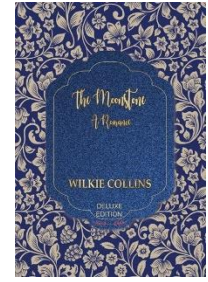


## The Moonstone (1868) – Step-by-step BREAKDOWN (v.4)

(possible access points into the deeper layers of the text)

*For exam purposes, you will need to grasp the basic information from each category. However, if you are aiming for a higher grade or wish to pursue further research, you should consider delving deeper into these topics on your own.*



### NOTABLE ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS

Wilkie Collins, *La pietra della luna*: romanzo, 4 volumi (totale pagg. 631), Milano, Treves, 1870-1871.

Wilkie Collins, *Il diamante indiano*: romanzo, Collana: I libri gialli, 60, Verona, Milano, Mondadori, 1933, p. 307.

Wilkie Collins, *La Pietra della Luna*, traduzione di Oriana Previtali; 2 voll.; collana: Biblioteca universale 801,806, Milano, Rizzoli, 1954, Tot. pagg. 560.

Wilkie Collins, *La pietra della luna*, Riduzione di Anna Curcio; illustrazioni di Antonio D'Agostini; collana: Primavera, Padova, Radar, 1964, p.150.

Wilkie W. Collins, *La pietra di luna*, traduzione di Cecilia Montonati; collana: Acquarelli, Bussolengo, Demetra, 1996, p. 605.

Wilkie Collins, *La pietra di Luna*, Introd. di Mariarosa Mancuso; trad. di Martina Rinaldi; collana: Le porte, 56, Roma, Fazi, 2000, p. 584.

Wilkie Collins, *La pietra di luna*, a cura di Franca Quasimodo, Collana: La tartaruga, 19, Palermo, Palumbo, 2000, p. 254.

Wilkie Collins, *La maledizione del diamante indiano (la pietra della luna)*, Collana: Narrativa Nord, 148; trad. di Viviana Viviani, Milano, Editrice Nord, 2001, p. 283.

Wilkie Collins, *La pietra di Luna*, traduzione di Piero Jahier e Maj-Lis Rissler Stoneman, collana I grandi libri, 865, Garzanti, 2002, p. 533.

William Wilkie Collins, *La pietra di luna*, Introd. di Andrea Marcheselli; prefaz. di Roberto Barbolini; trad. di Piero Jahier e Maj-Lis Rissler-Stoneman; collana: I classici La Stampa, 18, Torino, La stampa, 2003, p. 533.

Wilkie Collins., *Il diamante indiano*. Translated by Martina Rinaldi. 35a ristampa. Milano: Fazi, 2016

### 1. SETTING: Space (place) Time

*The Moonstone* is set predominantly in England during the mid-Victorian period, a time characterized by strict social norms and the expansive reach of the British Empire. The novel opens in India, capturing the turbulent backdrop of colonial conquest and exotic allure, starting with the theft of the titular Moonstone from a Hindu temple during the Siege of Seringapatam (1799).

The narrative soon shifts to the serene English countryside, primarily taking place at the Verinder family estate located in Yorkshire, near the fictional village of Frizinghall. This stark transition from the vivid chaos of India to the ordered rural settings of Victorian England frames the core mystery of the story. However, the narrative also weaves through various other crucial spaces, including the bustling streets of London, specifically areas like St. Paul's Churchyard where key solicitor's offices are located, and other urban locales that add layers to the plot.

One particularly evocative setting outside the Verinder estate is the Shivering Sands, a treacherous stretch of quicksand near the coast, which plays a pivotal role in the unfolding mystery and is key to the novel. The depiction of the Shivering Sands as a menacing, almost sentient landscape contrasts sharply with the structured, safe environment of the estate, reflecting the novel's thematic exploration of hidden dangers and the unknown.

### Impact of Setting on the Plot

The diverse settings are instrumental in shaping the novel's plot and thematic structure. The contrast between the **mystical East** and the **rational West** is mirrored in the settings—from the mystical dangers associated with the diamond in India to the seemingly tranquil but increasingly disturbed spaces of the English estate. The detective elements unfold in the drawing rooms, gardens, and secretive spaces of the estate, juxtaposing private intrigue against the backdrop of public Victorian decorum.

### DELVE DEEPER:



Eric Bulson's Spatial Imagination: In "Novels, Maps, Modernity: The Spatial Imagination," Eric Bulson discusses how novels incorporate complex spatial arrangements that mirror societal changes and technological advancements in mapping and spatial awareness. Applying this to *The Moonstone*, the detailed settings—ranging from the exotic landscapes of India to the precisely mapped interiors of the Verinder estate and the chaotic urban spaces of London—mirror the Victorian fascination with order, boundaries, and the exotic 'other'. Collins uses these diverse settings to challenge the characters' and readers' perceptions of space and place, illustrating the tensions between traditional British values and the destabilizing influences of colonial exploits.

**2. Phillip E. Wegner's Space and Place in Critical Reading:** Phillip Wegner's theories might focus on how the geographical settings within *The Moonstone* serve as more than mere backdrops; they actively shape the narrative's social and political commentary. The Verinder estate represents a microcosm of Victorian society—orderly, structured, and seemingly serene, yet underpinned by secrets and turmoil, much like the broader British society of the time. The Shivering Sands, with its ominous and unpredictable nature, contrasts sharply with this order, representing the repressed or uncontrollable aspects of the psyche and society—a place where conventional Victorian morality is continually at risk.

**3. Michel Foucault's Concept of Heterotopia:** Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia describes spaces that are other—simultaneously mythic and real, such as a mirror or a ship. In *The Moonstone*, settings like the Shivering Sands and even the estate itself can be seen as heterotopias. These spaces exist within the normal societal bounds yet operate under different rules. The Shivering Sands, a perilous and shifting landscape, acts as a counter-site where the norms of Victorian society are suspended and subverted, reflecting back the darker, hidden currents of the story and its characters.

**4. Mikhail Bakhtin's Idea of a Chronotope:** Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, which articulates how temporal and spatial settings are intrinsically linked to narratives, illuminates the reading of "The Moonstone." The shifting settings from India to England encapsulate a transition not only in space but also in time—reflecting a shift from a past associated with colonial conquest and mystical allure to a present grappling with those implications within the domestic sphere. The chronotope of the English country house, associated with a particular time in Victorian history, serves as a focal point where personal histories and the larger history of British colonialism intersect.

Together, these frameworks suggest that the spatial features in *The Moonstone* are crucial for understanding the novel's exploration of identity, empire, and morality. The settings do not merely serve narrative functions but are deeply imbued with cultural and historical significance, offering a rich terrain for analysis of the societal and psychological complexities of Victorian England.

## 2. GENRE

*The Moonstone* is frequently credited as one of the earliest examples of the detective fiction genre, but its rich narrative structure and thematic depth allow it to transcend simple genre classification. The novel incorporates elements from multiple literary genres, which contributes to its lasting appeal and complexity.

1. **Detective Fiction:** The core element of *The Moonstone* revolves around the mysterious disappearance of a valuable diamond, with Sergeant Cuff's investigative methods laying foundational techniques for future detective stories. This includes gathering clues, interviewing suspects, and employing logical deduction, all hallmarks of the detective genre.
2. **Mystery and Suspense:** Integral to its detective fiction framework, the novel also excels as a mystery and suspense narrative, engaging readers with its intricate plot twists, red herrings, and the slow revelation of secrets. This keeps the reader engaged in a suspenseful plot while challenging them to solve the mystery before the detective does.
3. **Sensation Novel:** Collins is also known as a key figure in the development of the sensation novel, a genre characterized by its focus on sensational, often scandalous subjects involving crime, intrigue, and romantic affairs, all set within domestic settings. *The Moonstone* fits this genre through its inclusion of family secrets, stolen treasure, opium addiction, and complex interpersonal dynamics.
4. **Gothic Fiction:** Elements of gothic fiction permeate the novel, particularly in its use of exotic locales, the supernatural curse associated with the moonstone, and the eerie, ominous setting of the Shivering Sands. These features add a layer of supernatural and emotional depth that is typical of gothic literature.
5. **Imperial Adventure:** The novel's initial setting in colonial India and the backstory of the moonstone being looted during a British military operation infuse it with elements of imperial adventure literature, which was popular in the 19th century. This genre typically involves exotic settings, colonial encounters, and moral questions about the British Empire's impact, all of which are present in Collins's narrative.

