Meg's speech by the formula "quoth she". There are not relevant interventions, though. They are just a way of illustrating her authority before hitting the men who try to cheat her or others and asserting her authority over them by making them do as she says. In none of the documents written about her life she appears as her own auto-biographer. In this aspect, Meg differs from all the previous female offenders that have been studied. Even Moll Cutpurse's biographer incorporates her diary to create a more direct relationship between the reader and the criminal. In contrast, the author of *Long Meg of Westminster* uses Meg as a way of entertaining his readers by making her a strong but an uncouth woman.

Meg lacks the elegance of the formerly analysed female criminals. In the first chapter she hits the carrier with a cudgel (1635: 5a); in chapter three, "she gave the Vicar the first handfell; and with that she reachd the Vicar a bor on the eare" (1635: 7b), after which they both fight and as a result "the Vicars head was broken" (1635:

¹⁶⁶ Patricia Shaw, "Mad Moll and Merry Meg: the roaring girl as popular heroine in Elizabethan and Jacobean writings". *SEDERI: yearbook of the Spanish and Portuguese Society for English Renaissance Studies*. 1996.

7b). Also, in the eighth chapter, Meg makes Woolner pay for his breakfast when she “tooke him by the cloake and puld him backe” (1635: 11b)”. These are but some examples, as almost in every episode Meg makes use of her strength. She is depicted as a very manly woman, not just because she hits men constantly, but also because she wears men’s clothes. For instance, chapter eight illustrates this fact: “It chanced in an Evening, that Meg would needs be pleasant, and so put on a suit of mans apparell, and with her Sword and Socket walkt the streets, looking how shee might find some means to be merry” (1635: 12a). Mary Frith also dressed in manly clothes and made use of weapons; nonetheless she is portrayed as caring about her appearance. Dekker and Middleton engage her in conversation with her tailor or talking about her clothes in several passages of the play. Likewise, in *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith* she is said to have many mirrors in her home because she likes looking at her reflection. When contrasting both females, Mary Frith appears as a better built character. She is deeper than Long Meg, who after fighting to defend the rights of the weak is beaten by her husband and promises him obedience. Her character relates better to a Punch and Judy show than to the rest of female offenders that are presented in this study.

These female criminals, above all, are represented by their speech. They show an elegance that is not only physical, but that it is reflected in their way of speaking. Alice Arden is compared to a snake because of her ensnaring tongue. The roaring girl also proves that she masters not only the English language but also the canting one, which positions her in a privileged status. And so are Mary Carleton, the German Princess, who defends herself in a trial and wins, and the Machiavellian Miranda in *The Fair Jilt*. They are all cunning and do not intent to be funny but to show their power through their intelligence. Contrastingly, Long Meg is no heroine but she is ridiculed in the

prologue, the writer warning the readership about this woman: “I hope you will use Long Meg as a whetstone to mirth after your serious businesse: and if shee haue any grosse faults, beare with them the more patiently, for that she was a woman” (1635: 3). In all the other examples of female offenders, the fact that they were women made them the more interesting. However, for this author, she is a woman worth writing of but as a specimen in a freak show.

It could be thought that due to the early date of this manuscript the representation of the female offender is more a curiosity than an ode to her rarity. However, there is a later work, *The Life and Death of Meg of Westminster*. Printed and sold in Aldermary Churchyard, London (1750) which is simply a remake of the previous 1635 text and which does not change the perspective about the character. It is considerably shorter, with thirteen chapters instead of eighteen. It finishes when Mary sets up her house in Islington. This version, despite its later date, is not more elaborate; on the contrary, it is simpler than the earlier document. There is no introduction, for instance, to her life and deeds and the description of her extraordinary size appears only on chapter III rather than at the beginning as a presentation to the character. This is probably due her lasting popularity. The author comments: “Meg so bestirred herself, she pleased her mistress, and for her tallness was called Long Meg of Westminster” (1750: 4a). If this reference appears after two other chapters and there is no need of an earlier explanation, it surely means that the readership was still acquainted with the character.

Meg is not a real offender. She belongs to the picaresque tradition: she is a comic character, she was never in prison and the crime she committed is not very clear, as it is nowhere in the jest-books stated that she managed a brothel. Neither do

her stories comply with the structure of criminal literature of sin, repentance, expectation of divine mercy and punishment. There is a repetition of sins, which are unconnected to each other. Its episodic nature detaches it both from criminal proto-journalist writings and the novel. Chapter IX illustrates Long Meg's main features clearly and is the determinant proof that she cannot be considered as a female offender like the rest of analysed characters. In this episode, she fights the thieves of St. James's corner and acts in a Robin Hood way, making them restore the previously robbed victims, two ladies and the carrier that took her to London. After beating them, she imposes conditions on these thieves:

1. First, that you neuer hurt woman, nor company that any woman is in.
2. Item, that you hurt no poore man, or impotent man.
3. Item, that you rob no children nor innocents.
4. Item, that you rob no Pack-men nor Carriers: for their goods nor mony is none of their owne.
5. Item, no manner of distressed persons. (1635: 12a-14a)

She goes on saying that there is an exception to these rules, which is to rob rich people, such as farmers. This attitude is unthinkable of a real offender. Criminal minds had doubts and repented after their acts, but they did not restore victims from their robbed money nor gave lessons to thieves. It could be argued that Mary Frith, as represented in the *Roaring Girl*, also warns her noble companions about pickpockets at the inn. But, at the same time, she creates suspicion on her when she goes into the shops, having to clarify that she is there to buy. Therefore, even if appears as a trustworthy character on stage, her fame precede her. For this reason shop tenders suspect her and Sir Alexander leaves watches and gold chains around his house to try her. Middleton and Dekker do not characterise her as a criminal, but they leave no

doubt to her criminal connections in her canting language and the reputation that she has as a cutpurse.

Contrastingly, Long Meg has an unusual attitude. In none of the broadsides which have been studied there is a similar case to hers. Even if some of the episodes narrated in Long Meg's pamphlets are true, many of them seem very unlikely, for instance the one above mentioned in which she beats two thieves. She must have been very strong, but the many people she beats without being defeated but by her husband, to whom she immediately promises submission does not sound very realistic. Therefore, she is the female counterpart of Robin Hood in her attitude, but also in the fact that the stories told about her are closer to fiction than to fact. In any case, whether she existed in reality or not, and even if she is not a real offender as the other female outlaws, Long Meg represents an important stage in the fictionalisation of female offenders. She became so well-known that there is a six-tonne canyon in Edinburgh Castle named Mons Meg, most probably after her although, as many other incognita within the topic of this thesis, it remains a hypothesis.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Mons Meg was built in 1449, but there is no reference to it with that name until 1678, when Long Meg of Westminster's pranks had already appeared in many publications. It is called Mons because it was tested in this Belgian locality. Instead of Meg of Westminster, this canyon is Meg of Mons, in a probably intended parallelism between the hugely oversized woman and the enormous canyon. This is reinforced by the fact that there is another canyon in the Belgian city of Ghent, founded at the same time than Mons Meg, which receives the name of "Dulle Griet," Mad Meg in English. The Ghentener canyon's name seems to reinforce the theory that they are called Meg as a reference to Long Meg, her well-known giant dimensions and her mad pranks. It is but a conjecture. If that is the case, though, it means that Long Meg's famous adventures reached the continent.

1.2. MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF A LIFE, THE GERMAN PRINCESS

The German Princess, as she became known, was born Mary Moders in 1635. She was convicted twice for bigamy and ended up executed for theft in 1673. She became well-known after her third husband, John Carleton, took her to court for having tricked him, making him believe that she was a German Princess. But she was deceived, too, thinking him a wealthy lord. They both wrote pamphlets against each other, exposing their case to the public opinion. Their personal affair became thus part of the London gossip.

A thief, a cross-dresser, a bigamous and transgressing woman in many aspects, Mary Carleton represents another step in the fictionalisation of a female offender. Many accounts are written about her but in all of them, fact and fiction intermingles as long as truth and invention are difficult to separate. For the first time in the line that has been traced back to unwrap the origins of the criminal novel, there enough documents¹⁶⁸ about the criminal so that an analysis on the fictionalisation of the female offender reassures the theory first stated. Likewise, Ernest Bernbaum notes that the writings about Mary Carleton “serve to illuminate the course of the English realistic novel in its obscurest period” (1914: 2).¹⁶⁹ Her narrations indeed shed light into the development of criminal biography. The two accounts to defend herself from

¹⁶⁸ According to Mihoko Suzuki, her story generated twenty-six pamphlets (1993: 61). Ernest Bernbaum, who was the first critic to work on a monograph on Mary Carleton listed twenty, but luckily some more were found in the last century. “The Case of Mary Carleton: Representing the Female Subject, 1663-73”. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring, 1993), pp. 61-83.

¹⁶⁹ Ernest Bernbaum. *The Carleton Narratives 1663-1673. A Missing Chapter in the History of the English Novel*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.

her husband John Carleton's accusations were truly written by her hand.¹⁷⁰ However, even if during her lifetime she was known by every Londoner, currently her memory is due to a literary work, Francis Kirkman's *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled* (1673). Had it not been for this pseudo-autobiography, the German Princess would have been forgotten. Due to the relevance of the surviving texts, this section focuses on the contrast of them rather than in an exhaustive analysis of the purely literary work.

As stated above, the notoriety that the German Princess achieved derives from the interest her marital quarrel with John Carleton arose.¹⁷¹ Yet her life is very similar to other female offenders. Before the Carleton family took her to court she had already been charged for bigamy when she abandoned her shoemaker husband in order to marry a surgeon. Mary learnt early in life that women had no other way of advancing in society than by marriage. For that reason she usurped the identity of a German princess and called herself Henrietta Maria de Wolway in an attempt to make an even better match. According to Kirkman a soldier she met in Germany mistook her for this princess and her lady later on confirmed the resemblance between both women (Kirkman 1673: 15-16). According to her own account, she was indeed a German princess, as she appeals to "his most Illustrious Highness Prince Rupert, Count

¹⁷⁰ Bernbaum affirms that in her "Historical Narrative", the first of her pamphlets, Mary had to be helped by professional writers because the pamphlet "learnedly cites Diogenes, Themistocles, and "a Spanish author I have seen" on the subject of detraction; likewise Valentinus Baruthius and Castaigneray on the obligation of knights to defend noble ladies in distress" (1814: 20).

¹⁷¹ According to Mihoko Suzuki, "one of the pamphlets concerning her went into a new edition as late as 1732 when London gossip had it that the Lord Mayor was her bastard son" (1993: 61).

Palatine of the Rhine and Duke of Cumberland” in *The Case of Madam Mary Carleton* (1663, 2).¹⁷²

What Mary did not expect was that her pretended lord, John Carleton, had no money and was ready to fight her back. The sessions against her husband and the pamphlets which were written about their case gave her fame. A year after the trial she even played herself in a performance of the quarrel entitled *A Witty Combat: or, the Female Victor* (1664). The play was unsuccessful, though. It could be due to her lack of popularity a year after the case, or simply because of the poor quality of this work. Mary seems to disappear then from public life until she was charged for theft and was brought back to attention in new publications (Lilley 2010: 79).¹⁷³ In fact, those pamphlets preserved correspond to the dates 1663, when her husband took her to court, and 1673, when she was imprisoned and hanged for robbery. In the ten years of difference between one set and the other, she entered the assizes with different names, such as Maria Darnton, Mary Blacke, Mary Kirton, Maria Lyon and Mary Carlston during the period from 1669 until 1671, when she was finally transported to Jamaica. She returned to London before her transportation period was finished and came back to her previous criminal life, for which she was tried and convicted to death penalty in 1673.

¹⁷² *The Case of Madam Mary Carleton, Lately Stiled The German Princess, Truly Stated: With an Historical Relation of her Birth, Education, and Fortunes; in an Appeal to his Illustrious Highness Prince Rupert.* By the said Mary Carleton. London, Printed for Sam: Sheed at the Rainbow in Fleetstreet, and Hen: Marsh at the Princes Arms in Chancery-lane, 1663.

¹⁷³ Kate Lilley. “Mary Carleton’s False Additions: the Case of the ‘German Princess’”. *Humanities Review*. Monique Rooney, ed. 2010. Pp. 79-89.

In the first pamphlet published about her, *The Lawyers Clarke Trapannd by the Crafty Vvhore of Canterbury* (1663), she is depicted as a terrible sinner, as it can be appreciated in this document's full title in which all her sins are numbered:

A true Relation of the whole Life of Mary Mauders the Daughter of Thomas Mauders a Fidler in Canterbury. Wherein is discovered, 1. How she married a Fidler at Dover, and a Shoe-maker at the City of Canterbury. 2. How she cheated a Vitner of 60. pound, and was committed to Newgate. 3. How she cheated a French Marchant of Rings, Jewels and other Rich Commodities last March. 4. How she pickt a Kentish Lords Pocket, at Graves-end, of his Watch and Mony. 5. How she made her escape, when sold and ship'd for the Barbadoes. 6. How she came to London to the Exchange Tavern, naming her self Henrietta Maria de Vulva the Daughter of a great Prince in Germany, and married a Lawyers Clark on Easter-day last. 7. How she was discovered by a Shoe-maker, and carryed before a Justice, who committed her to the Gate-house, All her rich Jewels (which were valued as three thousand pound) being broke and found Counterfeits.¹⁷⁴

The false name that she gives herself is mocked by the author of this pamphlet, who substitutes de Wolway for de Vulva in a clear intention of associating this woman with the exploitation of her sexuality. This first piece of news provides a very negative image of Mary. However, the opinions about her were divided, as it can be appreciated in the following writing about her. In this occasion, she is described as a heroine who fights her husband back. *The Great Trial and Arraignment of the late Distressed Lady, otherwise called the late German Princess* (1663) is the first of the two pamphlets on the Carleton's trial. In it, the author writes of Mary with admiration for her success at court defending her German and noble origin. The writer uses characterisation to make her an actual victim, a poor woman who had been abused by her husband's intention to ruin her. Yet, her manners and speech give her the lost credibility back.

¹⁷⁴ It was printed in London, for John Johnson, 1663.

Even if this piece of writing is meant to be journalistic, its characterisation of Mary Carleton and the narration make it closer to a piece of literature.

