Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Montserrat Zamora April 8, 2019

Redemption in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

by

Montserrat Zamora

Dr. Laura Otis

Adviser

English Department

Dr. Laura Otis

Adviser

Dr. Deborah White

Committee Member

Dr. Pamela Hall

Committee Member

2019

Redemption in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

By

Montserrat Zamora

Dr. Laura Otis

Adviser

An abstract of

a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences

of Emory University in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of the degree of

Bachelor of Arts with Honors

English Department

2019

Abstract

Redemption in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

By Montserrat Zamora

Comparing Victor Hugo's novel, *Les Misérables*, and Thomas Hardy's novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge,* I argue that both writers construct a narrative that analyzes the potential for redemption within the context of an individual entering into a covenant with God. Taking into consideration both authors' Christian background, I apply the New Testament's understanding of redemption and the relationship between faith and works as described within Jesus' ministry to my analysis of both novels. In an attempt to also investigate the role society plays in influencing an individual's ability to enter into a covenant, I develop an in-depth literary analysis of Jean Valjean, Javert and Michael Henchard. I explore how the characters are artistical representations of society's outcasts who have been impacted by societal rhetoric in their endeavor to re-establish their lives and gain redemption.

Redemption in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

By

Montserrat Zamora

Dr. Laura Otis

Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences

of Emory University in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of the degree of

Bachelor of Arts with Honors

English Department

2019

Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction

In Victor Hugo's novel, *Les Misérables*, and Thomas Hardy's novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, both authors present narratives surrounding the creation of a covenant with God, society's conceptualization of its outcasts, and redemption. I have chosen these novels for their narrative similarities. Because these novels have never been compared, I think that the narrative parallels between both works allow for an analysis of each writer's understanding of redemption and society's influence on the individual.

In both novels, the protagonist enters into a covenant with God in order to change a certain aspect of his past behavior. Becoming the mayor of his respective town, the protagonist of each book is able to change his life. However, when each adoptive daughter enters the narrative, both main characters are forced to reflect on their paternal obligations. In their old age, they find themselves isolated. At the conclusion of each storyline, both daughters choose to forgive their fathers for concealing their past actions. While Hugo's protagonist, Jean Valjean, is able to gain the forgiveness of his daughter, Cosette, Hardy's character, Michael Henchard, dies before his daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, reaches him.

Focusing on the conclusions of each novel, I will argue that the differences in each protagonist's covenant with God and their internal motivations directly impact their ability to obtain the forgiveness of their daughters and gain redemption. Both writers focus on the way selfishness negatively impacts a character's redemptive development. Taking into consideration both authors' Christian background, I will be looking specifically at the different components of redemption as they are presented in the New Testament. Moreover, examining the manner in which the novels use monetary language when discussing redemption, I will investigate how redemption can be understood in relation to an economic exchange. Analyzing the narratives of

Valjean, Javert, and Henchard, I will argue that each character serves as a literary representation of an individual's reaction to society's treatment of its outsiders.

Furthermore, in order to properly analyze the New Testament and both novels, I will define several of the terms that will be the focus of my argument. When evaluating society's role, it important to note that a community is composed of individuals. However, when examining society's influence over an individual, I want to focus on the way society has adopted certain notions that dominate the whole to the point that individuals are rendered speechless. In his book, *A Brief History of the Masses*, political theorist Stefan Jonsson argues that "at the very moment when sovereignty is transferred to the people…the people hence forth makes itself known only as a series of abstract units added up according to… principles" (Jonsson 10). While Jonsson's study focuses on the history of revolutions in Europe, I want to apply his argument relating to society's guiding principles to my analysis. He is claiming that once a community is established, the population as a whole is governed by specific tenets. Jonsson's argument highlights the way a population is driven by particular values, thus not allowing individual voices that originate from outside the community to be heard. I argue that these notions are directly tied to social order and the laws created within society. Within the novels, both authors demonstrate their own understanding of these principles and the way they impact individuals who are ostracized from the community.

In addition, throughout my analysis, I will use the term "heart" to denote internal sentiments and motivations. Beyond solely analyzing physical actions, I want to focus on the internal dialogues behind physical actions. In doing so, I will be able to investigate the reasoning of a character's decision-making. By gaining this knowledge, I will be able to evaluate a character's redemptive narrative in a more effective manner. However, before looking at the

specifics within each novel, I want to explore how the New Testament understands redemption, the manner in which individuals enter into a covenant with God and how societal castaways were understood during the time of the New Testament.

Chapter I: Redemption in Judeo-Christian Scripture

In this chapter, I will analyze how Judeo-Christian literature understands the relationship between faith, the belief an individual has in God, and works, the observance of the biblical rules. I will first be exploring how Jesus' ministry conceptualizes the importance of faith, and then I will use a Christian lens to comprehend how the writers of the New Testament understood the role of biblical law within Ancient Judaism.

In *Perspectives of Jesus in the Writings of Paul*, Gerry Schoberg, a New Testament scholar, states that there is a "widespread agreement that Jesus is associated with 'sinners'" (Schoberg 28). Schoberg quotes E.P Sanders and Marcus Borg, fellow New Testament scholars, who write that "the promise of salvation to sinners is the undeniably distinctive characteristic of Jesus' message," and Jesus' "table fellowship with sinners [is] one of the most striking features of [his] ministry" (Schoberg 28). The agreement among these authors illustrates the way Jesus' teachings have been understood by biblical scholars. Focused around the theme of universal salvation by means of faith, Jesus' sermons attempted to combat many of the perceived norms and beliefs of Ancient Judaism. His ministry served to criticize the Pharisees and their observance of the law. He chose not to focus on the physical actions of people but rather their possibility for redemption based on their belief.

Schoberg draws his readers' attention to the specific etymology relating to the word 'sin' in Greek and Hebrew. In Greek, the word ἁμαρτωλός , or "amartulos," means "immorality, foolishness, or ungodliness" (Schoberg 51). He states that this word appears 145 times in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures, and is translated from five different Hebrew roots: חטא ("sinner"), חנף ("profane person"), חרשׁ("a plougher"), רע ("an evil person"), and רשׁע ("a wicked person") (Schoberg 51). In looking at the different Hebrew

words, it is important to note how sin was thought of as relating to "evil" and "wickedness" (Schoberg 51). The figurative use of the word "plougher" is likewise significant because it shows the understanding of a sinner as someone who has the ability to oppress others (Schoberg 51). It emphasizes the tendency of a sinner both to become more evil and to spread their wickedness to others. Schoberg argues that the representation of a sinner as someone who distributes evil demonstrates how the ancient world understood sinners as a threat to society since they were seen as having the potential to oppress the lawful with their "wicked" ways (Schoberg 51). In *Forgiveness of Sin*, Tim Carter, a biblical scholar, states that "once [someone is] labeled a 'sinner' it is not easy to lose [this] status and be reintegrated into society" (Carter 165). Carter highlights the manner in which sinners were perceived as entirely apart from society, and it is due to their threat that they were not easily welcomed back.

Furthermore, Schoberg creates a connection between the Greek word relating to immorality and numerous other Greek words (Schoberg 51). The following include some of the words that he argues often appear with ἁμαρτωλός, or "amartulos": ἀσεβής ("godless"), ἄδικος ("unjust"), πονηρός ("wicked, evil-doer"), ὑπερήφανος ("arrogant, proud"), and ἄνομος ("lawless") (Schoberg 51). In understanding a sinner as being devoid of justice, humility, and God, we are able not only to understand what the ancient world valued but also how sinners were branded. Schoberg's etymological study of the terms found in scripture offers insight into the manner in which people in the ancient world understood sin. Looking at the way these different terms are used and defined, Schoberg concludes that "in contrast to the righteous, [people in the ancient world understood] sinners [as] forsak[ing] God's law" (Schoberg 52). His analysis demonstrates the way sinners were seen as being categorically different. Carter likewise

affirms that sinners were understood to be "outcasts" (Carter 164). He states that they were "shunned by everyone," and thus the term itself "serves to label people… to an identifiable class" (Carter 164). As both Schoberg and Carter argue, sinners were recognized as being apart from Jewish society. The exclusion of condemned sinners also negatively impacted the perception of certain occupations of the time period.

As biblical scholar Norman Perrin argues, several "occupations" were looked down upon in rabbinical texts: "the lists include tax collectors… [who] were denied certain rights as citizens… alongside other stereotypical disreputable people- robbers, prostitutes, extortioners, adulterers, Gentiles" (Schoberg 38). The manner in which these individuals were associated with their occupations enabled their exclusion to be understood in relation to their social class (Schoberg 38). In Hebrew, the term for these individuals is עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ (Schoberg 39). The literal translation, as stated by German theologian Joachim Jeremias, is the "people of the lands," whom Schoberg argues were "often looked down on because of their ignorance of both the Torah and the teachings of the sages" (Schoberg 39). Looking at the way these individuals were perceived, we are further able to see how they were understood as separate from the Jewish community. Moreover, the Greek translation to this Hebrew term is ἁμαρτωλοί, or "amartoloi" (Schoberg 41). This word similarly relates to the "the wicked" members of this social class (Schoberg 41). Both of these terms were associated with individuals "who effectively renounced the covenant" with God and lived lives of sin (Schoberg 41). In his analysis, Jeremias focuses on the fact that these people would not have been able to follow the rabbinic laws in relation to tithing and purity--something that would have further aggravated their ostracism (Schoberg 41).

Moreover, biblical scholar David Neale argues that "'sinners' are by definition those who oppose the 'righteous'" (Schoberg 53). He states that they are understood as "a symbol for the

enemies of God" (Schoberg 53). The use of the word "enemies" in Neale's argument is very significant. In explaining these individuals in such a manner, he is furthering our understanding of this group of people as not only being segregated from society but also as being a threat to those around themselves. Both the use of the word "enemies" and the figurative use of a "plough" in relation to oppression indicates the way sinners were perceived as possible dangers to the Jewish community. It is with this knowledge of how sin was conceptualized in the ancient world that we are able to have a clear understanding as to the radical nature of Jesus' ministry. As I will discuss later in this chapter, it is because sinners were seen as "evil" and "wicked" that they were unable to learn the Judaic laws that allowed for the observance of Jewish commandments. As a result, they were unable to fulfil any of the works outlined in the Torah to the Jewish people. However, Jesus disregards their inability to observe the law due to their lack of knowledge and nonetheless allows these individuals to obtain forgiveness solely on the merits of faith (Schoberg 40).

Focusing on Jesus' unique ministry, Perrin states that the exiled class of individuals are "extreme examples in whom God's radical forgiveness is displayed" (Schoberg 39). Perrin's argument demonstrates the way Jesus' ministry serves as an illustration of God's forgiveness through a Christian lens. Jesus' sermons allow for a new understanding of the specific nature of forgiveness. However, in contrast, instead of conceptualizing forgiveness as relating to a transformation of the heart--something that can be achieved by anyone--in ancient Judaism, the Pharisees argued for forgiveness focused on the observance of the law. As E.P. Sanders affirms in *Comparing Judaism and Christianity*, there was a difference between Jesus' ministry and ancient Judaism as to the degree to which works, or the actions mandated by biblical law, should impact an individual's ability to obtain salvation. Sanders argues against contemporary

Christians' understanding of ancient Judaism as being solely legalistic, and in an effort to analyze the entirety of the New Testament, it is significant to take Sanders' analysis into account. His article against the legalistic nature of Judaism allows us to understand how the arguments in the New Testament are centered around a Christian perspective of Judaic Law and the Pharisees--the ruling Jewish political party. However, since both Victor Hugo and Thomas Hardy not only were raised observing Christian doctrine but also use Christian imagery in their novels, the arguments of this chapter are focused on the Christian perspective of Ancient Judaism. Because of this focus, I will use the passages that Sanders highlights when trying to investigate the role of biblical law in ancient Judaism.

Analyzing segments from the King James Version of the New and Old Testament, Sanders' exploration of certain biblical verses allows for a deeper comprehension of Jesus' ministry. His analysis enables a more thorough understanding of the way Jesus disagreed with the way biblical law impacted an individual's ability to obtain salvation in ancient Judaism. Sanders' reading of the New Testament likewise enables the reader to recognize how rabbinical scholars' focus on the study of ancient scripture led to their focus on the law. In knowing this, we are able to further our knowledge of the reasons behind Jesus' arguments against the Pharisees and understand why he considered their interpretation of the biblical laws to be hypocritical.