**Combination of Genres:** Given these multiple layers, *The Moonstone* can be best described as a hybrid genre novel. It adeptly combines the intrigue of detective fiction with the emotional and psychological intensity of the sensation novel, the dark atmosphere of gothic fiction, and the expansive narrative scope of imperial adventure. This genre blending not only showcases Collins's skill as a storyteller but also enriches the novel's exploration of Victorian society, morality, and identity.

### 3. LAYOUT Plot Progression

*The Moonstone* employs a distinctive narrative structure that enhances its complexity and engages the reader from multiple perspectives. Here's how the novel is formatted:

1. **Epistolary Form:** The novel is predominantly presented in an epistolary format, comprising a series of narratives from different characters who play crucial roles in the story. This multi-perspective structure allows Collins to build a multifaceted view of the events surrounding the disappearance of the moonstone.
2. **Multiple Narrators:** Each section of the book is told by a different narrator, which not only provides varied viewpoints but also reflects the narrators' personalities and biases in their recounting of events. Major narrators include Gabriel Betteredge, the loyal house steward of the Verinder family; Miss

Drusilla Clack, a pious and somewhat meddling relative; and Ezra Jennings, an assistant to the family's doctor with his mysterious past.

3. **Subdivisions and Chapters:** The novel is divided into three main parts:
  - **First Period:** This section deals with the events surrounding the loss of the moonstone on the night of Rachel Verinder's birthday, narrated mainly by Betteredge.
  - **Second Period:** This part focuses on the investigation of the theft and is narrated from multiple perspectives, including those of Miss Clack and Sergeant Cuff, the detective.
  - **Third Period:** This section concludes the mystery, primarily narrated by Ezra Jennings and Franklin Blake (one of the primary suspects and a central figure in resolving the mystery).
4. **Pagination and Chapters:** The novel is structured into chapters within each narratorial section, which are usually short to medium in length, helping to maintain suspense and provide clear breaks within the narrative flow.
5. **Use of Documents and Letters:** In addition to direct narratives, the novel includes the use of letters, diary entries, and other documents interspersed within the narrations, contributing to the epistolary form and adding layers of depth and authenticity to the storytelling.

This layout, especially the use of multiple narrators and documentary evidence, is central to the novel's theme of subjective truth and the detective process. It allows Collins to explore different social and psychological dimensions through each narrator's unique perspective, making *The Moonstone* a pioneering work in detective fiction and a complex study of Victorian society.

#### 4. EPIGRAPHS: Initial quotes

An epigraph is a short quotation or saying at the beginning of a book or chapter, often used to suggest the theme or atmosphere of the work. It can serve several functions in a novel:

In *The Moonstone*, Wilkie Collins strategically uses epigraphs to enhance thematic depth and guide the reader's engagement with the narrative. Although the novel does not employ an overarching epigraph for the entire book, each narrative section introduced by a different character often begins with an epigraph that helps frame that particular portion of the story.

For example, one of the most notable uses of an epigraph in the novel is at the very beginning, where Collins places a quote from a 1792 sermon by Reverend J. White. It reads:

"The moonstone will have its vengeance yet on you and yours!"

This epigraph is particularly potent because it not only sets a foreboding tone but also encapsulates the overarching theme of retribution and the mysterious, almost supernatural qualities attributed to the moonstone itself. It serves as a thematic introduction, indicating the central motifs of curse and consequences that will pervade the narrative.

#### Functions of the Epigraph in *The Moonstone*

1. **Thematic Introduction:** The quote introduces the themes of fate, justice, and the supernatural, setting the stage for the unfolding mystery and the novel's exploration of moral and cultural questions.
2. **Setting the Tone:** The ominous nature of the epigraph sets a tone of foreboding and suspense, preparing the reader for a story where supernatural beliefs and human actions intertwine in complex ways.

3. **Prefiguration:** This initial epigraph foreshadows the tumultuous events linked to the moonstone's curse, hinting at the disasters that will befall those who possess the gem.
4. **Source of Authority:** By using a sermon, Collins lends a moral and quasi-religious weight to the story, suggesting that the events might be seen within the context of divine or cosmic justice.
5. **Creating Intertextual Connections:** The epigraph connects the narrative to broader themes found in religious and moral texts, hinting at the novel's engagement with Victorian concerns about morality, colonialism, and fate.
6. **Challenge or Provocation:** The epigraph challenges the reader to consider the implications of the moonstone's curse, setting up a narrative puzzle about whether the events are driven by human agency or supernatural forces.

Through this careful use of an epigraph, Collins not only enriches the reader's understanding of the novel's themes but also enhances the mystical and ethical layers of the narrative, engaging the reader with a complex interplay of forewarning and thematic exploration right from the start.

## **PLOT:**

### **Plot and Sub-Plots of *The Moonstone***

The main plot of *The Moonstone* centers around the theft of a precious and cursed diamond, the Moonstone, which was originally looted from a temple in India and given to Rachel Verinder on her eighteenth birthday. The disappearance of the diamond sets off a series of investigations and the involvement of various characters, each adding their perspective to the unfolding mystery.

Sub-plots enrich the narrative, including:

- **Romantic Elements:** The strained romantic relationship between Rachel Verinder and Franklin Blake, who is initially suspected of the theft.
- **Social Commentary:** The portrayal of British society, especially its views on colonialism, class, and gender. This includes the depiction of the servants within the Verinder household and the societal reaction to the presence of three Indian jugglers who are also suspects in the theft.
- **Redemption Narratives:** Several characters undergo personal transformations, such as Franklin Blake's journey to clear his name and understand his own actions, and the character development of secondary figures like Godfrey Ablewhite.

### **Basic Tension/Conflict**

The primary tension in *The Moonstone* arises from the theft of the diamond, which not only serves as a mystery to be solved but also triggers a crisis among the characters involved, revealing their true natures and hidden motives. The diamond's reputed curse and its colonial origins introduce broader conflicts related to morality, justice, and cultural imperialism.

### **Temporal Progression**

The narrative structure of *The Moonstone* is complex, involving multiple temporal layers:

- **Linearity vs. Non-Linearity:** While the overarching story progresses linearly, the narrative is delivered through various accounts that do not always adhere to a straightforward chronological order. This mosaic of perspectives creates a non-linear feel to the reading experience.

- **Flashbacks:** There are significant flashbacks, such as characters recalling past events that illuminate current situations, particularly in the narratives provided by different characters who revisit earlier incidents from their points of view.
- **Anachronisms:** Though not prominently featuring anachronisms (elements out of place in time), the novel does delve into historical reflections, especially concerning the British actions in India, which are woven into the contemporary narrative setting.

### Narratological Concepts

According to Gérard Genette's narrative theories:

- **Tense:** *The Moonstone* employs primarily past tense, which is typical for retrospective first-person narratives, but shifts in tense are used during the characters' recounting of events to reflect on past actions or to anticipate future possibilities.
- **Duration:** The duration of the narrative varies, with some events described in great detail and others summarized, which reflects the variable 'narrative speed' Genette discusses. The use of multiple narrators allows for this varied pacing and depth of detail.
- **Mood:** The mood, or the emotional atmosphere, shifts according to the narrator's style and the part of the story they are telling. For example, Betteredge's narratives are colored by his loyal, somewhat superstitious personality, while Miss Clack's are tinged with her pious and judgmental outlook.
- **Voice:** The voice changes with the narrator, from the loyal but superstitious steward Gabriel Betteredge to the devout and intrusive Miss Drusilla Clack, each adding a unique perspective and tone to the unfolding of events.

These narratological elements contribute to the richness and depth of *The Moonstone*, making it not just a pioneering detective story but also a complex narrative exploration of Victorian society and colonial legacy.

## 5. CHARACTER FUNCTIONS

In *The Moonstone*, characters can be analyzed through the lens of various narrative theories, including those proposed by Vladimir Propp, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Joseph Campbell. Each of these theorists provides a framework that helps to unpack the roles and functions of characters within the narrative structure of the novel.

**Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folktale:** Propp identified a series of character roles and functions within the context of Russian folktales, which can also be applied to the characters in *The Moonstone*

1. **The Villain:** Attempting to harm the hero or other characters, which in the case of *The Moonstone* could be interpreted through the actions of the person who actually steals the diamond. The identity of the thief remains ambiguous and mysterious for much of the novel, serving as a pivotal point of the plot.
2. **The Dispatcher:** The character who sends the hero on their quest. In *The Moonstone*, this could be seen as Franklin Blake, who, by giving the diamond to Rachel Verinder, unwittingly initiates the central conflict.
3. **The Helper:** Characters who assist the hero in achieving the quest. Sergeant Cuff plays this role as the detective who helps unravel the mystery of the stolen diamond.

4. **The Princess (or sought-after person) and her father:** Rachel Verinder serves as the 'princess' who is intimately tied to the central quest object—the diamond. Her mother, Lady Verinder, might be seen as the father figure, protecting her daughter and her interests.
5. **The Donor:** Prepares the hero or gives the hero some magical object, somewhat fulfilled by the character who originally bequeaths the diamond, Colonel Herncastle, setting the narrative in motion.
6. **The Hero:** Franklin Blake can be considered the hero who strives to resolve the theft and clear his own name, thereby restoring order.

**Claude Lévi-Strauss's Structural Anthropology:** Lévi-Strauss proposed that myths and stories are organized by binary oppositions, which help to drive the narrative forward through the resolution of conflicts between opposing forces. In *The Moonstone*, several oppositions can be identified:

- **Culture vs. Nature:** This can be seen in the contrast between the disciplined, structured life at the Verinder estate and the chaotic, mystical influence of the cursed diamond.
- **Rational vs. Irrational:** The rational detective work of Sergeant Cuff contrasts with the irrational fears and superstitions surrounding the diamond.
- **Colonial vs. Native:** The backstory of the diamond, taken from India, and the presence of the three Indian jugglers in England, highlight themes of colonial exploitation and cultural clashes.

**Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces:** Campbell outlines the monomyth or "hero's journey," which includes stages such as the Call to Adventure, the Road of Trials, and the Return with the Elixir. Franklin Blake's journey closely aligns with this structure:

- **Call to Adventure:** Franklin's journey begins when he decides to solve the mystery of the stolen diamond.
- **Road of Trials:** He faces multiple obstacles, including personal suspicion and the complexities of the investigation.
- **Atonement with the Father/Abyss:** Confronting and reconciling with his own actions and their implications, particularly concerning the drugging incident.
- **Return with the Elixir:** Franklin solves the mystery and restores his social position, returning with the 'elixir' of knowledge and justice.

Applying these narrative theories to *The Moonstone* reveals the depth of character function and development, and enhances our understanding of the novel's complex interplay of narrative elements and themes.

## 7. CHARACTERS

In *The Moonstone*, the division between main and secondary characters helps to structure the complex narrative. Here's a breakdown of the main characters versus the secondary characters:

**Main Characters:**

1. **Franklin Blake** - The protagonist who gifts the Moonstone to Rachel Verinder and takes an active role in solving the mystery of its disappearance.
2. **Rachel Verinder** - The heiress of the Moonstone, whose sudden changes in behavior after the theft drive much of the plot's development.
3. **Gabriel Betteredge** - The loyal house steward of Lady Verinder, who provides key insights and serves as a primary narrator for a significant portion of the story.

4. **Sergeant Cuff** - The detective brought in to investigate the theft of the Moonstone, known for his methodical and insightful approach to solving mysteries.
5. **Ezra Jennings** - An assistant to the family doctor, who plays a crucial role in the resolution of the mystery through his observations and experiments.

#### Secondary Characters:

1. **Lady Julia Verinder** - Rachel's mother, who is deeply involved in the turmoil surrounding the Moonstone.
2. **Drusilla Clack** - A devout and somewhat intrusive relative, who provides another narrative perspective with her unique viewpoint on the events.
3. **Godfrey Ablewhite** - A philanthropist and suitor to Rachel, whose role becomes more significant as the story unfolds.
4. **Mr. Bruff** - The family solicitor, who helps in legal and financial matters concerning the Verinder family and plays a role in resolving the mystery.
5. **Rosanna Spearman** - A housemaid at the Verinder estate, who has a troubled past and whose actions and feelings become pivotal in the subplot concerning the mystery.
6. **Penelope Betteredge** - The daughter of Gabriel Betteredge, who also provides information and assistance during the events.
7. **The Three Indian Jugglers** - Mysterious figures whose presence and actions are intertwined with the fate of the Moonstone, representing elements of the novel's colonial and exotic themes.

These characters collectively contribute to the intricate web of narratives and perspectives that define *The Moonstone*, making it a pioneering work in detective fiction and a rich study in character and motive.

In *The Moonstone*, the symbolic significance of the characters' names enhances the thematic layers of the novel and invites deeper interpretation. Wilkie Collins seems to have carefully chosen names that reflect the personalities, roles, or fates of the characters, contributing to the novel's rich symbolic texture. Here's an analysis of some of the key names:

#### 1. Franklin Blake:

- "Franklin" can imply a free or frank individual, reflecting his straightforward and determined nature. It may also hint at Benjamin Franklin, an emblem of rational thinking and scientific inquiry, aligning with Franklin Blake's logical approach to solving the mystery.
- "Blake" could be an allusion to the poet William Blake, who explored themes of innocence and experience, relevant to Franklin's journey from naivety to a deeper understanding of himself and those around him.

#### 2. Rachel Verinder:

- "Rachel" is a biblical name meaning "ewe" or "one with purity," which may symbolize her initial perceived innocence and the purity associated with her as the owner of the pure, but cursed, diamond.
- "Verinder" could be a play on "vindicator," suggesting her role in ultimately revealing the truth about the diamond's theft.

#### 3. Gabriel Betteredge:

- "Gabriel" is a biblical name, referring to the Archangel Gabriel, a messenger of God, which suits Betteredge's role as a narrator delivering the story to the readers.

- "Betteredge" suggests a reliable 'edge' or advantage, reflecting his dependable nature and his keen observations that provide insights into the unfolding events.

#### 4. Sergeant Cuff:

- "Cuff" resonates with the idea of capture or restraint, hinting at his role as a detective who aims to 'cuff' or capture the culprit behind the moonstone's disappearance.

#### 5. Ezra Jennings:

- "Ezra" means "help" in Hebrew, which is fitting as he provides crucial assistance in resolving the mystery.
- "Jennings" could suggest "genuine," reflecting his character's sincerity and the genuine insights he offers into the case.

#### 6. Drusilla Clack:

- "Drusilla" brings to mind Drusilla from the New Testament, known for her association with powerful yet morally ambiguous figures, reflecting Clack's manipulative and self-righteous nature.
- "Clack" suggests a continual, irritating noise, akin to her obtrusive and gossiping demeanor.

#### 7. Rosanna Spearman:

- "Rosanna" can be associated with the rose, a symbol of love and beauty, which is tragic given her unrequited love for Franklin Blake.
- "Spearman" evokes an image of a warrior, hinting at her internal battles and her role in the protective actions she takes regarding the secret she discovers.

These names, with their embedded symbolism, enhance the narrative by adding layers of meaning that resonate with the characters' roles and the broader themes of the novel, such as purity, deception, and redemption. Collins's use of evocative names is another tool that deepens the reader's engagement with the text, encouraging a more reflective approach to the unfolding mystery and the moral questions it raises.

- Livia Drusilla: Empress of Rome and wife of Emperor Augustus.
- Julia Drusilla: Daughter of Emperor Caligula.