According to the author, when Mary is brought from Newgate to the Old Bailey “being come to the place, she gave a Reverend Congey to the Honourable bench in such a grace and gallant deportment, that several spectators of that honourable Society did argue among themselves she could be no person of any low birth and parentage” (1663: 4).¹⁷⁵ The writer thus recalls the opinions of some of the attendants, who could not believe she was not a princess or someone pertaining to the nobility. This pamphlet, from the first lines, supports her cause, the fact that she is a German Princess and that she has been the one tricked by her husband by pretending he was a lord. She is able to provide witnesses that confirm that they knew her from her childhood times in Cologne (1663: 5). She is given a voice, both at court and at this writing. At the Old Bailey, she asks for permission to speak and her words are reproduced in the pamphlet, such as the following intervention:

My Lords, I desire you to hear me patiently: whereas there's stil'd in my indictment an honovrable contract in sacred bonds of Wedlock, with one Mr. *Ford*, a Shoemaker in Canterbury, and that I was married to him nine years agoe, and had two Children by him, to that my Lord I desire you rightly to consider, and also the worthy Jury, that I am at this present but one and twenty years of Age, which by many circumstances I might argue it that law and nature would not

¹⁷⁵ The Great Tryall and Arraignment Of the late Distressed Lady, Otherwise called the late Germain Princess. Being brought to her Tryal in the Old-Bayley, on Thursday last the 4th instant of this month of June, before the Right Honourable, the Lord Mayor, the Lord chief Justice of Common Pleas, the Right Worshifull, the Court of Aldermen, and all the rest belonging to that most Honourable Bench. The tenure of her Indictment, Of having two Husbands, and her Answet to the same. Also the several Witnesses which came in against her, with her absolute Consutation upon each of their evidences by her acute Wit and impregnable Reasons whereby she was acquitted by publique Proclamation. The manner ye may read as followeth. London, Printed for W. Gilberton, 1663.

grant it, though within this place it is not requisite to declare the reasons thereof, but according to my Sex I shall beg pardon for the rehearsal, at which the grave Senators admired her confidence, much more her prudence, and bad her speak on. (1663: 4)

The jury, but also the readers, clearly must have sympathised with a young woman who was married to the shoemaker when she was but twelve years old, even if it was not completely true.¹⁷⁶ Consequently, by explaining her circumstances in a very human but literate way of speaking, Mary could gain the favour of the senators and the jury to declare her non-guilty. In the public's opinion, the writer of this pamphlet had much to do. He even praises her physical appearance: "If without reproof may I say it, she had within her cheeks a perfect vermilion" (1663: 5). She is presented as a wonderful woman, beautiful and clever, who has been aggravated by her husband and his family's greed: "My Lord, if any cheat was in the businesse, they went about to cheat me, I not them: for they thought by marriage of me to dignifie themselves and advance all their relations, and upon that account were there any cheat, they cheated themselves" (1663: 5). In this way, she manages to turn the accusation to those that took her to court, making thus have the public opinion on her side. The writer notes how her speech "made the bench something the more sensible of her condition, and thereupon the Jury brought in their Verdict of not Guilty: and then began a great noise throughout the whole Court, and most of it was to her great applause and brave acute

¹⁷⁶ According to the "Memories of the Life of the Famous Madam Charlton, commonly styled the German Princess" (1673), when she was fourteen she went to France to be the maid of a lady. She stayed there for four years and then, at her returned to Canterbury, she married the shoemaker. She must have been then at least eighteenth when she had her first husband, if we trust that the biographer of these memoirs is telling the truth (Bernbaum 1914: 36). Also, Kirkman notices her lie and thus highlights it in his prologue to *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled*: "So that she began with a lye, for her Age was, as I have said, seven or eight years more" (1673: 6).

wit" (1663: 5). These last sentences prove the writer's support to Mary's cause. He would have probably also cheered at her absolution.

Bernbaum criticises the way this pamphlet approaches the case because of the writer's partial opinion and his unconditional support to Mary. He explains that, in his view,

The speeches which it places in Mary's mouth are not authentic; her main contentions are not given, and her incidental remarks are distorted beyond recognition. . . The clever author of the "Great Trial" not only elaborates the episode, but places it where it will be most astonishing and dramatic,—in the court-room during Mary's speech. In short, this account, apparently designed to make Mary a popular heroine, repeatedly sacrifices the true to the sensational.

(1914: 31)

Nevertheless, what Bernbaum criticises I find interesting, since the author of this document has transgressed the limits of the proto-journalistic genre to make of Mary a hero rather than presenting her as a normal woman. He has sacrificed indeed the truth in order to make his pamphlet a best-seller.

This writer proves he knows the way to manipulate the readership through sentimentalism and sensationalism, and he does it in order to make a profit out of it. As Bernbaum continues describing, these pamphleteers "relied on interesting, not so much the cultivated literary class as the common public—which, in the next century the real arbiter of literary success, came to support the vogue of the novel" (1914: 32). In fact, the novel lays its foundations in a well-established way of writing, what ensures its success. The mixture of a reliable fact with many sensational details had proved for centuries that it was a good combination. As Bernbaum well notes, "as long as the incident recounted might be popularly interesting, they did not scruple in details to pervert the truth: they aimed, not to be veracious, but to seem veracious" (1994: 32).

The probability of truth for those events did not mean that they necessarily happened, yet both readers and writers engaged in a trust-based relationship which gave way to the belief in what was being told.

At her death in the gallows in 1673, three biographies about Mary were published: *Memories of the Life of the Famous Madam Charlton, commonly styled the German Princess*, *The Life and Character of Mrs. Mary Moders, alias Mary Stedman, alias Mary Carleton, alias Mary—the Famous German Princess*, now lost, and finally, *The Memoires of Mary Carleton, commonly styled the German Princess*. The three of them add new and interesting data about Mary. However, as explained above, it is difficult to discern fact from fiction even in texts that should include only authentic data. Bernbaum argues that

in place of the romance there was, to be sure, the true story; but even if one painstakingly sought for this in John Carleton's "Ultimum Vale," and in the testimony of James Knot at her trial, the discoverable data, though important, would be far less numerous and interesting than those which imagination had created. (1914: 35)

Therefore, it is not simple to tell which of the episodes about Mary's life are trustworthy. There is no way of contrasting that information and, knowing that the pamphleteers used to intercalate figments of their imagination with true accounts, the line between fact and fiction is blurred.

It is not until the publication of Francis Kirkman that the story narrated about the German Princess is considered purely literature.¹⁷⁷ Even if the incidents told are a

¹⁷⁷ There is a play, *A Witty Combat: Or, the Female Victor, as it was Acted by Persons of Quality in Whitson-Week with great applause*. Written by T. P. Gent. London, Printed for Tho. Roberts, and are to be sold at the *Royal-Exchange, Fleet-Street, and Westminster-Hall*, 1663. However, the quality of the

compilation of previous narrations the way Kirkman puts them together crosses the line between pseudo-journalism and a piece of literature. This is the reason why this work is so interesting for the present study. He attempts to make his writing fall on the side of non-fiction including, for instance, passages from previous pamphlets. He places her “true original Picture as it was taken by her own order and appointment in the year 1663” (1673: 6)¹⁷⁸ next to the title page, with the following inscription below it: “the True Originall Picture of Mary Carleton also called by the name of the German Princess as it was taken by her owne Order in the yeare 1663” (1673: 2). Kirkman wants to give authenticity to his narration. Therefore, by the insertion of this picture, one of the three used to illustrate her *Case of Madam Mary Carleton*, Kirkman is making associations in the readers’ minds that if they took the “Case” as written by herself, this story that Kirkman tells must also be true.

In an attempt to avoid lying, Kirkman does not want to strongly affirm that his story corresponds to reality: “If I should promise to give you a true account of her whole life I should deceive you, for how can Truth be discovered of her who was wholly composed of Falsehood (1673: 8). He establishes that it relies in former documents, from which it can be inferred that if those writings were real, then his story needs to be real. Nonetheless, he claims to have included original material from interviews to those who knew her. He is thus purposely unclear about the truthfulness of his account. Moreover, what he could not “gather from these informations, [he has]

same is very poor and its repercussion almost inexistent. Therefore, it has not been considered for the analysis of the literary counterpart of Mary Carleton’s pamphlets.

¹⁷⁸ Francis Kirkman. *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled. Being a Full Account of the Birth, Life, most remarkable Actions, and untimely Death of Mary Carleton, Known by the Name of the German Princess*. London, Printed for Peter Parker, at the Leg and Star, over against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill, 1673.

supplied by Books, which have been formerly written of her” (1673: 8). Kirkman is aware that much of the information circulating about her could be the invention of writers. This idea of truth versus falsehood is used through the book in a very ironic way. When presenting her, for instance, he states the following affirmation: “I tell you that according to my best intelligence, which I think is sufficiently Authentick, she was no *German*, but an absolute (I will not say true) Englishwoman” (1673: 9). He cannot call her a true Englishwoman even if she was because everything that surrounded her was as false as the jewels that she wore. He contradicts her own narration and explains that she was not a German Princess, but the daughter of a musician from Canterbury (1673: 10).

According to Kirkman, the trigger for all her trickery was her idea of becoming a gentlewoman, even if she was of humble origin: “her Husbands quality being mean, and he not being able to maintain her at that height which she always aimed at, she was discontented and was resolved to seek her Fortune” (1673: 12-13). That is what made her go to the continent where she acquires the false name of Maria de Wolway. Kirkman tells this episode using a story that Mary had told in her “Case”. She said that she had to flee to England running away from one of her suitors, the Soldado. That is the truth, according to her version, but she also had stolen jewels and money from her landlady and had to escape:

. . . so soon as her Landlady was gone out, did break open a Chest, wherein she put all her Treasure, and there she found not only what had been given her by the Captain, but also a considerable Sum of Money; all which she took, and packing it up with her own parcel away she went, and having privately provided her self of a passage to *Utrecht*, there she made a stop for a while, thence passed to

Amsterdam, where she sold the Gold Chain, and some other Jewels, from thence she passed to *Rotterdam* and so coming to the *Brill*, took Shipping for *England*.

Bernbaum argues that Kirkman “unhesitantly purloin[s] incidents that he knew to be fictitious and modifying them as he pleased. The lie that Mary told to defend herself, Kirkman embroidered to entertain his readers” (1914: 54). That is the key aspect of this work, it was written to entertain as well as to inform. Yet its primary purpose is to be read for pleasure.

Kirkman adds very little new information. From the moment that the pamphlet that her husband John Carleton wrote against her, “*The Ultimium Vale*”,¹⁷⁹ the readers were acquainted with the fact that she was a “daughter of William Modders late of Canterbury Musician deceased” (1663: 4).¹⁸⁰ In this pamphlet, her husband even insults her by mocking the fact that she pretended to be this German lady while she was but an English woman: “a *German* Soul transmigrated into the Body of a *Canterbury Fidlers* Daughter: or a *German* Fiddle-stick, playd upon a *Canterbury* Fiddle: or, the Sperm of a *Germane* Lord mixt with, and evacuated into an Ale-Tub, and drank up by a *Canterbury* Hostes, of which came this Prodigious Excrescens, or, etc. I will not be tedious, this two-legged Monster then) a pretended *German Lady*” (1663: 6). Hence, her German noble origins were not corroborated by any of the writings but her own. Therefore, Kirkman is not telling anything new, apart from joining separate stories from the different accounts.

¹⁷⁹ Its complete title is *The Ultimium Vale of John Carleton, of the Middle Temple, London, Gent. Being a true Description of the Passages of that Grand Impostor, Late a Pretended Germane-Lady. Published by the Order and appointment of the aforesaid right worthy and ingenious Author Mr. John Carleton.* London, Printed for J. Jones, 1663.

¹⁸⁰ The numbering corresponds to the digital page established by EEBO, not the real page in the manuscript.

The story behind the German lady was very successful due to the echo that the media of the time made of it. Also, it owes its durability in time to the fact that despite being reality it was so awkward that it could have been a romance. In fact, intended parallelisms are knitted between her story and romances, either by herself, her biographers or even her husband. From Kirkman we know that she loved reading romances: “she was well read in *Perismos and Perismenos, Don Bellianis of Greece*, and all those other books that related to love and Arms” (1673: 12). He comments some others she used to like and the fact that she wanted to be like one of the princesses in them. He also adds that her story and what she had told of her origins and her supposed father, Henry von Wolway “was but a Romance” (1673: 10). John Carleton had previously made the same remark. He writes that her story “seemed to me to be a pretty Romance” (1663: 7). This intended comparison between romances and her story is a way of establishing that she was so fake that her whole invention of life could be suitable of a romance. In fact, Kirkman points out that “she had told this lye so often, that she at last believed it her self to be true (1673: 10). Moreover, by comparing her story to a romance, her biographers, commenters of her deeds, as well as Mary as active agent of her own construction, turn a real life into fiction. It is a marketing technique in modern terms. Writers of pamphlets, including Mary herself, wanted to sell as much as possible. And since romance was still fashionable but, at the same time, readership was demanding more real stories, this German princess’ adventures sounded like the perfect formula for success: a life that was fiction-like but that it was real. This is why in the preface to *The Case* she uses the word “novels” rather than stories to refer to the episodes that she narrates: “. . . cast a favourable eye upon these Novels of my life, not so much unlike those of Boccace, but that they

are more serious and tragical” (1663: 8). Her life is more serious, it is more real, but she still compares her tales to a high literary work as it is the *Decameron* in an attempt to make literature out of factual events.

The mixture of fact and fiction is one of the components for Mary Carleton’s success. But also the fact that she is a woman makes her a quite unique case. As commented earlier, there were not many female offenders in the seventeenth century, what drew attention upon them. Besides, a woman who defies all conventions to advance in society, who is capable of telling such a lie and defend it to court—and be successful against her husband—is a woman whose story awakes a special interest. By the middle of the seventeenth century the female reading population had grown considerably. Mary knew that the readership of her *Case* was most probably feminine, hence her dedication “to the Noble Ladies and Gentlewomen of England” (1663: 9). She knew that if she could engage the female audience, she could be successful. And she was. She managed to blend fact and fiction by her pen and in those of others. Her life sold much more pamphlets than any other offender before her, and she set the tone for the development of the novel.

4. THE FAIR JILT

Aphra Behn’s contribution to the history of the novel is irrefutable. In terms of criminal fiction, her work means a considerable step towards the new genre since it draws a line between preceding criminal narratives and later ones. As it has been previously mentioned, her novellas still have got many features of the romance in them, since in Behn the romance tradition is very strong. However, in her criminal novels the main characteristics that the novel takes from popular and proto-journalistic writings can

already be appreciated. She has got two significant works with criminals as protagonists, both of them women. *The History of a Nun; Or the Fair Vow Breaker* (1688) and *The Fair Jilt; or The History of Prince Tarquin and Miranda* (1688). *The Fair Jilt* has been preferred for the present analysis as it is more illustrative of the theories that this thesis aims at proving. Curiously, it has not attracted much attention from critics. For instance, in the *Aphra Behn Contemporary Critical Essays*, there is not a single article dedicated to it.¹⁸¹ However, for the present study it represents a key work in the development of the novel but also a striking illustration of how trials and executions occupied a central position in the social life of a city. It explores in depth the communal feelings that spring out of convicts' legal processes and engages the readership in such a way that they can count themselves as part of that original audience. Despite that she was never a journalist—that it is known—Behn combines perfectly the two tendencies that are being discussed here: journalism and the novel and how both of them are tinged with fact and fiction to the extent of making these qualities inseparable.¹⁸²

Even if the title subtitle suggests that the story is that of Prince Tarquin and Miranda, the narration centres in Miranda's life and how she turns into a criminal. She represents a new type of offender: the beautiful, wealthy powerful woman who

¹⁸¹ Janet Todd, ed., *New Casebooks. Aphra Behn. Contemporary Critical Essays*. London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999.

¹⁸² Janet Todd, in the introduction to *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* argues that very little is known for fact about Behn's life: "what is securely known about Aphra Behn outside her works could be summed up in a page" (2000: 1). Although Todd does not consider this possibility, she could have been a journalist, although there are no indications that point out at it. In any case, she was a spy and she was in jail for debt. Both facts might have made her closer to offenders and the interest that they seem to awake in writers who decide to explore their psyche and share their conclusions with the readers.

manipulates men at her will to the extent of making them kill for her. Although she cannot be accused of prostitution because she did not sell her services as such, her lusty nature is reminded constantly as it was the trigger for all her other sins. Even when they are very distant in time and literary genre, Alice Arden and Miranda are akin characters because of the nature of their crimes. It is passion and the impossibility of enjoying their object of desire what turns them into female outlaws and murder instigators.

The story that *The Fair Jilt* narrates seems to be built from a piece of news. Behn takes as a starting point the sensationalist happening at an execution in Antwerp in which a famous prince accused of an attempted murder saves his life by the executioner's failed blow. The following extract belongs to the London Gazette from May 1666:

[Price Tarquino,] being condemned at Atwerp to be beheaded, for endeavouring the death of his sister-in-law: being on the scaffold, the executioner tied a handkerchief about his head and by great accident his blow lighted upon the knot, giving him only a slight wound. Upon which, the people being in a tumult, he was carried back to the Town-house, and is in hopes both of his pardon and his recovery. (1995: 2)¹⁸³

According to Jane Todd, Aphra Behn "arrived at Atwerp in July 1666, engaged in her spying mission for the English government" (1995 : 2). Therefore, it is very likely that she read or heard of such an abnormal event. This uncommon happening is a piece of news which can trigger the imagination of writers and journalists even in the present

¹⁸³ Janet Todd, ed, *The Works of Aphra Behn*, Vol. 3, "The Fair Jilt and Other Stories," London: Pickering and Chatto, 1995.

time, as the factual element is there and it only needs a matching extraordinary story to make it a best-seller. Behn probably saw the potential of it to use it to create a literary piece. Decorated with love, passion, wickedness, revenge and providence, it makes a perfect combo for the seventeenth-century morbid readers.

