WRAPPED IN IMPORT: KASHMIRI SHAWLS IN BRITISH PAINTINGS
OF THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

Sheilagh G.L. Quaile

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Abstract

Woven shawls from the Kashmir region of the Indian subcontinent became a popular fashion in Europe during the latter half of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth. European manufacturers soon picked up on this trend, producing textiles which imitated eastern designs but sold at competitively lower prices from the 1780s onwards. As a consequence of their fashionability, Kashmiri shawls and their imitations made frequent appearances within European paintings. To date, there has been an absence of art historical investigation into the visual representation of Kashmiri shawls and their imitations within nineteenth-century painting, though several scholars have examined their appearance within French and English literature. This paper seeks to fill a literary gap by investigating Kashmiri shawls and their imitations depicted in British paintings from 1850 to 1910, with several French paintings included to support the analysis. Paintings are an appropriate source for considering the materiality of the shawl as they are some of the only available visual evidence to how shawls were worn and consumed as textiles (and to who wore and consumed them).

Each of the three paintings selected for the three main chapters of this thesis serves as a case study. These are Hunt’s The Awakening Conscience (1853-1854) and The Children’s Holiday (1864-1865), and Francis Henry Newbery’s The Paisley Shawl (c. 1910). These examples have been selected for the visual centrality of the shawls within each painting, for their differing temporality (dated to the mid-1850s, mid-1860s, and c.1910, respectively) and settings (a London villa interior, English country park, and a Scottish cottage interior, respectively), and for the shawls’ dissimilar materiality and appearance. The women depicted are also of varying ages and social classes, representing diverse consumers of the shawls at separate moments of its history. Through a material culture-based analysis of the shawls, which combines close-reading of the depicted shawls as objects with consultation of ‘external’ historical sources, this thesis utilizes painted images as texts to interpret nuanced contemporary cultural and social information that was attached to the shawl during the long nineteenth century in Britain.
Acknowledgements

While researching for this thesis in Glasgow I heard an Irish proverb that is appropriate to repeat here: “Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireas na daoine,” which translates to “It is in the shadows of one another that people live.” This can be interpreted to mean “No (wo)man is an island.”

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Sheilagh Quaile
Rockwood, Ontario, Canada
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Chapter 1

Introduction, Literature, and Methodologies

I. Introduction

Woven shawls from the Kashmir region of the Indian subcontinent became a popular fashion in Europe during the latter half of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth. This was a trend that European manufacturers soon picked up on, producing textiles which imitated Eastern designs but sold at competitively lower prices from the 1780s onwards. With growing consumer markets, imitation-Kashmiri shawls also were produced elsewhere in India from the first half of the nineteenth century.\(^1\) As a consequence of their fashionability, Kashmiri shawls and their imitations made frequent appearances within European paintings.\(^2\) To date, there has been an absence of art historical investigation into the visual representation of Kashmiri shawls and imitation products within painting of the long nineteenth century, though several scholars have examined their presence within French and English literature. Susan Hiner has studied their role in French works such as Honoré de Balzac’s *La Cousine Bette* (1846) and Gustave Flaubert’s *L’Éducation sentimentale* (1869), investigating their consumption and

\(^2\) This thesis adopts some of the terminology used by Michelle Maskiell in her article, “Consuming Kashmir: Shawls and Empires, 1500-2000,” *Journal of World History* 13, No. 1 (Spring 2002), 27. “Kashmiri shawls” refers to shawls from Kashmir; “Indian shawls” refers to those made elsewhere on the Indian subcontinent in the style of Kashmiri shawls; “imitation-Kashmiri shawls” refers to those made in Britain and France “in imitation of the Indian,” in the words of Pamela Clabburn in *Shawls in imitation of the Indian* (1981; repr. Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, UK: Shire Publications, 1990). “Cashmere” is also a word that appears, and is a variation of “Kashmir” that was used in England during the nineteenth century to refer to the shawls. This is a term that Maskiell notes “was popularly linked with ‘exotic’ luxury in nineteenth-century Britain” (p. 28). The *buta* or *boteh* is the name for the plant motif that appeared on the shawls (p. 29).
social and cultural import in nineteenth-century France. Penelope Alfrey has provided a material culture study which uses passages of Victorian literature to understand the shawl’s sartorial use and social meaning, and which also includes French nineteenth-century paintings to illustrate the author’s analysis, though they do not form its basis. In her 2002 article, Suzanne Daly examined the shawl in Victorian novels, charting their cultural and material significance through their frequent mention in works such as Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette* (1853), Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* (1847) and *North and South* (1855), and William Makepeace Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* (1847-1848). Daly also references early nineteenth-century paintings by the French portraitist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, observing their recurrent presence within Ingres’s paintings as material symbols of luxury, and contending that their disappearance from Ingres’s aristocratic portraiture by the 1850s demonstrates their rejection by aristocratic society at that time.

Discussion of the shawl’s portrayal within nineteenth-century paintings has begun, but has so far only been cursory. While paintings have been referred to within these studies, they have not themselves been analysed, but have been used to supplement or illustrate literary analyses. Furthermore, although much attention has been given to shawls in French painting, little has been given to the frequency of the shawl’s appearance within British paintings—notably in the works of the Pre-Raphaelite artist

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5 Suzanne Daly, “Kashmir Shawls in Mid-Victorian Novels,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 30, No.1 (2002): 237-255. For discussion and images of Ingres’s relevant paintings, see especially pp. 240-244.
William Holman Hunt. Shawls are worn by female sitters in William Holman Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience* (1853-1854, figs. 3 and 4), *The Children’s Holiday* (also known as *Portrait of Mrs. Thomas Fairbairn and Her Children*) (1864-1865, fig. 11), and *Portrait of Fanny Holman Hunt* (1866-1868, fig. 7).

This paper seeks to fill a gap in art historical literature by investigating Kashmiri shawls and their imitations depicted in British paintings from 1850 to 1910, with a select few French paintings to support the analysis. Paintings are an appropriate source for considering the materiality of the shawl as they are some of the only available visual evidence to how shawls were worn and consumed as textiles (and to who wore and consumed them). The selection and representation of objects within a painting are furthermore influenced by its genre, intended audience, and patron(s). As has been recognized by Rachel Worth in “Developing a Method for the Study of the Clothing of the ‘Poor’: Some Themes in the Visual Representation of Rural Working-Class Dress, 1850–1900,” *Textile History* 40, No. 1 (May 2009): 70-96. In other words, paintings are products of, and inform on, contemporary culture and social structures. As a case study on shawls, considering each of these factors is telling of the shawl’s communicative role within each painting.

While shawls were also used to adorn interiors, this thesis concentrates on the shawl as dress rather than as furnishing, and therefore relies on portraiture to study their sartorial use and meaning. Each of the three paintings selected for the three main chapters of this thesis provides a case study. These are Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience* and *The Children’s Holiday*, which demonstrate two materially and visually very different shawls, and Francis Henry Newbery’s *The Paisley Shawl* (c. 1910, fig. 13), which was painted...
relatively late in the garment’s history. These examples have been selected for the visual centrality of the shawls within each painting: as focal points within the pictures, the shawls in each have been represented with significant detail. The women depicted are also of varying ages and social classes, representing different consumers of the shawls at separate moments of its history. The paintings have furthermore been chosen for their differing temporality (mid-1850s, mid-1860s, and early 1900s, up to c.1910) and settings (a London villa interior, English country park, and a Scottish cottage interior, respectively). Comparing paintings of differing temporality establishes a longitudinal framework of visual evidence to the shawl fashion’s evolution over time—a valuable consideration, as the consumer base and the social and cultural meaning of the shawl in the 1780s was not the same as it was in the 1840s or in the 1890s. Politics and economics played strong roles in the shawl’s changing markets and meanings, and the influence of these will be considered.

Artists discussed often had backgrounds or connections in textile manufacture and design—Hunt and Newbery included. This raises the point that as textile production was more integrated in Western society than today, most Victorians were more engaged with textiles and textile production. This is also reflected in the imaginative literature which surrounded textiles, pieces of which are later mentioned within this thesis. Artists’

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9 *The Awakening Conscience* was painted in a villa in St. John’s Wood, London, *The Children’s Holiday* painted in Burton Park in Sussex, and *The Paisley Shawl* was completed in Paisley during Francis Henry Newbery’s time as the head of the Glasgow School of Art.

10 See, for example, the column, “Spinnings in Town,” which discusses textiles imaginatively, from the point of view of a silkworm. In *The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* (London, England), No. 32 (Thursday 1 August 1867): 438, accessed 8 July 2015, *19th Century UK Periodicals*. 


biographies as well as the material aspects of the shawls will therefore be examined in order to provide a rough appraisal of each shawl’s provenance—keeping in mind it is generally difficult to define the exact provenance of a nineteenth-century shawl, which is telling and significant in itself. As design influences were developed and exchanged between Europe and Asia over the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the distinctions between shawls from various centres of shawl production blurred.¹¹

II. Methodologies

The purpose of this enquiry—to consider the materiality of shawls depicted in paintings—fits closely with the objectives of material culture studies, which Jules David Prown has defined as “the object-based aspect of the study of culture,” and will thus be conducted through a material culture approach.¹² Prown’s suggested method for studying material culture is the close-reading of an object to discover its “internal evidence.” This includes, first, description, comprising evaluation an object’s structural and formal properties and, if decorated, its “content” or subject matter;¹³ second, deduction,


¹² Jules David Prown, “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method,” Winterthur Portfolio 17, No. 1 (1982): 5. The value of material culture studies to historical discipline has been discussed by Richard Grassby, “Material Culture and Cultural History.” The Journal of Interdisciplinary History 35, No. 4 (Spring 2005): 591-603, and by several historians within Karen Harvey’s edited book, History and Material Culture: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources (London: Routledge, 2009). In particular, see Harvey, “Introduction: Practical Matters,” 1-23, and Beverly Lemire, “Draping the body and dressing the home: The material culture of textiles and clothes in the Atlantic world, c.1500-1800,” 85-102. For a recent argument supporting a greater integration of the material culture paradigm within art history, see Michael Yonan, “Toward a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture History,” West 86th 18, No. 2 (2011): 232-248. Yonan explains the value of material culture studies in broadening the range of sources for art history to consider—including objects such as textiles, which have traditionally been relegated lesser statuses as “minor arts” or “decorative arts” for their “semi- or quasi-functional[ity]” (p. 235). He furthermore contends that reading objects’ materiality can “reveal unstated or otherwise suppressed beliefs or assumptions” (p. 245) which may not be apparent in reading the visual aspects of art alone (p. 239).

considering how a viewer interacts or empathizes with the object by factoring one’s own sensory and intellectual engagements and emotional response; and third, speculation, involving the development of theories and hypotheses based on the results of the study so far, and developing a programme of further research using other disciplinary methodologies and techniques.

This procedure is followed by consultation of outside sources (referred to by Prown as “external evidence”) to check information uncovered from the close-reading of the object. As such, shawls within selected paintings will be examined for their structural properties such as materials and fabrication, decorative content such as pattern, and formal qualities such as colour and texture. Supported by external historical evidence regarding the shawl’s domestic manufacture and consumption, this study will interpret the shawl’s role in signifying social status for Victorians, and will suggest possible provenance of the shawls depicted. I argue that analysing Victorian painters’ choice to depict Kashmiri and imitation-Kashmiri shawls, and the manner in which they were portrayed, reveals valuable information about how they were consumed and worn, as well as their power as symbols of wealth, femininity, and of empire. Furthermore, assessing

15 Ibid., 9-10.
16 As the standing discussion of material culture is an interdisciplinary one, Prown suggests approaches used by several different disciplines in seeking external evidence. For further discussion, see “Mind in Matter,” 7-12.
17 By examining the objects as they appear in paintings, this thesis takes a similar approach to that of Laura Peers. In several essays, Peers has examined material objects within paintings, drawings, and prints to tease out cultural meanings embedded in the images, as well as meanings which were attached to the objects themselves at the time of their depiction. This has included the role of objects as status symbols and in representing the exotic within nineteenth-century British colonial society. See Peers, “‘Almost True’: Peter Rindisbacher’s Early Images of Rupert’s Land, 1821-26,” Art History 32, No. 3 (June 2009): 516-544, and “Material Culture, Identity, and Colonial Society in the Canadian Fur Trade,” in Women & Things 1750-1950: Gendered Material Strategies, ed. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009): 55-74.
whether the shawls represented in the selected paintings were from Britain, Kashmir, or elsewhere on the Indian subcontinent will expound their economic histories.