## 8. CHARACTERISATION

*The Moonstone* provides a **complex, nuanced, and dynamic** characterization of its central figures. The novel employs a multi-narrator structure, which allows for deep and varied portrayals of characters, each revealing different facets of their personalities and motivations. This narrative technique enhances the depth and complexity of characterization, making it one of the strengths of Collins's writing:

1. **Complex:** Characters in *The Moonstone* are given complex personalities with motives that are intricately tied to the plot's development. For instance, Franklin Blake's actions and internal conflicts are detailed through his own narrative and those of others, presenting a multifaceted view of his character.
2. **Nuanced:** The nuances in each character's behavior are evident, especially in how they react under the stress of the theft or how they relate to each other. The differences in the narrators' perspectives, such as Gabriel Betteredge's superstitious leanings and Miss Clack's religious fervor, provide nuanced views that enrich the reader's understanding of the story and its characters.

3. **Dynamic:** Many characters undergo significant development through the course of the novel. Franklin Blake, for instance, evolves from a somewhat carefree gentleman to a more self-aware and determined individual, driven by his need to uncover the truth. Rachel Verinder also shows dynamic changes, especially in her emotional responses to the theft and her engagement with Blake.
4. **Relatable and Sympathetic:** Characters like Gabriel Betteredge, with his loyalty to his employer and love for Robinson Crusoe, are portrayed in ways that many readers find relatable and sympathetic. His down-to-earth narrative style and insightful observations often endear him to the reader.
5. **Enigmatic:** Characters such as Rosanna Spearman add an element of mystery and depth. Her secretive behaviour and unrequited love for Franklin Blake make her both tragic and enigmatic, compelling the reader to engage more deeply with her storyline.
6. **Evolving:** The evolution of characters is not limited to the protagonists. Secondary characters like Ezra Jennings, who battles societal prejudices and personal health issues while playing a crucial role in solving the mystery, also exhibit significant personal growth and complexity.

In light of these points, the characterization in *The Moonstone* is decidedly **complex** and **dynamic**, rather than bland or weak. Collins's ability to weave intricate character studies into the fabric of a compelling plot speaks to his mastery as a novelist and ensures that the characters resonate well beyond the confines of the mystery genre. The use of multiple narrators, each bringing their unique perspective and depth, greatly enhances the text's emotional and psychological layers, making the characterization one of the most celebrated aspects of the novel.

## 7. REPRESENTATION

Look for telling or symptomatic representations of males, women, racial or social minorities, homosexuals or any other minorities in the novel. Why are the representation given in the novel symptomatic or worth *The Moonstone*, Wilkie Collins presents a variety of characters that reflect the social attitudes and biases of Victorian England. This includes representations of gender, race, and class, which are both products of their time and subtly critical of prevailing social norms. The novel provides a complex portrayal of these groups, often highlighting the limitations and prejudices they face.

### Representation of Women:

- Women in *The Moonstone*, such as Rachel Verinder and Rosanna Spearman, are depicted with a surprising degree of agency and complexity, particularly for a novel written in the Victorian era. Rachel, for instance, refuses to conform to societal expectations by initially refusing to explain her actions regarding the diamond. Her independence and strength are noteworthy, challenging the typical portrayal of women as passive figures in Victorian literature.
- Rosanna Spearman, a housemaid with a criminal past, is portrayed sympathetically despite her lower social standing and troubled history. Her unrequited love for Franklin Blake and her ultimate tragic fate highlight the limited options available to women of her status, suggesting a critique of social stratification and the lack of social mobility for women.

### Representation of Racial and Colonial Subjects:

- The three Indian jugglers, who are actually Brahmin priests, represent racial and colonial tensions. Their pursuit of the Moonstone to return it to its rightful place in India touches on themes of colonial exploitation and the moral ambiguities associated with British imperialism. The novel does not fully develop their characters, often depicting them through a stereotypical lens of mystery and

exoticism, which reflects the era's pervasive racial prejudices. However, their presence and the background of the Moonstone itself serve as a critique of British colonial practices.

### Representation of Social Minorities:

- Although *The Moonstone* does not explicitly address homosexuality, it does explore issues of social exclusion and secrecy which can be parallel to the hidden lives of homosexuals in Victorian society. Characters like Rosanna Spearman and Ezra Jennings, who live on the fringes of society due to their pasts and personal struggles, reflect broader themes of exclusion and the societal repercussions of being different.

### Why These Representations Are Symptomatic or Noteworthy:

- The representations in *The Moonstone* are symptomatic of Victorian concerns about race, gender, and empire. The novel's progressive portrayal of women and sympathetic treatment of certain marginalized characters suggests a questioning of rigid social hierarchies and norms.
- Collins uses the novel to subtly critique these norms, embedding social commentary within a popular literary form. This allows him to reach a broad audience and provoke thought on serious issues under the guise of entertainment.
- The fact that the narrative gives voice to characters from various social strata, including servants and foreigners, reflects an awareness of and sensitivity to diverse perspectives, which is quite forward-thinking for the period.

Overall, *The Moonstone* serves as both a mirror and a critique of Victorian society, using its plot and characters to highlight and question the social inequalities and imperialistic attitudes of the time. This makes the novel not only a cornerstone of detective fiction but also a significant text for studying the social dynamics and cultural attitudes of 19th-century England.

In *The Moonstone*, Ezra Jennings presents a particularly interesting case of self-characterization that touches on issues of gender identity, which was a highly unconventional topic for the Victorian era. While the novel does not explicitly describe Ezra as neither male nor female, his portrayal and his own reflections suggest a sense of otherness and ambiguity that resonates with contemporary discussions about gender identity.

### Ezra Jennings' Ambiguous Identity:

- Ezra is described as having an unusual appearance that sets him apart from other characters. His physical description includes features that are not typically assigned to one gender, which contributes to a sense of androgyny or ambiguity. This is further compounded by his mixed racial heritage, as he is noted to have both European and Indian ancestry, placing him at the margins of Victorian society both racially and, implicitly, in terms of gender identity.
- His alienation due to his appearance and background is a significant aspect of his character. Ezra himself expresses feelings of loneliness and exclusion, and his narrative voice carries a melancholic tone, reflective of someone who does not fit neatly into the societal norms of the time.

### Interpretation of Gender Ambiguity:

- Ezra's characterization as an outsider and his unique appearance might be interpreted through a modern lens as a depiction of a non-binary or gender-nonconforming individual. This interpretation is more contemporary, as Victorian society did not have a broad understanding or acceptance of gender beyond the binary male and female roles.

- His self-description and the narrative portrayal invite readers to see him as a figure of intersectional marginality, dealing with the complexities of identity that include race, health, and possibly gender.

#### Significance of Ezra's Characterization:

- Ezra Jennings' role in the novel and his self-characterization challenge the conventional gender roles and identities of the Victorian period. His character provides a vehicle for exploring themes of otherness, isolation, and the struggle for acceptance and understanding.
- By incorporating such a character, Wilkie Collins not only enriches the narrative but also subtly questions and critiques societal norms about identity, appearance, and acceptance. Ezra's character offers a poignant reflection on the pain of not conforming to societal expectations, a theme that resonates with contemporary issues around gender identity and social inclusion.

Thus, while *The Moonstone* does not explicitly discuss non-binary or genderqueer identities in the way modern narratives might, Ezra Jennings' portrayal provides a complex and sympathetic representation of a character who defies easy categorization, making him a figure of significant interpretive interest in studies of gender and identity in Victorian literature.

Ezra Jennings, as a character, is a focal point for discussions about race, identity, and otherness in "The Moonstone." While he is not described as Jewish or Gypsy, the confusion and curiosity surrounding his identity highlight the Victorian (and possibly continuing) tendency to exoticize and marginalize those who are different. Collins employs this characterization to critique societal prejudices and to enrich the narrative with themes of inclusivity and understanding.

#### NARRATIVE POINT(S) OF VIEW

In Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, the narrative technique is distinctive for its use of multiple narrators, each contributing their unique perspective to the unfolding mystery. This multi-narrative approach allows for a rich exploration of the plot and characters, utilizing various forms of focalization and narrative viewpoints.