These affirmations are but suppositions, as it is not possible to prove the existence or invention of Miranda, the fair jilt, or any of the other characters but prince Tarquin. Behn, as it was proper of the writers in her time, claims to be writing a true story:

I do not pretend here to entertain you with a feigned story, or anything pieced together with romantic accidents; but every circumstance, to a title, is truth. To a great part of the main, I myself was an eye-witness; and what I did not see, I was confirmed of by actors in the intrigue, holy men, of the Order of St Francis: But for the sake of some of her relations, I shall give my Fair Jilt a feigned name, that of Miranda; but my hero must retain his own, it being too illustrious to be concealed.

(1995: 9)¹⁸⁴

If Behn bases her account in a piece of news about Prince Tarquin's execution, this is the only part that she can prove. For this reason, she cannot make his name up but otherwise she needs to highlight and use his notoriety in order to prove the veracity of the events. The "feigned name" given to the fair jilt probably responds to the fictitious part of the story, since if Tarquin's existence and story could be checked, there is no reason why his wife's name had to be under cover. After all, he was tried and punished for the attempted murder of her sister. Moreover, by adding that the events were confirmed by holy men, she achieves two main purposes; first, she connects the three stories: Miranda's, Prince Tarquin's and Father Francisco's, what adds cohesion and

¹⁸⁴ All extracts from *The Fair Jilt* have been quoted from Janet Todd's edition. *The Works of Aphra Behn*, Vol. 3, "The Fair Jilt and Other Stories," London: Pickering and Chatto, 1995.

coherence to the whole narration. Second, by reinforcing her tale with the word of the men of the church, she is implying that their testimony needs to be trusted, since they are not expected to lie, make up or decorate the facts that she is going to tell the readers about.

Apart from her initial affirmation that her narration is a true one, there are hints to the story that evoke the connection between the narrator and the events. The narrator, which can be Aphra Behn herself or a fictionalised author,¹⁸⁵ becomes visible to remind the reader of her presence. She includes comments such as forgetting some data because of not writing them down in her journal. For this reason, she cannot tell when the payment owed to Alcidiana, Miranda's sister, is due for: "setting a certain Time, which I have not been so curious as to retain, or put in my Journal Observations; but I am sure it was not long, as may be easily imagin'd" (1995: 36).¹⁸⁶ This money had

¹⁸⁵ Jacqueline Pearson analyses the narrative voices in Aphra Behn's stories. She notes that none of her fourteen narrators is definite male. She establishes a relationship between narrators and gender controversies which is very interesting. She defends that some of these narrators are misogynist by the implications they make of their female protagonists. Her point of view is a very interesting one. She states that the narrators "create complex paradoxes about female power and powerlessness." She believes that "Behn creates narrators who either speak with a consciously ironic voice to reveal the contradictions in the received orthodoxies of gender, or unconsciously reveal themselves as victims of these very contradictions" (1991: 48). I partially agree with Pearson, though, because in stories such as *The Fair Jilt*, where the author is trying to convince of the authenticity of her tale, she wants to be part of it as a narrator, editor and witness of the accounts. It is what it adds veracity to the narration. Therefore, from my point of view, it is Behn herself the authorial and narratorial voice and therefore, the narrator is referred as "she". For further information on this topic, see Jacqueline Pearson, "Gender and Narrative in the Fiction of Aphra Behn," *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 42 (1991), pp. 40-56.

¹⁸⁶ Janet Todd makes the following remark in a footnote:

Behn's reference to her keeping of journals has recently been given more credence with the discovery of the manuscript, 'Astrea's Booke', in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The

to be paid by Prince Tarquin, Miranda's husband, for the attempted murder of Alcidiana by Miranda's servant, who is sent to attend Alcidiana and kill her on Miranda's behalf. The narrator moves backwards and forwards in time, for instance when referring to Father Francisco's current life: he "lives now a most exemplary pious Life, and as he did before; for he is yet living in *Antwerp*" (1995: 42). She introduces this type of sentences to let the reader know that she has personally talked to him, as in the following: "But the whole letter, as he told me afterwards, was to persuade her from the honour she did him, by loving him" (1995: 21). These interventions are not very frequent in the narration, but they are enough to assert the presence of the narrator as an active part in the story; she is a strong link between readers and characters. As a matter of fact, the final sentence in *The Fair Jilt* reinforces the eye witnessing of the narrator: "Since I began this Relation, I heard that Prince *Tarquin* dy'd about three quarters of a Year ago" (1995: 48). In this last narrator's intervention, Behn probably gives information about Tarquin rather than Miranda—even if immediately before she comments on Miranda's repentance and happy life—because Tarquin is the single character which could be traced in reality.

Janet Todd contemplates the possibility of an actual interview between Behn and Prince Tarquin. However, since "Aphra Behn left England in July 1666 and her first letter from Antwerp was sent in August [and] since the narrator's meeting with Tarquin took place about two and a half years before, there seems to be some discrepancy in dates" (1995: 444). For this reason she concludes that "Behn and the

manuscript, a holograph collection of Restoration satires and broadsides, appears to have belonged to Behn and one of the hands identified in the book may be hers (1995: 445)

What Todd seems to imply is that it might be even true that Behn made notes about interesting events that she could later use for her fictions, the same way that some novelists do today.

narrator should not be too closely identified in experience here or that Behn is not being accurate or that she had been to Antwerp during the previous years” (1995: 444). It could be any of those reasons, or it could be a pretended pose as it is common in the writers of criminal biographies. From my perspective, the narrator needs to be identified with the author, Aphra Behn. In the dedication to Henry Pain, placed after the title page, Behn emphasises the truth of what she is going to tell. She writes thus:

For however it may be imagin'd that Poety (my Talent) has so greatly the Ascendant over me, that all I write must pass for Fiction, I now desire to have it understood that this is Reality, and Matter of Fact, and acted in this our latter Age. And that, in the Person of Tarquin, I bring a Prince to kiss your Hands, who own'd himself, and was receiv'd, as the last of the Race of the Roman Kings; whom I have often seen, and you have heard of, and whose Story is so well known to your self, and many Hundreds more: Part of which I had from the Mouth of this unhappy great Man, and was an Eye-Witness to the rest. (1995: 4)

In this dedication, it cannot be assumed that it is a feigned narrator who writes, since Behn signs it. From my point of view and taking into account the strong and normalised tendency to claim interviews with the protagonists of narratives or news, the most likely option is that Behn never interviewed Tarquin nor any other of the protagonists.

This has been the tendency so far. Since Greene and his conny-catching pamphlets there have been a series of authors who have asserted that they have met the protagonists of their stories. The role of these writers is thus to act as mere editors, to be the instrument by which the facts are known to the readership. In the previous analysis of the German Princess, Kirkman states that his biography adds new facts after having held interviews with people who directly knew her. Likewise, as concluded above, in proto-journalistic writings by the Ordinary and other “serious” authors,

confessions should never be taken as direct transcription from the offenders' mouths. Poems, letters and other additions are frequent. The elevated language in many instances, the standardised structure and the commonplace repentance indicate that they were not a hundred-per-cent trustworthy testimony of the criminals. Therefore, the assertion of factual stories and corporeal characters which later writers develop in the novel comes from a long-standing tradition. Behn reinforces and explores this tendency by—most likely—making up a tale from the failed execution of a man.

Yet Behn goes beyond previous criminal writings by introducing the story within the story. She is playful with the narrative mode, the multiple narrative voices and the intended confusion of fact and fiction. The account about Father Francisco is recounted by Cornelia, Miranda's maid, whose participation in the narrative is purely an excuse to introduce a second narrator. She relates the friar's life. Behn therefore creates this character with the purpose of having another witness, since she asserts that she knows the story from a reliable source: "My brother, Madam, was an Officer under the Prince, his Father, and knew his Story perfectly well; from whose Mouth I had it" (1995: 18). Cornelia might not have been an eye-witness of the events, but her brother knew Father Francisco's origins and his reasons for abandoning his family and titles to become a friar. After this intervention to tell the story, the character of Cornelia disappears from the main fiction, what reinforces her sole role as a second narrator in order to make the events more reliable. If Behn had asserted that all this information was first hand, it would have been suspicious. Therefore, she introduces someone else who knew someone else who was an eye witness.¹⁸⁷ Clearly, this is a

¹⁸⁷ Intended repetition to reproduce the tone of these narrations.

highly used resource nowadays for dubious events but it was a literary innovation at the time.

News, stories and reports are treated in this novella as part of a woman's entertainment, illustrating the conception that news and the so-called novels had at the time: "they receive *Presents, Balls, Serinades and Billets*. All the News, Wit, Verses, Songs, Novels, Musick, Gaming, and all fine Diversion is in their *Apartments*" (12). News is thus considered as part of the leisure time, the aim being thus to entertain the readers. As it has been formerly explained, news had a tinge of imagination and in times of shortage of news, it was common to resort to the writer's invention. Besides, even when news reports were truly factual, they could be adorned to make them more interesting.

In the *Fair Jilt*, the protagonist of the news report is Prince Tarquin, but he acts as a secondary character. His account is just the excuse to weave a very complicated story around this factual event. The work aims at exploring the consequences of love, as it says in the prologue, where she explains for over two pages the advantages of love only to conclude that she will prove "the strong Effects of Love in some unguarded and ungovern'd Hearts; where it rages beyond the Inspirations of *a God all soft and gentle*, and reigns more like *a Fury from Hell*" (1995: 9). In the case of Prince Tarquin, his love for Miranda makes a criminal out of him. Yet this seems to be Behn's excuse to link Miranda's story to the piece of news about Tarquin's execution. The real object of analysis in the novella is the character of Miranda; the work is an exploration of the circumstances of this female offender and the consequences of extreme passions.

Miranda, the jilt, embodies the prototypical female villain. She is a seducer and a manipulator of men with a Machiavellian mind. These features make her equally

attractive and despised at the same time, representing an early conception of the femme fatal. She is described by the narrator in the following terms:

she was vain enough to glory in her Conquest, and make it her Business to wound. She lov'd nothing so much as to behold sighing Slaves at her Feet, of the greatest Quality; and treated 'em all with an Affability that gave 'em Hope . . . *Miranda* accepted their Presents, heard their Vows with pleasure, and willingly admitted all their soft Addresses; but wou'd not yield her Heart, or give away that lovely Person to the Possession of one, who cou'd please it self with so many. (1995: 11)

She is thus depicted as a wanton who likes being surrounded by suitors but does not commit to any of them in order not to lose the attentions of the rest. She is a woman who cannot accept a 'no' as answer and proves to have no scruples when she accuses Father Francisco of rape because he has rejected her. She has a strong determination to get what she wants. She falls madly in love with the friar because he did not yield to her charms. And the more he ignored her, the more resolute she became to have him, to the extent of cornering him and intimidating him with these words:

I will either force you to abandon that dull dissimulation, or you shall die, to prove your sanctity real. Therefore answer me immediately, answer my flame, my raging fire, which your eyes have kindled; or here, in this very moment, I will ruin thee; and make no scruple of revenging the pains I suffer, by that which shall take away your life and honour. (1995: 23)

She threatens him to ruin his reputation if he does not agree to satisfy her, but also to kill him: "you shall die", she says. At this point, her passion has turned into rage and hatred. This passage is evocative of Alice Arden's spiteful speech at Mosby's rejection. The extremely passionate woman who can kill for love is also capable of inflicting terrible pains to her object of desire, if the subject does not comply with her expectations.

Miranda is lusty, without scruples and ambitious. She shows no respect for others' lives. She decides to kill her sister, Alcidiana, and for that purpose she seduces a servant with the promise of giving him what he wants the most if he kills Alcidiana:

She grew more familiar with him to oblige him; and seeing Love dance in his Eyes, of which she was so good a Judge, she treated him more like a Lover than a Servant; till at last the ravish'd Youth, wholly transported out of himself, fell at her feet, and impatiently implor'd to receive her Commands quickly, that he might fly to execute 'em ... the Pay he shou'd receive for the Service she requir'd at his Hands, shou'd be—what he most wish'd for in the World. To this he bow'd to the Earth; and kissing her Feet, bade her command. And then, she boldly told him
'Twas to kill her Sister Alcidiana. (1995: 31-32)

It is not explicitly said here, but the readership could sense that, most probably, the reward that the servant expected was to enjoy his mistress' love, as he later on confesses at his trial:

He own'd 'twas not Reward of Gain he did it for, but Hope he shou'd command at his pleasure, the Possession of his Mistress, the Princess; who shou'd deny him nothing, after having intrusted him with so great a Secret; and that besides, she had elevated him with the Promise of that glorious Reward, and had dazl'd his young Heart with so charming a Prospect, that blind and mad with Joy, he rushed forward, to gain the desir'd Prize, and thought on nothing but his coming Happiness. (1995: 34)

Even if he was given a hundred pistols for the murder of Alcidiana, what motivated his willingness to do anything for her was the power of love that the narrator talks about in the opening pages. This is the origin of many crimes, as Behn is trying to prove in her work.

Van Brune, the servant, "was a Gentleman" (1995: 35), as the narrator notes,

and the author indicates by his surname; in Germany, Van denotes a noble origin. He is also beautiful and innocent. His character responds to a double function. On the one hand, he becomes the perfect example of how humans in love are easy to manipulate. On the other hand, the description of his trial and execution breaths reality into the story since it follows the general structure and tone of last-dying speeches, the *Ordinary's Accounts*, *Session Papers* and similar writings. Furthermore, it reinforces the premise stated in this thesis that literary authors mimicked proto-journalistic documents to make the accounts veritable and make them appealing to the readership. Behn seems interested in sharing the anxiety, expectation and other global feelings which punishments awake in the citizenship. Therefore, she describes very carefully the different stages of the crime.

First, the offence is described. The following sentence summarises how the page Van Brune plans to kill Alcidiana:

He no sooner left her Presence, but he goes directly and buys a Dose of Poyson, and went immediately to the House where *Alcidiana* liv'd; where, desiring to be brought to her Presence, he fell a-weeping; and told her, his Lady had fallen out with him, and dismiss'd him her Service. (1995: 32)

Van Brune seems to have devised the plan himself, since it is nowhere said in the text that Miranda has given him instructions on how to kill her sister. He "waited for some Days on her, before he cou'd get an Opportunity to administer his Devilish Potion" (1995: 32). Finally, he mixes the poison with "Wine with roasted Apples, which was usual with her; instead of Sugar, or with the Sugar, the baneful Drug was mix'd, and she drank it down" (1995: 32). However, the poison does not kill her. Doctors conclude that she has been given mercury because of her symptoms: "her Head and Body swoll'n,

her Eyes starting out, her Face black, and all deform'd" (1995: 33). When they make inquiries to find out where the poison could have come from, they suspect Van Brune, which is confirmed by his "thousand guilty Looks" and the apothecary, who "prov'd he had bought *Mercury* of him three or four Days before" (1995: 33). Behn provides many details for this case so as to add verity to her account. As stated above, it is impossible to prove if the story happened as such or if she invented it and added this event to Prince Tarquin's, since all proof of it is the historical record on the *London Gazette*.