Methodologies for using visual culture to analyse dress history have been discussed by Lou Taylor. Taylor has examined the benefits of this mode of inquiry as well as problems with which scholars must be aware, observing: “[n]o painting or drawing is free from the personal preferences and prejudices of its creator nor free from the etiquettes, politics and prejudices of its day.”18 These include aesthetic conventions and social ones, as well as the decisions of the individual artist.19 The use of paintings to analyse dress has also been discussed by Rachel Worth, who examines how poor peoples’ clothes were represented during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and offers considerations in the development of a methodological framework for study of this subject. Due to the unevenness of garments’ survival, Worth contends that they are under-representative and are therefore not an appropriate source base when used alone.20 Paintings can help to reconstruct a better idea of how contemporary clothing was worn and by who, but several considerations must be taken when applying them as sources. These include a painting’s genre, and “issues relating to market and audience.”21 Because of the artistic license artists are liable to take under these circumstances, Worth contends the most important information to be gained from these sources is “the context in which the clothing is depicted, and the extent to which the artist’s choice forms part of the dialogue with his/her audience and/or is coloured by his/her own creative process and

19 Ibid., aesthetic conventions pp. 118-121, social conventions pp. 121-122, and decisions of the individual artist pp. 130-132.
21 Ibid., 82.
intent, rather than whether the clothes themselves are ‘real’.\textsuperscript{22} Consideration will thus be made of artists’ biographical backgrounds and more general use of textiles in paintings in order to interpret depictions of shawls.

Other secondary scholarship from which this paper draws its methodology includes the work of historian Sally Tuckett, who made use of Prown’s three-step methodology to study formal and iconographic elements of clothing. Tuckett connects her analysis with external historical evidence to demonstrate how political and national identity was communicated through dress in Scotland from the latter half of the eighteenth century and into the first several decades of the nineteenth.\textsuperscript{23} This thesis likewise uses Prown’s three-step methodology in examining the role shawls played in expressing political and national identity (see chapters 3 and 4 in particular).\textsuperscript{24} In using visual culture (specifically, paintings) to study material culture, this study also adopts an approach similar to that taken by Laura Peers. In several essays, Peers has examined material objects within paintings, drawings, and prints to tease out cultural meanings embedded in the images, as well as meanings which were attached to the objects themselves at the time of their depiction. This has included the role of objects as status symbols and in representing the exotic within nineteenth-century British colonial society.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{22} Worth, “Developing a Method for the Study of the Clothing of the ‘Poor’,” 82.
\textsuperscript{24} This is a valuable theme to include in studying the shawl, since, as Tuckett has observed, Scottish nationalism is often observed in Scottish men’s dress, but not in women’s. Tuckett, “National Dress, Gender and Scotland,” 148-149.
This thesis draws extensively from nineteenth-century British newspapers and magazines as primary sources. Such sources provide supportive evidence such as prices and vendor information (gleaned through advertisements); information on design, economics and manufacture (as can be found within opinion and editorial columns); social gossip (indicating which personages wore which particular kinds of shawls and on which occasions), and fashion advice.\textsuperscript{26} Women’s magazines specifically (such as \textit{The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine (EDM), Gentlewoman, Lady’s Pictorial, and Queen}) provide classified advertisements with price data as well as fashion plates and columns on fashion advice, which will inform on the shawls’ consumption and changes in styles over time. Secondary scholarship includes studies on economic history, consumption, dress and fashion, shawl manufacture and design, and shawls’ representation in literature.

III. Historical Context

The trade in the decorative Kashmiri fabric that came to be used for shawls was part of a much wider export of Indian textiles to Europe that had been occurring since the establishment of regular trade routes to India.\textsuperscript{27} In Asia the cloth in question had been worn by both men and women fitted to their clothes, and “had played a role in trading and diplomatic relations” from the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{28} It was not until the fashion had popularized in Europe during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century that the

\textsuperscript{26} Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman, eds., \textit{Victorian women's magazines: an anthology} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).
cloth was produced and worn more predominantly as an outer wrap, or shawl.\textsuperscript{29} The first Europeans to wear the shawl cloth were men working in colonial India.\textsuperscript{30} Those who made significant fortunes while working there in trade established a new class in England of \textit{nouveau riche}, and became referred to as nabobs. This term was first used by Captain John Foote in his 1798 satiric play \textit{The Nabob}; as Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin note, “popular use of the term” could be simultaneously derisive and flattering to “the social pretensions and extravagant wealth that characterized this new economic class.”\textsuperscript{31} Such individuals often engaged in Eastern culture and dress as expression of their wealth and imperial identity, and were consequently perceived by many Britons to be a cultural threat. Foote is apparently embracing this identity within his portrait painted in 1761 by Sir Joshua Reynolds (fig. 1).\textsuperscript{32} Foote adopted the shawl material as part of his identity as a European trader working in India, and as an expression of wealth and masculine identity.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{29} Clabburn, \textit{Shawls}, 3; Maskiell, “Consuming Kashmir,” 34.  \\
\textsuperscript{30} Alfrey, “The Social Background to the Shawl,” 30-31.  \\
\textsuperscript{31} “Nabob” was a derivative of the term “nawab,” a title for Indian princes. Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin, \textit{Indian Renaissance: British romantic art and the prospect of India} (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), 104.  \\
\textsuperscript{32} de Almeida and Gilpin, \textit{Indian Renaissance}, 104; Ramamurthy, “Orientalism and the ‘Paisley’ Pattern,” 125.
\end{flushright}
It was neoclassical fashions that popularized the shawl in Europe in the latter decades of the eighteenth century due to their emphasis on drapery. The convention of including drapery in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century portraiture likewise paved the way for the shawl as a fashionable sartorial item—as Alfrey explains, it offered “versatility and practicality within the aesthetics of neo-classical taste”, and thus the shawl adapted from being “an accessory in artistic representation” to become “an

essential accessory in everyday dress [i.e. the shawl]” as well.\textsuperscript{34} The fashion for Kashmiri shawls started earlier in England than in France, where they were also very popular.\textsuperscript{35} Kashmiri shawl cloth was initially imported to Britain through the East India Company during the middle decades of the eighteenth century, though these primarily were available only to the very wealthy. In France, the Kashmiri shawl fashion spread more quickly, and was helped by Napoleon Bonaparte’s invasion of Egypt in 1798.\textsuperscript{36} Joséphine Bonaparte, one of the first aristocratic women to promote the shawl cloth in Europe, had it made into dresses as well as home furnishings.\textsuperscript{37} One of these dresses appears in Antoine-Jean Gros’s portrait of Joséphine of c. 1808 (fig. 2).\textsuperscript{38} Even in its earliest stages, the spread of the Kashmiri shawl fashion evidently paralleled British and French Imperial expansions.

\textsuperscript{34} Alfrey, “The Social Background to the Shawl,” 24-25.
\textsuperscript{35} Ramamurthy, “Orientalism and the ‘Paisley’ Pattern,” in Disentangling Textiles, 125; Sowell, “Contextualizing Madge’s Scarf,” 16.
\textsuperscript{36} This was cited by the Journal des Dames et des Modes in November of that year. See Ramamurthy, “Orientalism and the ‘Paisley’ Pattern,” 124. Ramamurthy notes the Egyptian campaign is also thought to have helped the proliferation of the fashion in Britain, as production in Paisley began after 1798. This was suggested by Matthew Blair in The Paisley shawl and the men who produced it: a record of an interesting epoch in the history of the town (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1904), 23.
\textsuperscript{38} Joséphine wears both a dress and a shawl which are decorated by floral būtā motifs as borders along the edges of plain backgrounds (the shawl, a crimson red, and the dress a cream colour). Her clothes demonstrate the appearance and designs of the material prior to the later changes affected by European production and consumption of imitative products.
A practical reason behind the shawl’s popularity in Britain during the early to mid-nineteenth century was that the shape of Victorian women’s fashions made the wearing of cloaks or capes awkward. Women wore crinolines to give their skirts a wide circumference, in order to achieve a fashionable, bell-shaped silhouette.\(^39\) For this reason,

shawls were practical and essential as outerwear while walking or travelling by carriage. Shawls that were especially warm were desirable during the colder months, and besides their ornate and exotic design, it was their warmth that made the patterned Indian wool cloths popular. Notes accompanying contemporary fashion plates, even for images wherein shawls are not depicted, frequently advise that the outfit may be accompanied by jewellery and a shawl—such was the shawl’s versatility and ubiquity as an accessory. Although during the first decades of the nineteenth century men sometimes wore shawls as an extra layer over their coats while travelling, Valerie Reilly claims this declined as the “draughty horse-drawn coach” was replaced by “the enclosed railway carriage” from the 1840s. Thus, it was their particular suitability to pairing with other women’s fashions of the nineteenth century that the meaning of Kashmiri shawls and their imitations became gendered. As a result, shawls came to stand as symbols of ideal and respectable femininity.

European manufacturers soon caught on to the fashion for Kashmiri shawls and produced imitations. Early phases of production in Europe were characterized by experimentation with Eastern materials methods of production, in order to manufacture

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shawls that would retain a similar level of material quality as well as aesthetic beauty. This included early—though unsuccessful—attempts to introduce pashmina-producing goats to France and England. With the objective of replicating Indian textiles, from the latter half of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth, scientific geographers and travel writers (often working with the East India Company or the British Government) studied their materials and technological secrets. These efforts constituted what was in Ramamurthy’s words part of a wider endeavour to collect information “on all aspects of Indian life, culture, and geography in order to facilitate the maintenance of British control,” and what Marilyn Cohen has described as “global strategies to capture innovations, suppress them elsewhere and protect them at home to create and sustain competitive advantages.” Ramamurthy contends that these efforts indicate the British objective to crush all competition—European and Indian—and to dominate the markets

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46 John Irwin in *The Kashmir Shawl*, 21-24; Ramamurthy, “Orientalism and the ‘Paisley’ Pattern,” 127. Ramamurthy cites William Moorcroft, “[t]he most prolific creator of information of the Kashmir shawl,” whose writings are exemplary of this endeavour and provide information on the attempted introduction of Asiatic mountain goats to Europe for this purpose (127); Monique Lévi-Strauss, *The Cashmere Shawl* (London: Dryad, 1987), 52. Preliminary experiments in Paisley, Scotland, where production began later than in other locales such as Norwich and Edinburgh, featured the use of “naturalized Russian goats,” which offered a fleece that was similar to that used in Kashmir, and which would yield the imitation “Cashmere” and “Thibet” shawls. From Lochrie, “The Paisley Shawl Industry,” 102.
in order to sell the shawls not just within Britain, but to the world.\textsuperscript{49} The shawl therefore came to stand as both a symbol and means of British Imperialism.

European printers had been successfully imitating Indian-pattern textiles since the late seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{50} The European imitation of Kashmiri shawls was first taken up by manufacturers in cities and towns with prominent textile industries such as Norwich and Edinburgh in Britain in the late 1770s; Lyons, Nîmes, and Paris in France and Vienna in Austria beginning in the early nineteenth century; and Paisley, Scotland beginning as early as 1805.\textsuperscript{51} Paisley became so well-known for its production of imitation-Kashmiri shawls that by the mid-nineteenth century the town’s name became synonymous for many Western consumers with the \textit{buta} design.\textsuperscript{52} European imitations were generally made from wool, silk, cotton, or combinations thereof, and appealed to many consumers due to their availability at mid-range and lower prices.\textsuperscript{53} The three main types produced in Britain were the scarf or stole shawl, the square shawl, and the long shawl, generally referred to as a plaid.\textsuperscript{54} While European imitations never matched Kashmiri shawls in material and quality, they replicated the original ‘exotic’ patterns, and modified them to meet Western tastes. Even until the ‘shawl era’s’ decline (which is typically pegged during the 1870s), however, ‘authentic’ examples continued to be popular, and accorded

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\item \textsuperscript{49} Ramamurthy, “Orientalism and the ‘Paisley’ Pattern,” 128.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Lemire, “Domesticating the Exotic,” 71.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Lochrie, “The Paisley Shawl Industry,” 95-97; Maskiell, “Consuming Kashmir,” 44; Reilly, \textit{The Paisley Pattern}, 68. Norwich began producing shawls in 1777 and Edinburgh in 1780 (Ramamurthy, “Orientalism and the ‘Paisley’ Pattern,” 125). The aforementioned locales were ones which were more significant in their production of Kashmiri shawls, although there is also evidence that as early as the 1780s some were printed in the Dumbarton area of Scotland (Reilly, \textit{The Paisley Pattern}, 40).
\item \textsuperscript{53} Claburn, \textit{Shawls}, 15; Maskiell, “Consuming Kashmir,” 42.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Reilly, \textit{The Paisley Pattern}, 35.
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significant social status to those who possessed and wore them.\textsuperscript{55} Besides being prized for their warmth, luxurious softness, and fine hand-made quality, for Westerners it was their exoticism that made Kashmiri shawls a desirable commodity.