#### Main Speakers/Narrators:

1. **Gabriel Betteredge** - Serving as the steward of Lady Verinder, he narrates the initial events surrounding the loss of the Moonstone, using a first-person perspective that provides intimate insights into the household and the characters involved.
2. **Miss Drusilla Clack** - A devout and somewhat obtrusive relative, she takes over the narration in a first-person format, offering a contrasting viewpoint that includes her moral and religious observations.
3. **Franklin Blake** - He returns as a narrator later in the novel to recount his own investigations into the theft of the Moonstone, also in the first person.
4. **Ezra Jennings** - He provides another segment of the narrative, focusing on the scientific experiment he conducts to uncover the truth about the night the Moonstone was stolen.
5. **Other Narrators** - The narrative also includes contributions from other characters like Mr. Bruff, the family solicitor, and Sergeant Cuff, the detective, each adding their perspectives through first-person accounts.

#### Type of Narrators:

- The narrators in *The Moonstone* are primarily **first-person narrators**. Each narrator provides a subjective account of the events they witness or are involved in, offering personal insights, biases, and interpretations.

## Narrative Viewpoints:

- There are no instances of second-person narration in "The Moonstone." The use of multiple first-person narrators predominates, with no significant use of a third-person or omniscient narrator.

## Focalisation:

- **Internal Focalisation:** Most of the narration in *The Moonstone* involves internal focalisation, where the narrators are characters within the story. This technique allows readers to see events through the eyes of the narrators, each bounded by their own knowledge, experiences, and biases.
- **External Focalisation:** There are minimal instances of external focalisation, as the narrative rarely adopts a viewpoint that knows less than what the characters perceive. Most of the narrative is deeply embedded in the characters' personal experiences.
- **Zero Focalisation:** The novel does not employ zero focalisation; there is no omniscient narrator who provides a comprehensive and unbiased interpretation of events. The story is pieced together through the subjective lenses of several involved characters.

The narrative structure of *The Moonstone* is particularly effective in creating suspense and complexity, as the reader must synthesize the various accounts to understand the full story. Each narrator's limitations and personal stakes in the narrative add layers of intrigue and unreliability, engaging the reader in actively piecing together the true sequence of events from differing and sometimes conflicting perspectives. This approach not only enriches the mystery at the heart of the novel but also highlights the Victorian fascination with subjectivity, perception, and the multiplicity of truth.

## MAIN NARRATOR VOICE

In *The Moonstone*, the narrative voice significantly shifts depending on which character is narrating, reflecting their unique personalities, backgrounds, and biases. The three primary narrators—Gabriel Betteredge, Miss Drusilla Clack, and Franklin Blake—each have distinctive attitudes, tones, and styles that contribute to the richness of the narrative and its nuanced portrayal of events.

### Gabriel Betteredge

- **Attitude:** Loyal, traditional, somewhat superstitious.
- **Voice:** Conversational, earnest, and occasionally humorous.
- **Tone:** Nostalgic and reflective, often imbued with a tone of fondness for the past and a certain resignation towards the complexities of the present.

**Example 1:** Gabriel Betteredge, expressing his reliance on Robinson Crusoe as a guide for life's troubles, says:

"In all the troubles of our mortal condition, the trials of my life, gentle reader, as you will learn, if you read this Narrative, have been great and manifold), I have found my best comfort and my best encouragement in Mr. Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe."

**Example 2:** Discussing his philosophy of life:

"But, oh dear me! the beer must be very bad to be worse than the temper it was served in!"

These quotes capture Betteredge's use of humor and personal anecdotes, which color his narration with a warm, if occasionally curmudgeonly, tone.

## Miss Drusilla Clack

- **Attitude:** Piously self-righteous, intrusive.
- **Voice:** Didactic, often bordering on moralistic.
- **Tone:** Judgmental and occasionally condescending, reflecting her belief in her moral superiority.

**Example 1:** Her attitude towards other characters is often judgmental, as seen in her depiction of Rachel:

"The self-will of the present Rachel, my mother's indolence, and my father's infidelity, had set us in these past years so far apart."

**Example 2:** Describing her charitable efforts:

"I seized the opportunity of slightly shifting my position, which had become cramped, and then listened. They were evidently talking of the turnout, and suggesting what course had best be pursued."

These examples highlight Clack's moralizing nature and her tendency to view events through the lens of her rigid, often hypocritical, religious beliefs.

## Franklin Blake

**Attitude:** While earnest and determined, Franklin Blake also exhibits qualities that his contemporaries in the novel view as "un-English," such as indecisiveness or emotional expressiveness, which contrast with the Victorian ideal of stoic masculinity.

- **Voice:** Analytical and detailed, he reflects on his actions and the implications of the mystery deeply, often questioning his own judgments and those of others.
- **Tone:** His tone combines seriousness with a certain self-doubt, which may be interpreted as dithering by others but also shows a capacity for introspection not universally admired by his peers.

**Examples from the text:**

**Example 1:** In his narrative, Blake's self-doubt is evident when he discusses the confusing events surrounding the theft of the Moonstone:

"There are times when it is one's duty to assert oneself, and there are times when one should give way. At the risk of disappointing Richardson and the other suspected drama critics, I assert myself."

This quote reflects his introspective nature and his struggle with deciding when to be assertive and when to yield, which could be seen as dithering.

**Example 2:** His interactions often reflect a struggle with typical English restraint. Discussing his feelings, he notes:

"I had left the only woman I loved, when she was suffering insult, and was flying from the only home that she could feel to be her own, to follow me into the wilderness."

Here, Blake's emotional openness and his decision to express these feelings openly can be seen as uncharacteristic of the English gentleman's stoic demeanor, potentially leading to judgments of him as dithering or overly sentimental.

By integrating these elements into the analysis of Franklin Blake, we can appreciate the depth of his character and how his atypical qualities for a Victorian Englishman add richness to the narrative, presenting a

protagonist who defies some of the period's stereotypes and thereby enriches the novel's exploration of personal and cultural identity.

## THEMES or THEMATIC THREADS

Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* is a rich tapestry of themes that explore Victorian social concerns, cultural interactions, and moral dilemmas. Here, we'll explore the overarching themes focusing on the issues mentioned, providing examples to illustrate these complex layers:

### Race and the Racial Other(s)

*The Moonstone* significantly engages with themes of colonialism and race, primarily through the diamond itself, which is stolen from India and brings misfortune in England. The novel reflects Victorian anxieties about the empire and the "otherness" of colonized peoples.

**Example:** The prologue's account of the diamond's violent removal from India and its curse suggests a critique of colonial exploitation and the moral consequences that befall those who partake in such acts.

### Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Sexual Roles

The novel explores Victorian gender expectations and the limitations imposed on women. Rachel Verinder, for instance, challenges these norms through her strong-willed and independent nature.

**Example:** Rachel refuses to marry Franklin Blake despite societal pressures, asserting her autonomy in a society that often restricts women's agency.

### Class and Hierarchies

Class distinctions and social hierarchies are prominent, with servants playing key roles in both the household and the narrative, often displaying more complexity and moral fortitude than their "betters."

**Example:** Betteredge, the steward, is a character of significant moral and narrative weight, guiding the reader through the story with insights that blur the lines between servant and confidant.

### Religion and Spirituality

Religious motifs and critiques of religious hypocrisy appear throughout the text, particularly through characters like Drusilla Clack, who embodies the negative aspects of Victorian evangelicalism.

**Example:** Miss Clack's use of religious tracts as tools for personal intrusion and judgment showcases the novel's critique of religious moralizing.

### Art and the Role of the Artist

Art in *The Moonstone* reflects on the power of narrative and the role of the storyteller, which can be seen as a meta-commentary on the art of novel-writing itself.

**Example:** The structure of the novel as a series of narratives, each contributing different perspectives, highlights the subjective nature of truth and the artistic manipulation of narrative to engage and enlighten the reader.

### History, Science, Technology, Law, Philosophy

These elements intersect in the novel's engagement with detective work and the scientific method, especially in the character of Sergeant Cuff and later through the experiments of Ezra Jennings.

**Example:** Ezra Jennings' use of a reenactment experiment to solve the mystery incorporates scientific methodology, showcasing the novel's engagement with emerging forensic science.

## Additional Themes

**Imperial Critique:** Beyond the explicit theme of race and colonialism, the novel subtly critiques the consequences of British imperialism.

**Justice and Law:** The resolution of the diamond theft and the restoration of social order raise questions about the efficacy and morality of the legal and social systems of the time.