Beginning with the Mosaic covenant in the book of Exodus, Sanders states that the law that Moses established in the Pentateuch serves as the foundation of Judaism (Sanders 380). He argues that there is a strong focus on studying within Judaism that leads people to prioritize the laws (Sanders 380). He states that many rabbis found that "one should study [scripture] in order to do" (Sanders 380). When saying "to do," Sanders is articulating the active work of following the commandments and living a life that is in accordance with scripture (Sanders 380). Sanders is

illustrating the way rabbinic thought in the ancient world centered around the studying of the Old Testament for the purpose of applying the scriptures to daily life. As Sanders points out, divine law within Judaism "governs all of life, both the trivial and the important" (Sanders 385). By highlighting the role that the law plays in Judaism, Sanders emphasizes the manner in which biblical law impacted individuals' daily routines and actions.

In his research, Sanders uses rabbinical interpretations of the Ten Commandments as an example of the way rabbis are attempting to study the verses and learn how to best apply them to everyday life. The Book of Exodus states that, after having spoken with God on Mount Sinai, Moses was given two tablets with Ten Commandments that were to be observed by the Jews:

> Thou shalt have no other gods before me. …Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain… …Honor thy father and thy mother: …Thou shalt not kill…. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house (King James Version, Exodus 20:4-19).

In analyzing the specific nature of the commandments above, Sanders illustrates the way rabbinical scholarship has distinguished the "negative" and "positive" commandments (Sanders 380). The "negative" rules focus on what you cannot do: "you must not kill" (Sanders 380). This language contrasts with that of the "positive commandments" that state what you "should do": "you should honor your father and mother" (Sanders 380). It is with these different categorizations in mind that rabbinical scholars argue for different ways to apply each commandment to daily life (Schoberg 380). Having analyzed the different commandments and rabbinical scholarship, Sanders arrives at the conclusion of his article that the Israelite religion directly correlates "wisdom" with an understanding of these commandments (Sanders 380). He maintains that Jewish rabbinical conceptions of the Torah became a cornerstone for understanding "the word of God" and by extension of God himself (Sanders 380).

Jesus appears to contrast this latter perspective in an answer given during a sermon in the book of Mark. Traditionally, when asked about God's instructions, Jesus should have cited the 10 commandments from Exodus; however, he says that there are only two important commandments: first, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" and, second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (King James Version, Mark 12:25-45). When explaining their significance, he says that "there is none other commandment greater than these" (King James Version, Mark 12:25-45). Applying Sander's terminology, I argue that Jesus' commandments are positive in nature, as they are entirely focused on what you "should do" (Sanders 380). He tells his followers to treat each other as neighbors. However, there is a distinction in Jesus' command to "love" God. In Exodus, all of the commandments are focused on what one must do. Each commandment is centered around acts of impiety, murder, disrespect, etc. In contrast, Jesus argues for an internal sentiment: love. This difference is an example of how Jesus' ministry is characterized by internal emotions. I will further discuss this unique quality in Jesus' ministry in this chapter; however, for the purpose of my immediate analysis, I want to demonstrate how these verses serve to illustrate the way that Jesus is superimposing his own unique understanding of the Judaic law. By taking several of the original commandments and summarizing them, rather than focusing on specifics that tell you not to steal, kill, commit adultery, or bear false witness, Jesus is advocating treating everyone as "thyself" (Exodus 20, Mark 12:45). His concept of the commandments demonstrates how he is not focused on the literal law. He is not acknowledging most of the 10 commandments but rather is refocusing his principles and arguing for a new understanding of the law. In doing so, he is advocating a shift in focus from the works that have been commanded by God and the underlying faith behind each commandment.

Jesus' approach directly contrasts with that of the rabbis and the Jewish political party during the time period. Sanders uses the example of Passover to demonstrate the degree to which rabbinical scholars of the time focused on the significance of the law and the importance of accurate interpretation (Sanders 381). When reading over the religious laws that were established for Passover, many rabbis expressed concerns regarding the sacrifices that were supposed to occur during the religious holiday if the event were to land on the Sabbath day (Sander 381). Considering the fact that sacrifices were agreed to be a form of work, it would be against one of the commandments to engage in burnt offerings since Jews had to "honour" the Sabbath day by not partaking in any form of work (King James Version, Exodus 20:4-19). Sanders is arguing for the importance rabbis placed on the laws themselves and the development of accurate knowledge relating to them. The debate about whether one can do different types of work on the sabbath highlights the fact that the rabbis were concerned about getting the exact nature of the laws correct and fully understanding the manner in which they worked in conjunction with one another (Sanders 381-82).

These types of conversations among the Jewish community illustrate the focus on details and rules in ancient Judaism. They argued for a specific understanding of the established laws and saw this knowledge as their connection to God. Setting themselves apart through the rituals and holidays that were specifically given to the Jewish people, they understood these laws as a symbol of their community; however, this literal interpretation of the law was something that Jesus' ministry attempted to combat. In an effort to extend God to individuals outside of the Israelites, Jesus sought to reinterpret the laws in order to allow the Gentiles of the time period a chance to know and follow God. By attempting to include as many individuals as possible, Jesus went beyond the Jewish community and instead associated with sinners and societal outcasts.

The apostle Matthew is an example of Jesus' willingness to extend his ministry to social outcasts. Before joining Jesus, Matthew was a tax collector-- one of the disreputable professions of the time period. Jesus' choice in welcoming Matthew, one of the main writers of the New Testament, reveals the way in which he is unconcerned about societal classifications when looking for people to spread his ministry.

In the New Testament, Jesus directly argues against a law-driven interpretation of the commandments. This position is on full display during the healing of a man with "withered hands" (King James Version, Mark 3:1-6). Healing was understood at the time as a form of work, yet Jesus stepped forward and cured the man of his wounds on the Sabbath day. The action demonstrates how Jesus does not think that the Jewish laws should be understood literally (King James Version, Mark 3:1-6). Yet it is important to note that Jesus never disregarded the importance of the laws themselves. During one of his sermons, Jesus tells his followers not to believe the he has come to eliminate biblical law: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy… whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments… he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (King James Version, Matthew 5:17). This verse shows the importance that Jesus maintains on the laws. He is not arguing for the obliteration of biblical rules but rather, in his reinterpretation of the laws, he is arguing for a shift in understanding in an attempt to extend the grace of God to others outside of the Jewish people. This change can be seen in the Gospel of Matthew when Jesus discusses the way individuals should understand the ten commandments.

He encourages his followers not to worry about the literal interpretation of the law but rather urges his disciples to understand the importance of the feelings behind the physical actions that are prompted by the laws. Jesus argues for individuals not to concern themselves with the

details of scripture but rather impresses on them the importance of the sentiments within one's heart that are behind the physical actions. An example of Jesus' new understanding of Judaic law can be seen in his reinterpretation of one of the commandments concerning adultery:

> Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell (King James Version, Matthew 5:27-30)

In his sermon, Jesus establishes that the original commandment discusses the fact that one should not "commit adultery" (King James Version, Matthew 5:27-30). However, he extends this rule beyond physical actions of a sexual nature and urges his followers to not look at a woman with lust. He argues that, if you do so, you have already broken the commandment "in your heart" (King James Version, Matthew 5:27-30). The change from the physical act to internal thoughts demonstrates a shift in focus. Not only is Jesus trying to welcome the possibility of more people partaking in the word of God, but he is also advocating the importance of the heart above the body. He is combating notions relating to physical acts. While he says it is proper for someone to be concerned with physically committing adultery, Jesus believes that it is even more important to refrain from having lustful thoughts about a married individual. Proposing that it would be better to lose an eye than spend the rest of eternity in hell, Jesus demonstrates the importance that the heart--a metaphor for internal emotions and thoughts--has in relation to someone's salvation (King James Version, Matthew 5:27-30).

Another significant passage written by one of Jesus' disciples, Paul, discusses the relationship between the word of the Bible and the spirit:

> Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Corinthians 3:6, King James Version).

This verse highlights the way Paul understood that it is spirit, or faith, that enables you to be alive, or saved, and not the written word of scripture. He is creating a direct correlation between the New Testament and faith by saying that the ministries of the New Testament are not related to "the letter," but rather "the spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:6). He argues that it is through your faith in the Holy Spirit that you are given life--the ability to enter into heaven--and not an observance of the laws. Both 2 Corinthians 3:6 and Matthew 5:27-30 are significant when attempting to understand the manner in which Jesus is trying to combat the specific rule-driven nature of the Pharisees. He is not outright rejecting the law but merely offering a change in focus. He is arguing for individuals not to worry about the physical acts themselves but rather the feelings prior to the physical actions and what those sentiments say about your heart and soul in relation to sin. In this new interpretation, Jesus is allowing his followers to understand that even if they never commit a sexual act with a married person, their souls could still be in jeopardy, for if they are lusting after a married woman in their heart then they have already committed adultery.

Moreover, in the book of Matthew, Jesus further discusses the actions of the Pharisees, who he argues are acting hypocritically. Jesus asserts that, in focusing so much on the physical actions and the laws, the Pharisees have lost sight of the heart behind the actions that are dictated by the laws. Sanders focuses on certain passages in the book of Matthew in an attempt to demonstrate Jesus' words against the law-driven nature of the Pharisees:

> The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works…. But all their works they do for to be seen of men" (King James Version, Matthew 23:1-7; Sanders, 388)

Jesus is fighting against the way the Pharisees have chosen to conduct themselves. He argues that they are performing the commandments not for God but rather for the attention. He believes that they desire recognition for their religiosity. Pointing to the fact that they have "feasts" and

festivals in the synagogues, Jesus claims that everything that they do is entirely physical (Sanders 379). He argues that instead of wanting to outwardly demonstrate the degree to which one is able to follow every aspect of the commandments, we should focus on more important things that Sanders categorizes as "inside" works (Sanders 379). In his discussion, Sanders establishes the contrast between faith and works by arguing that faith is considered to be something found in the realm of the "inside" and works are found "outside" (Sanders 379). He articulates the distinction between faith being something that is not physically apparent, but rather is within someone's heart, and works that are physically done and thus can be viewed externally (Sanders 379). It is important to note the complex nature of the relationship between faith and works-- they are not mutually exclusive. In having true faith, someone can perform works to the letter of the law. My analysis in relation to these terms focuses on the motivations behind each action and the importance of having faith behind the works.

Jesus' message about works that are not rooted in faith can be seen as the book of Matthew progresses. In the 23rd chapter, Jesus argues directly for what the Pharisees should be focused on:

> …for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone (King James Version, Matthew 23:23-24; Sanders 388).

The language in this passage creates a divide between the three spices that Jesus states the Pharisees choose to give up for tithe and larger thematic terms like "faith'" and "mercy" (Sanders 388). In pointing out what the Pharisees have chosen to do without, Jesus is highlighting the fact that they are too focused on the law and not on the "inside" nature of the law and its intended purpose to help the community (Sanders 379). They continue to emphasize the giving of 10% of something they own even if what they are sacrificing would not have

positively impacted or helped a family in need (Sanders 388). Law, judgment, mercy and faith are all things that Sanders would argue reside within the "inside" (Sanders 379). While some of these actions correlate with physical deeds, Jesus is emphasizing that any action should originate from "inside" sentiments that uphold the commandments (Sanders 379). He does not think people should be worried about making sure that they have followed the specific rules themselves, but rather he believes that people should be concerned with larger thematic elements such as the degree to which the tithe can help their community. It is because of this change in perspective, focusing on the "inside" before the "outside," that Jesus' understanding of sinners is different from that of the ancient Jewish consensus (Sanders 379).