Once the offence is presented and the proofs and subsequent investigation uncover the culprit, the author describes how he is taken to prison, is judged and, finally, punished: "He was immediately sent to be examin'd by the Margrave or Justice, who made his *Mittimus*, and sent him to Prison" (1995: 33).¹⁸⁸ After a short but indeterminate time in prison, the trial takes place: "it was not long before the Trials for Criminals came on; and the Day being arriv'd, *Van Brune* was try'd the first of all; every Body having already read his Destiny" (1995: 33). As it was commonplace before trials and executions, the offence and details were published so that the audience could be familiar with the convict. This responded to the purpose of creating an interest about the case and offenders and to attract as many spectators as possible to the public execution. Punishments and trials were public and part of the public life, after all, so they needed to involve as many citizens as possible.

Yet since Behn, most probably, was writing for a feminine audience, the trial and execution of the page is adorned with comments which are not very common in

¹⁸⁸ Todd explains that the Margrave is "a military governor, particularly of a border province" and that the mittimus was a warrant issued by the justice of the peace directing a prison keeper to receive a prisoner in custody (1995: 444).

criminal accounts. Her descriptions, especially of clothes and emotions are very detailed. Also, there is an emphasis on the page's beauty and how women admired and pitied him: "the Sessions-house was fill'd that Day with all the Ladies, and Chief of the Town, to hear the Result of his Trial; and the sad Youth was brought loaded with Chains, and pale as Death" (1995: 33). It seems that in the room there were only ladies—and the chief of town—so, probably, the appeal to pity is extended to a presupposed female readership, in order to induce them likewise to sympathise with the poor fellow who, "making but a weak Defence for himself, he was convicted, and sent back to Prison, to receive his Sentence of Death on the Morrow" (1995: 33-34). At this point of the narration, Behn's contemporary readership must have felt as desolate as the original audience that attended the trial.

The character of the page, Van Brune, is thus portrayed as a victim despite his attempted murder of Alcidiana. As it is conventional in proto-journalistic writings, his case is used as a warning for other people in the same situation, i.e., young men that have been seduced and induced to act against their nature. His speech is transcribed with the following words. He confessed

That he saw too late the Follies of his presumptuous Flame, and curs'd the deluding Flatteries of the fair Hypocrite who had sooth'd him to his Undoing: That he was a miserable Victim to her Wickedness, and hop'd he shou'd warn all young Men, by his Fall, to avoid the Dissimulation of the deceiving Fair: That he hop'd they wou'd have Pity on his Youth, and attribute his Crime to the subtile Perswasions alone of his Mistress, the Princess: And that since *Alcidiana* was not dead, they wou'd grant him mercy, and permit him to live to repent of his grievous Crime, in some part of the World, whither they might banish him. (1995: 34)

Again, in this speech, main features of the criminals' literature are found: repentance,

warning and expectation of mercy. Besides, he makes a reference to transportation as an alternative to the death penalty sentence. Van Brune sees the idea of being banished to “some part of the World” as a better punishment because that way he could live a life of repentance, which is what Moll Flanders will be enabled to do.¹⁸⁹

Yet Van Brune is not granted transportation but he is condemned to death instead while the Princess’ punishment is that of public shame:

both receiv’d Sentence; the Page to be hang’d, till he was dead, on a Gibbet in the Market-place; and the Princess to stand under the Gibbet, with a Rope about her Neck, the other End of which was to be fasten’d to the Gibbet where the Page was hanging; and to have an Inscription in large Characters upon her Back and Breast, of the Cause why: Where she was to stand from Ten in the Morning, to Twelve.

(1995: 35)

His punishment is surrounded by an air of injustice to the servant since his lady is allowed to remain alive while he dies in the gallows, even when Alcidiana is not dead and he has confessed he was the victim of his naivety and deep feelings for the evil Miranda. Behn notes the disagreement of the citizens with the verdict: “this Sentence, the People, with one Accord, believ’d too favourable for so ill a Woman, whose Crimes deserv’d Death, equal to that of *Van Brune*: Nevertheless, there were some who said, It was infinitely more severe than the Death it self” (1995: 35). The punishment to a public exhibition of the offender was very common for women, especially for those who trespassed their female roles. They were associated thus to manly behaviour, such as fornication or cross-dressing. It is a punishment that seeks the degradation of the

¹⁸⁹ Transportation started in the early seventeenth century. Both Behn and Defoe show their endorsement to this penalty that enabled repentance. Yet Van Brune needs to die in order to make it a stronger point. He is seen as a victim who has to pay for the wickedness of the jilt and his own folly.

self by public exposure of the offender who, in many circumstances is obliged to appear on a scaffold or elevated setting in a degrading situation. Pillories were the most common form of public humiliation. For the psychological consequences that it might have for the individual it can be considered a more cruel punishment than death, hence the note by the narrator that “there were some who said, It was infinitely more severe than the Death it self.” Public humiliation, as a form of punishment has appeared before in literature. Moll Cutpurse, for instance, is sentenced to stand on Paul’s Cross during the sermon on a Sunday morning so that all those who attend church or pass by could see the sinner. However, it is not until the nineteenth century when public punishment is fully analysed as a central topic in a literary work.¹⁹⁰

According to the narrator, the execution of Van Brune and public exhibition of Miranda’s shameful behaviour is mass attended. Behn is again taking a commonplace of executions and describing this fact to make it more credible. It is depicted in the following terms: “The following *Friday* was the Day of Execution, and one need not tell of the abundance of People, who were flock’d together in the Market-place: All the Windows were taken down, and fill’d with Spectators, and the Tops of Houses” (1995: 35). As it has been explained above,¹⁹¹ windows were rented for execution days. In this occasion, as it is a highly awaited punishment because of all the notoriety of the

¹⁹⁰ Nathaniel Hawthorne’s famous novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) has as its central theme the public humiliation of an adulterous woman. From hence it explores the consequences of sin and guilt in a society where the individual needs to be judged by the community. Public humiliation is still applied in many parts of the world, most of the times still associated to women, although the twenty-first century scandal took place in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Prisoners were forced to appear naked, on leash as if they were dogs and in extremely degrading situations while their captors were being photographed with triumphal smiles.

¹⁹¹ See 3.5.2.1. Drama and Executions, pp. 84-91.

people involved and the well-known circumstances of a story “every Body having already read” (1995: 33), the market place is crowded.

The protagonists give the masses the show that they have been waiting for. The princess does not participate in a normal parade, as a common prisoner, but hers is proper of her class:

at the Hour appointed, the fatal Beauty appeared. She was dress'd in a black Velvet Gown, with a rich Row of Diamonds all down the fore-part of the Breast, and a great Knot of Diamonds at the Peak behind; and a Petty-coat of flower'd Gold, very rich, and lac'd; with all things else suitable: A Gentleman carry'd her great Velvet Cushion before her, on which her Prayer-Book, embroider'd, was laid; her Train was born up by a Page, and the Prince led her, bare; follow'd by his Foot-men, Pages, and other Officers of his House. (1995: 35)

The narrator dedicates some lines to explain her appearance in a similar way to today's yellow press coverage of any celebrities' event.¹⁹² Van Brune is likewise described:

He was dress'd all in Mourning, and very fine Linen; bareheaded, with his own Hair, the fairest that cou'd be seen, hanging all in Curls on his Back and Shoulders, very long. He had a Prayer-Book of black Velvet in his Hand, and behav'd himself with much Penitence and Devotion. (1995: 35)

As stated above, the meticulous remarks which Behn' makes in these characterisations might respond to the high rate of female readers of her novellas. This idea is supported by Behn's references about the feminine audience that attended the trial and execution, so she might be aiming at creating a bond between the audience in Antwerp and her readers. At the Sessions House the public was chiefly female while during the

¹⁹² It seems that as current readership want to know about the dresses in the Oscars' ceremony, seventeenth-century readers were delighted to be told about the different items of clothing that felons worn to their punishment. Otherwise, it is not understood the length of this picture.

punishment there is a reference to women's sympathy: "he was turn'd off, while a loud Cry was heard through all the Market-place, especially from the fair Sex" (1995: 36). Presumably, the female readership would be likewise moved by this detailed description of execution. This is precisely the transformation which proto-journalistic accounts suffered after their proven success. They metamorphosed from concise and purely administrative documents into long narrations that aimed at the melodramatic effect in their readers.

Before dying, Van Brune, as it is proper of a criminal, repents. Yet Behn here introduces a novelty in criminal literature; the page repents of having accused his mistress and apologises to her:

When he was brought under the Gibbet, he seeing his Mistress in that Condition, shew'd an infinite Concern, and his fair Face was cover'd over with Blushes; and falling at her Feet, he humbly ask'd her Pardon for having been the Occasion of so great an Infamy to her, by a weak Confession, which the Fears of Youth, and Hopes of Life, had oblig'd him to make, so greatly to her Dis-honour; for, indeed, he had wanted that manly Strength, to bear the Efforts of dying as he ought, in Duty, and Honour it self; and that he cou'd not die in Peace, unless she cou'd forgive him.

(1995: 36)

Miranda, still proud, does not repent after the page is executed. On the contrary, she plots to kill her sister in order to prevent her fortune going to Alcidiana as compensation. The prince, whose only aim in this story is to make his wife happy, agrees to kill his sister-in-law. After he shoots her and he fails, he is apprehended and taken to prison. Only then does Miranda repent of her sins, but after much insistence of the friars to confess and apologise in order to make amends to her husband and Father Francisco's situation, both of them imprisoned as a consequence of her sins. Her

confession is narrated in the following way:

at last confess'd all her Life, all the Lewdness of her Practices with several Princes and great Men; besides her Lusts with People that serv'd her, and others in mean Capacity: And lastly, the whole Truth of the young *Friar*; and how she had drawn the Page, and the Prince, her Husband, to this design'd Murther of her Sister. This she sign'd with her Hand, in the Presence of the Prince, her Husband, and several holy Men who were present. (1995: 42)

It is only after her confession that they release the friar. Yet Tarquin is not so fortunate and, after six months, he is he was sentenced to be beheaded.

Again, Behn recreates the important moment of an execution to build up a climax in the story. This time, though, she is doubtlessly basing her account on a real event. She likewise describes his parade to the execution place:

When he came to the Market-place, whither he walk'd on foot, follow'd by his own Domesticks, and some bearing a black Velvet Coffin, with Silver Hinges; the Heads-man before him, with his fatal Scimitre drawn; his Confessor by his Side, and many Gentlemen and Church-men, with Father *Francisco*, attending him; the People showering Millions of Blessings on him, and beholding with weeping Eyes, he mounted the Scaffold; which was strow'd with some Sawdust about the place where he was to kneel, to receive the Blood: For they be-head People kneeling, and with the Back-stroke of a Scimitre; and not lying on a Block, and with an Ax, as we in *England*. The Scaffold had a low Rail about it, that every Body might more conveniently see: This was hung with Black; and all the State that such a Death cou'd have, was here in most decent Order. (1995: 44)

In this passage, Behn immerses her readership in the executions atmosphere, by describing the procession, the scaffold and how beheadings take place in Antwerp, contrasting the differences with the way they did it in England. Tarquin does not give a speech when he is on the scaffold: "he did not say much upon the Scaffold: The Sum of what he said to his Friends was, to be kind, and take care of the poor Penitent, his

Wife: To others, recommending his honest and generous Servants” (1995: 44). He is not said to repent publicly, probably because he is seen as a victim of his love, for which reason the audience pities him. He does not recommend others to be careful about women’s wantonness or their evil tricks, as the page did in his confession. He behaves very honourably instead: “he was some time in Prayer, and a very short time speaking to his Confessor; then he turn’d to the Headsman, and desir’d him to do his Office well, and gave him twenty *Leue d’Or’s*” (1995: 44). Behn’s emphasis is more on the circumstances that surrounded the execution than on any powerful speech that might serve as a moral lesson for other offenders. She seems interested in building up tension to the moment in which the final blow is given:

Undressing himself with the help of his *Vallet* and Page, he pull’d off his Coat, and had underneath a white Satten Wastecoat: He took off his Periwigg, and put on a white Satten-cap, with a Holland one, done with Poynt, under it, which he pull’d a little over his Eyes; then he took a chearful Leave of all, and kneel’d down, and said *When he lifted up his Hands the third time, the Heads-man shou’d do his Office.*

(1995: 44-45)

The narrator wants the readers to feel that contained breath that the audience experiments at the moment of the strike. There is an emphasis on how all the multitude feels and behaves as a single being, their empathy with the prince being maximum. “The People, with one common Voice, as if it had been but one entire one, pray’d for his Soul: and Murmurs of Sighs were heard from the whole Multitude, who scrambl’d for some of the bloody Saw-dust, to keep for his Memory” (1995: 45). Highlighting that the audience at the execution was united helps to reinforce a feeling of sympathy between that original audience and the readers of Behn’s novella.

With such a detailed depiction, Behn is able to transmit the extreme morbidity of the situation. In the above quotation, the narrator explains how the crowd pushed for some of the saw dust impregnated of the prince's blood to keep as a relic, as if he were a saint. The following extract likewise reflects these two feelings: the empathic audience that feels as one and the attractiveness of the gruesome macabre situation:

The Heads-man going to take up the Head, as the manner is, to shew to the People, he found he had not struck it off, and that the Body stirr'd. With that he stepp'd to an Engine which they always carry with 'em, to force those who may be refractory; thinking, as he said, to have twisted the Head from the Shoulders, conceiving it to hang but by a small matter of Flesh. ... The Prince, who found himself yet alive; or rather, who was past Thinking, but had some Sense of Feeling left, when the Heads-man took him up, and set his Back against the Rail, and clap'd the Engine about his Neck, got his two Thumbs between the Rope and his Neck, feeling himself pres'd there; and struggling between Life and Death, and bending himself over the Rail backward, while the Heads-man pull'd forward, he threw himself quite over the Rail by Chance, and not Design, and fell upon the Heads and Shoulders of the People, who were crying out with amazing Shouts of Joy. The Heads-man leap'd after him, but the Rabble had like to have pull'd him to pieces: all the City was in an Uproar, but none knew what the matter was, but those who bore the Body of the Prince, whom they found yet living; but how, or by what strange Miracle preserv'd, they knew not, nor did examine; but one Accord, as if the whole Croud had been one Body, and had but one Motion, they bore the Prince on their Heads, about a hundred Yards from the Scaffold, where there is a Monastery of *Jesuits*; and there they secur'd him. All this was done; his Beheading, his Falling, and his being secur'd, almost in a Moments time; the People rejoicing. As at some extraordinary Victory won. (1995: 45)

The fact that Prince Tarquin was taken by the audience and protected in the monastery was part of the piece of news in the *London Gazette*. But the adornment that Behn implements to this account is what makes of a piece of news a work of art. She has managed to move her readership, transport them to the time and place that she not

even herself experienced, since she arrived months later to Antwerp.

All in all, *The Fair Jilt* represents a very important step towards the development of the novel. Its mixed nature reflects the two main influences of the new genre: the romance and the news. It evokes the romantic idea of a distant location with characters that are beautiful—because there is a special emphasis in highlighting that all of them are of a rare beauty—and rich. They do not belong to the common people since Father Francisco comes from a noble German family and Miranda is not a simple nun, but she is heiress of an immense fortune. The story has all the intrigues that are proper of romances. Yet, it uses a real event as its basis and Behn employs techniques that are proper of native criminal writings, such as the introduction of the narrator's voice in the narrative and the emphasis in first-hand information, as well as all the elements and structure which are commonplace in trials and execution papers. The lack of proximity between the character's world and the reader's background is what keeps *The Fair Jilt* still away from the novel. However, this distance is solved in the two executions, in which Behn narrows the space between the two audiences. It is not a novel yet but Behn's *The Fair Jilt* is a masterpiece in criminal literature. The common people and the everyday situations are resolved by Defoe in the final step towards the novel.