IV. Further literature

As can be gleaned from contemporary fashion columns, throughout the nineteenth century Britons revered and praised the shawl for its aesthetic beauty.\textsuperscript{56} It was also celebrated for the economic, social, and cultural benefit it brought to communities wherein it was manufactured, as is exemplified within histories of local industries such as the works of Paisley author Matthew Blair.\textsuperscript{57} The shawl was for Victorians a vehicle for imagining the exotic East, and became the subject of fictional works about the Orient including novels such as Charles White’s \textit{The Cashmere Shawl: An Eastern Fiction}. In this story, the shawl is presented as an animate being with the ability to speak, and it thus narrates a story of romance, adventure, and warfare set across Asia.\textsuperscript{58} Each of these types of sources will be drawn on to inform on the cultural, social, and economic significance of the shawl to Britons during the long nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century, historians traced the trajectory of shawl production from its rise in the late eighteenth century with a boom in consumer demand to its ‘fall’ from

\textsuperscript{57} Blair, \textit{The Paisley Shawl and the Men Who Produced It} (1904). Blair also discusses the shawl industry briefly throughout \textit{The Paisley Thread Industry and the Men Who Created It: with Notes Concerning Paisley, Old and New} (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1907).
\textsuperscript{58} Eastern food, dress, and social customs are also described throughout the book. Charles White, \textit{The cashmere shawl: An eastern fiction} (London: Henry Colburn, 1840).
fashion during the 1870s. While this is an accurate characterization of the shawl’s time in fashion in Europe, accounting for the height of its production and consumption, it is a narrative that has tended to ignore the role of colonialism and colonial politics to the shawl fashion, on which grounds the discourse which supports this narrative has recently been critiqued by postcolonial scholars. Indeed, the publications of John Irwin, such as *The Kashmir Shawl* (1973) have been critiqued as having asserted this Eurocentrism even as late as the 1970s. Irwin was a colonial administrator in India who developed a love for textiles, and became Keeper of the Indian Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Irwin’s publications privilege and depict European production (including technological innovation and design) as superior to production in Kashmir, although he did acknowledge the problems with contemporary writers’ view that the būtā design was immutable and ancient, and observed the dilemma of tracing a shawl’s ‘authenticity’ when in truth designs were exchanged between Indian, French, and British manufacturers throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Authenticity is a concept which is integral to understanding the shawl’s transnational history, as it formed the basis of a shawl’s perceived social and monetary worth. Shawls which were truly (or which appeared to be) from Kashmir, were throughout the century valued above European


products made in the style of Kashmiri examples, since they were cheaper and were accorded lesser status as ‘imitations’.

In recent decades scholars have introduced a postcolonial framework to the historical literature on the shawl. Michelle Maskiell’s 2002 article is perhaps the most comprehensive transcultural history of the Kashmiri shawl and its imitations. Maskiell explores the influence of colonialism on the production and consumption of the shawl, how the shawl was circulated through Empire, how Europe influenced methods of shawl production on the European continent and in India, and how a Eurocentric narrative of the object’s ‘rise and fall’ was constructed. Anandi Ramamurthy has provided another postcolonial study of the shawl and its design (known as the būtā in India or the Paisley in English-speaking countries). Examining “the meaning of and attitude towards the Kashmir and Paisley shawl in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,” including the classic historical texts on the Paisley shawl, Anandi Ramamurthy “offer[s] a way of reading pattern and textile history as political and ideological.” Drawing from Edward Said’s Orientalism throughout, she contends that the pattern was a product of unequal exchange, which thus “expresses the cultural and political appropriation, colonization and domination of the East by the West, during the period of Empire and after.” Like Michelle Maskiell, Ramamurthy’s article diverges from much of the historical writing about Kashmiri shawls that present the shawls as uniting, in the words of Valerie Reilly, “the cultures of eastern and western hemispheres.” Anandi Ramamurthy argues that the expansion of the shawl fashion in England “paralleled the

66 Ibid.
nature of Britain’s imperial dominance over India through the East India Company, which took place over a period of about one hundred and fifty years.” In both the French and British cases, Ramamurthy contends, the “shawls only became fashionable when they could operate as an indicator of Empire”, and demonstrate European “imperial supremacy”.

Studies such as Maskiell’s and Ramamurthy’s offer valuable insights into the structures of colonialism that influenced the shawl trade.

This imperial history has economic precedence. Prasannan Parthasarathi investigates the discrepancy between the economic expansion of Europe versus Asia from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. He “draw[s] on scholarship that points to profound similarities in political and economic institutions between the advanced regions of Europe and Asia [and] rejects claims of European difference,” and “points to the existence of plural paths of change.” Parthasarathi contends that there were “two pressures [which] were critical in generating British divergence”: one of these was shortage of wood, which led to the adoption of an alternative fuel source—coal—and then to the development of the steam engine. Combined with new techniques for smelting iron, this led to new means of transport including the railway and steamship. The second was competition from Indian cotton textiles, “which in the eighteenth century

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68 Ibid., quotations from p. 124 and p. 126 respectively.
71 Ibid., 1-2.
72 Parthasarathi, Why Europe grew rich and Asia did not, 2.
were the most important manufactured good in the world trade”.\textsuperscript{73} Parthasarathi notes that “British efforts to imitate Indian cloth propelled a search for new techniques of production, which culminated in the great breakthroughs in spinning of the late eighteenth century,” and led to technologies that “transformed the world economy and shifted the center of global manufacturing from Asia to Europe.”\textsuperscript{74} As will be discussed, such technologies influenced the design, materials, and manufacture of shawls.\textsuperscript{75}

In addition to historical economic literature and postcolonial analyses of the shawl fashion, studies on consumption of shawls and other textiles will inform on how and where shawls were purchased, who purchased them, and their price ranges. These include the works of Alison Adburgham, who has examined shops and the act of shopping in England during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from the perspective of social history, and has used magazine articles and advertisements to discuss the shawl fashion specifically.\textsuperscript{76} It also includes work by Nupur Chaudhuri, who has used nineteenth-century women’s periodicals such as The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine (EDM) and Queen to demonstrate that though they had little desire for owning and using Indian material culture as either fashion or furnishings themselves, memsahibs (Anglo-Indian women) often sought to sell or exchange shawls in classifieds read by domestic Britons.\textsuperscript{77} Such periodicals generally had large middle-class readerships, and advertisements in them reveal that Indian material goods such as shawls and jewellery could be obtained by

\textsuperscript{73} Parthasarathi, \textit{Why Europe grew rich and Asia did not}, 2.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} Ramamurthy, “Orientalism and the ‘Paisley’ Pattern,” 128.
\textsuperscript{77} Chaudhuri, “Shawls, Jewelry, Curry, and Rice.”
sale or exchange for lower cost than in commercial emporiums in Britain. Shawls, for example, could sell at prices “from five to fifty pounds, as opposed to seventy pounds or more for the same articles bought in a store.”78 While shawls were still clearly beyond the reach of lower-middle and working class women, their sale and exchange by memsahibs at these adapted values helped to proliferate such tastes among upper-middle and middle-class individuals in Britain.79

Finally, and as mentioned previously, analyses of the shawls in British and French literature by scholars such as Daly and Hiner will also support this material culture analysis of shawls in another artistic medium—that of the painted image.80

79 Ibid., 235, 242.
80 Daly, “Kashmir Shawls in Mid-Victorian Novels”; Hiner, “Lust for Luxe.”
Chapter 2

The Awakening Conscience

Exoticism and sensuality

Given their apparent value to a range of social classes in mid-century Britain, it is unsurprising that shawls appear so frequently in period paintings, including William Holman Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853-1854 (fig. 3), commissioned by his patron, the Manchester businessman (later Sir) Thomas Fairbairn.¹ The shawl in the picture is probably a European imitation, since it has a busy background and vibrant, almost garish colours. Bold colours and heavier material became favoured as shawls competed with the denser clothing that became fashionable in mid-nineteenth century Britain, when *The Awakening Conscience* was painted.² Additionally, as Valerie Reilly has observed, “improvements in weaving techniques after 1820 allowed the imitation Indian patterns to become more elaborate, and to cover more of the surface of the shawl.”³ Thus, the trend for more complex designs became more prevalent after the 1840s.⁴ The shawl in *The Awakening Conscience* has a red fringe which appears to have been sewn on, which would have taken less labour than hand-tying the warp threads, and by this time could have been produced by machine.⁵

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¹ Later the name of the painting was changed by the artist, at Fairbairn’s request, to *The Awakened Conscience*, and the woman’s expression was changed to look less ‘pained’. Tim Barringer, Jason Rosenfeld, and Alison Smith, eds., with contributions by Elizabeth Prettejohn and Diane Waggoner, *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian avant-garde* (London: Tate Pub., 2012), 134.
³ Reilly, *The Paisley Pattern*, 34.
⁴ Ibid., 12.
⁵ Francina Irwin observes that in 1835 the Scottish firm Summers and Strachan offered “[s]hawl borders, middles and fringes sold separately” (quoted from *The Glasgow Courier*, 9 June 1835) in “The Printed
Figure 3: William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853-1854. Oil on canvas, support 76.2 x 55.9 cm, frame 106 x 85.7 x 9.7 cm. Tate Britain. Reproduced from Tate, http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hunt-the-awakening-conscience-t02075 (accessed 13 September 2014).

Shawl in Scotland, c.1785-1870,” *Costume* 15, No. 1 (1981): 35. Thomas W. Leavitt notes that shawls made by Bay State of Lawrence, Massachusetts produced “the fringe as well as the main body of the shawl... by machine” in 1849, and American manufacturers were taking “advantage of a labour-saving fringe-making machine” by 1858, which could conceivably have been used by British manufacturers. See “Fashion, Commerce and Technology in the Nineteenth Century: The Shawl Trade,” *Textile History* 3, No. 2 (1972): 55, 59.
*The Awakening Conscience* features a man and a woman before a piano within what appears to be a private dwelling, and was in fact painted in Woodbine Villa in St. John’s Wood in London, a ‘courtesan’s house.’ The room in which they sit opens onto a garden, which is visibly reflected in a mirror on the wall behind the couple. The woman, formerly seated in the man’s lap, has just stood and now wears an expression of transfixion and revelation as she gazes out at the garden. The man appears discountenanced as she moves away from him, as if he is goading her to stay with him and finish the song (a setting of the poem “Oft in the Stilly Night” by Thomas Moore). She is apparently his mistress, since she symbolically bears rings on every finger but her ring finger. She is also in what was for Victorians a state of undress, and the famed art critic John Ruskin—in a letter to the Editor of *The Times* (25 May 1854)—observed that the whiteness of her garment alluded to the vulnerability of purity. Additionally, her hair is down—a manner in which only young girls and ‘loose’ women wore their hair in the Victorian era.

The rest of the painting is riddled with further symbolism to explicate the impropriety of the woman’s situation, including the tangled yarn to signify her entanglement in a predicament, and a bird caught in the claws of a cat as a metaphor for the control her lover currently has over her. At the time, the colours of the interior were so effervescent as to be considered gaudy (and in fact, this was the exact word used by F.G. Stephens to describe the furniture in *The Awakening Conscience* in his biography of

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6 Barringer, Rosenfeld, and Smith, eds., *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian avant-garde*, 134.
8 For Ruskin, a woman’s loose hair also signified her wanton sexuality. See Galia Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 74.
William Holman Hunt. Writing to *The Times*, John Ruskin referred to the “fatal newness” signified by the lustre of the furniture. Charlotte Nicklas observes that mid-nineteenth-century books on fashion advice exhorted women to “avoid fashionable extremes and extravagance—considered immoral by many” and instead “to select clothing that was appropriate and harmonious with their complexions, figures and socioeconomic circumstances.” The immorality associated with vivacious colours was not limited to dress. For John Ruskin, the “fatal newness” of the room’s trappings including its “terrible lustre” reflected the immorality of the couple’s sexual relationship—an example, in Julia Skelly’s words, of “the way that Victorian viewers often read architecture and space for indications of morality or… immorality”. Furthermore, as Nicklas notes, “colour and enthusiasm for colour” have traditionally been assigned a feminine association that “has been used to denigrate colour and to characterize it as superficial, especially when compared to form”—a fact that may further implicate the woman’s sin.

The frame of the painting itself insists that the image is of the moral genre. The shape, and its decoration by roundels with emblems acknowledges the painting to be “a secular ‘modern life’ subject”, and suggest “sixteenth and seventeenth century Northern

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prototypes of secular art.” The emblems are bells and marigolds, which F.G. Stephens in his work on William Holman Hunt emphasizes to be “emblems of warning and sorrow.” Lynn Roberts explains that “the religious resonances of the emblems, crowned by the Christian symbol of the star, reminisce on the floral symbols in the frames of fifteenth century altar pieces.” By drawing these historical associations, Hunt affirmed that the subject of the picture is a modern secular subject with an ethical message.