Throughout his ministry, Jesus did not discriminate against anyone; on the contrary, he welcomed those who were purposefully marginalized. It is significant to note that Jesus incorporates rhetoric concerning the need for salvation that is not present in Judaism. In incorporating a message concerning the corruption of the soul and the subsequent need to be redeemed by a savior, Jesus directs his audience's attention toward those that were seen as "wicked" (Schoberg 51). As previously discussed, in the ancient world there was a clear understanding about the way class divisions and the ability to learn of the Judaic law impacted one's ability to be close to God. Schoberg addresses the fact that, in Judaic law, there were very specific rules such as food laws that "served to define the boundary between Jews and Gentiles" --and by extension the disreputable "occupations" (Schoberg 43). Having these laws serve as a way to differentiate the social classes during the time period, Schoberg argues that the discrepancy relating to the knowledge of the Torah is further increased (Schoberg 43). This exclusion illustrates the way an entire group of individuals was unable to learn the Jewish customs.

In Judaism, the Old Testament, or Tanakh, is divided into three sections: the Torah, the Nevi'im, and the Ketuvim. The Nevi'im is composed of the writings from the prophets and contains books such as Joshua, Samuel and Jeremiah. The Ketuvim, which can be translated to the "writings," contains different poetic verses and sections that are used for prayer such as the book of Psalms and Proverbs. In contrast, while the two other sections of the Hebrew Bible contain examples of the Jewish law being carried out by individuals, the Torah is entirely focused on the establishment and explanation of Judaic law. It is composed of 5 books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In them, Jewish traditions, laws, customs and rules are explained in detail. The fact that individuals were unable to have access to the Torah creates a problematic setup where someone, either for being part of a disreputable class or being a Gentile, would be shunned from the Judaic community--not having the ability to learn the laws--and then by extension never having the opportunity to build a relationship with God since they are unable to observe the commandments (Schoberg 43). It is because they are not welcomed that they never have the means to learn the laws in the first place--thus creating a vicious cycle. It is likewise important to note that many of the Judaic rituals were taught communally. The interpersonal nature of Ancient Judaism further exacerbates the divide between the outcasts' knowledge of the Torah and the Jewish community's religious education. It is this problem that Jesus is attempting to address.

Trying to combat the challenge concerning the access to education about the Torah, Jesus spends much of his time alongside individuals who were considered "disreputable," and he speaks of parables that focus on the forgiveness of prostitutes and other sinners (Schoberg 43). Schoberg uses Joachim Jeremiah's argument when attempting to articulate the manner in which

such changes were perceived by ancient Jewish society. Using a Christian understanding of salvation, Jeremiah discusses specific elements in Jesus' ministry:

> Jesus' following consisted predominantly of the disreputable… the uneducated, the ignorant, whose religious ignorance and moral behavior stood in the way of their access to salvation, according to the convictions of the time (Schoberg 40).

Jeremiah's statement highlights the stark contrast between Jesus and the understood ideologies of the time period. In Jesus' attempt to make salvation obtainable for everyone, Schoberg highlights the fact that Jesus often spoke "critically" of the Pharisees and, in return, they were offended by the nature of his ministry (Schoberg 43). They generally understood these actions as going against the religious scriptures and thus, by extension, against God (Schoberg 43). At its core, the contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees focuses on the specific nature of the relationship between man and God. Questions concerning the degree to which religious law should impact an individual's salvation, who is able to obtain salvation, and the manner in which salvation is gained are all under dispute when looking at Ancient Judaism and Jesus' ministry. For the purpose of my analysis, I will focus on Jesus' answers to the above questions.

When attempting to understand how Jesus conceptualized salvation, it is important to note the different components involved in obtaining it: repentance, forgiveness, selflessness, self-knowledge, love and redemption. Bruce Chilton, a biblical scholar, argues that "repentance… is a necessary and inescapable aspect of entering the Kingdom: it is implicit within much of Jesus' discourse" (Schoberg 29-30). Furthermore, in the opening chapters of Matthew's gospel, John the Baptist is said to have been preaching the importance of repentance: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (King James Version, Matthew 3:2-3). The fact that John the Baptist was speaking of repentance prior to Jesus' arrival is important to note since it allows for the understanding that repentance is one of the first steps toward salvation.

In *Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation*, Susan Eastman, a New Testament scholar, argues for the interconnected nature of forgiveness and redemption. Establishing a distinction between two common Christian understandings of salvation, Eastman states that the first view holds that "all human beings are guilty of sinful actions for which they need divine forgiveness," and the second view argues that "all humanity is in bondage to 'Sin' as a supra-individual… from which humanity needs deliverance and liberation" (Eastman 75). Eastman establishes the distinct views of salvation within Christian doctrine on a micro versus a macro level. (Eastman 75). However, she says that regardless of an individual's understanding of salvation, there is one unifying principle: "all people need forgiveness" and by extension redemption (Eastman 75).

According to Eastman, the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 serves as an illustration for the importance of forgiveness in relation to redemption (Eastman 76). In the parable told by Jesus, a father is said to have two sons. After each son receives his inheritance, the youngest son leaves the home and squanders everything that he was given in "riotous living," while the other son is said to have remained with his father (King James Version, Luke 15:11-32). After he has spent everything, the son experiences a famine that sweeps the land, and so he decides to return home. In reaction to his son's homecoming, the father--an extended metaphor for God--welcomes his son and orders a feast. The father kills the fattest calf and gives his youngest son the best robe to wear; however, the oldest son--having stayed faithful to his father--is angered by the festivities and voices his concern: "these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid… But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf" (King James Version, Luke 15:11-32). This interaction underlines the differences between the two sons. While at the end of the parable both find themselves loved and accepted

by their father, the youngest was not faithful throughout his life in the same manner as the oldest; however, in the eyes of the father, both are welcome in his home, and he does not focus on the mistakes of the youngest son but rather rejoices in the fact that he has returned. Jesus equates this to finding something lost. He says that if a shepherd were to lose one of his sheep, he would nonetheless rejoice once it was found even if he had an entire flock (King James Version, Luke 15:11-32).

Eastman argues that in being merciful and showing forgiveness to his youngest son, the father in the parable--God--"creates the conditions that makes full repentance possible" (Eastman 77). After entering his father's home, the youngest son decides to speak directly with his father: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (King James Version, Luke 15:11-32). It is in this act of absolute humility and selflessness that his father welcomes him: "his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (King James Version, Luke 15:11-32). The youngest son did not return to ask for more of his father's money but rather asked to work as a servant in his own home in order to earn his wages after having acted wrongfully, and it is because of this that he was forgiven. After this demonstration of love by the father, the son then openly confesses to him-- this exchange illustrates, as Eastman argues, the manner in which it was the forgiveness shown by the father that "prompts to repent in the most basic sense of the word" (Eastman 77). Eastman articulates the significance of forgiveness in order for someone to repent and gain redemption. However, in this process there is also a renewal of self-knowledge that Eastman believes plays a key role.

Eastman argues that self- knowledge is another component of redemption (Eastman 78). In "coming to himself," the younger son is able to experience the love and compassion of his

father. This juxtaposes the oldest son's inability to understand the father's decision, and thus Eastman argues that he finds himself "entrapped in bitterness and judgement toward his brother" (Eastman 78). In discussing this distinction, Eastman is articulating the importance of the self-evaluations that must come before the knowledge that pushes someone to ask for forgiveness (Eastman 78-79). When looking at the manner in which forgiveness is given in the New Testament, Eastman highlights the seventh chapter in the book of Luke when Jesus forgives a prostitute for all sin: "Jesus is dining at the home of the Pharisee when a woman with a reputation as a 'sinner' enters the house, kneels at Jesus' feet as she anoints them with oil, and wipes them with her hair" (Eastman 78, Luke 7:36-50). Jesus then states that "her sins…are forgiven" (King James Version, Luke 7:36-50). In saying this, Jesus is creating a direct correlation between forgiveness and salvation. Reacting to this, the Pharisees voice their opposition. They discuss the sinful actions of the woman and state that she should not be allowed to wash the feet of a rabbi let alone obtain forgiveness; however, Jesus says that she has shown him only acts of kindness:

> I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment (King James Version, Luke 7:38-50).

This exchange illustrates how Jesus is not concerned with the purity laws but rather focuses on the inside motivations of her actions (Schoberg). Though she does not have the correct tools with which to properly clean his feet, she is selfless in her attempt to show him love. In letting the woman wash his feet with her tears and hair, Jesus is not worried about her cleansing him properly but is concerned with the love behind the actions (Schoberg). This illustrates the way Jesus is not concerned with the "outside" but rather the "inside" (Schoberg).

Eastman argues that there is an important point in this passage that creates a connection "between forgiveness and relationship, as the acceptance of forgiveness is completed by love" (Eastman 79). Eastman is drawing the connection between the forgiveness that Jesus gives the woman, after having established a relationship with her, and the love that she shows (Eastman 79). When discussing her forgiveness to the Pharisees, Jesus says that "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (King James Version, Luke 7:36-50). This verse creates a direct connection between love and forgiveness. The language highlights the components that lead to redemption: self-knowledge, love and forgiveness. It is by coming to an understanding with yourself that you are in need of salvation that you are then able to ask for forgiveness and gain it by means of love thus having the ability to be redeemed and receive salvation.

Beyond this passage, the New Testament also has a prominent figure that came from a similar background: Mary Magdalen. As Marion Carson, a theologian, argues in *Setting the Captives Free*, Mary Magdalen was considered to be a "fallen woman" who has been understood to be the "patron of the 'repentant whores'" (Carson 78). Carson discusses a misunderstanding in relation to the prostitutes in the New Testament (Carson). She argues that there is no evidence that these women were ever prostitutes but rather that it was through the centuries that they were branded as such due to their perceived sinful nature; however, for the purpose of my argument, I will be focusing on her analysis of Mary Magdalen, Rahab and Tamar.

Carson explains that Mary Magdalen was said to have been exorcised of seven demons in Luke 8:1-3 (Carson 79). In an attempt to further understand this passage, Carson uses the analysis of Pope Gregory the Great:

> She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John Calls Mary, we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected according to Mark. And what did these seven devils signify, if not all the vices? (Carson 81).

This quotation from Pope Gregory highlights the way Mary was perceived to have lived her life. The seven demons that are explained to have been cast from her body are argued to be representations of the seven deadly sins: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride (Carson 81). This supposed exorcism establishes a narrative surrounding Mary in relation to sin. It allows us to understand the manner in which she is perceived and verify her place within the "disreputable occupational" class (Schoberg 38).

Carson mentions the fact that Jesus would have understood these individuals as being ostracized from society: "[He] refers to prostitutes as an example of people classed as sinners and social outcasts" (Carson 83). However, she warns against the assumption that because of this understanding, Jesus would have shamed or "stigmatized" individuals residing in this class (Carson 83). The fact that prostitutes were understood by Jesus in such a manner and that Mary was associated with the seven sins is very significant. This connection demonstrates how Mary's past actions and reputation were not a deterrent for Jesus. He nonetheless forgave her of all sins and welcomed her. Carson remarks that Mary is considered to be the "apostle to the apostles," for she was the one who first told all of the apostles that Jesus had been resurrected (Carson 80). In following Jesus during his ministry, Mary went from being branded a sinner to being one of the closest people to Jesus throughout his time on earth. She was able to obtain salvation and redemption. Jesus' relationship with Mary, Carson argues, illustrates how Jesus was "calling out" the fact that "[the Pharisees believed] that prostitutes… [should be] excluded from the kingdom of God" (Carson 83). In allowing Mary the opportunity to be saved regardless of her social status, Jesus attempts equalize everyone. He argues that while the transgressions of prostitutes are different from those of the Pharisees, both parties have committed outside

physical mistakes and are in need of different inside driven actions that are focused on God and not the physical deeds themselves (Schoberg).

Furthermore, as Carson highlights, two prostitutes--Rehab and Tamar--are mentioned as being part of the genealogy of Jesus (Carson 86). This connection would make them the direct ancestors of Jesus. Carson argues that "these two women, viewed as outcasts by their own people, are cited as important for God's work in history" (Carson 86). This perspective highlights the way these two women's past decisions did not impact their lasting legacy. While Tamar is not mentioned again in the New Testament, Rahab is mentioned in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 (Carson 86). In both references she is "cited with honor" (Carson 86). In Hebrews she is discussed alongside biblical figures such as Abraham and Moses, and in James she is praised for housing messengers of God (Carson 86). Rahab is not branded as a prostitute, but rather she is praised in the New Testament for her faith and acts of hospitality, thus having the ability to be redeemed and obtain salvation.