5. *MOLL FLANDERS*

Moll Flanders is one of the best known female criminals that literature has produced. In her, most of the characteristics of previously analysed female offenders are condensed. With Moll, Daniel Defoe offers an insightful exploration of the life of a woman who is driven into criminality by adverse circumstances, scrutinising all the stages through which a female outlaw goes and making her move from one offense to the other. Many discussions about this character focus on the possible fictionalisation of a real woman. For instance, Gerald Howson published an article entitled “Who was Moll Flanders?”¹⁹³ in which he proposes Elizabeth Adkins, alias Mary Godson or Goldstone—better known as Moll King—, as the pickpocket on which Defoe based his Moll.¹⁹⁴ The interest this character stirs is precisely due to the treatment Defoe makes of a criminal’s life to build up his novel. From my perspective, the success of *Moll Flanders* is clearly based on the ordinariness of her case; indeed, she can represent the lives of many female offenders. She has features of real criminals whose lives were found in proto-journalistic accounts as well as previous literary adaptations of their deeds. Moreover, after realizing how biographers and proto-journalists could not be trusted in telling absolutely the whole truth in their accounts, Defoe might have produced the character of Moll Flanders as a construct made up of many real cases, enhanced by Defoe’s imagination. Therefore, instead of whether she was based on just one woman or in several, what is relevant for this analysis is the inference that Defoe used real material to produce his novel, following in the footsteps of a long-standing English literary tradition of fictionalised female offenders.

¹⁹³ Gerald Howson, “Who was Moll Flanders?” *The Times Literary Supplement* 18 (1968): 63-64.

¹⁹⁴ Howson’s hypothesis is however difficult to prove and, even if it might be relevant for the present study, the scope of this investigation is clearly beyond the limits of this thesis.

The present chapter will deal with the process of a woman who becomes a criminal, paying attention to the different stages she goes through. The analysis of Defoe's *Moll Flanders* will therefore help to summarise the ideas that have been presented through this thesis by analysing this character in the light of the other female protagonists that have been studied so far. As I intend to show in this chapter, the novelties introduced by Defoe will be spotted so as to confirm that *Moll Flanders* is in fact the first novel in English language. *Moll Flanders* has often been associated by scholarship with picaresque narrative, so it is also my purpose to demonstrate this novel's distinctiveness if contrasted with picaresque tradition, reinforcing by contrast its connection to native literature. All in all, this chapter and the analysis of Moll as an offender who combines several transgressions will be the coda to the study that has been offered in this thesis, thus confirming the premises that were established at the beginning.

Many critics before have distinguished two phases in Moll Flanders's life: "the first containing Moll's sexual adventures, the second being her life as a thief, her imprisonment and her transportation to America."¹⁹⁵ These two parts correspond to two kinds of transgressions. According to Elisabeth D  tis, "Moll is guilty of a great number of offences ranging from theft to bigamy, all falling into one or the other category of offences, those against manners and morals and those against property" (27).¹⁹⁶ These crimes are stated from the start. The title page serves as a summary and introduction to the many transgressions that she commits.

The Fortunes & Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders &c.

¹⁹⁵ Douglas Brooks, "Moll Flanders: An Interpretation," *Essays in Criticism* 19 (1969): 46.

¹⁹⁶ Elisabeth D  tis, ed. *Daniel Defoe, Moll Flanders* (Paris: Didier   rudition, 1997).

Who was Born in Newgate, and during a Life of continu'd Variety for Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was Twelve Year a Whore, five times a Wife (whereof once to her own Brother), Twelve Year a Thief, Eight Year a Transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew Rich, liv'd Honest, and dies a Penitent. Written from her own Memorandums. By Daniel Defoe.¹⁹⁷

In this title page, there is an emphasis on the fact that Moll Flanders was bound to become a criminal, since she was born in Newgate.¹⁹⁸ Apart from her already marked predisposition, Moll complies with the characteristics expected of the female criminal. She leads a life of "continu'd variety." For many years she was a whore and a husband seeker, having been married for five times, one of them to her own brother. After her period as a prostitute, she turned into a thief. Therefore, Moll Flanders's offences could be divided into two groups, corresponding to two different moments of her life.

Also her crimes can be separated depending on whether she commits them innocently or on purpose. In her early years, Moll behaves as a prostitute, first without much notice, and then in order to survive and depend on a man who can provide her with economic security. She turns to robbery once she realises she cannot escape poverty by depending on any man; she can only trust herself to become a gentlewoman.

Before entering the discussion of the type of criminal that Moll is, some other aspects need to be taken into account, such as her name and the circumstances that predisposed her to become an offender. These two elements shape the character and

¹⁹⁷ All the references and extracts from the novel are from the 1971 edition, G. A. Starr, ed., *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

¹⁹⁸ Many criminal biographers associated the birth situation of an offender to his or her future relationship with crime. Note, for example, *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith*, where the writer insists that she was born under the influence of Mercury, the God of thieves, and Venus, associated to lust and prostitutes. See page 203 of this thesis.

the work itself. The shortened title of the novel responds to the pseudonym that she receives. Moll was the most common name for women in the crime industry for centuries. Her surname, Flanders, makes reference to the fabric imported from the County of Flanders, which female pickpockets coveted for its value. She first uses this surname when she pretends to be a widow. Then, interestingly, it is her underworld companions who call her Moll Flanders. She wonders how they have nicknamed her by her previous false surname.

These were they that gave me the Name of *Moll Flanders*: For it was no more of Affinity with my real Name, or with any of the Names I had ever gone by, than black is of Kin to white, except that once, as before I call'd my self in the *Mint*; but that these Rogues never knew, nor could I ever learn how they came to give me the Name, or what the Ocassion of it was. (1971: 214)

Yet the ones who re-named her Moll Flanders are no longer alive by the time she writes her memoirs. They “are out of the Way of doing [her] any Harm, having gone out of the World by the Steps and the String, as [she] often expected to go” (1971: 7). Since her old companions are dead, it is safe for her to use her alias once more, probably because it is a name which best defines her. Otherwise, she could have chosen a new one.

Regarding her predisposition to crime, she constantly emphasises that her circumstances did not leave her with any other option. Moll’s mother abandoned her when she was just a baby. She was helpless as

[her mother] left a poor desolate girl without friends, without clothes, without help or helper, as was [her] fate; and by which, [she] was not only exposed to very great distresses, even before [she] was capable of understanding [her] case or how to amend it, but brought into a course of life, scandalous in itself, and which in its ordinary course tended to the swift destruction both of soul and body. (1971: 8)

Besides her mother, Moll also blames the British government of her ill fortune. She complains that in her country, the authorities forced orphans to work when they were too young. Instead, she suggests they could have been provided with a good education and training in trades as it was the case in France (1971: 8).¹⁹⁹ As the author presents it, Moll is a victim of her circumstances. Defoe justifies her ill doings in the following way: “there is not a wicked action in any part of it, but is first or last rendered unhappy and unfortunate” (1971: 3). Hence, as the author sees it and his protagonist defends, it is not completely her fault that she ends up becoming part of the underworld; her fate is due to her ill fortune and the wrongly-chosen companionship.

Her surroundings might have determined her crime inclination, yet Moll is also decided to become a gentlewoman at any expense. During the eighteenth century, the most common occupation for a girl without resources was to be at the service of a lady. However, Moll does not want to work as a maid, as she tells the nurse that takes her in Colchester: “I cant’ Work House-Work” (1971: 10). The nurse answers ironically, “pray how will you come a to be a Gentlewoman? What, will you do it by your Fingers Ends?” (10). She is making a reference to Moll’s suggestion of living on the needle, but

¹⁹⁹ In instances such as the comparison between the English and the French approach to orphans, the reader can appreciate the criticism that Defoe makes of the social system in Britain as well as the harsh methods to eradicate crime and poverty. He has an insider’s perspective of the underworld and the criminals’ conditions. But he also benefits from an international experience. Hence, he is able to compare the situation in Britain with that of other countries, France, for instance. He uses thus his novel to teach that the wrong paths can take the reader to a life of misery and even to death, but he takes the chance to make the government responsible for the situation that Britain was living during the first decades of the eighteenth century. Defoe was a Puritan but also a very pragmatic person. The “providence” that Moll holds responsible for her course can be both read as divine providence but also as the socioeconomic circumstances that force her into a life of opportunism in order to survive in a callous society.

both the author and the readers have in mind her dexterity as a pickpocket, which is actually what finally makes her a gentlewoman. Her idea of nobility is different, though, as she explains: “all I understood by being a Gentlewoman, was to be able to Work for myself, and get enough to keep me without that terrible Bug-bear *going to Service*” (1971: 13). From an early age, Moll is resolved to be able to sustain herself. In this aspect, she succeeds. Hence, not only the ill circumstances lead her towards crime; her determination to become wealthy and independent contributes to a career of delinquency.

Defoe seems to have devised his work as an extended criminal’s ballad or a detailed case in the Old Bailey *Session Papers*. As was explained previously when discussing *Arden of Faversham*, most proto-journalistic and legal accounts situated their readers in the circumstances that led the felon to commit the crime.²⁰⁰ However, the structure pointed out by Adams which both the accounts and the domestic tragedy follow is not strictly respected in *Moll Flanders*. Adams’ sequence of “sin, discovery, repentance, punishment and expectation of divine mercy” is altered as Defoe is mostly interested in the evolution of the character. Moll narrates her feelings and thoughts in a very detailed manner, so that the readership can have a better understanding of how an innocent girl, whose aim in life was to live by herself, could end up considering killing a child to steal her necklace. The textual analysis will focus mostly in the first half of the novel, so as to provide examples of how the female criminal mind develops and evolves in the character of Moll Flanders.

Moll is first introduced in law-breaking unconsciously until she becomes a deliberate offender. The first companions she recalls in her life are a group of gypsies.

²⁰⁰ See pages 178-179.

With them, Moll is introduced into a life of vagrancy and, probably, petty crime, since these were the associations that gypsies would bring to the minds of eighteenth-century readers.²⁰¹ Moll's memories of her time with them are vague, though:²⁰²

the first account that I can Recollect, or could ever learn of myself, was, that I had wandred among a Crew of those People they call *Gypsies*, or *Egyptians*; but I believe it was but a very little while that I had been among them, for I had not had my Skin discolour'd, or blacken'd, as they do very young to all the Children they carry about with them, nor can I tell how I came among them, or how I got from them. (1971: 9)

In the company of gypsies Moll does not become a criminal yet but, as stated above, as in her birth in Newgate, these are events that will determine her future life as an offender.

Her corruption begins when she accepts money from the elder Brother in the Colchester family that takes her after her nurse dies. The monetary exchange for allowing him to kiss her and take "freedoms" (1971: 25) makes her a prostitute although she does it quite unwittingly. It is not made clear if she falls in love with him because of his loving words or because of the money, since both rewards are tightly linked from the start: "he got off from the Bed, lifted me up, professing a great deal of Love for me . . . and with that he put five Guineas into my Hand, and went away down

²⁰¹ Note that gypsies were considered criminals because of the type of life they led. They were vagrants and that reason alone already made them outlaws. There is obviously an intention in introducing her connection to them, even if she does not really recall much from her early years. Defoe knew what his readers would think of an association to the gypsy community, so there was no need for him or Moll to give any further details. She also implies that they were not good company so she decided to leave them in Colchester "I hid myself and wou'd not go any farther with them" (1971: 9). Defoe devotes just a paragraph to mention them, but it is enough for the readers to understand his intention.

²⁰² She mentions that when she arrived in Colchester she was three years old. Hence, she was but a toddler when she lived with the gypsies. The amount of time spent with them is indeterminate, though.

Stairs" (1971: 25). As he proceeds to make advances, he raises the quantity of money: "he put almost a Handful of Gold in [her] Hand" (1971: 25). She starts mentioning the quantities as they are larger, as in the following instance when he pays a hundred guineas: "that you may see that I am not in Jest, *says he*, here's an Earnest for you; and with that he pulls out a silk Purse, with a Hundred Guineas in it, and gave it me; and I'll give you such another, *says he*, every Year till I Marry you" (1971: 28). Gradually, their exchanges become a routine.

Moll does not refuse the money on any occasion. On the contrary, she expects to be paid for allowing him some liberties, even when she is not convinced of his marital intentions: "I had a most unbounded Stock of Vanity and Pride, and but a very little Stock of Vertue; I did indeed cast sometimes with myself what my young Master aim'd at, but thought of nothing, but the fine Words, and the Gold" (1971: 25). In the end, it is money and not love what corrupts her since once she accepts the money, she also has to accept his advances and let him do as he pleases, as she explains:

putting the Purse into my Bosom, I made no more Resistance to him, but let him do just what he pleas'd; and thus I finish'd my own Destruction at once, for from this Day, being forsaken of my Vertue, and my Modesty, I had nothing of Value left to recommend me, either to God's Blessing, or Man's Assistance. (1971: 28)

Thus she progressively begins her career as a prostitute, of which she becomes aware rather soon:

I was now in a dreadful Condition indeed, and now I repented heartily my easiness with the eldest Brother, not from any Reflection of Conscience, but from a View of the Happiness I might have enjoy'd, and had now made impossible; for tho' I had no great Scruples of Conscience *as I have said* to struggle with, yet I could not think of being a Whore to one Brother, and a Wife to the other. (1971: 31)

Moll makes this reflection when the elder brother shows no real interest in marrying her but he decides that she should be his brother's wife instead. She feels as an object who passes from someone's hands into someone else's.

As she describes in the previous quotation, she had no scruples of conscience, but the situation of being the wife of a brother and the mistress of the other was not acceptable for her already shaky moral standards: "shall I now give the Lye to all those Arguments, and call myself your Whore, or Mistress, which is the same thing? And will you Transfer me to your Brother? Can you Transfer my Affection?" (1971: 39). Despite the possibility of marriage, which could save her honour, she sticks to the eldest brother because she has feelings for him: "I had much rather, since it is come that unhappy Length, be your Whore than your Brothers Wife" (1971: 40). She might have exchanged sex for money, but this first relationship is still based on affection although its foundations are a monetary intercourse. This relationship is finally ended by a payment that the eldest brother gives Moll in order to convince her to marry his brother: "and to satisfie you that I am Sincere, *added he*, I here offer you 500 l. in Money, to make you some Amends for the Freedoms I have taken with you, which we shall look upon as some of the Follies of our Lives, which 'tis hop'd we may Repent of" (1971: 55). Moll accepts the money but it makes her unhappy nonetheless, as she "lov'd him to an Extravagance, not easie to imagine" (1971: 56). In fact, there is much insistence that she loved this man truly and that was the reason of her ruin.²⁰³

²⁰³ A parallelism could be set between Aphra Behn's conception of love in *The Fair Jilt* and Defoe's in his *Moll Flanders*. Behn's text is very explicit of how blind love can ruin the life of a person, as it is the case of Prince Tarquin. However, in Defoe's work, the concept of the dangers of love, although still present, is more subtle. The emphasis relies rather in the importance of being economically independent.

Once Moll is disappointed with love and with the way men and women relationships work, she does not seek love again but for economic stability. “I kept true to this Notion, that a Woman should never be kept for a Mistress, that had Money to keep herself. Thus, my Pride, not my Principle, my Money, not my Vertue, kept me Honest” (1971: 61). By the time her husband Robin, the younger brother dies, she is older and wiser: “I had been trick’d once by *that cheat call’d LOVE*, but the game was over” (1971: 60). She knows how life works and what she can expect of it. Therefore, she plays her cards the best she can, proving that she has an authoritative voice to refuse being anybody else’s mistress. It could be said that being in love and naïve probably justifies her initial yield to offer sex for money, as she truly believed that she was going to marry the eldest brother.