The painting is thus, in Victorian ideology, a moral one, warning women against the immorality of sexual relations outside marriage. As mentioned in Chapter One, the shawl was a symbol of social status and model femininity during the Victorian era. Why, then, should the shawl appear in a moral picture? Its visual prominence in the painting would suggest that it too was intended a symbolic role, though Ruskin did not comment on this possibility. Further attention is drawn to the woman’s clothing by the text on the painting’s frame (see fig. 4), which is decorated by a Biblical text from Proverbs 25:2: “As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart.” This Proverb suggests the woman’s moral awakening on hearing the song, but it may also serve to acknowledge her scantily-clad state—the embodiment of her immorality. It was a style at that time among both middle- and upper-class women to wear a shawl tied around the waist; however, within this painting it does nothing to disguise that the shawl is the only outer garment she is wearing.

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15 Stephens, *William Holman Hunt and his works*, 34.
Figure 4: William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853-1854 (framed). Oil on canvas, support 76.2 x 55.9 cm, frame 106 x 85.7 x 9.7 cm. Tate Britain. Reproduced from Artstor, http://www.artstor.org (accessed 10 April 2015).

Is the shawl, like many of the other objects in the painting, intended to contribute to the work’s prime moral message—that unwed women should avoid succumbing to seduction? Given that the female model for the painting was Annie Miller, a working-
class woman whom Hunt intended to educate in order to take her on as his wife, analysing the shawl’s social context may provide an answer. European-made shawls at lower prices made buta-patterned shawls available to the middle classes by the 1820s, when Paisley-made shawls were available for £12. By the early 1840s, a Paisley shawl cost between 21s. 6d. and 31s. 6d—prices Maureen Lochrie notes that “would have been highly acceptable to the provincial middle class.” As literary historians Daly and Hiner maintain, by the 1850s, when The Awakening Conscience was painted, mass-produced imitation-Kashmiri shawls and their increased consumption by the middle classes caused the shawl’s rejection by the upper classes. Daly and Hiner each contend that this negated their value and precipitated their eventual rejection by fashionable society. However, Alfrey suggests that this process was gradual, and that the shawl in fact developed divergent meanings which surfaced in class distinctions in a particular garment’s quality and wear. Likewise, social status was demarcated by how a woman wore her shawl, and whether she did so with composure and in accordance with the style of doing so at the time. Magazines offered advice on how to drape shawls, and some women even resorted to taking lessons on the subject.

18 Barringer, Rosenfeld, and Smith, eds., Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian avant-garde, 134.
22 Alfrey, “The Social Background to the Shawl,” 31-32. As Vivienne Richmond notes, completely successful emulation of elite styles by working-class people was impossible because they did not lead elite lifestyles. Vivienne Richmond, Clothing the poor in nineteenth-century England (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2013), 49.
23 “The Fashions,” section in The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine (London, England), No. 53 (Saturday 1 May 1869, p.257) records that “[t]he triumph of the grande dame of former days was the shawl”, and that “[s]he revealed her identity by the way in which she knew how to drape the rich soft folds of a cachemire” (accessed 16 July 2015, 19th Century British Library Newspapers).
24 Adburgham, Shops and shopping, 98.
As Alfrey observes, a visual example of how shawls might be read for class indicators can be found in a French painting, Gustave Courbet’s *The Painter’s Studio*, 1855 (fig. 5).²⁶ Set in Courbet’s studio, this painting exemplifies the class distinctions in dress which also existed in Britain at the time, and which would have been read by contemporaries in clothing including shawls. An Irishwoman wearing a Scotch plaid appears seated on the floor to the left of Courbet (centre). Apart from her shawl, which the Irishwoman in Courbet’s painting wears loosely around her and without calculation, she is meagrely-clothed. She is slumped on the floor and is breastfeeding her child—an act whose conspicuousness was considered immodest in the nineteenth century.

Breastfeeding was also associated with the lower classes, due to the practise among the wealthy of hiring wet nurses, which continued into the late nineteenth century.²⁷ Her shawl is worn loosely around her. As Penelope Alfrey has noted, she is juxtaposed against the well-dressed woman with an embroidered silk shawl worn ‘properly’ in neat folds, its ends draped over the crook of each arm, who is standing fully-clothed at the far right side of the image.²⁸ By contrast her shawl is clean, colourful, of luminous material, and is decorated by ornate floral designs. It consequently conveys respectability and a more graceful, middle-class femininity. The painting is divided into two sides, which, combined, Courbet described represented “the whole world coming to me to be painted… [o]n the right are all the shareholders, that is to say friends, fellow-workers and art lovers.

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²⁷ Jacqueline H. Wolf, *Don’t kill your baby: public health and the decline of breastfeeding in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001), 132.

On the left is the other world of commonplace life: the masses, wretchedness, poverty, wealth, the exploited and the exploiters, people who live on death.” While neither shawl is in the Kashmiri style, the opposition of both kinds of shawls distinguishes for viewers the opposition between both kinds of women—the working-class Irishwoman and the wealthy art-lover. If a shawl appeared tattered, worn, or dirty, its effect was one of pathos rather than respectability—a sense Courbet doubtlessly intended to convey about the Irishwoman and her lot in life.\footnote{Toussaint et al., \textit{Gustave Courbet: 1819-1877}, 254.}{\textsuperscript{29}} \textsuperscript{30} Alfredy gives examples of this effect of pathos in two Victorian novels in “The Social Background to the Shawl,” 32. Courbet’s decision to depict a poor Irishwoman as an example of poor society was certainly affected by the infamy of the recent Great Potato Famine in Ireland (1845-1849). As Toussaint et al. observe, this event was still fresh in European’s minds, and during “the second half of the century the state of Ireland was a byword for oppression and want.” In \textit{Gustave Courbet: 1819-1877}, 256-257.
Because clothing such as shawls were indicators of an individual’s social status and wealth, Victorians were anxious about such readings proving false—for example, if a person of lower station were to come into possession of a more expensive shawl. This is demonstrable within Charlotte Brontë’s 1853 novel Villette. In Villette one character—who is in Daly’s description a “coarse” Irishwoman with a habit of drinking during working hours—“obtains employment as a governess in a respectable Belgian household” alongside the novel’s protagonist, a true English lady, by possessing a real Kashmiri shawl.\textsuperscript{31} The protagonist’s indignity at this apparent deception demonstrates the social distinction the shawl offered its wearer in the Victorian period. Evidently, the continued association of Kashmiri shawls with their once-exclusively aristocratic consumer-base gave them the power of elevating the perceived social standing and propriety of an individual of lesser standing.

As is articulated by the shawl worn by the wealthy art-lover within Courbet’s The Painter’s Studio, shawls could also signify wealth and status, depending on their quality and how they were worn. This is demonstrable within William Powell Frith’s The Railway Station, completed in 1862 (fig. 6). The painting features Frith and his family (among the group in the painting’s centre foreground) sending their children to boarding school. Christopher Wood observes that their superior status is denoted not only by this distinctly “middle-class activity” but by their “calm and unhurried” demeanour as well as their clothing, and the fact that the eldest boy is clutching a cricket bat.\textsuperscript{32} Frith’s wife

\textsuperscript{31} Daly, “Kashmir Shawls in Mid-Victorian Novels,” 238-239. Penelope Alfrey also draws attention to this example in Villette, in “The Social Background to the Shawl,” 23.
wears a thick and elaborately-coloured shawl worn over a crinoline. It has a large, decorative red tasselled fringe. The body of her shawl is gold to match her skirts, although it also contains highlights of red, purple, and green. The details of the shawl are too indistinct to ascertain whether it is a Kashmiri shawl, though based on its colours and fringe it appears to be of that style. This shawl is sizeable, and larger shawls typically cost more than smaller ones. Its conservative but luminous colour and the fact that it appropriately matches the rest of her outfit affirm her respectability and middle-class identity.


As well as class distinctions, the shawl was subject to divergent cultural meanings in mid-century Britain, which surfaces in contemporary moral and aesthetic debates. For example, the appeal of the foreign cultural object (for elements such as its exoticism) was

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weighed against the perceived cultural threat of adopting it. Daly observes that in 1859 John Ruskin considered patterned shawls to exemplify “cruel and savage nations, cruel in temper, savage in habits and conception.”\textsuperscript{34} He furthermore contended that “art which is especially dedicated to natural fact always indicates a peculiar gentleness and tenderness of mind,” but “when you examine the men in whom the gifts of art are variously… or universally mingled, you will discern that the ornamental, or pleasurable power… is not in itself an indication of their goodness, but is rather, unless balanced by other faculties, indicative of violence of temper, inclining to cruelty and irreligion.”\textsuperscript{35}

As has been demonstrated, while the shawl could represent social status and access to exotic riches, it was the quality, cut, fabric, and way in which the shawl was worn that lent it this illusion. Conversely, shawls could represent the pathetic or fallen woman, and for some Britons carried a tinge of cultural threat due to its derivation from the ‘uncivilized’ cultures of the East. Do either of these meanings—social disrepute or cultural incivility—explain the shawl’s appearance in a moral picture such as Hunt’s \textit{Awakening Conscience}?

It is problematic to suggest that Hunt’s intention in \textit{The Awakening Conscience} was to associate the woman with an outmoded and especially with a vilified fashion, as Hunt was evidently not of the same persuasion as Ruskin regarding Eastern design. If he had been, he would probably not have used a shawl in his \textit{Portrait of Fanny} (fig. 7), completed in 1866 to 1868 (over a decade after \textit{The Awakening Conscience}), shortly after the death of the model, his wife, of cholera while the couple was staying in Florence.

\textsuperscript{34} Daly, “Kashmir Shawls in Mid-Victorian Novels,” 247.
\textsuperscript{35} John Ruskin, \textit{Works}, vol. 10, (Sunnyside, Kent, UK: George Allen, 1884), 63.
Caroline Igra contends that the work represents “not merely Hunt’s attempt to capture Fanny’s photographic image for posterity, but instead an attempt to memorialize the effect of her death on the artist.”36 The painting depicts Fanny Holman Hunt before a fireplace, wearing a thick red shawl with a swirling buta pattern which indicates it was woven on a Jacquard loom, and thus probably came from a British manufacturer who would probably have been based in Norwich or Paisley. Shawls which were entirely covered in pattern, such as this one, were made during the later 1850s and 1860s.37 Igra has noted that Hunt wrote to his studio assistant in Florence requesting Fanny’s favourite peacock shawl, and as it does not appear in the painting, it is possible it was unable to be found and he deliberately chose this one as a stand-in.38 It is unlikely Hunt would have chosen this shawl in his memorial of his late wife—to whom he had been married for less than a year—unless it were fashionable and respectable at the time.

37 Rock, Paisley shawls, 23.
Hunt was not ignorant of textiles and their construed meanings. As the son of a textile warehouse-manager (who had inherited the business from his father before him), Hunt was given the necessary training as a youth to enter textile manufacture.39 In particular Linda Parry attributes Hunt’s experience in handling textiles and in pattern design in the employ of Richard Cobden & Co. Muslin and Calico Printers from 1841 to 1843 to his later use of such bold colours in his painting.40 Hunt also had a longstanding

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39 Linda Parry, “Textile Background: Cloth and Costume,” in Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision, 57-74 (Toronto: Art Gallery of Toronto, 2008). I thank Jennifer van Schoor for directing my attention to this.
40 Parry, “Textile Background,” 59.
interest in the East and in its art and design. He frequently travelled to the Middle East for inspiration, and adopted Middle Eastern clothes in attempt to model his image after that of an Old Testament prophet following the dissolution of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.\textsuperscript{41} In his 1857 self-portrait, Holman Hunt even depicted himself wearing a silk kaftan featuring a \textit{buta} pattern (fig. 8).\textsuperscript{42} For Hunt, as symbols of the exotic, the shawls undoubtedly epitomized foreign riches, mystery, and beauty.


\textsuperscript{41} Igra, “William Holman Hunt's Portrait of Fanny,” 238.
\textsuperscript{42} Parry, “Textile Background,” 72.
The shawl in *The Awakening Conscience*, painted over a decade earlier, is neither tattered nor worn, but is brightly coloured, fully patterned, and tied around her waist, as was the style at that time. Nevertheless, explanations based in the shawl’s power to confer social status and the threat of cultural ‘other’ are convincing ones. I propose two possible meanings the shawl in the painting was meant to express. The first, that it was intended to symbolize the practical lure of her relationship with the man at the piano: by becoming his mistress, she gained access to material luxuries such as the colourful shawl, which as mentioned, were generally given by men of comfortable means to their female relatives. Hiner argues that anxiety over authenticity and quality of a shawl mirrored women’s social anxieties in nineteenth-century France: namely, the threat of phony bourgeoises to the ‘true’ aristocracy. Similar class anxieties were shared in Britain at the time, and are evident in Charlotte Brontë’s aforementioned *Villette*. Perhaps such anxiety appears here, and the shawl is meant to demonstrate that the woman is attempting to rise above her social class through reprehensible means.