Connecting salvation and redemption, Eastman argues that "redemption includes forgiveness but extends to a divine act of liberation through God's full participation in the sphere of human dereliction under the sway of sin" (Eastman 82). Eastman's analysis demonstrates the manner in which forgiveness, redemption, and salvation are all interconnected. Forgiveness is part of the process that enables someone to be saved and thus experience redemption. Both the prodigal son and the prostitutes come to an understanding concerning their transgressions and thus turn to God asking for forgiveness with love, humility, and selflessness. The prostitutes turn their attention toward Jesus and the prodigal son to his father--a metaphor for God. They attempt to serve the one who is able to forgive them with no expectation of reciprocation. However, in showing love and asking for forgiveness, they are in turn shown love and are forgiven, thus

enabling them to obtain salvation and by extension be redeemed. Contrary to the law driven nature of the Pharisees' understanding of biblical law, Jesus' ministry argues for the possibility of salvation for everyone--regardless of social status. Jesus' ministry urges individuals to stop focusing on the physical outside nature of the laws and, instead, pay attention to the inside sentiments behind the actions mandated by the laws (Schoberg).

Another key component of redemption within the New Testament is the covenant. Without entering into a covenant, or agreement, with God, one would not be able to be forgiven for one's past transgressions, thus making redemption impossible. Beginning in Genesis with the Noahic Covenant, throughout both the Old and New Testaments there is a common motif of God coming to someone and entering into a covenant with him. Throughout the Old Testament, all of the covenants that are established are made between a man and God. The construction of these covenants demonstrates that the individuals who are able to participate in pacts with God are limited. In *People of the Covenant and the English Bible*, historian Naomi Tadmor establishes the manner in which the biblical covenant is defined. She begins by citing the word "beriot" (Tadmor 100). She states that this word can be found within the Hebrew Bible in relation to "treaties or pacts" (Tadmor 100). She argues that within the Old Testament, the "biblical beriot includes an alliance of friendship between individuals" (Tadmor 100). Examples of these types of pacts can be found in Genesis between Isaac and Abimelech or Jacob and Laban; however, looking specifically at the alliances between God and man, Tadmor points out how God's beriots usher radical change for the human partaking in the pact (Tadmor 100).

When entering the Noahic Covenant, Noah was given specific instructions as to what to do when the floods begin; similarly, Abraham was not only instructed to leave his home and go to Canaan, but he was also told to circumcise himself. In Exodus, Moses was likewise instructed

to free the Israelites from Egypt and bring them to a new land. These examples demonstrate the manner in which, upon entering a covenant with God, all the men's lives drastically changed. As Tadmor discusses, a covenant, at its core, is a "solemn oath, which is uttered verbally" (Tadmor 101). She argues that an important feature of a covenant is the "transaction" that happens which is often represented by a "'bond'… [where] the sacrifice of animals is often implied or presented" as to solidify the oath (Tadmor 101). It is important to highlight the monetary language used when discussing the covenant. In talking about the creation of a covenant as a transaction, Tadmor demonstrates how the oath can be understood in terms of an exchange. However, if someone breaks the promise, there is a "cut" that is indicated "by the removal of the transgressor from amongst the living" (Tadmor 101). This threat of destruction demonstrates the manner in which the oath is central to the individual's life. It impacts the manner in which the person lives and whether he is able to continue living. Within the New Testament, Jesus creates a covenant with his disciples.

When discussing the Abrahamic Covenant in the Old Testament in relation to Jesus' ministry, in the book of Romans, Paul says that "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not the letter" (King James Version, Romans 2:29). In having his disciples understand this his covenant in relation to the heart, Jesus is choosing to not focus on a specific act that establishes the oath but rather advocates a complete change of the heart. Moving past the laws of scripture, Jesus' covenant is open to everyone--no matter what their social standing or past transgressions--in an attempt to change their hearts toward good. Instead of focusing on their actions or words, he is focusing on the sentiment--or heart--behind every action in order to shift everyone's inner intentions and desires toward God. Within Christianity, it is by entering into a covenant with Jesus that you are able to move from spiritual death to eternal life.

Chapter II: Faith, Works, and Redemption in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*

In this chapter, I will discuss the ways in which the central tenets of Jean Valjean's storyline in Victor Hugo's novel, *Les Misérables*, mirror those of Jesus' ministry and the redemption narrative previously discussed. In the first chapter, I highlighted the fact that, in Jesus's view, redemption is contingent on the following components: repentance, forgiveness, selflessness, self-knowledge, and love. In attempting to understand how Hugo conceptualizes faith and works in religion, I will analyze how the stories of Jean Valjean and Javert illustrate the debate between a faith-driven religion versus one that is focused on the strict observance of the law through works.

In her article, "Homelessness, Barricades, and Wastelands," French literature scholar Kathryn Grossman argues that many of the main characters in *Les Misérables* seek comfort and guidance in parental figures. She believes that they are only able to "forge their existence… by embracing a variety of parental or fraternal models" (Grossman 30). In arguing for the presence of fraternal relationships, Grossman is highlighting the fact that Jean Valjean turns to the paternal figure of the Bishop. In the same way the societal outcasts discussed in the previous chapter were guided by those who showed them compassion, Valjean is aided by the Bishop. It is only with the help that the Bishop provides, allowing Valjean to take all of the silver that the Bishop owns, that Valjean is able to "forge" his new identity (Grossman 30). Valjean begins the novel as a convicted felon on parole. After receiving monetary help from the Bishop, Valjean is able to create a new life for himself. Taking on a new identity as Monsieur Madeleine and using the knowledge he gained during his time in prison, Valjean constructs a manufacturing business that not only furthers his own prosperity but benefits the development of the town. Because of his business and its impact on the community, Valjean is appointed mayor and is able to live a

new life under his assumed identity. However, Javert, a policeman in the town of Montreuil-sur-Mer, discovers Valjean's criminal past and arrests him. Valjean is able to escape prison during his second incarceration and turns his attention to saving the life of Cosette--the child of one of his factory workers, Fantine. After being fired from Valjean's factory, Fantine is forced into prostitution due to her inability to continue supporting her child, who lives with the Thenardiers--a family that runs an Inn. Prior to discovering Valjean's false identity, Javert advocates for Fantine's arrest upon finding her working as a prostitute; however, Valjean intervenes and instead allows Fantine to receive medical attention. Valjean promises her that he will find her daughter, Cosette, and return her to Fantine's care. After Fantine dies and Valjean escapes prison, he finds Cossette and, feeling an obligation to her deceased mother, takes full responsibility for her. Together, the two seek and find asylum from Javert in a convent.

The novel opens with a narrator who speaks in the 3rd-person, omniscient point of view. The narrative choice allows the narrator to comment on both internal and external events that are occurring in relation to the different characters throughout the novel. As readers, we are able to gain a more holistic understanding of a character's motivations and thus we are able to discern how each person evolves throughout the novel. A 3rd-person narrative decision contrasts that of a 1st-person narration, where the reader only has access to a single perspective. While a reader might have a clearer and more personal understanding of a character's inner thoughts, the reader's knowledge would be restricted to a single character. In only having one perspective, we would lose the fullness of a comparative analysis between the different characters and their individual storylines. It is only by having knowledge of both the internal and external dialogues that we gain a complete picture as to the way Jean Valjean and Javert understand faith and works. In her article, "Restoring the Sacred in *Les Misérables*," Lisa Gasbarrone, a scholar of

French Literature, highlights the language and omnipotence that the narrator possesses. She notes that the narrator opens a section of the first chapter by stating that "we must try to answer the questions…" (Hugo 96, Gasbarrone 2). This language illustrates the sense in which the narrator is all-knowing. Moreover, this quotation also serves as an illustration of the narrator bringing the reader into the narrative. The narrator is inviting the reader to think about the questions within the narrative and analyze Valjean's internal disposition. Further highlighting his omnipotence, the narrator discusses Valjean's inner state as the story continues.

In book II, section VI, the narrator says that "during [Valjean's] nineteen-year imprisonment, he had not shed a tear," for he was an "unhappy being, [one of God's creature's] left without support, guidance, or shelter..." (Hugo 94, 102). These words demonstrate how the narrator does not consider Valjean to be innately evil but rather understands him as someone whose circumstances allowed his heart to harden. The narrator is also alluding to the idea that if Valjean had had the proper "support, guidance, and shelter," he would not have found himself in such an unhappy state (Hugo 102). This argument shifts the focus from Valjean toward his surrounding community and the manner in which he has been externally influenced. Moreover, the imagery of the hardened heart can be seen in one of Valjean's internal monologues. When contemplating the Bishop's kindness, Valjean wonders if "his heart would be hardened once and for all" if he resists and goes against the Bishop's love (Hugo 116). The narrator's ability to comment on the inner thoughts of the characters, as well as the circumstances, from an omniscient point of view allows the novel to be read beyond the scope of a single individual's thoughts and enables the reader to gain an understanding of everyone's internal and external states. The knowledge of both the internal and external allows for a comparative analysis of an

individual's heart in relation to other characters and not only the way in which they perceive faith and the law but also their personal path to redemption.

In the beginning of the novel, having just left prison, Jean Valjean is ostracized by his surrounding community. He was placed in prison for having stolen a loaf of bread for his sister and her seven children. Valjean was originally sentenced to five years in prison; however, due to his numerous attempts to escape, he served a total of 19 years. Valjean is introduced in a section titled: "La Chute". While the English translation by Norman Deny titles this section, "The Outcast," I argue for a more literal translation: "The Fall." Deny's translation directly speaks to Jean Valjean's status within society. His introduction is characterized by the way his community shuns him. However, the French word choice speaks to Valjean's actions within Book II. It is important to note that Hugo characterizes the events of the robbery as Valjean's fall, as seen by the book title, and not the incarceration. The book does not begin with the initial robbery but rather his travel into the town of Digne and the subsequent events at the Bishop's home. The choice to focus on Valjean's theft of the Bishop's silver and not the bread demonstrates how Hugo understands Valjean's past transgressions. He does not believe that Valjean's illegal actions were the cause of his fall but rather his betrayal of the bishop-- the main event of Book II. In choosing to focus on this, Hugo is arguing for the importance of Valjean's actions during the robbery of not only the Bishop but also of the little boy over his initial incarceration.

Looking more closely at the events of Book II, I want to investigate the manner in which Valjean is treated when he first arrives in Digne. Upon entering the town of Digne, Jean Valjean is watched by everyone from their "windows and doorways… with a vague misgiving" (Hugo 71). He is described as someone of a "disreputable" status (Hugo 71). These words create a divide between the townspeople of Digne and Jean Valjean. The townspeople isolate themselves

within the comfort of their homes, while Valjean is left unable to find shelter for the night. The difference in habitation highlights their separation. From this initial interaction, Valjean can be understood as an outcast, or sinner. In the same way that sinners in the New Testament were shunned by their society and understood to be disreputable, Jean Valjean is incapable of finding any place to live because of his reputation. He is exclusively known in relation to his criminal past. By introducing one of the main characters in such a way, Hugo is attempting to argue for the reconceptualization of social outcasts.

In her article, "The Sewer and the Prostitute in Les Misérables," French Literature scholar Briana Lewis argues that Hugo "attributes renewed value to what his society saw as disposable" (Lewis 267). In the same way that Jesus argued against the branding of disreputable professions in the New Testament, Lewis asserts that Hugo is pushing against perceived assumptions concerning these professions. Focusing on the example of prostitution, Lewis states that Hugo is arguing for a conception of prostitution that sees "prostitution not as a moral failing but a profession of last resort for women with limited choices for their survival" (Lewis 270). She emphasizes the way that the sewers described in the novel serve as an extended metaphor for how French society understood prostitutes as akin to waste (Lewis). Stating that the "sewers [are a] practical and symbolic link to the criminal underworld… that the novel seeks to represent," Lewis pushes forward the notion that Hugo's novel is focused on highlighting the marginalized and ostracized--the poverty of Paris (Lewis 271). She argues that just as the sewer system was remolded under the direction of Haussmann during the Second Empire, Hugo is calling for "a change in society's approach to all its marginalized and outcast, from imposing regulation and control to enabling their inclusion and redemption" (Lewis 267). In creating this metaphor, Hugo is advocating for a "renewed value to what his society saw as disposable" (Lewis 267). She

states that “it has long been noted that Hugo is interested in prostitution largely as a symptom of the social problems that drove otherwise innocent and virtuous women to it” (Lewis 270). Her arguments demonstrate not only Hugo’s interest in “la misère” but also the way in which he understands “les misérables”, the wretched, not as contamination but rather as individuals with the opportunity for redemption (Lewis 269). It is important to note the different translations of “La misère”: “misery," “poverty,” “wretchedness,” and “affliction.” The English versions of this word illustrate the connotations behind the French term. In its totality, the word means not only poverty but also misery and, in being translated as an “affliction,” this word represents these conditions as a burden. Specifically looking at the manner in which Victor Hugo uses this term, I want to analyze his National Legislative Assembly speech from July 9th, 1849, in an attempt to highlight the way Hugo understands not only the poor but also society.