From being a prostitute in the arms of the eldest brother, Moll turns into a bigamous woman, another form of prostitution, since of her four husbands only Robin, the younger brother, and her last husband, dies.²⁰⁴ Her next marriages will be discussed briefly in as much as they reflect her lifestyle and how she moves from the arms of a man into the arms of another, looking for stability and economic security. However, in terms of importance, she does not give the other men in her life the same relevance than the eldest brother. Moll does not offer many details of her other affairs and marriages, with the exception of Jemy—the only one who receives a name—and her brother, because of the relevance this event has for the ending of the story. Also,

²⁰⁴ Her second husband, the merchant who gets bankrupted and flees to France does not die, nor her brother or Jemy. Moll could thus have been accused of bigamy at different times, and even of incest, although she does not know that she is marrying her brother when she does. Moll is not prosecuted for these two crimes by the state, but Defoe portrays her as a sinning character, whether by providence or by her own intention of advancing in society.

abandoning her brother in spite of a comfortable economic situation shows a reaffirmation of her moral standards at a time when these were faltering.

After the initial emphasis on the love she felt for the elder brother, there is not a focus on feelings in her narration, with the exception of Jemy. Following her first disappointment, she realises that love is an economic transaction, and the emphasis shifts to her monetary status:

Indeed I had preserv'd the elder Brother's Bonds to me, to pay me 500 l. which he offer'd me for my Consent to Marry his Brother; and this with what I had saved of the Money he formerly gave me, and about as much more by my Husband, left me a Widow with about 1200 l. in my Pocket. (1971: 58)

Her second marriage represents a loss, since she is abandoned by the draper who falls into bankruptcy and flees to France. Her fortune is much lessened, "for including the Hollands, and a parcel of fine Muslins, which I carry'd off before, and some Plate, and other things; I found I could hardly muster up 500 l." (1971: 64). When she confesses her position to her friend, the Captain's wife, she resumes her possibilities of finding a husband in monetary terms:

my Stock was but low, for I had made but about 540 l. at the Close of my last Affair, and I had wasted some of that; However, I had about 460 l. left, a great many very rich Cloaths, a gold Watch, and some Jewels, tho' of no extraordinary value, and about 30 or 40 l. left in Linnen not dispos'd of. (1971: 76)

As can be appreciated by the examples, Moll gradually becomes more money driven and more pragmatic.²⁰⁵ She has to survive, so although she is still married to the

²⁰⁵ She soon understands the nature of marriage, being "the Consequences of politick Schemes, for forming Interests, and carrying on Business, and that LOVE had no Share but very little in the Matter" (1971: 67). This affirmation represents Moll's maturity at the realisation of the importance of money in her society. She has a better insight of the human nature and the relationship between them. Hence, she is able to provide a deeper sociological analysis from the London of her time. This is not the girl who

draper, she knows her husband is not going to return: "I had a Husband, and no Husband, and I could not pretend to Marry again, tho' I knew well enough my Husband would never see *England* any more, if he liv'd fifty Years" (1971: 64). Then, she has to turn to another man to secure her social and economic position.

It is during this time when she changes her name to Mrs. Flanders and dresses as a widow. Thus, the use of the surname which makes her famous is originally not associated to her robbery activity but to her chameleonic nature in search for a husband. The choice of Flanders could make reference to her husband's occupation as a draper. This change in name also involves a change in character. This Moll is more mature and self-confident. She knows what she is looking for, so she is determined to find an appropriate partner. Most of her suitors are debtors who keep the company of prostitutes and drink the little money they have. She depicts them fiercely: "these Men were too wicked, even for me" (1971: 65), since she finds herself not "wicked enough for such Fellows as these yet" (1971: 66). Moll's morality can be appreciated in her attitude and criticism of the world that surrounds her. From her point of view, she is an unlucky woman but not a criminal.

She succeeds in the finding of a good husband, but her ill-fortune ties her to her half-brother. Moll proves a strong morality that cannot be corrupted by the money that her mother offers her in order to "bury the whole thing entirely, and continue to live with him as [her] Husband" (1971: 97). However, she cannot ignore the fact that her husband is her brother. She summarises her feelings in the following terms: "I

dreams about becoming a gentlewoman anymore. There is a growth in her character, which evidences acceptance of the reality, as well as compliance to play her role as it is expected in this rigid environment.

could almost as willingly have embrac'd a Dog, as have let him offer any thing of that kind to me, for which Reason I could not bear the thoughts of coming between the Sheets with him" (1971: 98). Due to her abhorrence of the situation, she confesses to him her secret and decides to exchange a comfortable life in Virginia for the uncertainty of Britain.

Back in Europe and after having lost her cargo at sea, Moll becomes the mistress of a man in Bath since, after all, there "Men find a Mistress sometimes, but rarely look for a Wife" (1971: 106). Here she starts a six-year period as a kept woman, moving eventually to Hammersmith when she gets pregnant. She lodges there in a flat that her lover pays for her and their son. She realises that she has become the mistress of a married man and gives herself the "unmusical harsh sounding Title of WHORE" (1971: 116). Up to this point her story echoes that of many women in proto-journalistic writings since many of them entered the underworld in a similar way. For this reason, the warning to young ladies about the dangers of being beautiful and innocent appears frequently in ballads and broadsides. The formerly analysed case of Janet Fleming is a much sadder instance than Moll Flanders's life since by the time the former repents, she is very ill and dies.²⁰⁶

Moll wants to act as an example precisely because she is aware of the commonness of her conditions:

I am the more particular in this part, that if my Story comes to be read by any innocent young Body, they may learn from it to Guard themselves against the Mischiefs which attend an early Knowledge of their own Beauty; if a young Woman once thinks herself Handsome, she never doubts the Truth of any Man,

²⁰⁶ See pages 128 and 129.

that tells her he is in Love with her; for if she believes herself Charming enough
to Captivate him, tis natural to expect the Effects of it. (1971: 24)²⁰⁷

She repeats continuously that she should be taken as “a fair memento to all young women whose vanity prevails over their virtue” (27). Moll is turned into a prostitute by the elder brother’s promises of marriage and her naivety to think she could become a gentlewoman.

Janet Fleming, in the pamphlet “Life, Sufferings, and Death of Janet Fleming” previously commented The Life and In analogous circumstances Janet’s suitor seduces her “by making her numberless little presents, and filling her head with notions of future grandure, he prevailed upon the unsuspecting maid to quit her parents' roof, and go with him to Edinburgh.”²⁰⁸ As the story of Janet continues, her parallelism to Moll’s life is even greater as it can be observed in the following fragment:

Upon her arrival in town, her noble seducer placed her in stylish lodgings, where she was dressed in the most fashionable manner, and had a maid to wait upon her. He took her to all fashionable places of amusements, and never seemed happy but when in her company. In this manner about twelve months passed

²⁰⁷ This warning for young ladies is found still a century later because it reflects women’s situation and their lack of possibilities to ascend in the social system. Up to the twentieth century, women could only move up in the social scale by means of marriage. So it was very common that young women who came from a countryside environment to serve in the great city were charmed by a gentleman who convinced them of their honest intentions of marrying them. Samuel Richardson also embraces the topic in his *Pamela*, although Pamela’s moral standards keep her away from sinning. Her virtue is rewarded by a happy marriage to the house master. However, Pamela’s example is not representative of a reality in which ninety per cent of the seduced women ended begetting a child and living in the streets, ruined and taking any chance they could to survive in the harsh city environment either through prostitution or thievery, or both. Pamela’s chastity was mocked by Fielding in his *Joseph Andrews*, in which the author ridicules Pamela’s extreme virtuousness by transferring it to a male servant, exposing this way the improbability of such stern values.

²⁰⁸ ‘Life, Sufferings and Death of Janet Fleming’, from the National Library of Scotland’s digital collection, <http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/15461>.

away, in a continual round of dissipation, when there appeared a visible change in the conduct of her noble and vile seducer. His visits became less frequent—he upbraided her with extravagance—and she, in return, reproached him with seducing her from her dear parents and peaceful home. Things went on in this way for a few weeks, when the wretch set off for the Continent, leaving her in possession of only a few shillings, and heavily in arrears with her landlady. For some time she subsisted by pawning the trinkets and other valuables presented by her seducer, until she attracted the notice of a young gentleman of fashion, with whom she cohabited for nearly three months. Left again to her own resources, and descending step by step, she was at length reduced to obtain a livelihood by the casual wages of prostitution.

Janet's story resembles Moll Flanders' so much that it is not surprising that Defoe's readership believed that the novel told the story of a real woman. The broadside "Life, Sufferings, and Death of Janet Fleming" was published in the 1830s or 1840s, which proves *Moll Flanders* was a success because it was based in true accounts which were current affairs, still unsolved a century later. It can be concluded that Moll Flanders embodies Defoe's concern with the vulnerability of women in a society in which they could only be autonomous if they had an economic status, only obtainable by marriage.

There is a difference between Moll and felons in proto-journalistic and legal writings, though. Moll is a very cunning character and she finds resources to escape a situation of predetermined poverty since birth. When Moll's lover decides to stop the relationship after feeling guilty for his adultery, she invents a new way of income, which is extortion. She requests money from her lover with the excuse of going back to Virginia to meet her mother: "if he would send me 50 *l.* more to facilitate my going away, I would send him back a general Release, and would promise never to disturb

him with any Importunities” (1971: 125). In a similar way she obtains some goods from her brother, although she never signs the release, feeling very proud of it:

I manag’d so well in this case, that I got my Goods away before the Release was sign’d, and then I always found something or other to say to evade the thing, and to put off the signing it at all; till *at length* I pretended I must write to my Brother, and have his Answer, before I could do it. (1971: 127)

Moll has moved to a new stage in her life now. She plays her cards to her advantage in order to obtain what she needs from men: a small fortune that assures her economic independence. Her manipulative behaviour together with her calculating mind turns her into an evil character since an eighteenth-century audience would have perceived her as a risk for the status quo of society.

Yet Defoe creates a deeply human protagonist for his novel. Moll has doubts and feelings which interfere in her well-organised prospect of marrying the best suitor. Jemy is a turning point in her quest for a good marital transaction. Of all her lovers and husbands, he is the only one who receives a name, the only one for whom she would have forgotten her determination of being a gentlewoman: “I would have gone with him thro’ the World, if I had beg’d my Bread” (1971: 153). When he abandons her after realising that none of them have the fortune the other has imagined, she exclaims desperately that she would give everything if he returned: “I’ll give you all I have; I’ll beg, I’ll starve with you” (1971: 153). She only goes back to her pragmatism after she realises she is pregnant of Jemy once he is gone. Moll always resorts to desperate measures when she feels on the edge of poverty. She contacts the banker she has met before Jemy in order to accept his offer of marriage. With him, she does not have to look for alternative ways of living until he is bankrupted and dies of melancholy. It is

then that she utters her famous sentence: *"Give me not Poverty least I Steal"* (1971: 191). And so she does.

Moll starts her career as a thief by stealing an unattended bundle. If she has previously excused herself of her bigamy because her second husband and Jemy abandoned her, and of incest, because she married her brother without knowing it, once she becomes a thief she is fully aware of her acts against the law. In fact, first she announces that if she comes to be poor she will have to steal and then, she goes for a walk and finds an unattended bundle. Very soon after, she steals the necklace from a child. In this instance, she is even tempted to kill the girl: "the Devil put me upon killing the Child in the dark Alley, that it might not Cry" (1971: 194). She refrains herself from doing so, though, but she starts showing no remorse when she robs:

The last Affair left no great Concern upon me, for as I did the poor Child no harm, I only said to my self, I had given the Parents a just Reproof for their Negligence in leaving the poor little Lamb to come home by it self, and it would teach them to take more Care of it another time. (1971: 194)

Moll justifies her actions by blaming poverty, the devil or chance. She finds goods on her way and her extreme poverty leads her to take them unlawfully. In these circumstances, she feels the need to make the most of the opportunities that life offers her. Her second act of thievery is a parcel that two thieves drop in their escape. She waits until it is safe for her to pick it, and then she takes it home. She explains her action as follows: "I only robb'd the Thief I made no scruple at taking these Goods, and being very glad of them, too" (1971: 196). Likewise, she sees two rings on a window and does not hesitate to take them since they probably belong to "some thoughtless Lady, that had more Money than Forecast" (1971: 196). Moll thus always finds an excuse for her criminal actions.

Initially, her thefts are fortuitous. However, during the time that she lodges with her former governess and midwife, who attended her when she was with Jemy's child, she becomes a professional thief and she even rejoices in it. She explains to the reader how she learns from a more experienced woman:

The Comrade she helped me to deal in three sorts of Craft, (*viz.*) Shop-lifting, stealing of Shop-Books, and Pocket-Books, and taking off Gold Watches from the Ladies Sides, and this last she did so dexterously that no Woman ever arriv'd to the Perfection of that Art, so as to do it like her: I lik'd the first and the last of these things very well, and I attended her some time in the Practice, just as a Deputy attends a Midwife, without any Pay. (1971: 201)

When Moll is ready, her "teacher" allows her to work on her own: "At length she put me to practice. She had shown me her art, and I had several times unhooked a watch from her own side with great dexterity" (1971: 201). From this moment onwards, Moll stops finding abandoned parcels and taking advantage of situations to become a fully professional thief.

The relationship with her former midwife is determinant in Moll's criminal's career. When Moll meets her again, the old lady has changed her previous job for that of pawnbroker who, in fact, sells stolen goods:

I had not been long there, but I discover'd it more plainly than before, for every now and then I saw Hilts of Swords, Spoons, Forks, Tankards, and all such kind of Ware brought in, not to be Pawn'd, but to be sold down right; and she bought every thing that came without asking any Questions, but had very good Bargains as I found her Discourse. (1971: 200)

The governess, as Moll calls her, encourages Moll Flanders to bring her what she robs and prompts Moll to commit the crimes. The following instance belongs to a passage in which the governess suggests Moll to go to a house on fire in order to steal what she can:

One Night, in the Neighbourhood of my Governess House, they cryed Fire; my Governess look'd out, for we were all up, and cryed immediately that such a Gentlewoman's House was all Fire a top, and so indeed was: Here she gives me a jog, now, Child, says she, there is a rare opportunity, the Fire being so near that you may go to it before the Street is block'd up with the Crowd; she presently gave me my Cue, go, Child, *says she*, to the House, and run in and tell the Lady, or any Body you see, that you come to help them, and that you came from such a Gentlewoman (that is one of her Acquaintance farther up the Street); she gave me the like Cue to the next House, naming another, Name that was also an Acquaintance of the Gentlewoman of the House. (1971: 204)

At a time when Moll Flanders does not want to continue her incursions in the underworld because her comrade has been recently executed, the governess pushes her to continue with her criminal activity. This becomes the turning point in Moll Flanders's debut as a professional criminal.

Moll's governess is a central character in the novel. In fact, Defoe situates her appearance in the middle of the work, separating and uniting Moll's former and later ways of living. From my point of view, the governess represents an instrument for Moll's transition from one type of crime to another. She fulfils the role of the experienced woman who can give advice to younger ladies, since she has already suffered the same situation in her youth. She was "born a Pick-Pocket" (1971: 213), convicted for her crimes to be transported, but escaped and remained in Ireland until she could go back to England, where she "turn'd Midwife and Procuress" (1971: 213). When Moll Flanders meets the governess, Moll is not a girl, but she is not as old and experienced yet as she becomes by the time when she writes her memoirs. Moll needs guidance, so the midwife represents a motherly figure for her. She comes to be a substitute for Moll's absent mother who abandons her at birth and does not fully support Moll in her decision of telling her brother about their incestuous relationship.

Moreover, the governess is a leading character clearly rooted in traditional literary patterns. She fulfils the traditional role of the old lady who warns young ones about life and men. The motherly wise female figure who draws on her own experience in order to help the younger generations of ladies is no doubt the model on which the characterisation of the governess is based. Literary figures such as Widow Edyth, the Wife of Bath or the fishwives in *Westward for Smelts* had previously taken a similar position in their narratives. Accordingly, contemporary readership would have associated Moll's governess with these emblematic women from the English letters. At the same time, in the Ordinary's *Accounts*, the ordinary had also held a similar role in his writings. Even if there is no motherly discourse in the broadsides and pamphlets that the ordinaries wrote, there is always a moralising and a protective intention towards their readers.