A second possibility is that the artist intended the shawl to be an accusatory sign. As mentioned earlier, the unrestrained gaudiness of the interior’s colours was for Victorians indicative of immorality. The shawl is similarly bright and vibrant in its colour. The colour red, which makes up the shawl’s solid ground, was also frequently associated with passion and lust, for which reason the colour may have been a deliberate choice by the artist. Because of the distinction in how the shawl is worn in this painting compared to the one in the *Portrait of Fanny* (in which it is worn over the shoulders and has a more modest, concealing effect), perhaps the meaning has been flipped—as the

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shawl was associated by Europeans with femininity and the mysterious Orient, Hunt may
have intended it to accuse her of behaving as a courtesan rather than a respectable
English lady.

During the nineteenth century, Europeans perceived the East to be more sensuous
than the West, which was conceived of as being more rational. This assumption
extended to design, and as a result, the *butha* motif took on a more elongated and sensuous
form through its European replications. Furthermore, there was a continued association
by Europeans during the nineteenth century (particularly writers, including novelists such
as Gustave Flaubert) of the Orient with licentious sex. These connotations are
particularly relevant since the way the woman in *The Awakening Conscience* wears the
shawl associates it with the East. Britons wore shawls this way when posing as Eastern
characters at dress balls, and the style itself was probably adapted from Eastern dress.

An 1852 article in *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* notes that “real Cashmere
shawls” were woven in India and were “usually of three sizes; two of which, the long and
the small square, are in common use in India; the other, long and very narrow, with a
mixture of black in it, is worn as a girdle by the Asiatics.”

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44 The binary perception of East and West is discussed in Edward W. Said’s seminal text *Orientalism* (New
45 Ramamurthy, “Orientalism and the ‘Paisley’ Pattern,” 129-130. William Morris made such conclusions
based on Oriental design, perceiving the East as unconstrained by Western rationality and therefore a place
47 In the 1842 Lady Ernest Bruce worn a shawl this way while dressed as the Biblical Rebecca at the
Queen’s fancy-dress ball. “The Queen’s Fancy-Dress Ball, Thursday, May 12th, 1842,” *The Court
19th Century British Library Newspapers.
48 “Selected Extracts” (“Cashmere Shawls”), *The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* (1 May 1852), 26,
accessed 8 July 2015, 19th Century British Library Newspapers. “Cashmere” is a word that was used to
refer to the shawls in England during the nineteenth century (a variation of “Kashmir”) and “was popularly
Textiles of Eastern design which resemble Kashmiri shawls act as drapery in and contribute to the sensuality of several nude figure sketches by James McNeill Whistler. By the 1890s, when these sketches were completed, shawls were more often used for interior decoration with an ‘antique’ flair than for clothing; nevertheless, the sketches demonstrate the enduring sensuality of Indian textiles in the eyes of European viewers. The titles of these drawings—*The Arabian*, c.1890-1892 (fig. 9) and *The Fortune Teller* (fig. 10, also referred to as *A nude lying on a sofa*), c.1890-1892—are deliberately exotic. However, while the same textiles are used in each, the works’ variant titles do not tie the textiles to any single or specific place of origin. Margaret F. MacDonald described *The Arabian* to be “the most highly finished and the most erotic of Whistler’s drawings,” and acknowledges it to be “suggestive of the harem.” MacDonald proposes that by reclining with the textiles the nude woman in the second drawing, *The Fortune Teller* is analogized as “a contemporary courtesan.” Comparing the use of Eastern textiles in these images supports the thesis that the shawl in *The Awakening Conscience* subtly likens the woman in that painting to a courtesan.

49 This fits with Debra Sowell’s observation that in European ballet, the shawl was a “prop” that “signall[ed] Oriental identity or culture” by 1830, though it was “undiscriminating” regarding the particular Eastern cultures it signified. Sowell, “Contextualizing Madge’s Scarf,” 25. Sowell also notes that the shawl’s “exoticism was sometimes tinged with eroticism” (p. 27).
51 Ibid., 460.
Unlike the narrative of “the downward trajectory through prostitution to the grave propagated in much of the contemporary literature surrounding the fallen woman”, *The Awakening Conscience*, as several scholars have pointed out, also expresses the possibility of redemption.\(^{52}\) Yet given the sensual associations of Eastern textiles, it is

\(^{52}\) Allison Smith notes that *The Awakening Conscience* is novel among moral paintings for providing this “alternative narrative” – in Barringer, Rosenfeld, and Smith, eds., *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian avant-garde*, 134. Caroline Arscott shares this opinion – see Arscott, “Employer, husband, spectator: Thomas Fairbairn’s
feasible that Hunt intended us to interpret that within *The Awakening Conscience*, the woman’s epiphany has brought her to realize the immoral behaviour in which she is currently ‘cloaked.’ In this case, the shawl may have been meant to symbolize for the woman and the Victorian viewer her moral failure in succumbing to her seducer and the material wealth he has offered her. Through its ostentatiously vibrant colours, which for its lack of restraint would have signified lax moral standards for Victorians, and its decorative Eastern designs, which signified the perceived-heightened sensuality of the East, the shawl assists the rest of the objects and interior of the portrait in suggesting that something within the domestic scene is morally askew. It thus supports the rest of the image in reinforcing a Victorian ideal of female chastity outside of marriage.

Based on the shawl’s apparently sewn-on fringe and gaudy colours, it is probable that it is a British product. Paisley shawls have been described as having “harsher” colours than those of the Edinburgh shawls, which were thus closer to Kashmiri ones.\(^5^3\) As the colouring of the shawl in *The Awakening Conscience* is particularly vibrant, Paisley is a location of possible provenance. At mid-century a wool weft was also introduced to shawls made at Paisley, which would have made the fabric thicker and warmer—qualities that were particularly valuable during colder months in a northern climate, and which match the bulk of the shawl in *The Awakening Conscience*.\(^5^4\)

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\(^5^3\) Alice Mackrell, *Shawls, Stoles, and Scarves* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1986), 57. In fact, the Edinburgh shawl industry was so eclipsed by Paisley that it remained largely forgotten until the mid-twentieth century; Dorothy Whyte observes that authenticated Edinburgh shawls were not found until the 1973 (From “Edinburgh Shawls and their makers,” *Costume* 10, No. 1 (1976): 16).

Chapter 3

The Children’s Holiday

Wealth and status

While it has been argued that shawls were rejected by the aristocracy by the 1850s,\(^1\) they evidently still stood as status symbols for members of the *nouveau riche* in the 1860s, as is apparent in William Holman Hunt’s *The Children’s Holiday* (1864–5) (fig. 11). The portrait features Allison Fairbairn (née Callaway) and five young children completed for Hunt’s patron Thomas Fairbairn.\(^2\) It was painted at the Fairbairn’s newly-acquired Burton Park in Sussex, where it was probably intended to hang at the head of the staircase.\(^3\)

Within the image, Lady Fairbairn serves tea to her children, who are at play on the grounds. Lady Fairbairn’s shawl has a white background with a woven *buta* pattern on its edges, and triangular stripes along its borders. It also has a gold fringe that appears to be a true extension of the rest of the woven shawl. Lady Fairbairn’s shawl would have been what was referred to in Britain as a plaid, since its length is at least twice that of its width.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Daly, “Kashmir Shawls in Mid-Victorian Novels,” 243.
Written verification of the shawl’s provenance is not to be found in Lady Fairbairn’s last will and testament, as the shawl was not represented. It is also challenging to determine the shawl’s origins, as due to intermingled design, technology, and methods of production by this time, distinction between European and Kashmiri products was ambiguous. In response to European markets in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century, Kashmiri manufacturers had begun to adopt European manufacturing processes, technologies, and patterns. Additionally, some European imitations made from the first decade of the nineteenth century on may have been sold as products which were authentically from Kashmir. Long silk shawls with distinct borders of flowing pattern of Indian style at each end, and a narrower border along their outer two edges, were imitated by Paisley manufacturers from Indian shawls from the earliest period of manufacture in Paisley, when shawls were made on the draw loom. The Fairbairn shawl fits this description, which may suggest British provenance. As will be demonstrated, however, it is more likely this shawl was from Kashmir. This is primarily because throughout the nineteenth century shawls made in Kashmir were more expensive

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5 Dame Allison Fairbairn [died 8 February 1907], will proved 11 March 1907, Principal Probate Registry of His Majesty’s High Court of Justice. The shawl may have been worn out, or given by Lady Fairbairn ahead of her death to her daughter. I thank Prof Janice Helland for this information and for this suggestion.

6 David Brett and Suzanne Daly have each acknowledged the network of international trade and cultural contact that continued to form the shawl’s evolution from the eighteenth century on. See Brett, “The Management of Colour: The Kashmir Shawl in a Nineteenth-Century Debate,” Textile History 29, No. 2 (1998): 124, and Daly, “Kashmir Shawls in Mid-Victorian Novels,” 246-248. This effect is also observed by John Irwin in The Kashmir Shawl (London: HMSO, 1973), 24.

7 Daly, “Kashmir Shawls in Mid-Victorian Novels,” 246.

8 The draw loom makes figured textiles, and was also known as the harness loom because it has a figure harness for controlling each warp thread. Draw looms required the additional help of a “drawboy”, who worked the harness. Matthew Blair praised the draw loom, and described it as “an attempt to produce in the loom the effects which, in the Indian Cashmere Shawl, were produced by the needle.” From Blair, The Paisley Shawl, 23. Blair explains how draw looms were made in his chapter, “Weaving of the Harness Shawl,” in The Paisley Shawl, 37-44.
and of greater social value, and because Sir Thomas Fairbairn was a man of great wealth and social position.\(^9\)

That the shawl was an expensive one is certain—and not only because of Sir Thomas Fairbairn’s wealth and position. For one, the shawl is large, and longer shawls typically cost more than smaller shawls.\(^10\) It has many colours, which made for another distinction in price.\(^11\) This shawl is lustrous—it has been depicted with the appearance that it is shimmering in the light. David Brett has observed the quality of iridescence which characterised the best Kashmiri and imitation-Kashmiri shawls obtained through a simple optical effect created by careful colour combination.\(^12\) Its high sheen may also indicate that it is composed partially of silk. However, there are numerous examples of shawls such as the one in *The Children’s Holiday* that were made in India at the time. A gold-embroidered “real Indian Cashmere shawl”, studded by 16 diamonds was advertised by Amott Brothers and Co. in 1860, selling for £200 (though the advertisement claimed it to be worth 500 guineas).\(^13\)

In the mid-1810s, according to John Irwin, a Paisley imitation would sell for about £12, while shawls from Kashmir were generally priced from £70 to £100.\(^14\) This

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\(^10\) Monique Lévi-Strauss notes in the French context that if a long shawl was torn, it might be cut lengthwise in half and sold as two smaller shawls for half the price of a long shawl. See *The Cashmere Shawl*, 37.


\(^12\) Brett, “The Management of Colour,” 125.


hierarchy was preserved into mid-century. An 1857 advertisement for Farmer & Rogers’ Great Shawl and Cloak Emporium, a major London shawl vendor, advertises “the largest and most fashionable assortment of INDIA, CHINA, FRENCH, & BRITISH SHAWLS in the world, from the ordinary PAISLEY of 21s. to the elaborately worked INDIA of 150 guineas” (fig. 12).\textsuperscript{15} As will soon be explained, it is possible that Lady Fairbairn acquired her shawl in the time after her wedding to Thomas Fairbairn on 23 March 1848, but most likely that she acquired it as a gift on that occasion.\textsuperscript{16} Due to the family’s wealth, the shawl in \textit{The Children’s Holiday} would have been one of the more expensive examples available, and thus it is most likely that the shawl is an Indian example. In 1852, nearer to the time of their marriage, Indian shawls could typically be priced at £100 to £200 in London.\textsuperscript{17} In 1887, shawls from Kashmir were sold by Liberty London at prices from £30 to £500.\textsuperscript{18} Compared with a workman’s salary of the day, £500 is an extraordinary price: for example, the average annual earnings of manufacturing workers in the UK was £34.65 in 1891.\textsuperscript{19} However, at his death in 1891, Sir Thomas Fairbairn’s wealth was £72,661 2s. 8d., which demonstrates that a shawl of £500 from Liberty’s London was within his and his wife’s purchasing power.\textsuperscript{20} Furthermore, as a businessman

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{footnote15} \textit{Le Follet - Journal du Grand Monde, Fashion, Polite Literature, Beaux Arts &c. &c.} (1 March 1857), No. 126, accessed 18 June 2015, \textit{19\textsuperscript{th} Century UK Periodicals}. Other London stores which sold shawls are discussed by Adburgham in \textit{Shops and shopping}, 99-100.
\bibitem{footnote17} “Selected Excerpts,” \textit{The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine} (London, England), (Saturday 1 May 1852): 26, accessed 8 July 2015, \textit{19\textsuperscript{th} Century UK Periodicals}.
\bibitem{footnote18} Adburgham, \textit{Liberty's}, 58.
\end{thebibliography}
and art patron, collector, and exhibition organizer, Thomas Fairbairn would have had
easy access to goods such as an expensive Kashmir shawl.21

Figure 12: Advertisement for The Great Shawl and Cloak Emporium in Le Follet - Journal du
(Sunday 1 March 1857). Reproduced from 19th Century UK Periodicals (accessed 18 June
2015).