In speaking with the National Assembly, Hugo states that while suffering is inevitable within the world, poverty can be destroyed: “je suis de ceux qui pensent et qui affirment qu’on peut détruire la misère” (Hugo). He argues that poverty is a “maladie du corps social,” or a “disease of the social body,” that is a crime against God (Hugo). In relating poverty to the social masses, Hugo is creating a direct correlation between society and poverty. He believes that, since the legislative bodies of the government continually refuse to eradicate poverty, they are actively neglecting their duty (Hugo). Moreover, in saying “que ce sont des crimes envers Dieu”--arguing that poverty is a felony against God--Hugo is stressing the divide between society’s actions, allowing poverty to flourish within Paris, and God. Hugo is establishing the mutually exclusive nature between social poverty and God.

Hugo relates the living conditions of individuals within Paris and highlights specific circumstances such as a man dying of hunger after not having eaten for six days (Hugo). He then

proceeds to discuss the way a woman and her four children were found scavenging for food in the cemetery of Montfaucon (Hugo). Hugo compares the living conditions of the misère to that of creatures: “où des créatures s’enfouissent toutes vivantes pour échapper au froid de l’hiver” (Hugo). The connection Hugo creates between the poor’s habitation and where “creatures burrow alive to escape the cold of winter” reinforces our analysis of the poor as being outcasts. Hugo is not only relating the poor to creatures, who are by definition of not being human apart from society, but also emphasizing their horrific living environment. In doing so, he argues for change and the possibility of the total eradication of poverty. He is highlighting the injustice of individuals finding themselves not only ostracized from their community but also living in filth and starving of hunger. In saying that “la société,” or society, has spent all of its strength, concern, intelligence and will in order to fix the problems he is elucidating, Hugo is allowing us to understand the way he conceptualizes society’s role in relation to poverty. He does not believe that society has done enough to aid the poor and thus is advocating for societal change.

Furthermore, Hugo’s speech likewise illustrates how he understands the law. It is important to note that the members of the National Assembly, Hugo’s intended audience for this speech, are the law makers of the country. He tells the Assembly that in creating laws and institutions, they have accomplished nothing: “Messieurs...Vous avez sauvé la société régulière, le gouvernement légal, les institutions, la paix publique, la civilisation même. Vous avez fait une chose considérable… Vous n’avez rien fait!” (Hugo). In his final remarks he discusses the way the council has “saved the regular society, the legal government, the intuitions, and public peace” (Hugo). Talking about “civilization itself,” Hugo discusses the numerous different legal and societal constructions of the assembly; however, he says that these accomplishments mean nothing. By stripping all importance from the societal constructions, Hugo argues for the

Assembly to turn their focus towards the moral order of society and not the material order: "Vous n'avez rien fait, j'insiste sur ce point, tant que l'ordre matériel raffermi n'a point pour base l'ordre moral consolidé!" (Hugo). Because the poor still suffer, Hugo asserts that the Assembly has only been concerned with material order and not moral order. The distinction between them further shows how Hugo understands the aid of the poor in relation to morality, and by extension to God. He is creating a division between the importance of the law, a societally constructed entity, and the importance of moral obligation, a concept directly relating to God. The distinction between society and God is further seen when Hugo discusses the "lois évangéliques," or "evangelical laws" (Hugo). By talking about a type of law that is religious in nature and its connection to the poor, Hugo is illustrating how he does not believe that socially constructed law is moral. Instead, he argues for "evangelic laws" that serve to help the suffering (Hugo). He understands the poor as "people of the heart" and not social outcasts and thus believes that they deserve the help of society (Hugo). The fact that he understands them in relation to "cœur," or "the heart," illustrates that Hugo is not interested in the external but rather focuses on the internal.

Connecting the ideas Hugo discusses in his speech to the literature itself, I want to first focus on the scenes between Valjean, Javert and Fantine in order to contextualize not only Hugo's assertions but also Lewis' claims. Upon finding Fantine working as a prostitute, Javert seeks to imprison her; however, Valjean, under the disguise of Monsieur Madeline, tells Javert to let her go. Lewis argues that Javert is a representation of the "law and culture" within the time period (Lewis 271). Extending her argument, I argue that Javert's role within this scene, advocating the incarceration of Fantine due to her disregard for the law, serves to mirror a work-driven religious narrative that Hugo conceives of as part of the "material order" (Hugo). In an

effort to maintain social stability, Javert is entirely focused on the rules themselves. By not looking into the internal factors that drive Fantine's narrative, Javert only focuses on the external, and thus he does not listen to her testimony but rather sentences her to six months in jail.

Lewis argues that Javert's "raison d'etre" is centered on not allowing the reintegration of individuals who have proven to be unable to live in accordance with the social laws (Lewis 274). She argues that "for Javert, to allow infectious agents [such as] Jean Valjean, a convict, or Fantine, a prostitute, to re-enter the world above… would be to put society as a whole in danger of moral infection" (Lewis 274). The rhetoric that Lewis uses when attempting to highlight the way Javert sees the disreputable as a threat to society resembles that discussion in the previous chapter.

In the same way that sinners were understood as threats to society, Javert conceptualizes these individuals as unable to re-enter society due to their past transgressions. His mentality can be seen when he finds Fantine working as a prostitute and sees her attacking a gentleman:

> His office chair at that moment was a seat of justice before which the case must be tried, judgment delivered, and sentence pronounced. He summoned all the powers of his mind…. What he had witnessed was undeniably a crime. He had seen society, in the person, a landowner who votes, insulted and attacked in the street by a creature outside society. A prostitute had assaulted a citizen (Hugo 183)

The internal dialogue of Javert illustrates not only the importance he places on the law, but also the way he conceptualizes society and its outcasts. The language that he uses when describing his role is directly related to legal terminology. Talking about "the case," how it must be "tried" using "judgement," and pronouncing a "sentence," Javert is entirely fixed on the law and the position that he holds within the law. Furthermore, he explicitly brands the individual who was attacked by Fantine as a "citizen," while saying that Fantine is not a part of society but rather a

"creature" (Hugo 183). In not investigating the occurrence itself or attempting to understand that Fantine's attack was self-defense, Javert reveals his bias. In seeing that Fantine is a prostitute, inherently understanding her as an outsider, he assumes her guilt. His language and actions show that he understands the law as being the absolute governing set of rules within society, and thus any transgressor of the law should be automatically set apart from the community. When describing the scene itself, the narrator uses an omniscient point of view; however, while the narrator cites the gentleman's name, Monsieur Bamtabois, he does not explicitly reveal the identity of the "the woman" in the passage (Hugo 182). Only mentioning it is Fantine after she turns to scratch the gentlemen, the narrator is attempting to distance Fantine from her actions.

Moreover, the narrative choice to only focus on the perspective of Javert highlights the injustice within the story. In isolating the narrative to Javert, the narrator demonstrates how Fantine's personal experience and thoughts are omitted. By choosing to use a limited narrative viewpoint, Hugo is emphasizing the manner in which those who are not accepted into society do not have a voice. Furthermore, the fact that the gentleman, engaging in prostitution, is left unreprimanded illustrates a hypocrisy. It is only because he is understood by Javert to belong to society that the man is not found guilty. Javert has a distorted view of the law. He views the law as a means to control society's castaways and thus does not apply the law equitably to accepted community members. By applying the law to those who are outsiders, Javert is not holding the citizens to same standard. This bias can be traced back to Javert's childhood and his attempt to fight against society's exiles.

Revealing Javert's childhood, the narrator discusses the manner in which Javert was born from a family of felons:

> He had been born in prison, the son of a fortune-teller whose husband was in the galleys. As he grew older, he came to believe that he was outside society with no

> prospect of ever entering it… At the same time, he was a man with a profound instinct for correctitude, regularity, and probity and with a consuming hatred for the vagabond order to which he himself belonged (Hugo 165)

Javert is described as someone who is entirely focused on his integration into society. In having Javert's birthplace be a prison, Hugo is commenting on the beginning of his narrative as directly relating to societal outcasts. Javert was born into the society's criminal community. Rebelling against his origins, he grew to desire his inclusion in the community of France. The narrator discusses the manner in which Javert has an instinct for the observance of the law. When discussing Javert's guiding principles, he cites several ideas such as "correctitude and regularity" (Hugo 165). Both of these terms relate to the ordering of society. Javert is innately focused on society and its created laws. In his desire to belong, he adopted an absolute understanding of the law. In the same manner in which he understands the law as a tool to impose order on societal outsiders, his extreme implementation of the laws serves as an attempt to correct any unlawful nature within himself.

The narrator mentions that Javert's mentality was shaped by two principles: "respect for authority and hatred of revolt against it" (Hugo 166). It is important to note that authority is a societal construction. Authority originates within the society itself-- it is something that is either granted to an individual by the masses or sought by someone within a community. The focus Javert has in relation to authority and the revolt against it demonstrates the motivations behind his actions. Fighting in order to integrate himself into society, he has grown to be entirely focused on the power of societal rules and thus has an intolerance for any form of deviance not only form the law but also from society itself. The narrator says that Javert's "duties were his religion" and that he attributes "human law some sort of power to damn" (Hugo 166). In saying this, the narrator allows us to understand how Javert is not guided by the "evangelical laws" that

Hugo emphasizes but rather by society's laws that are driven by the material, or external (Hugo). The narrator is creating a distinction between "human law" and the laws that are not made by man but rather by God and, in doing so, is illustrating the way Javert is entirely focused and driven by man's laws (Hugo 166). Javert utilizes the power of society's rules to damn individuals and does not believe that any "good can come of the loss" of an outcast (Hugo 166). In speaking about the insignificance of the loss of an outsider, Javert's language allows us to understand what Javert believes is valuable--the citizens of society. Javert's thoughts illustrate not only his unyielding desire to maintain social order but also the way he does not believe in helping those who have lost their way. Instead, he is described as having an extreme view of the law--one which does not allow for any exceptions (Hugo 166).

Furthermore, it is important to note the manner in which the narrator discusses the physical appearance and emotional state of Javert. In discussing Javert's physical characteristics, the narrator ties Javert's description to imagery relating to animals: "his thin lips parted to display not only his teeth but his gums… and a savage furrow formed on either side of his nose as though on the muzzle of a beast of prey… Javert unsmiling was a bulldog; when he laughed, he was a tiger" (Hugo 165). The description of Javert indicates how the narrator connects Javert to the savagery of an animal. Referring to his "dark gaze," the narrator likewise describes him in relation to darkness (Hugo 166). The description illustrates how, in Javert's decision to give absolute authority to societal laws, he is still unable to strip himself of the savage characteristics attributed to societal outcasts. In the same way Hugo discusses the poor of Paris in relation to creatures and Javert talks about Fantine as a creature, Javert is described through imagery relating to an animal. Through his connection, Hugo illustrates how Javert is unsuccessful in his attempt to rebel against the group of individuals into which he was born. Moreover, I believe that

Hugo is subverting the imagery of a creature, or animal, when applying this language to Javert. When Hugo uses the term creature in his speech or Javert cites Fantine as a creature, Hugo is using the word in order to elicit sympathy and allow the reader to understand the way society alienates individuals. In attributing animal imagery to a discussion of creatures, Hugo is adding a threatening component. He talks of bulldogs and tigers in an effort to demonstrate how, in being an outcast, Javert has been pushed toward aggression. The term creature is ambiguous; however, the animals that Hugo uses are understood in relation to violence. Javert's failure to move beyond his physical traits relating to society's outsiders results not only from the fact that he turns to social laws and not "evangelic laws" but also from his focus on imposing order instead of decreasing the suffering within society (Hugo). Javert is motivated by a desire to maintain order within society rather than help those in need, and thus he has rendered himself akin to an animal. Driven only by his personal need to enter society, he does not look towards the suffering of others. Moreover, in being described by means of violent imagery, Hugo is illustrating the effects society's ostracization has had on Javert.