*The Moonstone* thus serves as a complex exploration of Victorian society, weaving together multiple thematic threads that challenge and illuminate the cultural and moral landscape of the era. Each narrative layer adds depth to these themes, making the novel a profound commentary on the intersection of personal lives with broader societal and cultural forces.

## LANGUAGE and STYLE: syntax, rhetoric, lexis, keywords

Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* exhibits a writing style that leans towards **hypotactic** rather than paratactic. The novel's syntax is characterized by complex sentences with multiple clauses that reflect detailed descriptions, introspective commentary, and intricate narrative developments. This hypotactic style, which relies heavily on subordination, allows for a layered and nuanced depiction of events and character thoughts.

**Writing Style:** Collins's style is detailed, reflective, and meticulous, with a strong emphasis on creating suspense and developing intricate plots. The use of detailed narrative constructions helps build a richly textured world that draws readers deeply into the story.

## Recurrent Patterns or Features

The narrative often uses detailed, lengthy sentences that weave together various elements of the story, providing depth and complexity. This method is particularly effective in a mystery novel where multiple viewpoints and pieces of evidence must be interlinked to build tension and intrigue.

## Assessment of Diction

### Figures of Speech

- **Metonymy and Synecdoche:** These figures are used to symbolize broader themes through specific objects or terms. The Moonstone itself serves as a synecdoche for colonial plunder and its repercussions.
- **Irony:** Irony permeates the novel, particularly through the unreliable narratives provided by the various narrators, whose biased or incomplete understandings of events often contrast with the truth as it is later revealed.
- **Hyperbole:** Used frequently to emphasize the dramatic nature of the events or the extreme emotions of characters, especially in moments of tension or surprise.
- **Personification:** Elements such as the Moonstone are imbued with almost living qualities, enhancing the mystical and cursed aura that surrounds the gem.

These rhetorical devices enhance the narrative's depth and engage readers on multiple levels, often forcing them to question the reliability of the narrators and the veracity of the presented facts.

## Rhetorical Appeals

- **Logical (Logos):** Evident in the detective elements of the story, where logical reasoning and clues are pieced together to solve the mystery.
- **Ethical (Ethos):** The narrators' credibility is a central theme, and their moral standings and reliability significantly affect the reader's engagement and judgment.
- **Emotional (Pathos):** Strong emotional appeals are present, especially in the relationships and personal crises faced by characters like Rachel Verinder and Franklin Blake.

## Kenneth Burke's "God Terms" and "Devil Terms"

- **God Terms:** Justice, truth, and duty are treated as ultimate values in the novel, guiding the actions and justifications of characters.
- **Devil Terms:** Deceit, theft, and betrayal are depicted as inherently negative, driving the conflict and moral judgments within the narrative.

These terms serve to align the readers' sympathies and antipathies according to the moral framework established by the novel, influencing how events and characters are perceived.

## MOTIFS:

Keep in mind the distinction we discuss in class between motifs and themes in literature: it is important but can be subtle. Think of music: In music, a motif (or motive) is a short, distinctive musical idea or figure that is recognizable through its repetition and development within a composition. It can be a rhythm, a sequence of notes, or a combination of both. A motif is often just a few bars in length and serves as a building block in the construction of a larger piece.

A musical theme, on the other hand, is a longer, more fully developed musical idea that often serves as the main melodic entity in a composition. Themes are usually more complete and recognizable as the central idea around which a piece of music is developed. They are typically more elaborate than motifs and are often the main subjects of variations or developments throughout the piece. So, in a novel:

- **Motifs** are recurring elements such as colours, phrases, objects, or situations that appear throughout a novel. These elements are used consistently to enhance the narrative by adding depth and a layer of meaning. Motifs serve to develop and inform the novel's major themes by providing a concrete representation of ideas, contributing to the atmosphere, or emphasizing aspects of the characters or settings.
- **Themes**, in contrast, are the central ideas or underlying messages explored in a novel. They may be abstract concepts such as freedom, conflict, love, or betrayal. Themes are expressed and explored through the narrative, characters' development, and interactions, as well as through the use of motifs. While a motif is a tangible element that recurs throughout the story, a theme is a broader idea that the story seeks to investigate or comment upon.

In essence, motifs are specific, repeated elements that support and enrich the themes of a novel, providing a visual, auditory, or conceptual pattern that helps to weave the theme more deeply into the fabric of the story.

1. **The Moonstone Gem:** Central to the narrative, the Moonstone itself is a recurring motif representing various aspects such as greed, colonial exploitation, and the supernatural. Its mysterious disappearance and the curse associated with it drive the plot and symbolize the consequences of moral and ethical transgressions.

2. **Opium and Dreams:** Opium use and its effects, including dreams and altered states of consciousness, recur throughout the novel. This motif is closely linked to the unreliability of perception and memory, playing a crucial role in the unfolding of the mystery and the revelation of truth.
3. **Disguise and Deception:** Various forms of disguise and deception are a motif that appears repeatedly, emphasizing themes of identity and truth. Characters often use physical disguises, and the narrative itself is structured to mislead both characters and readers, creating layers of mystery and suspense.
4. **Clocks and Time:** References to time, clocks, and timepieces are frequent, underscoring the motif of time in relation to the unfolding of events and the timing of the theft. This motif contributes to the tension and pacing of the narrative and symbolizes the inexorable progress towards revelation and resolution.
5. **Detective and Investigation:** The process of detection and investigation recurs as a motif, represented by the characters of Sergeant Cuff and later, Franklin Blake and others who take on investigative roles. This motif highlights the theme of truth-seeking and the scientific method, integral to the detective genre.
6. **Letters and Written Documents:** The frequent use of letters, diaries, and other documents as narrative devices is a key motif. These texts within the text are crucial for revealing personal perspectives and for advancing the plot, emphasizing the importance of communication and the written word in uncovering truth.

## TOPOI or COMMONPLACES or FORMULAS

In Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, several classical and medieval *topoi* are utilized to enhance the narrative and thematic depth of the novel. Here are some examples that can be clearly identified:

1. **Memento Mori (Remember Death):** This motif surfaces in the context of the Moonstone's curse, which is said to bring misfortune and death to its holder. The death of Rosanna Spearman and the dangerous fate of those involved with the stone serve as reminders of mortality.
2. **Locus Amoenus (Pleasant Place):** The novel features several idyllic settings, such as the Verinder estate, which represents a peaceful and idealized environment. This contrasts sharply with the more ominous settings like the Shivering Sands, highlighting the dual nature of the narrative's spaces.
3. **Hortus Conclusus (Enclosed Garden):** The Verinder estate can also be seen as an enclosed garden, a separate and protected space where much of the initial drama unfolds. This setting symbolizes both safety and isolation, playing a crucial role in the unfolding of the mystery.
4. **Vanitas (Vanity/Futility):** The pursuit of the Moonstone and the characters' fixation on its material and mystical value serve as a commentary on the futility and vanity of human desires. The characters' efforts often lead to disappointment or worse, reflecting the emptiness of such pursuits.
5. **Tempus Fugit (Time Flies):** The narrative's attention to detailed timelines and the urgency with which the mystery needs to be solved reflect this topos. The fleeting nature of time is emphasized through the characters' race to uncover the truth before further calamities unfold.

6. **Deus ex Machina (God from the Machine):** The unexpected resolutions that come about in the novel, such as the explanation of the theft itself, border on the miraculous or coincidental, akin to the narrative device of *deus ex machina*, although they are grounded in the detective genre's conventions.
7. **In Medias Res (Into the Middle of Things):** The novel begins with the theft of the Moonstone already having occurred, plunging the reader directly into the mystery and the ramifications of the theft.
8. **Fortune's Wheel (The Turning of Fate):** The shifting fortunes of the characters, particularly Franklin Blake, who goes from being a suspect to a detective to a lover, illustrate this topos of changing fate.
9. **Vox Clamantis in Deserto (A Voice Crying in the Wilderness):** Sergeant Cuff's role as a detective who understands the truth but struggles to convince others of his theories reflects this motif. His insights often go unheeded or misunderstood by those around him.
10. **Theatrum Mundi (The World as a Stage):** The entire narrative can be seen as a stage where each character plays their part in the unfolding drama, often unaware of the full context or the roles of others, which is a common element in detective fiction.