Paradoxically, despite the higher esteem of shawls which were actually from
Kashmir, Victorians were anxious about the cleanliness of textiles and other products
from the East.22 This is apparent in nineteenth-century newspapers as well as in novels

21 Fairbairn succeeded his father in the family engineering firm, William Fairbairn & Co., in 1840. His
involvement in the planning of exhibitions included his role as a member of the Royal Commission for the
Exhibition of 1851 and that of chairman of the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857. Bronkhurst,
22 Suchitra Choudhury also discusses the issue of cleanliness and smell regarding the shawls in her thesis.
See chapter 5, “‘Smell of mountain goat’: Cashmere Shawls and a Narrative of ‘Smell’,” in
Choudhury, “Textile orientalisms: cashmere and Paisley shawls in British literature” (PhD thesis,
University of Glasgow, 2013), 165-187.
such as Charles White’s *The Cashmere Shawl* (1840). Within White’s novel, the shawl is an animate being with the ability to speak, and thus narrates its own story. It explains to its incredulous discoverer that it has “passed through many hands; enjoyed great glories, and alas—devoured infinite dirt” over its lifetime.\(^\text{23}\) Once “worn out, soiled, tattered and threadbare as a half naked dervish,” the shawl explains it was sold to the “impure clutches” of a rag merchant and thence into the boiler of a paper manufacturer.\(^\text{24}\) Evidently, Victorians revered and valued the shawl for its aesthetic beauty, but also feared the dirt it might carry from foreign climes, particularly as it was believed to carry disease.\(^\text{25}\)

New shawls were the most valued, as an article from Reynold’s Miscellany of 1853 expresses. It observes that “with many persons it is a point of vanity to wear their shawls unwashed as incontestable proof of their newness.” However, it encourages that “the shawls improve by wear, and even by being washed”, and even that a “shawl will, through use, acquire a certain flexibility, which certainly improves its appearance”. Nevertheless, the article states that it is necessary to wash the shawl should it become dirty, and “this operation, though it adds to the beauty, lessens the value of the fabric, in which case the owner sometimes sells the shawl.” The author continues to explain that shawls are sometimes “re-sold by merchants in other countries to persons who have not sufficient experience on such matters to discern that their purchase is not new”, indicating

\(^{23}\) Charles White, *The cashmere shawl: An eastern fiction* (London: Henry Colburn, 1840), ix-x.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., x.

\(^{25}\) Anne McLintock has written about the Victorian perception of soap as having a civilizing influence. The rise of soap over the nineteenth century paralleled the popularity of the shawl fashion, and, like the shawl, came to stand as a symbol of empire. Soap embodied contemporary “emergent middle-class values”, including “Christianity… class control… and the imperial civilizing mission.” Anne McLintock, “Soft-Soaping Empire – Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising,” in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995) (quote from p. 208).
shawls sold from the Punjab to Europe in particular. Such claims were frequently made by shawl manufacturers, and were perhaps calculated to boost British industry. Even early in the nineteenth century, contemporary discourse degraded Eastern products for the economic benefit of domestic European industries. Such an offensive was launched by European manufacturers. Included among them was Jean Rey, French manufacturer of imitation-Kashmiri shawls, and member of *La Société d’Enouragement pour l’Industrie Nationale*, who argued that French shawls were guaranteed to be new, while there was no such guarantee regarding Indian shawls. The main suggested benefits of buying British products were cleanliness and thrift. An August 1825 column in *The Times* (taken from *The Scotsman*) encouraged people to buy British shawls and not Indian ones, explaining that

what makes the preference shown to the foreign article the more surprising is, that no small proportion of the India shawls brought to Britain have been worn by the natives as turbans, girdles, &c. before they were imported… therefore, it is literally true, that our wealthy and titled dames are content to array themselves in the cast clothes of our eastern subjects.

The article furthermore expounds that British manufacture will soon catch up with Indian manufacture of the products, claiming that

Custom may keep up the old predilection for a time; but self-interest will teach people to save two or three hundred pounds paid for an India shawl, when they can have one for ten, twenty, or thirty, so closely resembling the other in fabric and appearance, that only the practised eye of the dealer can tell the difference.

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26 “‘Kashmir Shawls.” *Reynold’s miscellany of romance, general literature, science, and art* 10 (May 7, 1853): 252.


Evidently, the fear that Eastern shawls carried Eastern dirt was propagated by those who saw the economic benefit in promoting domestic industry. Manufacturers also offered patriotic incentive for buying domestic products. Early on, there was movement to use indigenous European flowers in shawls to replace Eastern floral patterns, and as symbols of national pride. Domestic-produced shawls (such as those from Paisley and Norwich in Britain) were marketed throughout the nineteenth century as being more modern and patriotic than shawls from India. They were an especially appealing option for their middle-class clientele, who could not afford shawls from India. Maskiell notes that simultaneously, British officials including Queen Victoria, who wore Paisley-made shawls in public, patronized British shawls “both as a matter of colonial policy and because of their Eurocentric tastes.” Nevertheless, because of their costliness, exclusivity, and their promise of authenticity, Indian shawls remained the most valued. Even when bought used, Indian shawls were only accessible to the upper and upper-middle classes. In this way while the consumption of domestic products was

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32 John Irwin observes the continued social “superiority” of shawls from Kashmir in *The Kashmir Shawl*, 25.

33 Nupur Chaudhuri has shown that classified advertisements such as those found in women’s magazines facilitated the purchase of shawls by both upper- and middle-class people. Classifieds demonstrate that shawls were frequently sold by memsahibs in colonial India, for whom they had little value except for exchange, and were bought by women in Britain at prices “from five to fifty pounds, as opposed to seventy pounds or more for the same articles bought in a store” (p. 235). Chaudhuri accordingly observes the pivotal role memsahibs played in proliferating such tastes within Britain among upper-middle and middle-class individuals (p. 242). She states that the prices at which they sold “were clearly beyond the reach of the lower-middle and working-class women” (235). Chaudhuri, “Shawls, Jewelry, Curry, and Rice.”
encouraged in Britain as clean and patriotic, the likelihood remains that Lady Fairbairn’s shawl is truly from India.

Does the colour of the Fairbairn shawl contribute to the rest of the image’s symbolic meaning? Long, white shawls were popular throughout the shawl’s term in fashion, and white-centred plaids were popular during the 1850s and 1860s.\(^\text{34}\) Besides popularity, a practical explanation for the light colour and more contained ornamentation of Lady Fairbairn’s shawl is that winter shawls in Britain were typically of thicker material, with a surface that was fully covered with pattern—whereas according to Valerie Reilly summer shawls were made to be “thinner, lighter,” and had a “scarlet or white centre.”\(^\text{35}\) As this is a summer portrait, this may be the case. But in the Victorian era, white also had important symbolic connotations with purity, virtue, and matrimony.\(^\text{36}\)

As noted in the Libraries and Museums Department of Edinburgh’s *Exhibition of Paisley shawls, 1805-1865* (1949) long, white-centred shawls (which became referred to “as the ‘pale-end’ plaid”) in the latter half of the nineteenth century “formed part of the trousseau of every well-to-do bride.”\(^\text{37}\) White shawls were given by the Queen as wedding gifts.

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\(^\text{34}\) Libraries and Museums Department, Edinburgh, *Exhibition of Paisley shawls*, f2v.


\(^\text{36}\) A white shawl in Kashmiri style (from India and given to her by the Major in his hopes of courting her) is worn by Emmy in William Makepeace Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* (1847-1848). The colour may have been intended to symbolically reflect the sincerity of his affections. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, (Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 2001), 627.

\(^\text{37}\) Libraries and Museums Department, Edinburgh, *Exhibition of Paisley shawls*, f7. Such a shawl is described as a wedding present to Miss Prittie, “daughter of the Hon. Francis Prittie, and niece of Lord Dunally, on her marriage with Mr. Henry Mervyn d’Arcy Irvine, of Castle Irvine, County Fermanagh” in “Fashion and Varieties,” *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin, Ireland), Friday 5 September 1862, accessed 31 July 2015, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*. These shawls were also worn to church after a honeymoon and to christenings—practises which were prevalent among the middle-classes and high society, including the British monarchy. At the christening of the Prince of Wales in 1842, both the Queen and the Duchess of Kent wore “rich shawl[s] of Paisley manufacture.” “Christening of the Prince of Wales,” *Liverpool Mercury etc.* (Liverpool, England), No. 1603 (Friday 28 January 1842), accessed 4 July 2015, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*. Shawls worn to church after special life events were consequently sometimes known as “kirking shawls” in Scotland (as will be discussed in chapter four: *The Paisley Shawl*).
even into the 1890s, and these were sometimes from Delhi. Indeed, Delhi was famous for its white silk shawls made with gold, which makes Delhi a possible source for this shawl. Lady Fairbairn’s shawl was not a gift from the Queen, as there is no mention of it in newspaper advertisements of the Fairbairn’s wedding on 23rd March, 1848. This is not surprising, as neither partner came from a noble background nor held any title at that time. The most likely assumption, then, is that this shawl was given to Lady Fairbairn by her husband as a wedding gift.

A reading of the rest of The Children’s Holiday contributes to the symbolic associations of the colour of the Fairbairn shawl with moral purity and wifely and motherly virtue, and can even be enriched by comparing it against Hunt’s earlier painting, The Awakening Conscience (1853-1854). This has been done by Caroline Arscott, who has directed attention to the two paintings’ similarities, “[t]hough such a comparison would have been unthinkable at the time.” This is because both women are archetypal: the woman in The Awakening Conscience represents the harlot, and Lady

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39 “Spinnings in Town,” The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine (London, England), No. 53 (Saturday 1 May 1869): 270, accessed 8 July 2015, 19th Century UK Periodicals. While Kashmir was most known for its shawls, shawls were also made elsewhere in the north of the Indian subcontinent, including in Delhi. Clabburn, Shawls, 5.


41 Arscott, “Employer, husband, spectator,” 168.
Fairbairn represents the ideal wife. Nevertheless, the two paintings complement one another based on the similarities and juxtapositions of the women’s postures, their dress (including their shawls), and by the fact that they appear to be “surrounded by their domestic trappings”. While the harlot’s surroundings and clothes are new and brash, the wife’s are expensive but modest. The harlot appears in a temporary abode with her lover, while the wife supervises and serves her children and acts as a responsible mother. Arscott states that these archetypes symbolise “the function of women in society” in the Victorian worldview. Since most of the paintings Fairbairn bought from or commissioned of Hunt, including the moral picture The Awakening Conscience, all share the theme of an illicit sexual union, Arscott contends that this was a conservative reaction that may have been spurred by the perceived threat of communism via unionism in Victorian England. The “moral influence” a virtuous woman could have within the domestic sphere was considered to be a tonic for such politics.

The paintings are indeed very similar. In both the women wear “richly patterned shawls over grey striped garments.” In The Children’s Holiday, Lady Fairbairn’s left hand is in plain view. This is also the case with the woman in The Awakening Conscience, though in that painting it exposes that she is unwed, since she wears a ring on every finger but her wedding ring finger. Lady Fairbairn by contrast wears a wedding ring—a detail that is significant because in addition to acknowledging the wealth of her husband the purpose of the Fairbairn portrait is evidently to represent Lady Fairbairn as

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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 166-168.
46 Ibid., 168.
the ideal mother and wife.\textsuperscript{47} The white, lustrous shawl she wears is therefore meant to enhance this reading. Just as the shawl in \textit{The Awakening Conscience} draws attention to the woman’s working-class status and moral lapse, this shawl promotes Lady Fairbairn’s upper-middle-class standing and upholds her morals as proper and ideal.