In contrast, after having stopped Javert from imprisoning Fantine, Valjean tells Fantine that she is virtuous in the eyes of God: "vous n'avez jamais cessé d'être vertueuse et sainte devant Dieu" (Lewis 271). That is, having heard her story, Valjean tells Fantine that she has "never ceased to be virtuous and holy before God" (Lewis 271). In saying this, he permits the reader to understand that he believes that Fantine has always been a virtuous individual with the ability to reintegrate into society. Valjean's understanding of Fantine's sinless nature complicates her redemptive narrative. By being without sin and remaining virtuous in the eyes of God, Fantine should not be in need of redemption. In choosing to construct her narrative in such a manner, Hugo is attempting to illustrate the way that Fantine's redemption should be understood

in relation to society. While Valjean states that Fantine "never ceased to be virtuous before God," it is clear from the narrative that she was understood as disreputable by the society around her (Lewis 271). By alluding to the fact that she is not in need of religious redemption, Hugo is indicating that her redemption is a social matter. In stripping her of all moral culpability, Hugo focuses on Fantine's failures within society and, in arguing for her redemption, is stating that she should not be shunned from her community. Alluding to the manner in which Hugo discusses the poor as people of "heart," Fantine's narrative serves to illustrate the significance of helping individuals within a community. It is because of the abuse she experiences from the Thenardiers, the factory manager, and the men who payed her for sex that she is unable to re-establish her life. However, Hugo understands her heart relating to good and believes that she is in need of guidance. Her story functions as an example of why helping the impoverished is important.

Furthermore, Lewis asserts that Hugo's description of Fantine's death and burial illustrates the way he conceptualizes the redemption of Fantine and argues for her integration into society:

> She dies and is buried in a *fosse publique*… Hugo redeems the prostitute not by returning her to the path of virtue, but simply by demonstrating that she never left it; she is not restored from immorality to virtue (Lewis 271)

Hugo does not focus on the observance of the law. While he could argue that, in turning to prostitution, Fantine broke both civil and religious law, Hugo does not focus on Fantine's transgressions when reflecting on her morality or virtue. Instead, he considers her "holy" before God (Hugo 120). In burying her in the "fosse publique" or "public burial ground," Hugo is arguing for Fantine's incorporation into a community. In choosing to bury her in such a manner, Hugo is illustrating how, in both life and death, while Fantine remains buried with outcasts, she never stopped being part of a community. He does not believe that she should be buried

separately or isolated but rather rest with members of society. In her inclusion in the public burial ground, Hugo is arguing against her ostracization. It is because Fantine was fired from her job in Valjean's factory that she was driven to prostitution. After being unable to find a job, Fantine resorts to selling her hair and teeth in an attempt to send money to her daughter. Hugo's words in the previous quotation illustrate that Fantine's heart dictates her virtue. She did not turn to prostitution due to any innate desire but rather she turned to it as a last resort, entirely out of her need to support her daughter. In doing so, she demonstrates selflessness. By selling her hair, teeth and body, she is literally stripping herself of everything to ensure the survival of her daughter. Fantine is told by the Thenardiers, the family that is taking care of her daughter, that Cosette is very ill and is in need of expensive medicine. It is important to note that the Thenardiers' motives were monetary. Even though Cosette was healthy and the Thenardiers had enough money to support themselves, the Thenardiers were driven by their greed. Needing to send more money in order to help Cosette, Fantine says: "Well… I may as well sell the rest" (Hugo 179). In talking about her body as if it were something to be sold, Fantine is making the greatest sacrifice for the sole purpose of keeping her child alive. As discussed in the previous chapter, in the analysis of the Prodigal Son parable, selflessness is one of the cornerstones in a Christian understanding of redemption. Fantine's act of absolute selflessness drives her narrative and enables her to maintain her virtue.

In the same way that Fantine is able to obtain redemption due to the motives driving her actions, Valjean's story is motivated by selfless deeds. When introducing Valjean, the narrator takes the time to explain the story behind his initial arrest. The narrator informs the reader that, after Valjean's sister was widowed, he took upon himself the responsibility of her welfare and that of her seven children. During one particularly difficult winter, Valjean was unable to make

enough money to support his sister and her children. It is because of his starving family that he was driven to steal the bread. The narrator's choice to focus on the motives behind Valjean's initial crime demonstrates the way his story is centered not only around the physical act of breaking the law but also the heart-driven motives behind each action. Hugo's omniscient narrative choice, focusing not on Valjean's immediate perspective, presents the narrative in a broad manner and attempts to distance Valjean from his past actions. Hugo is creating a divide between the character that he is presenting in his novel and the individual who was driven to steal. As I will discuss later in this chapter, Hugo likewise uses narration when talking about Valjean's thoughts on stealing the Bishop's silver in an attempt to dissociate Valjean from his actions. The choice to create a divide between Valjean and his transgressions demonstrates how Hugo wants the narration to focus not on Valjean and his actions of theft, but rather on Valjean's internal journey throughout he novel. Discussing the initial incarceration in a single paragraph, Hugo focuses on Valjean's redemptive narrative throughout the rest of the novel.

The focus on the heart above the law can likewise be seen when the Bishop discusses the way "the Law decrees the wrecking of a human life" (Hugo 93). When the Bishop makes this claim, he is discussing the prison system and the role that he plays in helping individuals while incarcerated. The fact that the Bishop, the novel's character that serves as a representation of God, discusses the law as something that destroys human life reveals Hugo's attempts to demonstrate the significance of a heart-driven decision, rooted in selflessness, above the law. In portraying the Bishop as exhibiting selflessness, kindness, and humility toward societal outcasts, Hugo is connecting the Bishop to the characteristic traits of Jesus within the New Testament. In doing so, he is establishing the connection between Jesus, or God, and the Bishop. Furthermore, looking at the quotation itself, the capitalization of the word "Law" creates an allusion to biblical

law outlined in the Old and New Testaments. In saying that the Law, both legal and biblical, is responsible for the destruction of human life, the narrator hits against the Law ruling an individual's life. Connecting this challenge to the previous chapter's discussion of Corinthians 2:3, "not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," both the Bishop's words and the scripture verse highlight the idea of the law leading to a person's downfall. Instead, they both speak for the "spirit" of the law and, by extension, the sentiments behind each law.

By creating a contrast between the law and the spirit, the narrator highlights the problematic nature of a law-driven society. Having escaped from prison, after Javert has discovered Valjean's fake identity, Valjean is then pursued by Javert throughout the remainder of his life. In doing his utmost to support his new daughter and being entirely focused on her well-being, Valjean is still tormented by Javert. Upon heading to Paris, Valjean finds a place to live in a rundown part of the city; however, Javert once again discovers his whereabouts, and Valjean is forced to flee and work as a gardener in a convent while Cosette is able to go to school there. Because of the law, Valjean is never able to settle somewhere and live a calm life with Cosette; instead, he is tormented by the thought of being caught and returned to jail, thus leading to his inability to care for Cosette. The narrative decision to place Valjean and Cosette in constant danger and worry illustrates the repercussions that can occur in a law-focused community. In portraying the love and care that Valjean has for Cosette, as well as the renewal of his life and his selfless nature, the narrator is accentuating the injustice that Valjean is experiencing by constantly being pursued by Javert.

Despite the constant anxiety, Valjean remains focused on his adopted daughter and, as the novel progresses, allows for the relationship between Cosette and Marius. Marius Pontmercy

is a young man who wishes to participate in the revolution. Having expressed his love for Cosette, he tells her that he has a duty to fight for his country. Setting aside his own reservations relating to Cosette's relationship with Marius, upon discovering that Marius has chosen to fight at the barricades, Valjean puts on a uniform and follows him. Despite his personal dislike of Marius, fearing that Marius is taking his daughter away from him, Valjean, nonetheless puts himself at risk and ends up carrying Marius' injured body through a sewer once Marius is injured. This action illustrates the way Valjean is motivated by the happiness of Cosette and not by his own. He is willing to enter into battle in order to protect Marius because he knows his daughter loves him. Putting his life at risk, Valjean does not think of himself but only of Cosette. While throughout the novel Valjean stays faithful to Cosette, he does experience personal turmoil in maintaining Cossette's interests.

Before leaving for London, Valjean finds Cosette's letter to Marius and is instantly alarmed:

> Valjean stood aghast…He trembled... his eyes dulled in utter dismay… He said to himself that there was no escape, the light of his world had gone out, since Cosette had written this to someone other than himself. But then he heard his own spirit, become again terrible, roar sullenly in the darkness. Try to rob a lion of its cub! (Hugo 973-974)

Describing Valjean in relation to imagery relating to darkness and animals, the narrator elucidates the way that Valjean's previous "light," or God- focused life, has "gone out" and is instead, once again, in "darkness" (Hugo 973). The narrator describes Valjean's inner need to have Cosette remain his by using imagery depicting a lion protecting her cub. This language is similar to that of the tiger and bulldog to which Javert is compared. The similarity in narrative highlights the selfish motives of both Valjean and Javert. Citing this savage reaction, the narrator permits us to understand the way that Valjean is struggling with the idea of being separated from

Cosette. Illustrating Valjean's imperfect nature, the narrator shows how Valjean is worried that Cosette will "leave [him]" (Hugo 975). In feeling this, Valjean is said to have experienced "an overweening rebirth of egotism" (Hugo 975). By categorizing Valjean's episode as a "spiritual collapse," the narrator remarks on Jean Valjean's internal struggle (Hugo 975). Valjean is said to have turned toward "hatred" (Hugo 976). Talking about the way Valjean is moved toward hate and selfishness due to the fear of being alone, Hugo illustrates the struggles that are involved in maintaining one's heart in relationships with others. In illustrating the internal hardship that Valjean endures, Hugo is also highlighting Valjean's later choice to help Marius. Even when faced with the greatest "torment he had suffered," Valjean remains steadfast in his choice to support his daughter's wishes and refocus his heart on others, thus allowing the previously described "darkness" to "fall" (Hugo 974).

However, due to his position as an undercover spy, Javert finds Valjean once again. Once discovered as a spy, Javert is sentenced to death by the revolutionaries. Volunteering as executioner, Valjean gains the ability to kill Javert and protect himself; yet, instead, he shoots his firearm upward and allows Javert to escape. After carrying Marius through the sewers, Valjean then makes a promise to Javert to return to him and turn himself in. Valjean's only request is the safe return of Marius. These events demonstrate the way that Valjean is driven by selfless motives. He is not concerned for his own safety, or the fact that he desires his daughter entirely for himself; instead, he allows Javert to escape death, promises Javert he will return, and brings Marius to Cosette. These decisions show Valjean's disregard for his own well- being. He is entirely focused on his daughter having the opportunity to marry the man she loves and maintaining his promise to Javert. This act of selflessness demonstrates a true change within Valjean's heart. Valjean's reaction to Marius' desire not to have Valjean remain in contact with

Cossette is another example of a selfless act. After Marius and Cossette are married, Valjean tells Marius of his criminal past. In response, Marius prohibits Valjean from seeing Cossette. Not wanting to go against the desires of Cosette's husband, Valjean leaves his wealth to his daughter and isolates himself entirely. These different examples illustrate how every action that Valjean performs is fueled by his desire to make Cosette, someone he loves, happy and not himself. It is by acting with absolute selflessness that he is able to be redeemed at the conclusion of the novel. He does not obtain redemption from his criminal past but rather he is redeemed from his hardening heart. Valjean's narrative is not focused on the specifics of his initial robbery but rather it is focused around his soul. It is because his heart was darkened and became hard, due to the manner in which he was treated by society, that he became selfish and turned to stealing.