However, the type of advice which the governess offers Moll leads the protagonist of this novel into a life of crime, which accentuates the irony of the whole work, especially when it is the governess who procures her salvation in the end. When Moll is in Newgate, the governess, who has become a penitent, sends Moll a minister who hears her confession and helps her to obtain transportation to Virginia. Moll and Jemy embark in the same ship, starting their quest together. Moll is not that abandoned child or woman anymore, she now has a companion; fate will finally be on her side. The ending of *Moll Flanders* is a well-known one. She receives her mother's fortune from the son she has had with her brother and she lives comfortably in Maryland until she returns to England in old age. The governess is thus a keystone in the narrative. She is the provider of Moll's happy ending.

Moreover, there is a rebirth metaphor which emphasises the function of the governess as this maternal figure. Moll's mother gives birth to her child in Newgate, condemning her thus to a life of misery. The governess grants Moll a second chance by bestowing her the opportunity to start anew. Through repentance and religious beliefs, the governess can change Moll's fate and make it a favourable one for her. Following the comparison between the governess and the ordinary's role, the governess leads Moll to salvation as the ordinary did with real life criminals.

Defoe seems to be using English literary models blended with proto-journalistic types in order to create expectations in his contemporary readers, who trusted that *Moll Flanders* was but the extended life of a criminal. Nevertheless, *Moll Flanders* has been subject to many interpretations. It is not clear if Defoe wanted to write solely a moralising narrative since Moll does not seem to be such a repentant criminal as she claims to be. She writes her story at old age, taking then the role of her governess instructing young ladies on how to act, or rather, not to act. She warns them about the dangers of bad companies and the risks of being beautiful and naïve. Or, at least, that is what she claims to be doing. In fact, Moll continuously justifies her decisions applying either to her poverty, innocence, bad company or bad luck. She acts accordingly, trying to fulfil her aspirations of becoming a gentlewoman and being financially independent; she improvises her responses to life when she finds herself in a difficult situation. Looking for a husband and afterwards robbing were actually the only alternatives that a woman had in the early eighteenth century if she wanted to escape poverty and live her own life.

Daniel Defoe's background as a journalist, together with his experience in prison, helps him to create the perfect criminal. Moll constantly makes allusion to her

dexterity, but she is not outstanding just as a pickpocket and a master of disguise. She manages to engage the reader in such a way that even if her acts are against the law, the readership cannot but support her reactions. She convinces her audience that she had no other way out of poverty but prostitution and then, robbery. Moll Flanders deceives everyone the same way that Defoe makes his contemporaries believe that he was publishing the extended account of a repented felon. The key is, as Bernbaum noticed, “not to be veracious but to seem veracious,” (1994: 32). He polishes previous literary characters to make Moll Flanders succeed where others fail. She is the coda to an exploration of female criminality in English letters. She is the beginning of new literary subgenre.

Conclusions

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, the choice of criminal literature and the relevance of the female offender in the rise of the English novel as the subject for this research responds to two main reasons: first, the neglect that criminal writings have suffered from scholars due to its base subject matter, and second, to demonstrate the importance they have had for the literature and culture in English. Stemming from the criminal novel, crime fiction is the most successful narrative subgenre in the English-speaking world. Also, in the development of the English novel, women have attracted attention in recent decades, but critics have either noticed their role as readers or as writers. There are no significant studies related to what the role of the woman as the protagonist of narratives is in the initial stages of the English

novel. Given these evident gaps in the history of literary criticism, this thesis, which combines the study of criminal writings with the analysis of female protagonists in criminal literature, has therefore contributed to shed light on the development of the English novel in its embryonic phase in which it was tightly associated with proto-journalistic texts.

The significance of women in the development of the novel has already been noted by several critics. However, these studies have usually focused on the relevance of female writers without taking into account the prominence of the female character in the early stages of the evolution of the criminal subgenre. As demonstrated in this thesis, the analysis of women in literary works—and in particular, female criminals—open a window into the motives that lead them to commit the crime. As presented in criminal writings, women are more vulnerable due to their circumstances, but they fight against a society that limits their possibilities, becoming thus outcasts. It is arguable if all the female characters that have been analysed in this thesis receive a sympathetic treatment from the authors of the works in which they appear, especially, in the case of Alice Arden. But nonetheless, what becomes clear from the study of a group of selected works is the fact that they were all of interest to the writers who decided to centre their works on the character in order to offer a deep insight into crime. Of all the analysed works, only Aphra Behn's *The Fair Jilt* does not explore the motives behind the murderous woman. Behn is, by contrast, more interested in the figure of Prince Tarquin and how his passion towards Miranda leads him to commit a crime. It is interesting, though, to compare how Prince Tarquin is perceived by the audience, as opposed to Miranda or the female felons in the other works that have been studied in this thesis. Prince Tarquin was saved by the spectators who were

present at his execution; probably the readership would not have condemned his behaviour, either. He does not seem to be considered as an offender even if he has attempted to murder Alcidiana. His wife is said to have manipulated him.

The woman as the evil temptress and instigator of the crime conveys a cliché that is shared by many of the authors, even by Aphra Behn. In *Arden of Faversham*, the motives for which Alice Arden wants to kill her husband are similar to Prince Tarquin's. She considers murder to secure love. However, she is compared to a snake and a hydra, thus equating her to a deadly creature. Likewise, Moll Cutpurse is literally called a monster (ii.135). The woman who attempted a rupture of the laws was generally considered a freak and was, therefore, criminalised. However, criminal women conveyed an attractive subject to write about because of the morbid tinge that their actions had. Interestingly, even if there were many more men than women in the world of organised crime, two out of three protagonists in the case of Defoe's novels are women.

As the study offered in chapter 5 of this thesis has showed, Moll Flanders epitomises the figure of the female criminal. If Defoe's protagonist is compared to the other characters analysed earlier in this thesis, many similar patterns can be identified. In *Arden of Faversham*, Alice decides to murder her husband in order to be free to marry her lover. She does not have a natural killing impulse, nor she does it for money or vengeance; she just wants to be able to make her own choice.²⁰⁹ Mary Frith, or Moll Cutpurse, as she was better known, is presented in *The Roaring Girl* as a woman who

²⁰⁹ Alice and Mosby had a love affair before she married Arden. She was probably unable to marry Mosby because he lacked the social status that was pertaining of a woman of her position. It was probably not her choice but her father's to make a good match rather than to have a husband that she loved.

does not take into account the social conventions of the time. She dresses in man's clothes, smokes, has a sword and speaks her mind freely to the extent of giving a lesson to reputable characters such as Sir Alexander. Her words and speech are also manly: she expresses herself with propriety and authority. In a way that recalls Moll Flanders's deceit at making her suitors believe that she was a noblewoman, Mary Carleton, the German Princess, does not only cheat her husband—and many other men—but also confronts him at court. By the same token, she writes *The Case of Madam Mary Carleton*, becoming the first of this group of female offenders who is the author of her own account. Whether it is Mary Carleton herself who writes *The Case* or not, she is the one signing it, claiming publicly that it was her work.

Miranda in *The Fair Jilt* is another illustration of a strongly determined woman who can cheat and kill in order to attain her goals. She is probably the character that the readers less empathise with because of her truly evil nature. But she shares Moll Flanders's determination and obsession. Both characters push their will to extreme limits in order to obtain what they most want. On the other hand, Long Meg of Westminster is probably the figure that has less to do with Moll Flanders and the other female offenders selected for this study. She is presented as a woman who teaches men how to behave making use of her strength. However, the turning point is when she marries and yields to her husband's will. It is then that she detaches from all the other female protagonists who do not abandon their ideals so easily.

In all the texts that have been included in this study, the criminals are portrayed as intelligent powerful women who rule their own lives and do not let men decide for them. Apart from the crimes they commit, the audience might have perceived them as transgressors, a danger for the society of their time because of the rupture of the

established norms that they represent. These women cross the line of the correct behaviour as expected from them in society, thus becoming a menace that needs to be punished. However, the authors who created these characters show sympathy for them. Just as Greene condemned the conny-catchers but also admired them, the authors of *Arden of Faversham*, *The Roaring Girl*, *Long Meg of Westminster*, *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled*, *The Fair Jilt* and *Moll Flanders* show that ambivalent attitude to their protagonists, too. Despite these characters' wrong acts, these women are portrayed with humanity and even admiration by the authors. In the case of Miranda, however, she is unable to engage the reader to partially agree with her behaviour. She is the flattest of these female offenders. This might be so because Miranda has the least credible personality. She seems to be the only one who is purely fictional while all the other characters have either existed in real life or have been based on human models. Yet, leaving Miranda aside, the female criminals studied in this thesis all present this double-edged quality for both writers and readers. They are criminals but the audience sides with them.

The authors of the works selected for this study conveniently manage to turn real people into literary characters in order to show aspects of criminality that worried the society of their time, allowing their readerships to better understand the reasons behind criminal acts. Moreover, these female characters permit authors to combine the two main goals of literature, teaching and entertaining, which are not always fully attainable in proto-journalistic and legal accounts. There is usually an attempt at entertainment when the ballads become broadsides and these are in turn transferred into pamphlets. If Janet Fleming's broadside includes a letter and a poem, it is not purely to indoctrinate and inform, but also to make its reading more enjoyable. The

increasing length and the inclusion of additional information and material in this work constitute a response to a demanding interest. However, most of the entertaining elements of criminal writings had to be fulfilled by the executions, leaving the audience unsatisfied because of the lack of a happy ending. In White's opinion, "executions created bonds between the condemned and the scaffold crowd" (2006: 307).²¹⁰ Previous works could not solve this problem, either. Alice Arden and Mary Carleton were executed. Moll Cutpurse died of an illness. Miranda and Long Meg never suffered punishment because they were never brought to justice. In Miranda's case, justice fell on Prince Tarquin.

Defoe and his novel, for the first time, problematised crime in contemporary English society. Moll Flanders repented of her life of crime and was rewarded with the lands that her mother has given her in Virginia. In the end, the story of a criminal entertained the readership for over three hundred pages. Readers, on the other hand, through a much more rewarding experience than that provided by executions, managed to comprehend the moral consequences of crime. For Defoe, the novel thus revealed its potentiality as a more efficient literary vehicle to reflect on crime and arouse the audience's empathy than journalism.

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, little attention has been paid to criminal novels from the times of Defoe until nowadays. The subgenre has suffered a significant transformation but its conception as mass literature that is not worth studying as part of the official canon still remains. During the eighteenth century, criminal novels were very successful, although they were later discarded once the

²¹⁰ Barbara White, "The Criminal Confessions of Newgate's Irishmen," *Irish Studies Review* 14.3 (2006): 303-324.

readership understood they were not real accounts. The subgenre was practically abandoned for a century, from the edition of Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (1743) until the publication of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841). However, when Poe planted the seeds of the detective novel in his short stories, the subgenre had already shifted from what it was once the criminal novel into crime fiction. In this new literary variant, the protagonist is not the criminal anymore, but the story centres on the discovery of a crime and leads to the resolution of the mystery. There is no longer an interest in the offender's perspective, but his or her motives are only understood at the resolution of the conflict. In crime fiction, the motivation that leads to the illegal act is normally simplified into a single emotion: jealousy, envy, economic reasons, etc. The offender is thus turned into a flat character that cannot even express himself or herself because (s)he is invisible until the end of the narrative. The empathy and even admiration for the felon's tricks are gone; the detective acquires the leading role and the criminal is just the instrument to allow him display his wit. Likewise, the woman stops being the protagonist to become the victim in most of the cases. In hard-boiled fiction in the early twenty-century United States, she complements the detective's masculinity, becoming his assistant and amorous partner.

Parallel to the transformation of the criminal novel into crime fiction was the evolution of broadsides and pamphlets into sensationalist tabloids. They were cheaply sold as compared to more serious newspapers, so their popularity continued. With the invention of radio and television, the reports of these stories were transferred to the new media, although narratives in papers were still common. According to Neil McCaw, the most watched programme worldwide in the year 2007 was *CSI*, the popular television show in which crimes were analysed from a forensic point of

view.²¹¹ That this series proved to be popular does not mean that it is good from an artistic point of view. In fact, thrillers in literature, television or cinema are not normally labelled as artistic. The inheritors of criminal stories are thus as void of literary value as they were when they were first put into writing in the form of lyrical ballads.

The literary value of the proto-journalistic and legal accounts might not lie in their quality as pieces of art, but rather in the relevance they have had in the history of English literature. The morbid and low subject matter offered by broadsides, ballads and pamphlets have relegated them to a secondary category as notorious documents used mainly by sociologists and historians, though of scarce significance for most literary critics. This thesis has therefore contributed to bring to light these texts that had been forgotten despite their crucial role in the development of the criminal novel. Limited to Defoe as its main exponent, the criminal novel has likewise been neglected for being generally viewed by scholarship as the transposition of this author's journalistic techniques into the novel. Nevertheless, criminal narratives and the continuation they find in the novel have "exerted no inconsiderable influence in the shaping of modern fiction" (Chandler 1907: 181). It is obvious that crime fiction is not fully understood without the development of the criminal novel. But leaving offenders aside, this type of narrative sets the foundations of the realistic novel which will have its culmination in the nineteenth-century movement of naturalism.

Seen in this light, the difference between Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), regarded as the first naturalist work in American fiction, and Defoe's

²¹¹ Neil McCaw, *Adapting Detective Fiction. Crime, Englishness and the TV Detectives*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011.

Moll Flanders is very little. In both novels, the circumstances in which the leading characters are involved are very similar. Both Maggie and Moll are certainly victims of determinism. They are born in an unfavourable environment that has imposed their fate as preys of a changing society. Industrialisation and migration into urban areas are going to alienate a considerable part of the population, leaving women very little resources to escape poverty. Prostitution is, in both cases, the beginning of a fight for survival. Moll and Maggie represent a reality that was contemporary to the readers and worried them as much as the authors of these works. Crane's *Maggie* is the evidence that the mimicking technique which used the social reality of crime as the basis of a literary work had a continuation on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean three centuries after Robert Greene's *Conny-catching Pamphlets* and the domestic tragedy *Arden of Faversham* in 1592 initiated this tendency.

The ending of both works is strikingly different, though. Maggie dies in conditions that are akin to those of Janet Fleming in the pamphlet that has been analysed earlier in this thesis. Most women who entered the underworld were either executed or died of a venereal disease. Defoe's positive and idealistic perspective has been highly criticised, but, as explained in the previous chapter, he most probably introduced salvation as a reward to repentance in an attempt at granting his audience the satisfaction that executions could not provide. Nevertheless, even this compensation to a life of misery has a continuation in the literary figures that Charles Dickens creates. Most of Dickens's protagonists are rewarded at the end of the novels. It has been argued that Dickens could have based his characters on real people, since there are studies that compare, for instance, *Oliver Twist* with the life of a chimney

sweeper in early nineteenth century London.²¹² As in the case of Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Dickens could or could not have read the story the journalist published about Robert Blincoe, the chimney sweeper on whom the fictional character was based, but similar tales appeared every day in the papers, so Dickens most surely used them to build his characters, as Defoe did in the previous century.