These topos not only enrich the narrative of *The Moonstone* but also tie it to deeper philosophical and cultural reflections, adding layers of meaning that resonate with the reader's exploration of the text.

## REFERENCES, QUOTES, ECHOES or ALLUSIONS:

*The Moonstone* is often considered one of the first and finest in the genre of English detective novels. Its echoes of other literary works and intertextual references enrich the narrative and align it with broader literary traditions and conventions. Here are some key intertextual relationships and influences present in the novel:

1. **Echoes of British Empire Literature:** Collins's portrayal of the Moonstone's origins and its curse reflects the Victorian fascination with and anxiety about the British Empire. The novel alludes to British activities in India and the consequences of colonial exploitation, similar to themes explored in *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling and other British Empire literature of the time.
2. **Gothic Influences:** The atmosphere around the Moonstone, particularly the curse and the mysterious circumstances surrounding its loss, is reminiscent of Gothic novels such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe. These novels typically involve supernatural elements, ancient curses, and settings that evoke a sense of mystery and dread.
3. **Shakespearian Echoes:** The complex, interwoven narrative and the emphasis on flawed human nature echo the dramatic structures of Shakespeare's plays, particularly *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*. In *Othello*, the titular character's downfall is precipitated by a treasured handkerchief, much as the Moonstone's theft sets off the plot in Collins's novel.
4. **Biblical Allusions:** There are numerous references to Biblical texts and Christian morality, which reflect Victorian England's religious temperament. For instance, Miss Clack, who often quotes scripture, uses religious texts to assert moral superiority, echoing the religious sermonizing found in earlier Victorian literature such as works by Charles Dickens.
5. **Legal and Detective Fiction:** Collins was influenced by the early development of detective fiction and legal narratives. Echoes of Edgar Allan Poe's detective stories, particularly those featuring C. Auguste Dupin, are evident in the methodical approach of Sergeant Cuff. The attention to legal details and the

importance of evidence in solving the mystery also follow patterns established in legal narratives and real-life legal procedures, which were increasingly represented in Victorian literature.

6. **Theatrical Influences:** Collins, who was also a playwright, imbues the novel with a sense of theatricality that recalls the stage, particularly in the structured setting of scenes and the dramatic revelations. This can be seen as a pastiche of theatrical conventions, where each character plays a role that contributes to the unfolding of the plot, akin to a cast in a play.

These intertextual elements do not merely serve to situate *The Moonstone* within its literary context but also enrich its narrative, allowing Collins to explore themes of colonialism, morality, and human psychology more deeply. The novel's use of these literary echoes helps to set genre expectations for detective fiction, which would be further developed by authors like Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie.

## IMAGERY and RECURRENT IMAGES:

The visual aesthetic of *The Moonstone* can be described as **vividly cinematic**, with a strong emphasis on contrasting light and shadow. This aesthetic enhances the mystery and dramatic tension, drawing readers into the sensory and emotional experience of the narrative. Collins's detailed descriptions help visualize the settings and characters, making the scenes memorable and engaging.

### Application of Literary Theories to Imagery Analysis

#### David Lodge's *The Language of Fiction* (1966):

Lodge discusses how different types of imagery, including visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic, enrich a narrative. In *The Moonstone*, visual imagery (the gem, settings) dominates, but auditory imagery (the storm, footsteps) and tactile imagery (the sensation of touching the Moonstone) are also crucial in creating a sensory tapestry that engrosses the reader. The kinesthetic imagery, particularly in scenes of physical action (such as Cuff's investigation or the chase sequences), adds dynamism to the narrative.

#### Ayşe Çelik's *The Visual Poetics of Raymond Carver* (2008):

Although focused on Carver, Çelik's ideas about concrete details and metaphorically charged language apply to Collins's work. *The Moonstone*'s detailed descriptions use concrete details to build a realistic world, while metaphorical language elevates objects like the Moonstone to symbols of broader themes. Recurring patterns, such as references to moonlight and storms, create a motif that reinforces the novel's themes of fate and human frailty.

## SYMBOLS:

### 1. The Moonstone Gem

**Classical Symbolon:** In classical Greek, a *symbolon* was a token broken into two pieces, each held by a party to a pact or agreement. This notion of split identity and reunion can be applied to the Moonstone, which, taken from India and sought to be restored to its rightful place, symbolizes disrupted unity and the quest for restitution.

**Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics:** Ricoeur emphasizes symbols' ability to convey multiple levels of meaning simultaneously. The Moonstone serves as a complex symbol of colonial exploitation, the spiritual quest for enlightenment, and the personal redemption of the characters involved with it. Its theft and recovery mirror a journey of moral and psychological upheaval and resolution.

**Tzvetan Todorov's Symbolic Distinction:** Todorov distinguishes between autotelic symbols (which exist for their own sake within the narrative) and heterotelic symbols (which refer to meanings outside the narrative). The Moonstone operates as a heterotelic symbol, connecting the narrative to broader themes of imperial guilt, justice, and spiritual seeking.

## 2. The Shivering Sands

**Psychoanalytical Views:** From a Freudian perspective, the Shivering Sands could symbolize the unconscious mind—murky, unstable, and concealing hidden depths. Jung might see it as representing the shadow self, a place where darker aspects of the psyche are projected. Lacan's notion of the "mirror stage" could interpret the Sands' reflective surface as a place for self-confrontation and realization, mirroring characters' internal conflicts and transformations.

**Archetypal Imagery (Gilbert Durand):** Durand discusses archetypes as fundamental images derived from the collective unconscious that shape the cultural psyche. The Shivering Sands, with their perilous, engulfing nature, act as an archetype of chaos and the primordial abyss, a place of danger and transformation in mythic structures.

## 3. The Three Indian Brahmins

**Classical Symbolon and Archetypes:** In Platonic terms, these figures could be seen as symbolizing the divided parts of the soul (logos, thumos, eros) seeking unity—in this case, the reunion with the sacred Moonstone. As archetypes, they might represent the seeker or the guardian, figures prevalent in various cultural mythologies guarding sacred knowledge or treasures.

**Psychoanalytical Views:** Freud might interpret the Brahmins' relentless pursuit as a manifestation of the return of the repressed, a symbol of colonial crimes that continue to haunt the perpetrator culture. Jung could see them as manifestations of the anima or animus, guiding the narrative toward a deeper understanding of the self through the quest for the Moonstone.

**Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics:** Ricoeur would likely focus on their role as mediators between the spiritual and material worlds, embodying the dual nature of the Moonstone as both a physical object and a bearer of deeper spiritual significance. Their presence enriches the narrative's polysemy, offering multiple interpretative paths regarding restitution, justice, and ethical responsibility.

By applying these diverse theoretical frameworks, the symbolic elements in *The Moonstone* reveal themselves as deeply woven into the fabric of the novel's narrative structure, enhancing its thematic complexity and inviting a richly layered interpretive experience.

## KEY QUOTES:

### 1. Theme: Mystery and Detection

"I can't account for it, and my bedfellow can't account for it...The Moonstone has been taken." (Mr. Franklin Blake, Second Period, Chapter I )

**Why it's representative:** This initial utterance sets the entire plot of the novel in motion – the inexplicable disappearance of the diamond establishes the central mystery and propels the reader into the world of detectives and suspects.

### 2. Theme: Colonialism and Legacy

...three Indian jugglers...had followed Colonel Herncastle and begged to exhibit their tricks before him...and the yellow diamond was the price they set on their performance." (Gabriel Betteredge, First Period, Chapter IV) \*

**Why it's representative:** This quote reveals the Moonstone's origin story, steeped in colonial exploitation and a complex legacy. The diamond carries cultural and historical weight, making its theft a multi-layered crime.

### 3. Theme: Secret Desires and Obsession

The diamond hangs about my neck. The diamond is burning me at this moment. The diamond has won me. I believe in God; I believe also in the Moonstone." (Rosanna Spearman, Second Period, Chapter VI)

**Why it's representative:** Rosanna's conflicted words reveal both her passionate longing for Franklin and a darker, almost supernatural obsession with the diamond. This echoes the broader theme of characters' hidden desires and the power of objects over them.