Creating a connection between the state of someone's soul and the law, when the narrator is first introducing Jean Valjean, the narrator focuses on the state of Valjean's soul after he has left prison. He talks of Jean Valjean as someone "damned [by] civilization," who has been "turned into an animal" by the prison system (Hugo 98-99). He also states that Valjean was "damn[ed] within civilization" (Hugo 98). In saying this, the narrator has created a distinction between the damnation of the soul within a religious sphere versus the damnation of the soul within society. This form of language is likewise seen when the narrator is discussing Javert's understanding of the law as a religion. The narrator uses the distinction between religious and societal damnation to claim that Valjean's soul has been turned to an animal-like state due to society. Stripped of his human soul, Valjean is forced to change in response to the external world around him. By establishing a connection between damnation, not in relation to God, but rather to society, the narrator is creating a connection between the laws and man and showing how the

laws corrupt individuals. The repeated use of animal-like imagery when discussing society's outsiders suggests the way that outcasts were understood as inhuman and apart from society.

Considering the manner in which the narrator has established the relationship between damnation, society and the laws, I argue that the narrator is negating the possibility of a connection between the laws and God. This point can be seen when the narrator is describing Valjean's "spirit [shrinking]":

> [In prison, Valjean] concluded that there was no true balance between the wrong he had done and the wrong that was inflicted on him…. [and so] hatred was his only weapon, and he resolved to sharpen it in prison and carry it with him (Hugo 97)

This passage highlights the injustice experienced by Valjean. In stating that the crime Valjean committed does not match his punishment, the narrator is illustrating Valjean's understanding of the imbalanced nature of the legal system. The imbalance develops into the hatred that is later described as a hardening of Valjean's heart and that leads the narrator to negate a relationship between the laws and God. As discussed in the last chapter, one of the central tenets of New Testament scripture and the Judeo-Christian understanding of God and redemption centers around God's love and an active fight against hate. This passage creates a direct connection between the laws and the corruption of Valjean's soul--something that negates the possibility of the laws being related to God.

Furthermore, in the beginning of Book II, the narrator states that Valjean "condemned society and felt himself becoming evil… he [then] condemned Providence and knew that he became impious" (Hugo 98). Arguing for the connection between Valjean's hatred, stemming from the society whose laws had condemned him, and his rejection of God, the narrator indicates that the decision to be impious did not originate internally but rather came from external influences impacting Valjean's perspective. Moreover, the narrator emphasizes this point by

stating that Valjean was "virtuous when he was sent to prison," a claim that demonstrates a component of Jesus' ministry discussed in the previous chapter (Hugo 98). The fact that Valjean was still categorically virtuous after having stolen the bread demonstrates how the narrator implies that it was not the breaking of the rules that led to his evil but rather the anger that hardened his heart. With these connections in mind, we are able to understand how the narrator represents the laws as apart from God. In taking this position, the narrator is implying a definition of evil as it relates to society. Hugo is arguing that evil is centered around society and the manner in which it corrupts individuals.

Looking specifically at the interactions Jean Valjean experiences prior to entering into a covenant with God--an event that occurs after Valjean leaves the Bishop's home with his silver and then proceeds to steal a silver coin from a young boy--I want to emphasize the way Valjean's story closely parallels that of the sinners described in the previous chapter. After having spent an entire day hiking through mountains and passing different towns, Jean Valjean attempts to enter two inns. He enters each inn through a back door since he "did not venture to use the front entrance" (Hugo 75). The fact that he did not feel as if he could enter the shelter of the townspeople sheds additional light on Valjean's divide from them. Yet, on coming in, he is greeted with kindness and warmth. He is called a "friend" and is able to warm himself by the fire (Hugo 70-75). The hospitality, however, quickly ends once the innkeepers recognize him and realize that he is a convict on parole. In every place he enters, the discovery that he is a convict leads to his ejection. Desperate to find shelter, he turns to a family, but once he is recognized, Valjean is threated by a gun and asked to leave immediately (Hugo 78). Jean Valjean is slowly ostracized by the community for being perceived as a threat, and the above events show how Jean Valjean's ostracization manifests itself once he is out of prison.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the way scripture understands sinners is directly related to wickedness and its threat to society. Moreover, the fact that Valjean begins to plead and beg for water while standing at the end of a firearm emphasizes the disparity between the way he is perceived and his true nature. Having previously highlighted his virtuous core, Hugo uses this scene to illustrate the disconnect concerning the social consensus of what is perceived to be a threat. Where the society is entirely fixed on the laws, they are unable to consider helping the starving man in front of them. The scene illustrates Hugo's understanding of a society that is hyper-focused on the laws. In having none of the townspeople show Valjean kindness due to hearing reports from other town members, Hugo is indicating how the evil that society creates within people grows and festers within the society itself.

In his attempt to be accepted into society, Javert likewise adopts an exclusionist mentality. Due to this unrelenting observance of the law, he is unable to move beyond the letter of the law and resolves to kill himself when Valjean, upon being told to kill him at the barricades, lets him live:

> To owe his life to a man wanted by the law and to pay the debt in equal terms; to have accepted the words, 'You may go', and now to say, 'Go free,' this was to sacrifice duty to personal motive (Hugo 1104-5).

Hugo's narrative choice from the perspective of Javert allows for an in-depth understanding of Javert's thoughts. Javert understands the law in relation to its application to society. The way in which Javert initially describes Valjean is directly related to the law. Javert says that Valjean is a "man wanted by the law" (Hugo 1104). By drawing our attention to the way Javert conceptualizes Valjean, the narrator is showing us that Javert is fixated on how Valjean is a convicted felon even when Valjean has shown Javert mercy. Moreover, he sees Valjean's actions as a transaction, or debt. In thinking about Valjean's act of kindness as a form of deal, the

narrator is likewise drawing the reader's attention to how Javert's mind understands everything within legal terms. Furthermore, he is unable to fathom telling Valjean to run free since it would be considered a "personal motive" (Hugo 1105). The moment of interiority shows how Javert is incapable of going against the letter of the law. In contemplating letting Valjean go, Javert enters into a dialogue where he questions whether there is something beyond "all social and legal organizations" (Hugo 1105). He then enters into a discussion concerning the law and whether there is an ultimate legal authority such as God. However, Javert concludes that he has committed an "unpardonable infraction of the rules" when he decided to let Valjean return Marius (Hugo 1107). Thus, he says that since "authority was dead within him, he had no reason to go on living" (Hugo 1107). These internal thoughts illustrate the degree to which Javert holds the law to be sacred. He not only shows how he conceptualizes God directly relating to the law, questioning if there is a higher power beyond the law, but he also demonstrates the manner in which he does not think that he can reside within society, having himself broken the rules.

In contrast to Javert, who is fixated on the law, the Bishop fights against a law-driven narrative and focuses entirely on the heart of people. At the beginning of the novel, once Jean Valjean is in the Bishop's home, the Bishop automatically talks to Valjean as an equal. He does not shun him but rather welcomes him into "Christ's house" and makes him understand that he is considered a "brother" (Hugo 87). This welcoming is similar to that of Jesus in the New Testament with many of society's outcasts. The Bishop then speaks to Jean Valjean of the changes he has to make within his heart:

> You have come from an unhappy place. But listen, there is more rejoicing in Heaven over the tears of one sinner who repents than over the white robes of a hundred who are virtuous. If you leave your place of suffering with hatred in your heart, and anger against men, you will be deserving of our pity; but if you leave with goodwill, in gentleness and peace you will have risen above any of us (Hugo 87).

The Bishop's message mirrors Jesus' ministry in the New Testament. The Bishop highlights the fact that there is joy in the redemption of sinners. Just as Jesus' ministry is focused on giving redemption to all, the Bishop emphasizes that repentance is valued above all else. The Bishop also indicates the importance of the heart in relation to repentance and says that it is the emotions in your heart that affect the peace that you are able to gain. In articulating the significance of internal emotions, the Bishop alludes to the covenant of the heart discussed in the New Testament. Much as the Bishop believes that the feelings of your heart directly correlate with your peace, the New Testament authors argue that your emotions lead to your salvation.

Moreover, the Bishop is not concerned with Jean Valjean's social status. Instead of focusing on details in Jean Valjean's past and seeing them as unlawful, the Bishop categorizes his life not as "sinful" but rather "unhappy" (Hugo 87). In the French, the narrator uses the word "tristesse" which can be literally translated to "sadness" (Hugo). The word choice in the French, along with the English translation of "unhappy," illustrates the way the Bishop understands Valjean coming from a place of suffering and not of sin. This word choice demonstrates how the Bishop conceptualizes sin--he does not understand it as a determining factor for damnation but rather as something that is inhibiting someone's happiness; he sees sin as something that leads to an individual's sadness. However, it is important to note that within Catholic theology, sadness to the point of despair is understood as a sin. The French word choice complicates the narrative. It illustrates that while Hugo understands Valjean as an individual afflicted by society's influence, he nonetheless has committed sin and thus needs to be redeemed. In understanding sadness in relation to sin, we are also able to understand the way that Hugo is citing internal emotional sin rather than the external sin of theft. The choice to focus on the sinful nature of the

internal emotion of despair not only further highlights Hugo's focus on the heart but also demonstrates Valjean's need for redemption.

Moreover, the Bishop's conception of sin can likewise be seen when the narrator asks the following open question: "can the heart become misshapen and afflicted with ugliness?" (Hugo 98). In the original French, the narrator asks: "Le cœur peut-il devenir difforme et contracter des laideurs et des infirmités incurables sous la pression d'un malheur disproportionné, comme la colonne vertébrale sous une voûte trop basse?" (Hugo). Translating the original version more literally, the narrator is asking if it is possible for the heart to "become deformed and contract incurable ugliness and infirmity under the pressure of a disproportionate misfortune" (Hugo). The imagery relating to the deformation of a spine due to weight sheds light onto the manner in which the narrator understands sin as an external weight burdening and deforming an individual. The French likewise illustrates the way in which the narrator believes that it is bad luck, something external, that can drive a heart toward ugliness. Moreover, the way the question is phrased presupposes that a heart is not ugly by nature but rather "becomes" ugly (Hugo 98). In presenting these different questions, the narrator draws the reader's attention to Jean Valjean's heart. This internal dialogue from the narrator demonstrates how the character of Valjean is intended to represent possible answers to the questions he proposes. Furthermore, since the questions themselves focus on the heart over the laws, I argue that the nature of the dialogue the narrator is engaging in directly connects to Jesus' ministry. Valjean serves as a representation of the sinners in the New Testament. He is one of the outcasts who were shunned by society but were able to be redeemed by making a covenant with God and changing their hearts. For the purpose of my argument relating to the connection of Valjean and the Covenant of Jesus, I will

be looking at the language surrounding the events concerning the robbery of the bishop's silver and the subsequent monologue that marks the creation of a covenant.

While sleeping in the Bishop's house, Jean Valjean begins to be tormented with thoughts that lead him to steal the Bishop's silver. The way these scenes are written demonstrates how Jean Valjean is not internally thinking of committing evil, but rather is being influenced by external sources to choose wrong. The outside influences can be seen in the imagery relating to darkness and the personification of Valjean's thoughts. These passages illustrate the way the narrator understands people's sin as a product of their external influences and not of their innate souls. The narrator describes how Valjean's thoughts are "overshadowing" his mind (Hugo 105). He says that Valjean looks like a "sinister figure… in the darkness" with his "ugly thoughts [jostling] in his brain, [coming and going], bearing down on him like a physical weight; and at the same time… he was thinking of something entirely different" (Hugo 105). Relating back to the previous imagery to a spine feeling the burden of a weight, this quotation likewise personifies these thoughts as physical afflictions. Moreover, the description demonstrates not only the imagery of darkness that surrounds Valjean as soon as he begins to consider stealing the silver, but it also shows a dissociation between Valjean and his thoughts. In saying that his thoughts were "jostling" and "coming," the narrator is portraying them as if they were entities of their own--apart from Valjean (Hugo 105). By describing the way these thoughts were "bearing down" on him, the narrator is further illustrating this separation (Hugo 105). The fact that Valjean was thinking something different when these thoughts started to "jostle" further illustrates how the narrator is creating a divide between Valjean and the thoughts concerning the robbery (Hugo 105). In effect, the narrator portrays Jean Valjean as a man who is influenced by external thoughts that do not originate within him. In creating a divide between the robbery and

Valjean's inner nature, the narrator is metaphorically illustrating how outside thoughts, originating from social influences, can invade into the minds of individuals and persuade them to commit wrong actions. Ironically, it is this theft that ultimately leads to Valjean's redemption.