Because the white coloured-shawl was associated with matrimony, the shawl in \textit{The Children’s Holiday} apparently reinforces Lady Fairbairn’s status as an ideal mother and wife. This reading is supported by other objects in the painting. Lady Fairbairn stands next to a red leather, cushioned chair and a table, which is covered by a white (presumably satin) tablecloth. Among the objects on the table are a Russian samovar, a tea service and china, and a broad-brimmed hat adorned with a bird’s tail feathers. Lady Fairbairn also stands over a Turkish carpet. Tim Barringer has described these items as “newly purchased commodities in the latest style, objects of the kind that Thomas Fairbairn would have inspected as a juryman on the committees of the International Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862.”\textsuperscript{48} Like the women’s clothing, Caroline Arscott has compared these domestic ‘interior’ trappings to those which appear in \textit{The Awakening Conscience}. While Lady Fairbairn’s homemaking skills are displayed as exemplary, those of the woman in \textit{The Awakening Conscience} are presented as being lacking.\textsuperscript{49}

Evidently, the shawl in \textit{The Children’s Holiday} supports Lady Fairbairn’s reputation and standing as an ideal mother and wife. This is indicated not only by visual clues offered by other objects within the painting (such as her conspicuous wedding ring

\textsuperscript{47} Barringer, Rosenfeld, and Smith, eds., with contributions by Prettejohn and Waggoner, \textit{Pre-Raphaelites}, 148.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 148.
\textsuperscript{49} Arscott, “Employer, husband, spectator,” 170.
and the silver tea service and chinaware with which she serves tea to her children), but by the shawl’s material qualities, including its white colour with gold ornamentation. The colour white represented purity and virtue, and it was also the chosen colour of shawl given as a wedding gift to a bride and worn by a bride to her wedding. The shawl, like the rest of the objects in the portrait, clearly express the Fairbairns’ wealth and Lady Fairbairn’s suitability as a mother. While the shawl does not appear in Lady Fairbairn’s will, given the family’s social position, Thomas Fairbairn’s connections with trade, and the value of Eastern shawls, it is probable that this shawl came from India. Since Delhi became famous for its white shawls composed with silk and which featured gold embroidery, it is possible this shawl is from Delhi, though further material and contextual analysis beyond the bounds of this thesis is required to confirm whether this is its precise provenance.
Chapter 4

The Paisley Shawl

Longevity and tradition

Francis Henry Newbery’s *The Paisley Shawl* (fig. 13) depicts a seated elderly woman wearing a red kerchief around her head, and a thick red shawl draped over her shoulders. The shawl has a swirling, all-over pattern (similar to the example in *Portrait of Fanny*, fig. 4) that suggests it was made on a Jacquard loom. Completed in circa 1910, the painting was presented to the Paisley Art Institute in 1915. The sitter is Mrs. Cleeve of the neighbourhood of Bideford, Devon. Mrs. Cleeve sat for another painting by Newbery, *Portrait of a Devonian or Memories* (fig. 14), which was painted as early as 1908. *Portrait of a Devonian* was likewise donated by Newbery to the country of its title—in this case, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum at Exeter in 1916. In this painting Mrs. Cleeve also wears a kerchief around her head and a shawl draped over her shoulders; this time the kerchief is a dark blue and the shawl has a plain white background with long tassels and rose-coloured floral motifs at the ends. There is little information about where these paintings were painted and, prompted by the different locations in both paintings’ titles, it may be asked whether it was in Devon or in Paisley.

3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
Francis Newbery was born in Devon, and was the son of an illiterate shoemaker from Dorset. Newbery attended Bridport general school from 1860 to 1874, and qualified as a teacher; he also trained in art from 1871/2 to 1875 at the Bridport School of Art, where he became certified as an art master. He taught in London as art master at the City Corporation Middle Class School, Cowper Street from 1875, and at the Grocers’ Company’s School in Hackney Downs from 1877 to 1881. In 1877 he enrolled as a general student at the National Art Training School at South Kensington, and won a scholarship as a full-time ‘Art Master in Training’ in 1881. From his appointment in 1885 until his retirement in 1917, he was head of the Glasgow School of Art—the post for which he is most famous.

Due to its proximity to Glasgow, it would make sense if The Paisley Shawl was painted in the town of Paisley. However, as Director of the Glasgow School of Art, Newbery had little time to paint during the school year. Consequently he probably completed much of his own work during summer holidays, when he and his wife travelled. It is conceivable that Newbery became acquainted with Mrs. Cleeve and completed these paintings in Devon—particularly as there is a coastline visible through

8 Newbery is also famous for encouraging collaboration between “The Four” artists who were definers of the late-nineteenth-century Glasgow Style: Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, Charles Rennie Mackintosh (later Margaret’s husband), Margaret’s sister Frances Macdonald, and Herbert MacNair (later married to Frances). See Rawson, ‘Newbery, Francis Henry (1855–1946)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography [http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.queensu.ca/view/article/49479, accessed 8 November 2014].
9 Rawson, “Francis Henry Newbery,” Vol. 1, 348. Indeed, much of their time was spent in England, since as early as 1897 Francis and Jessie had a holiday home in Walberswick, where they would come to spend the latter part of their annual summer holidays – see Rawson, “Francis Henry Newbery,” Vol. 1, 351, 354; Fra H. Newbery: artist and art educationist, 27.
the window within *Portrait of a Devonian*. Given that *The Paisley Shawl* features the same model, it is therefore also possible that it was painted in Devon but later donated to the Paisley Art Institute.

For the purpose of this textile-based inquiry, the precise location of each portrait’s execution is perhaps less important than its title, which ties it to a particular place, and its subject matter, in which the woman’s clothing is central. In a 1916 letter to F. Harcourt Kitchin, Editor of *The Glasgow Herald*, Newbery states his intention to donate *Portrait of a Devonian* to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, and explains that the clothing of the sitter was her usual dress. This is significant, because the time of both portraits’ completion was beyond the period of the shawl fashion. While during its time in vogue many accounts claimed the shawl would never be out of style, it did in fact fall from fashion in the 1870s—forty years before the completion of this painting. This was owing to several factors. First, mass production meant decline in the shawl’s value as a luxury item, since it made it more affordable, replicable, and available to wider sections of society. Printed shawls and more sophisticated looms for woven ones (such as the Jacquard model) aided the transition from cottage industries to factory-based weaving from the 1840s, and also sped up production. In the 1860s, as European shawls dropped in price, Indian production by necessity increased, and the market was flooded with

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11 London fashion periodical *Bow Bells* in 1866 linked shawls to the fashions of the ancient world, stating that “[o]f the wardrobes of the ancients… the shawl is the only article which has not been superseded.” “The Shawl,” *Bow bells: a magazine of general literature and art for family reading* 3, No. 76 (10 January 1866), 595.
coarser and heavier weaves. As Tirthankar Roy has observed, segments of the Indian textile industry which specialized in coarser cloth experienced depression in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

As well as the shawl’s lost quality of exclusivity, the end of silhouette-altering fashions such as the crinoline and the corset in the 1870s—with which the shawl acted as an accoutrement—rendered it redundant. In the 1870s the crinoline was replaced by the bustle, which allowed more movement and which women could wear with fitted jackets as an outer layer instead. Fitted jackets were sold as early as the 1860s, when companies such as Frisby, Dyke, & Co. of Liverpool sold jackets alongside their stock of mantles and shawls as jackets were just coming into fashion. As Winnifred Aldrich has demonstrated, concerns over the healthfulness of the corset played a role in the “revolution in cutting” that likewise influenced the shape of the woman’s fitted jacket and its popularity.


The cessation of more physically restrictive fashions such as the crinoline and the corset has been linked to the emergence of the “new woman,” a typecast of educated, middle-class women who during the latter half of the nineteenth century asserted and took advantage of their growing independence and improved educational and employment opportunities. The bicycle was another invention which greater enabled women to travel for work and pleasure and which was consequently linked with the image of the “new woman.” In *The Graphic* in 1900 Lady Violet Greville speculated that despite the popularity of “the Empire period in dress” at the time in Paris, it was unlikely that shawls would return to fashion as they did not suit “the modern methods of athleticism.” Greville observes that “[a] woman cannot play golf or tennis, ride a bicycle or skate properly when draped in a shawl.” Jackets made of Kashmiri shawl patterns, available from as early as the 1870s, were perhaps intended to coax those consumers who were hesitant to give up the shawl.

Despite having fallen from their place in fashion, the Kashmiri shawl in the latter decades of the nineteenth century still held ceremonial, sentimental, and monetary value. Its ceremonial and sentimental value is discernible in the fact that shawls were given as...

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19 As Aldrich has noted, this was helped by urbanization and women’s emergence from the private into the public sphere during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Aldrich, “The Impact of Fashion,” 141. In this article, Aldrich has thus linked the emergence of the New Woman with that of the tailored jacket, a fashion less physically restrictive than its predecessors. Also see Helland, *The Studios of Frances and Margaret MacDonald*, 33.

20 In the 1890s, once the bustle had also declined from fashion, it was accordingly suggested by some critics of the “new woman” that a revival of the restrictive crinoline and bustle would undo this apparition by preventing her from being able to ride a bicycle safely and comfortably. Helland, *The Studios of Frances and Margaret MacDonald*, 33.


wedding gifts in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. In the 1880s it was reported that this was no longer fashionable.\textsuperscript{23} For this reason, some were mildly critical of the Queen’s continued tradition of giving Kashmiri shawls as wedding gifts to members of high society.\textsuperscript{24} Nevertheless for many owners, shawls had personal histories—and hence, value—since many had been passed down through families or given as wedding gifts.

The shawl retained its monetary value due to its rise as an antique, for which reason it was used prevalently as an interior decoration from the 1880s until World War I.\textsuperscript{25} This was due to contemporary philological and popular discourse that India was in a similar stage of civilization that Europe had already passed through, and hence its material culture was to be considered antique.\textsuperscript{26} What aided this was a general belief that ‘authentic’ modes of non-European production would soon disappear, as they “degenerated under European influence.”\textsuperscript{27} The popularity for ‘authentic’ products may furthermore have been helped by the value in the 1880s of the handmade over the

\textsuperscript{23} “Social Topics – Some Facts about French Marriages (From The Parisian),” Manchester Times (Saturday 15 May 1880), accessed 8 July 2015, 19\textsuperscript{th} Century British Library Newspapers.
\textsuperscript{24} “Place aux Dames,” The Graphic (London, England), No. 1467 (Saturday 8 January 1898); A wedding notice in “Gleanings,” Nottinghamshire Guardian (London, England), No. 2593 (Saturday, January 26, 1895) states that “Lady Wolverton is the only bride for a very long while to whom the Queen has presented jewels instead of a Cashmere shawl” (accessed 8 July 2015, 19\textsuperscript{th} Century British Library Newspapers); one article explains that the queen is actually given shawls from Kashmir as perquisites to give to brides of society marriages – see “Daily Notes,” The Yorkshire Herald, and The York Herald (York, England), No. 13501 (Tuesday 11 September 1894): 4, accessed 31 July 2015, 19\textsuperscript{th} Century British Library Newspapers. In France it similarly remained customary to give Kashmiri shawls as wedding gifts after the shawl had otherwise fallen from fashion (Lévi-Strauss, The Cashmere Shawl, 52).
\textsuperscript{25} Shawls had been used as interior decoration throughout the long nineteenth century, but were especially selected for this purpose during this period. See Brett, “The Management of Colour,” 129; Chaudhuri, “Shawls, Jewelry, Curry, and Rice,” 237; Maskiell, “Consuming Kashmir,” 41-42. The shawl’s rise as an antique is evident in articles such as “Our London Correspondence,” Glasgow Herald (Glasgow, Scotland), No. 304 (Tuesday 21 December 1897), which under “Books and Curio Sales” describes “[a]n important sale of objects of art and antiquities” including Kashmiri shawls (accessed 5 July 2015, 19\textsuperscript{th} Century British Library Newspapers). Similarly an ad in The Morning Post (London, England), No. 39019 (Monday 28 June 1897): 1, offers an “[o]ld Indian cashmere shawl for sale” (accessed 8 July 2015, 19\textsuperscript{th} Century British Library Newspapers).
\textsuperscript{26} Maskiell, “Consuming Kashmir,” 41.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 54.
machine-made product, affected by artistic movements such as Arts and Crafts and Aestheticism. By the first decades of the twentieth century, in Hiner’s words, shawls were “relegated to indoor status”, and were used almost exclusively to furnish homes. They might be used as wall hangings, or else were draped over pianos. The shawl’s value as an antique is evident in the fact that in 1887 shawls from Kashmir were sold by Liberty London at prices from £30 to £500.

Any one or several of the above reasons made many owners reluctant to get rid of their old Kashmiri shawls despite the fact that they were out of fashion by the 1870s. Some creatively repurposed their shawls into new clothing, and as Sally Helvenston Gray notes, “fashion magazines in the 1860s began to provide instructions for stitching a shawl into a more fitted outerwrap without cutting the fabric.” Shawl-patterned dresses had been produced since mid-century, but those who were less inhibited might also refashion their old shawls into new dresses. In Le Follet in 1893 one reader was advised that she could use her shawl for drapery for her drawing-room mantelpiece as a way of reusing it without needing to cut it apart.

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31 Adburgham, Liberty’s, 58.
33 Ibid.
By the 1910s, about the time when *The Paisley Shawl* and *Portrait of a Devonian* were painted, the shawl had become “a sign of outmoded fashion.”

For outings such as the theatre it was replaced by the opera cloak. One fashion writer in an 1892 issue of *Hearth and Home* despaired that so many insensible “girls of moderate means” chose to wear “sad-looking cashmere shawls” rather than opera cloaks, which she explains to be “the easiest possible attire to fabricate at home.” She recounts that a young woman she sat next to at the theatre that very week wore such a shawl instead of an opera cloak. The author relates: “I longed, with all my heart, to seize that young woman and shake her, and then to dress her afresh.”