### 4. Theme: Rationality vs. the Unexplained

This is a very serious matter, Rosanna; and the Superintendent expects you to assist him in finding the thief...Show Mr. Superintendent our diamond, and the way it was kept, and tell him all you know." (Mr. Bruff, Second Period, Chapter XXII) \*

**Why it's representative:** Mr. Bruff, the lawyer, embodies rational inquiry, highlighting the novel's clash between logic and seemingly-inexplicable events. This conversation illustrates the tension between detective work and the more mystical elements surrounding the Moonstone.

### 5. Theme: Class and Social Order

You will hear next of him, if I can find him, tramping the country, and in debt for his jacket. To use his own words, he has tried his luck, and lost his chance." (Miss Clack, Second Narrative, Chapter III) \*

**Why it's representative:** Miss Clack's snobbish dismissal of her nephew, Godfrey Ablewhite, exposes the novel's underlying themes of class division and social prejudice. This quote acts as a "representative anecdote" in how it reveals the judgment and limitations of certain characters within the novel's world.

### ADDITIONAL QUOTES:

#### Colonial Guilt and Justice:

**Quote:** "The Moonstone will have its vengeance yet on you and yours!"

**Speaker:** A quote from the prologue, originally part of a letter written by Colonel Herncastle.

**Context:** This quote is part of the Colonel's will and serves as a chilling prophecy regarding the cursed diamond, foreshadowing the turmoil it will bring to the English holders. It encapsulates the theme of colonial exploitation and the moral repercussions that follow.

#### The Elusiveness of Truth:

**Quote:** "There are three things that none of the young men of the present generation can do. They can't sit over their wine; they can't play at wist; and they can't pay a lady a compliment.b"

**Speaker:** Mr. Betteredge.

**Context:** This is spoken by Betteredge as he reflects on the changing times and the younger generation, subtly critiquing the loss of certain values and skills. It reflects the broader theme of the shifting perceptions of truth and integrity within the society.

#### The Spiritual and Material Quest:

**Quote:** "I am not only persuaded of Her Majesty's forgiveness, but I am also persuaded that Her Majesty would rest the jewel, the forfeited jewel, under the peculiar care of the young lady who personifies the best part of the colonists' conquest—their principle!"

**Speaker:** Mr. Murthwaite.

**Context:** Spoken when discussing the fate of the Moonstone and the qualities of Rachel, this quote ties the material diamond to the spiritual and moral quest represented by Rachel's integrity and the colonial history behind the gem.

#### Identity and Self-Discovery:

**Quote:** "It is the grand misfortune of my life that nobody will let me alone."

**Speaker:** Rachel Verinder.

**Context:** Rachel expresses this during the turbulent events following the theft of the Moonstone, highlighting her struggle for personal autonomy and identity amidst societal and familial expectations.

#### The Burden of the Past and Redemption:

**Quote:** "We must not think of the things we could not prevent. Let us be cheerful. We have been so long depressed."

**Speaker:** Franklin Blake.

**Context:** This is said by Franklin towards the end of the novel, after the mystery of the Moonstone has been resolved. It captures the relief of unburdening oneself of guilt and the hope for redemption, reflecting the resolution of the narrative's conflict and the personal growth of the characters involved.

#### CRITICISM:

To engage deeply with Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, several critical works and interpretations from the past two decades and beyond stand out as particularly insightful. Here are three essential academic resources that should be included in any study of the novel:

"Wilkie Collins, Vera Caspary and the Evolution of the Casebook Novel" by A. B. Emrys - This work links Collins's techniques in *The Moonstone* with later developments in detective fiction, highlighting his innovative use of the casebook format.

*The Moonstone: A Study of Picaresque Narrative Technique* by Tamar Heller - This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the narrative techniques used in *The Moonstone*, emphasizing its picaresque elements and how these contribute to the detective genre.

Articles and reviews in *The Wilkie Collins Journal* - This peer-reviewed journal offers a range of articles dedicated to Collins's life and works, providing varied methodologies and ideological perspectives on his writings. It's an invaluable resource for anyone studying Collins's influence and techniques [\[\[75†source\]\]](#).

In addition to these canonical works, here are seven critical interpretations of *The Moonstone* that provide a broad spectrum of literary analysis:

**Narrative Complexity and Romantic Entanglement:** Critiques often highlight how Collins masterfully intertwines a complex mystery with a romantic plot, a narrative strategy that sustains reader interest and deepens character development.

**Characterization and Social Commentary:** Collins's characterization, particularly of figures like Rosanna Spearman and Ezra Jennings, is noted for its depth and for challenging Victorian social norms. This adds layers of social critique to the novel, particularly in terms of class and race .

**Realism and Marvel:** Collins's blend of detailed realism with elements of the marvelous is recognized as a key technique that enhances the believability of the narrative while maintaining a gripping plot [[77†source]].

**Use of Detective Fiction Conventions:** The novel is praised for its early use of detective fiction conventions, which Collins blends with elements of suspense and mystery to engage the reader's deductive skills .

**Literary Device Usage:** The use of multiple narratives and the epistolary format is seen as innovative for its time and influential in the development of the detective genre. This narrative multiplicity allows for a richer exploration of perspectives and truths [[78†source]].

**Thematic Depth:** Collins's exploration of themes such as identity, imperialism, and morality is noted for its complexity and for provoking reader reflection on these enduring issues .

**Symbolic Use of the Moonstone:** The diamond itself is analyzed as a multifaceted symbol representing British colonial history, the mystical, and the material, all of which are interwoven into the characters' personal redemptions and the broader societal critique .

These interpretations showcase the multifaceted nature of *The Moonstone*, underscoring its richness as a text that merges thrilling narrative with deep thematic and social exploration. Each critique brings its own merits to understanding the text, whether through the lens of narrative structure, character analysis, or thematic depth, contributing to a comprehensive appreciation of Collins's work.

## READER RESPONSE:

Based on the reviews from Goodreads, here are some typical and noteworthy responses to Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*.

### Typical Positive Response:

Many readers appreciate the novel for its intricate plot and its status as a pioneering work in the detective genre. They often praise Collins's ability to maintain suspense and the complex, layered narrative presented through multiple viewpoints.

**Example:** A Goodreads review highlights the novel's complex narrative and its pioneering role in detective fiction, noting Collins's skill in sustaining interest throughout the book's considerable length and intertwining different narrative lines effectively.

### Typical Critical Response:

Some readers find the Victorian prose challenging, mentioning that the dense writing style can sometimes slow down the pace of the story. Others point out the length of the book as potentially daunting.

**Example:** A reviewer on Goodreads mentions that while the story is engaging and the characters are colourful, Collins's Victorian writing style can be dense and may require patience due to its detailed narrative approach.

### Atypical Insightful Response:

A few readers delve deeper into the themes of imperialism and morality, discussing how the Moonstone itself serves as a critique of colonial exploitation. These reviews often appreciate the novel's deeper thematic layers beyond just the mystery.

**Example:** Another review on Goodreads discusses how the novel, through the story of the stolen diamond, serves as a latent critique of British imperialism, suggesting that the novel uses its plot to engage with significant social and historical issues.

#### **Reader Engagement with Character Development:**

Readers often express a strong connection with the characters, particularly with how they are developed and revealed through their first-person narratives. The characters of Gabriel Betteredge and Sergeant Cuff are frequently mentioned as particularly well-drawn and engaging.

**Example:** On Goodreads, a reader noted the vividness of Collins's characters, especially Rosanna Spearman and Ezra Jennings, who are portrayed with depth and compassion, challenging the typical social norms of Victorian literature .

#### **Discussion on Narrative Technique:**

Some readers and critics focus on Collins's use of the epistolary form and multiple narrators, discussing how this technique adds to the richness of the narrative and allows for a more immersive and multi-faceted storytelling approach.

**Example:** A review praises Collins for his innovative narrative structure, using multiple narrators to effectively build suspense and develop a multi-dimensional view of the plot, likening this technique to a modern psychological thriller [[78†source]].