Defoe is thus the forerunner of a tendency that reaches present day literature. He is the first one to consciously mix journalism with literature in both directions. His language, which derives from the discourse of facts rather than the discourse of fiction, reproduces chronicles, making his readers believe they are reading about a real event. At the same time, his accounts of Jonathan Wild and Jack Sheppard are tinged with literary devices, just as New Journalism does in the 1960s and 1970s. Two and a half centuries later, the same trend proves to be successful. Many similarities can be established between Truman Capote, the leading figure of the New Journalism, and Daniel Defoe. Capote's best-seller *In Cold Blood* (1966) was the first of a new series of narrative: true crime. Capote, as Defoe, made use of his experience in journalism to write about a famous murder and turn it into a literary piece of work. Curiously, the work for which Capote is best known involves a prostitute who searches love in the arms of rich New Yorkers. Maybe Holly Golightly, the protagonist of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958) cannot be termed as a felon, but she presents many similarities with Moll Flanders or Mary Carleton, among others. The times have changed, too, and it is not even correct to accuse Capote's character of prostitution when she limits her actions to be nice to men and accept presents from them. Prostitute or not, the story

²¹² For further information, see John Waller's *The Real Oliver Twist: Robert Blincoe, A Life that Illuminates an Age* (Thriplow: Icon, 2006).

of the country girl who moves to the big city searching for independence and ends up using her female seductive powers to survive, has echoes of many previous instances.

As it can be appreciated from the many instances given from past and present times, *Moll Flanders* inscribes itself in a native tradition that derives from the early Modern period and continues up to nowadays, manifesting itself not only in literature but also in cinema, radio, television and even the pseudo-journalistic tabloids. It is not possible to understand British culture without crimes and the stories generated around them. There is not a single city tour in Edinburgh which does not mention the story of Maggie Dickson, an eighteenth-century woman who was abandoned by her husband, had an affair with another man and, at discovering herself pregnant, got rid of the baby when it was born. She was sentenced to being hanged but the gallows did not kill her completely and, on the way to the graveyard, she lifted the lid of the coffin herself. This story shares similarities with many of the backgrounds of the other offenders analysed in this dissertation. Also, her near death reminds us of Prince Tarquin's account in Behn's *The Fair Jilt*. However, the most important fact about Maggie Dickson's story is that it has survived for three centuries in the oral narrative and that it is as part of the city of Edinburgh as its castle. Maggie Dickson is just but another instance, but this thesis has aimed to prove the relevance of executions and the literature generated around them for British culture, which in many cases was also "transported" overseas.

Works Cited

- ADAMS, H. H. *English Domestic Or, Homiletic Tragedy. 1575 to 1642*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.
- The Araignment, and Execution, of a wilfull and obstinate Traitour, named Eualde Ducket, alias Hauns: Condemned at the Sessions house for high Treason, on Friday, being the 28. of Iuly, and executed at Tiborne, on Monday after, being the 31, day of the same Moneth.*
- BAKHTIN, MIKHAIL M. "Epic and the Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel". McKeon, Michael, ed. *Theory of the Novel. A Historical Approach*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 320-331.
- BELL, IAN A. *Literature and Crime in Augustan England*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- BELLAMY, J. G. *The Criminal Trial in Later Medieval England. Felony before the courts from Edward I to the Sixteenth Century*. Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1988. pp. 57-92.
- BERNBAUM, ERNEST. *The Mary Carleton Narratives. 1663-1673. A Missing Chapter in the History of the English Novel*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.
- BJORNSON, Richard. *The Picaresque Hero in European Fiction*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979.
- BACKSHEIDER, PAULA. *Moll Flanders. The Making of a Criminal Mind*. Woodbridge: Twaine Publishers, 1990.
- BASTON, JANE. "Rehabilitating Moll's Subversion in The Roaring Girl." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 37, No. 2, Tudor and Stuart Drama (Spring, 1997), pp. 317-335.

- CAPP, BERNARD. "Long Meg of Westminster: A Mystery Solved". *Notes and Queries*. Vol. 45 (3). 1998. pp. 302-304.
- CARLEN, PAT. *Women, Crime and Poverty*. Oxford: O. U. P., 1988.
- CARLEN, PAT and ANN WORRALL. *Gender, Crime and Justice*. Philadelphia: Milton Keynes, 1987.
- The Case of Madam Mary Carleton, Lately Stiled The German Princess, Truly Stated: With an Historical Relation of her Birth, Education, and Fortunes; in an Appeal to his Illustrious Highness Prince Rupert*. By the said Mary Carleton. London, 1663.
- CHANDLER, FRANK W. *The Literature of Roguery*. 2 Vols. London: Archivald Constable & Co., 1907.
- COHEN, DANIEL A. *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace. New England Crime Literature and the Origins of American Popular Culture, 1674-1860*. Oxford: O.U.P, 2003.
- CONGREVE, WILLIAM. *Incognita: Or Love and Duty Reconcil'd. A Novel*. H. F. B. Brett-Smith, ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1922
- DAVIES, OWEN. *Witchcraft and Popular Literature. 1736-1951*. Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1999.
- DAVIS, LENNARD J. *Factual Fictions. The Origins of the English Novel*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
- D'CRUCE, SHANI and LOUISE A. JACKSON. *Women, Crime and Justice in England since 1660*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- DEFOE, DANIEL. *Moll Flanders*. G. A. Starr, ed. Oxford: O. U. P., 1998.
- *A Tour Thro' the whole Island of Great Britain, Divided into Circuits or Journies, giving a Particular and Diverting Account of Whatever is Curious and worth*

Observation, Viz. Vol. 3. "Introduction to the Account and Description of Scotland." London, 1727.

DELONEY, THOMAS. *The Pleasant Historie of Iohn Winchcomb, in His yovnger yeares called lack of Newbery, the famous and worthy Clothier of England: declaring his life and loue, together with his charitable deeds of great hospitality; and how he set continually fiue hundred poore people at worke, to the great benefit of the Common-wealth: worthy to be read and regarded.* London, 1619.

DICKINSON, H. T., ed. "Crime and Punishment". *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain.* Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002. pp. 358- 365.

DONOVAN, JOSEPHINE. *Women and the Rise of the Novel. 1405-1726.* London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1999.

DOWNIE, J. "The Making of the English Novel". *Eighteenth Century Fiction.* Vol.9.3. April, 1997, p. 249-266.

FALLER, LINCOLN B. *Crime and Defoe. A New Kind of Writing.* Cambridge: C.U.P., 1993.
----- *Turned to Account. The Forms and Functions of Criminal Biography in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-century England.* Cambridge: C.U.P., 1987.

FIELDING, HENRY. *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers and Related Writings.* Malvin R. Zirker, ed. Oxord: O.U.P., 1988.

FRYE, NORTHROP. *Anatomy of Criticism.* Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2000.

GALFORD, ELLEN. *Moll Cutpurse. Her True Histoy.* Edinburgh: Firebrand books, 1985.

GARTENBERG, PATRICIA. "An Elizabethan Wonder Woman: The Life and Fortunes of Long Meg of Westminster". *The Journal of Popular Culture.* Vol. 17 (3). Pp. 49-58. 1983.

GATRELL, V. A. C. *The Hanging Tree. Execution and the English People. 1770-1868.*

Oxford: O.U.P., 1994.

GLADFELDER, HAL. *Criminality and narrative in Eighteenth Century England.* Baltimore:

John Hopkins University Press, 2001.

The Great Tryall and Arraignment Of the late Distressed Lady, Otherwise called the late

Germain Princess. Being brought to her Tryal in the Old-Bayley, on Thursday last the 4th instant of this month of June, before the Right Honourable, the Lord Mayor, the Lord chief Justice of Common Pleas, the Right Worshifull, the Court of Aldermen, and all the rest belonging to that most Honourable Bench. The tenure of her Indictment, Of having two Husbands, and her Answet to the same. Also the several Witnesses which came in against her, with her absolute Consutation upon each of their evidences by her acute Wit and impregnable Reasons whereby she was acquitted by publique Proclamation. The manner ye may read as followeth.
London, 1663.

GREENE, ROBERT. *Second part of Conny-Catching. Containing the discovery of certaine*

wondrous Coosenages, either superficialle past ouer, or vtterlie vntoucht in the first. London, 1591.

HARRIS, VALENTINE P. *The Truth about Robin Hood. A Refutation of the Mythologists'*

Theories, with New Evidence of the Hero's actual Existence. Linneys of Mansfield, 1951.

HAZLITT, CAREW W., ed. *Merie tales, newly imprinted and made [by] Master Skelton,*

poet-laureat, 1566-7. London, Willis and Sotheran, 1866.

----- Ed., *Shakespeare Jest-books; Comprising Merie Tales of the Mad Men of Gotham.*

XII Mery Jests of Widow Edyth. Pasquils Jests, with Mother Bunches Merriments.

The Pleasant Conceits of Old Hobson. Certayne Concepts and Jeasts. Taylors Wit and Mirth. Conceits, Clinches, Flashes and Whimzies. London: Willis and Sotheran, 1864.

HIBBARD, G. R., ed. *Three Elizabethan Pamphlets.* London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1951.

HOLT, ANITA. *Arden of Faversham. A Study of the Play first Published in 1592.* Faversham: The Faversham Society, 1970.

HOLT, J. C. "The Origins and Audience of the Ballads of Robin Hood," *Past and Present* 18 (1960), 89-110.

HUNTER, J. PAUL. *Before Novels. The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990.

KIRKMAN, FRANCIS. *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled. Being a Full Account of the Birth, Life, most remarkable Actions, and untimely Death of Mary Carleton, Known by the Name of the German Princess.* London, 1673.

KIT OF KINGSTONE, KINDE. *Westward for Smelts, or, The Water-Man's fare of mad merry Western wenches whose tongues, albeit like Belt-clappers they neuer leaue ringing, yet their tales are sweet, and will much content you.* London, 1620.

LAVIN, J. A., ed., *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay.* London: New Mermaids, 1969.

LIEBLEIN, LEANORE. "The context of murder in English Domestic Plays. 1590-1610". *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol 23 (2), Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama (Spring, 1983), pp. 181-196.

LILLEY, KATE. "Mary Carleton's False Additions: the Case of the 'German Princess'". *Humanities Review.* Monique Rooney, ed. 2010. Pp. 79-89.

MANLEY, DELARIVIÈRE. *The secret history of Queen Zarah, and the Zarazians; Being a Looking-Glass for ----- In the Kingdom of Albigion Containing the true reasons of the necessity of the Revolution that lately happen'd in the kingdom of Albigion. Faithfully translated from the Italian Copy now lodg'd in the Vatican at Rome, and never before Printed in any Language.* Albigion, 1705.

MAYER, ROBERT. *History and the Early English Novel: Matters of Fact from Bacon to Defoe.* Cambridge: C.U.P., 1997.

MIKALACHKI, JODI. "Gender, Cant, and Cross-talking in "The Roaring Girl," *Renaissance Drama*, New Series, Vol. 25, *Renaissance Drama and the Law* (1994), pp. 119-143.

McCAW, NEIL. *Adapting Detective Fiction. Crime, Englishness and the TV Detectives.* London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011.

McKEON, MICHAEL. *The Origins of the English Novel. 1600- 1740.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1988.

-----, Ed. *Theory of the Novel. A Historical Approach.* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000.

MORGAN, GWENDA & P. RUSHTON. *Rogues, Thieves and the Rule of Law. The Problem of Law Enforcement in North-East England, 1718-1800.* London: Routledge, 1998.

MORLEY, Henry, ed. *Early prose romances. Reynard the fox. Friar Bacon. Robert the devil. Guy of Warwick. Virgilius. History of Hamlet. Friar Bush.* London, 1889

MUNRO, IAN, ed. "A womans answer is neuer to seke": *Early Modern Jestbooks, 1526-1635.*" Vol. 8, in Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott, eds. *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works. Series III. Essential*

Works for the Study of Early Modern Women: Part 2. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006.

Newes from Scotland, Declaring the Damnable life and death of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in Ianuary last 1591. Which Doctor was regester to the Diuell that sundry times preached at North Barick Kirke, to a number of notorious Witches. With the true examinations of the saide Doctor and Witches, as they vttered them in the presence of the Scottish King. Discovering how they pretended to bewitch and drowne his Maiestie in the Sea comming from Denmarke, with such osher wonderfull matters as the like hath not been heard of at any time. London: 1591.

PEARSON, JACQUELINE. "Gender and Narrative in the Fiction of Aphra Behn," *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 42 (165), 1991, pp. 40-56.

PELHAM, CANDEM. *Chronicles of Crime; OR, The New Newgate Calendar. Being a Series of Memoirs and Anecdotes of Notorious Characters who Have Outraged the Laws of Great Britain from the Earliest Period to the Present Time.* London: Printed for Thomas Tegg, 1841.

POLLACK, ELLEN. "Gender and fiction in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*", in John Richetti, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe.* Cambridge: C.U.P., 2008.

RALEIGH, WALTER. *The English Novel. A Short Sketch of its History from the Earliest Times to the Appearance of Waverley.* London: John Murray, 1911.

REEVE, CLARA. *The Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries, and Manners; with Remarks on the good and bad Effects of it, on them respectively; in a Course of Evening Conversations.* Colchester: W. Keymer, 1785.

- REY HAZAS, ANTONIO. *Deslindes de la novela picaresca*. Málaga: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Málaga, 2003.
- RICHETTI, JOHN J. *Defoe's Narratives. Situations and Structures*. Oxford: O.U.P, 1975.
- . *Popular Fiction Before Richardson. Narrative Patterns 1700 – 1739*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- . *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*. Cambridge: C. U. P., 1996.
- RIETZ, JOHN. "Criminal Ms-Representation: *Moll Flanders* and Female Criminal Biography". *Studies in the Novel*, 1991 Summer; 23 (2): 183-95.
- ROSENTHAL, BERNARD. *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*. Cambridge: C. U. P., 2009.
- ROLLINS, HYTHER EDWARD, ed. *A Pepysian Garland. Black-Letter Broadside Ballads of the Years 1595-1639*. Chiefly from the Collection of Samuel Pepys. Cambridge: C. U. P., 1922.
- SCHLAUCH, MARGARET. *Antecedents of the English Novel. 1400-1600 (from Chaucer to Deloney)*. Oxford: O. U. P., 1963.
- SHARPE, J. A. *Crime and the Law in English Satirical Prints 1600 – 1832*. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986.
- . "Crime and Punishment". *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*. H. T. Dickinson, ed. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002. Pp. 358- 365.
- . *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750*. Harlow: Longman, 1984.
- . *Crime in Seventeenth-century England*. Cambridge: C.U.P., 1983.
- . *Early Modern England. A Social History 1550-1760*. London: Arnold, 1987.

- SHAW, PATRICIA. "Mad Moll and Merry Meg: the roaring girl as popular heroine in Elizabethan and Jacobean writings." *SEDERI: yearbook of the Spanish and Portuguese Society for English Renaissance Studies*. 1996.
- SHEPARD, LESLIE. *The Broadside Ballad. A Study in the Origins and Meaning*. London: Herbert Jenkins, 1962.
- SHERIDAN, RICHARD BRINSLEY, *The Rivals*. Tiffany Stern, ed. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.: London, 2004.
- SUZUKI, MIHOKO. "The Case of Mary Carleton: Representing the Female Subject, 1663-73". *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring, 1993), pp. 61-83.
- TODD, JANET, ed., *New Casebooks. Aphra Behn. Contemporary Critical Essays*. London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999.
- . *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn*. London: Pandora, 2000.
- . *The Works of Aphra Behn*, Vol. 3, "The Fair Jilt and Other Stories," London: Pickering and Chatto, 1995.
- WALLER, JOHN, *The Real Oliver Twist: Robert Blincoe, A Life that Illuminates an Age*. Thriplow: Icon, 2006.
- WATT, IAN. *The Rise of the Novel. Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. London: Chatto&Windus, 1957.
- WILLIAMS, IOAN. *Novel and Romance 1700-1800. A Documentary Record*. London: Routledge Revivals, 2010.
- WINE, M. L., ed. *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham*. London: Methuen, 1973.
- ZALL, P. M. *A Hundred Merry Tales and Other English Jestbooks of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963.