As it was replicated on other mass-produced items, such as curtains, “[p]orcelain vases and tea services”, and clothes such as dresses and bodices, the Indian shawl pattern itself became kitsch. An article in the *Glasgow Herald* from 1890 makes a call for more interesting design, rebuking British manufacturers for simply copying Indian patterns rather than developing new ones, and in particular highlights the Kashmiri shawl patterns that were prevalent on mass-manufactured items beyond textiles at the time and which included “[p]orcelain vases and tea services”.

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40 “Our London Correspondence,” *Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, Scotland), No. 67 (Tuesday 19 March 1895), accessed 5 July 2015, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*.
41 “Art in the Street,” *Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, Scotland), No. 10 (Saturday 11 January 1890), accessed 5 July 2015, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*. 
There was resistance to the decline of the shawl fashion. Throughout the nineteenth century, the shawl had been praised and revered for its aesthetic beauty, and was also valued for the economic benefit it brought to communities wherein it was manufactured. The author of an 1869 article in *The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* expresses that though the Kashmiri shawl was going out of vogue, such change was “imposed” unwillingly, for many, by the present dictates of fashion. Some articles looked back at the shawl fashion sentimentally, and some continued to claim, even into the early 1900s, that the fashion was making a comeback. Still, as Maskiell notes, “shawls continued to be worn by some women who did not adopt the latest fashion”. This included—as *Portrait of a Devonian* and *The Paisley Shawl* demonstrate—elderly women, who held on to the fashions with which they were familiar even as new ones took their place.

What meaning might the shawl have had for a woman such as Mrs. Cleeve? One possible answer is that it affirmed for her her British identity. As discussed in chapter three, imitation-Kashmiri shawls produced in Paisley and Norwich were portrayed to be modern and patriotic—especially for their middle-class clientele, who could not afford

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'authentic’ Kashmiri shawls. This was the same in France.\textsuperscript{46} Their popularity and prevalence over the nineteenth century also meant that shawls came to be indigenized Western dress.\textsuperscript{47} Evidence of the shawl’s domestication in European culture can be read in the ceremonial and ritualistic occasions and purposes for which they were given, worn, and kept. Throughout the nineteenth century, shawls were frequently presented as gifts by upper-middle-class men working in colonial India to their mothers, sisters and wives.\textsuperscript{48} By the 1860s in France and Britain the shawl was a common gift for weddings and baptisms.\textsuperscript{49} As Alfrey notes this is important because these were “the rituals signifying the bonds of affection that linked bride to groom or parent to child.”\textsuperscript{50} In Scotland, shawls which were worn by a woman on the first Sunday after her marriage or the birth of her first child were referred to as “kirking shawls.”\textsuperscript{51} These were typically plaids, and might have white centres.\textsuperscript{52} Kirking is a ritual that preceded the shawl fashion in Scotland, but according to Matthew Blair went out with it in the 1870s (which demonstrates the degree to which the shawl became tied with the practise).\textsuperscript{53} The care with which shawls were often stored underscores their personal as well as their monetary value. Alfrey observes that many shawl owners kept their shawls in “purpose-made chests” which were scented with sandalwood or cedarwood to prevent moths.\textsuperscript{54} Evidently, sentimental attachment as well as custom made owners of shawls—particularly those of Mrs. Cleeve’s generation,
who had lived most of their lives while the shawl was in fashion—reluctant to give them up.

The shawl’s meaning for Newbery as the artist needs also to be considered, and for this reason his politics and opinions about art, as can be gleaned through examining his teaching policies, are important. As head of the Glasgow School of Art from 1885 to 1917 Newbery sought to merge fine art with technical arts and design. He was a socialist supporter, and followed the views of William Morris and Walter Crane. In his own painting practise, Newbery positioned himself as a champion of the ‘everyman’; his works typically feature working-class people, and following his retirement from the Glasgow School of Art in 1918 he accepted numerous commissions to create artworks for public spaces including inn signs and local war memorials. Newbery was thus also invested in celebrating localities through his painting.

Importantly, at this time in his painting practise Newbery produced paintings of rural labourers but not industrial workers. Just as significantly, he depicted them at leisure and not at work, as many of his contemporaries did. In offering caution to scholars utilizing paintings as sources for dress history, Lou Taylor gives the very example of images of the rural poor, in which depictions are “highly variable in their dealings with notions of ‘realism.’” Paintings featuring the rural poor were often idealized due to the utopian ideals of artists and consumers, who romanticized the

55 Helland, The Studios of Frances and Margaret Macdonald, 30.
57 I thank Dr George Rawson for our discussion on this.
preindustrial past. It may therefore be argued that by showing rural workers at leisure whilst ignoring industrial workers, Newbery’s portraits were nostalgic for an idealized rural and preindustrial past. The shawls in *Portrait of a Devonian* and *The Paisley Shawl* are likewise nostalgic in their reminiscence on the passed age of the shawl—a fashion that Newbery would have remembered from his childhood.

As is indicated by their titles and the sites of their donation, the thematic locations of *Portrait of a Devonian* and *The Paisley Shawl* are also significant to their interpretation. As mentioned, *Portrait of a Devonian* went to Devon, and *The Paisley Shawl* went to Paisley. The only link with Paisley that is certain within *The Paisley Shawl* is the shawl itself—affirming that Newbery associated the shawl in the painting with the Paisley industry. For this reason, the shawl is almost certainly from Paisley. Besides living in close proximity to the town, Newbery would have been very familiar with Paisley’s shawl industry through his role as Director of the nearby Glasgow School of Art, and as a prior exhibitor at the Paisley Art Institute. Newbery also had a personal connection to Paisley’s textile industry through his wife Jessie Wylie Newbery (née Rowat, 1864-1948). Jessie was the Paisley-born daughter of William Rowat, a shawl manufacturer by trade until the 1880s, when he joined his brother’s business in importing tea. Jessie herself had a lifelong vocation in textiles: as an embroiderer, she was trained at the Glasgow School of Art and, in 1894, founded and became head of the school’s

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60 Taylor, “Approaches to using visual analysis,” 123.
61 As George Rawson has indicated, Newbery was exhibiting with the Paisley Art Institute as early as 1890. Rawson, “Francis Henry Newbery,” Vol. 1, 348.
embroidery department. She also designed the cover of Paisley author Matthew Blair’s book, *The Paisley Thread Industry and the Men who created it.*

It is difficult make out the exact design details of this shawl, as—unlike the work of earlier painters such as Hunt (see figs. 3 and 4, 7, and 11)—Newbery’s style was quite impressionistic. However, as the shawl in *The Paisley Shawl* features the same reddish predominant colour, with hints of green, akin to the examples in *The Awakening Conscience* and *Portrait of Fanny,* it could conceivably have been produced near the same time as those two shawls (at mid-century). Its swirling pattern, which indicates it was woven on a Jacquard loom, corroborates the hypothesis that it is a domestic product. It is in the style of all-over pattern plaids from the 1860s, the likes of which were made in Paisley at that time, and thus is more than likely a Paisley example. Examples of Paisley-made all-over pattern plaids from the 1860s can be found within the Paisley Museum and Art Galleries, and one example can be found within the Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 15). The shawl owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art is also a Paisley example and has very similar shades of red to the one in *The Paisley Shawl,* as well as a swirling pattern that covers the shawl. The example from the Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection has a crimson centre. As the shawl worn by Mrs. Cleeve appears to be the same type of shawl and probably has a

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65 I thank Dr Dan Coughlan for this suggestion. All-over pattern plaids were often thick and worn during the winter (Reilly, *The Paisley Pattern,* 39).
similar all-over design, it is likely that the green colour that appears on her shawl is that shawl’s centre.\textsuperscript{66}


The shawl in \textit{Portrait of a Devonian}, meanwhile, with its white centre, long white fringe, and decorative border featuring \textit{buta} motifs, matches several kirking shawls of the

\textsuperscript{66} I thank Dr Dan Coughlan for our discussion on this.
1850s and 1860s which are in the collection of Paisley Museum and Art Galleries. Newbery mentioned it was Mrs. Cleeve’s usual dress, and she may have had it since she was very young, or it may have been passed down to her through her family. Perhaps Mrs. Cleeve owned the shawl in *The Paisley Shawl* as well, or perhaps it was in Newbery’s or his wife’s possession. Francis Newbery frequently dressed his models in clothes which he or his wife owned. For example, the same dress appears in *The Lady of the Carnation*, which features his wife Jessie, wearing a dress which she made (fig. 16), and in *Daydreams* (fig. 17). Furthermore, as Newbery’s wife Jessie had familial connections with the Paisley shawl trade, Newbery would have had easy access to a Paisley shawl. Throughout her life, Jessie Newbery collected textiles when she travelled, and it’s conceivable she had a collection of shawls.

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69 I thank Douglas Breingan, technician, and Dr Dan Coughlan, Curator of Textiles, of the Paisley Museum and Art Galleries for their suggestions.
The shawls that appear in *Portrait of a Devonian* and *The Paisley Shawl* are objects which kindle nostalgia for both the painting’s sitter and artist. For the sitter, a shawl given as a gift or passed down through generations and worn to important celebrations could be a strong reminder of personal and family histories. For the artist, it signified a bygone age—that of the shawl’s time in fashion and its consequent benefit to local textile industry. This was a sentiment that was expressed by numerous
contemporary accounts—including those by Matthew Blair—regarding its passing. While the painting was likely completed in Devon, it is more than likely that the shawl itself came from Paisley and was manufactured during the 1860s. While Newbery used painterly brushstrokes in this painting, the details of the shawl’s design are clear enough to ascertain from its colours and swirling pattern that it is an all-over pattern plaid, woven on a Jacquard loom during the 1860s. These material clues, and, as this chapter has argued, since the shawl was likely owned by Newbery, the artist’s proximity to and family connections with the Paisley industry support a Paisley provenance.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis has selected several paintings of differing temporality to establish a longitudinal framework of visual evidence to the shawl fashion’s evolution over time. Possibilities for further research into European paintings of shawls from the late eighteenth century remain, and by including paintings from Asia and the Middle East, investigation may be conducted into even earlier material. This thesis has begun such enquiry by focussing on paintings of the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century in Britain—a time when Kashmiri and imitation-Kashmiri shawls were common in painting, including in the works of William Holman Hunt, and in several paintings by Francis Henry Newbery. It has demonstrated the use of a material-culture based approach (combining close-reading of an object’s “internal evidence” with its “external evidence”, as discussed by Jules David Prown1) to deduce information of the shawl’s construction and even infer its provenance, as well as to interpret nuanced social and cultural information of its contemporaneous period.

While the task of determining a shawl’s provenance is frequently difficult due to intermingled design influences between manufacturers in both Europe and India during the nineteenth century, by examining the material qualities of shawls within paintings—such as a shawl’s colour, design, and fabric—and pairing such examination with information gained from artists’ biographies, the provenance of particular shawls has also

1 Prown, “Mind in Matter.”
been provided. This has further contextualized the reading of shawls’ social and cultural meanings within a painting, as would likely have been apparent to contemporary viewers. For example, as the shawl within *The Children’s Holiday* is likely from India, it was all the more potent in its demonstration of the Fairbairns’ wealth. The shawl within *The Paisley Shawl* is likely a Paisley example, and thus articulates the shawl’s history of meaning for British consumers and for the community and industry of Paisley.

By comparing with external evidence including economic and social histories, the investigation has attested that while the Kashmiri shawl (and its imitations) could signify social status in nineteenth-century Britain, the range of prices at which it sold meant it was also subject to class distinctions. The ‘class’ of a shawl was intelligible in its material quality, visual appearance, and, if identifiable, origins. Reading these distinctions through a material culture-based approach contextualizes the presence of shawls in Victorian visual culture including paintings. This in turn can be used to inform historical knowledge of the shawl’s wider social and cultural meaning. As has been established, shawls within the selected paintings could portray social meanings as varied as in Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience*, wherein I have argued that the shawl stood as a symbol of a lower-class woman’s social ambition and desire for material luxury. Shawls could also communicate wealth and propriety, as is the case of Lady Fairbairn’s shawl within *The Children’s Holiday*. They could also convey and reveal cultural nuances, such as the Victorian link between aesthetics and morality, and the contemporary conviction that Eastern design’s heightened sensuality, as it was perceived by Westerners, reflected the hedonism and moral laxity of the Orient (as discussed in Chapter Two, *The Awakening Conscience*). In later paintings, such as Francis Henry Newbery’s *The Paisley Shawl*, the
presence of a Kashmiri or imitation-Kashmiri shawl might also reflect lingering nostalgia for the shawl’s aesthetic beauty, ceremonial purpose, and the economic prosperity it brought to local communities following the decline of the fashion in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Such examples demonstrate that the shawl retained meaning even after it fell from popularity, and further substantiate the value of utilizing visual sources in studying the history of the Kashmiri shawl—a century-long fashion—in Britain and in the wider Western world.
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