A distinct passage marks the events that lead to the creation of a covenant between Jean Valjean and God. After having told the police to leave once Valjean was caught with the stolen silver, the Bishop allows Valjean to keep the silver with the promise that he will use it to become an "honest" man (Hugo 111):

> Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to what is evil but to what is good. I have bought your soul to save it from black thought and the sprits of perdition, and I give it to God (Hugo 111)

The passage demonstrates key components of Jesus' ministry. First, it shows that the Bishop does not see Valjean as an outcast but rather calls him "brother." Furthermore, it portrays the evil as if it were external. The Bishop creates an extended metaphor when discussing the evil--saying that evil has taken possession of Valjean. He claims that he is saving Valjean from the "black thoughts and spirits" (Hugo 111). Moreover, in stating that he used to "belong to evil," the Bishop is associating the effect of society and the law with evil (Hugo 111). He lastly says that he has given Valjean's soul to God (Hugo 111). This passage illustrates the connections with Jesus' ministry and highlights the potential for Jean Valjean to enter into a covenant with God. The Bishop's words illustrate how Valjean has it within himself to move from the evil that was grown, due to society's influence, to the good the Bishop connects with God. This passage also emphasizes the necessity for God. In saying that Valjean can no longer be weighed down by the "black thoughts" because he has given his soul to God, the Bishop creates a connection between goodness, God, and the manner in which God can save his soul from society's evil (Hugo 111). The Bishop's act of kindness does not immediately spark a change in Valjean. Nevertheless, it

creates a lasting change after Valjean turns to theft once more. Furthermore, this scene can also be understood as a possible inverse Biblical allusion. In the New Testament, Judas betrays Christ for 30 pieces of silver. In having Valjean's soul be bought for pieces of silver, Hugo is reversing the biblical story and, in doing so, uses this ironic twist to highlight Valjean's soul being sold to God. The allusion additionally highlights the manner in which the redemption that is discussed by the Bishop in relation to Valjean's soul has a monetary component. He says that Valjean's soul has been "bought" (Hugo 111). The Bishop's language is similar to the economic motif that I previously discussed in relation to Javert's suicide. In both cases, redemption is understood in regard to a monetary exchange. However, I would argue that there is a key difference in the manner in which each exchange is presented. For Javert, the exchange was connected to societal laws. In seeing Valjean as an outcast, he could not fathom owing a debt to him. His debt-driven mentally was entirely motivated by his desire to maintain societal order. In contrast, the Bishop is motivated by his desire to help Valjean. He understands the exchange as relating directly to God. The difference between the two mentalities highlights the importance Hugo attributes to the motives behind actions. While both Javert and the Bishop use debt-driven language, the distinct motives between of each character differentiate their narratives.

Once outside of the Bishop's home, Valjean finds himself stealing a coin from a child. The theft serves as the catalyst for change. Jean Valjean enters into an internal monologue that prompts an in-depth analysis of himself that leads to self-knowledge:

> He truly saw that Jean Valjean, that evil countenance confronting him. At that moment he was near to asking who the man was, and he was appalled… thus he contemplated himself… (Hugo 117)

Hugo's narrative choice allows for absolute access to Valjean's inner thoughts. Valjean enters into a conversation with himself that enables him to analyze his past actions in relation to the

theft of the Bishop's silver and the child's coin. Upon reflection, he understands his past transgressions --and feels "appalled" (Hugo 117). In experiencing these sentiments, he is not only opening his heart to emotion, but is also adopting the Bishop's mentality as he begins to understand his actions as evil and in need of change. These thoughts show Valjean acquiring the self-knowledge that then prompts him to ask for forgiveness. He is described as "kneeling in an attitude of prayer outside the door of Monseigneur Bienvenu"--his first attempt to ask for forgiveness and enter into a dialogue with God (Hugo 118).

As discussed in the previous chapter, once individuals come to the self-realization that they have done wrong, in order to turn to redemption, they must ask for forgiveness from God. By beginning this type of dialogue with God, in order to experience lasting change, the individual must solidify this conversation by entering into a permeant discussion with God by means of a covenant. The following passage marks the creation of the covenant between Valjean and God:

> He looked more closely at this light growing in his consciousness. He saw that it had a human form and that it was the bishop. His mind's eye considered the two men now presented to him, the bishop and Jean Valjean. Only the first could have overshadowed the second…. His trance continued. The bishop grew and gained splendor in his eyes, while Jean Valjean shrank and faded. A moment came when Valjean was no more than a shadow and then he vanished entirely. The bishop alone remained, flooding that unhappy soul with radiance…. Jean Valjean wept for a long time, sobbing, he saw all things with clarity that he had never known before – his past life, his first offense… his inward hardening… he saw all of this, the picture of his life, and of his own soul, hideous in its ugliness. Yet a new day had now dawned (Hugo 117-18)

The internal imagery that Valjean experiences in this vision indicates a shift in focus. In his vision, he sees himself slowly fading away into darkness before he disappears. Once his old self is gone, an image of the Bishop takes his place. The way the darkness surrounding Valjean contrasts with the brightness surrounding the Bishop illustrates how the evil that resides within

Valjean is being replaced by good. While there is no verbal promise, Valjean's internal vision demonstrates a change in attention. He turns from the unhappiness and evil of his soul toward the "radiance" of the Bishop and God (Hugo 117). Taking into consideration that Valjean never cried in prison, the fact that he is moved to tears indicates a significant change within his heart. The imagery of a new dawn as the passage concludes alludes to a form of rebirth that Valjean experiences. He is moved by his emotions to renounce his old ways and refocus his attention on God. It was not prison or the prospect of returning to prison that led to his change but rather the kindness of another person who saw him as an equal who simply needed help. The narrator does not place weight on the laws changing individuals but rather believes that it is kindness and selflessness that prevent people from corrupting each other within society.

After Marius finds out that it was Valjean who saved his life that day in the barricades, he runs with Cossette to Valjean's side only to find that he is dying. Valjean's final and absolute redemption can be seen in the final scene of the novel when he passes away: "Children my sight is failing… I don't know what is happening to me, I can see a light. Come closer, I die happy" (Hugo 1200). Following his death, Valjean is buried in the cemetery of Père Lachaise. Connecting his death to the imagery of his covenant, I argue that the light that he sees when he is dying is a metaphorical representation of God. Upon his death, Valjean was able to die with the people that he loves surrounding him and focus on the light that he is able to see--the reader is left to assume that he is in heaven. In having the ability to die in peace and go to heaven, with the forgiveness of his daughter for concealing his past transgressions from her, Valjean is redeemed. Though he experienced torment throughout his life, it was his continuous choice to remain selfless and heart-driven that led to his eventual redemption. Turning from the societal influences within him, he was able to refocus his life on others and gain absolute freedom upon his death.

Hugo creates a narrative centered around revolution and the redemption of his characters. I argue that this connection is purposeful. Within a society, revolution serves the purpose of changing the structural components within a community and attempts to create a new ruling body. I argue that, in individual's attempts to enter into an uprising against their government, they are trying to redeem their society of its past mistakes and create a new chapter. This narrative parallels that of Jean Valjean and Javert. Each character finds himself ostracized from a community and, in their attempt seek redemption, each turns to a new life. By finding redemption through a revolution within his heart, Valjean is able to experience a peaceful death; however, in not engaging in change, but rather adopting society's rules into his heart, Javert experiences a death of violence and torment. While Valjean and Javert choose to engage with redemption in a different manner--Valjean is focused on the internal, while Javert is influenced by external societal motivations--both are affected by society. It is because of the way that society has conceptualized its outcasts that Jean Valjean and Javert are directly affected. While Valjean's internal state darkens, turning to theft as if accepting the role which society has given him, Javert continuously tries to fight against his origins and chooses to adopt an extreme understanding of society's rules as if he were attempting to gain the approval of the society that has shunned him. In creating such narratives, Hugo is attempting to demonstrate the problems that can arise from society's treatment of its outcasts.

Chapter III: Selfishness in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Thomas Hardy's novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, serves as an example not only of works-based religiosity but of an understanding of redemption that is associated with society. In her article, "Hardy, Character and Moral Inquiry," English Literature scholar Jane Adamson argues that Hardy's novel is not "preachy" but rather "morally interrogative" (Adamnson 49). Her argument highlights the way the novel serves to demonstrate a narrative that complicates societal actions in relation to the help of outsiders. Fighting against the desire to isolate the socially exiled, in creating a character that evokes sympathy while being driven by "the self," envy, and desire, Hardy's protagonist is meant to illustrate how outsiders from society are in need of help even when they engage in self-destructive and alienating behavior (Adamson 50). In the same way the Prodigal son receives aid from his father and the Bishop helps Valjean, I argue that Henchard is in need of guidance in order to shift his perspective from himself onto others.

In this chapter, I will analyze the way that Henchard is focused on himself and uses his internal motives to shape his understanding of the law. Throughout the novel, his narrative is focused on his desires. While I will connect Henchard's understanding of the law to that of the Pharisees in the Ancient World, I am not arguing that Henchard represents Ancient Judaism but rather that he manifests what occurs when someone places too much focus on the works, or laws, that govern society for the purpose of pursuing his self-interest. In the same manner that Javert, in *Les Misérables,* continuously fights against his connection to society's outcasts, Henchard constructs his understanding of redemption in relation to a desire for social acceptance. Any internal changes that he makes are motivated by obtaining power and wealth within society. In the same way that Javert wishes to be a part of society, Henchard is motivated by external

appearances. Both characters exhibit a similar debt-driven mentality, which influences their redemption narratives.

Hardy's novel focuses on the life of Michael Henchard, who begins the novel by stopping to eat and drink at a country fair with his wife, Susan, and their daughter, Elizabeth-Jane. Allowing himself to become intoxicated during the meal, Henchard sells his wife and daughter to a sailor, Newson. This event serves as a catalyst for change, in which Henchard vows to abstain from alcohol for 21 years and manages to become the Mayor of a town called Casterbridge. The rest of the story focuses on the homecoming of Susan and Elizabeth-Jane and the interpersonal relationships between Henchard, Susan, Elizabeth-Jane, Farfrae, a gentleman who works for Henchard, and Lucetta, a woman from Jersey with whom Henchard has had an affair. Having become the Mayor following the success of his corn business, Henchard attempts to re-establish his family once Susan and Elizabeth-Jane return. However, Henchard's fortune takes a turn for the worse when Farfrae begins his own business after being fired by Henchard. Henchard then experiences the death of Susan and ultimately discovers that Elizabeth-Jane is not his biological daughter. As Farfrae's business grows, Henchard is forced to declare bankruptcy and finds himself having to work for Farfrae. As the novel progresses, due to his behavior, Henchard finds himself isolated from everyone. Driven by envy, he is unable to maintain any relationships. At the conclusion of the novel, Elizabeth-Jane and her husband, Farfrae, try to find Henchard in order to forgive him for his past transgressions. Unfortunately, Elizabeth-Jane is unable to reach Henchard before he dies. She finds a note from him saying that he does not wish a funeral but rather wants to be forgotten.

In his essay, "Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*: The Infernal Triangle," John Rodden, an English Literature scholar, argues that the single emotion which drives the plot throughout the

novel is envy (Rodden 55). Discussing the way Hardy's novel serves as a "modern Oedipus" story, Rodden argues that the "series of interlocking, potentially explosive and self-destructive triangles involving Henchard, Susan, Elizabeth-Jane, Lucetta, and Farfrae" illustrates the original Oedipal triangle that is centered around desire (Rodden 54). Rodden points out the way that each section of the book opens with a different triangle. He argues that each triangle drives the narrative of that particular section: "[The book] opens with the Henchard-Susan-baby triangle and climaxes with Newson's entrance, creating the Newson- Henchard confrontation over Susan… Act III opens with the family triangle of Henchard, Susan and Elizabeth-Jane … Act IV begins with the Farfrae, Elizabeth- Jane and Henchard triangle…" (Rodden 57-58). In discussing the different relationship dynamics that govern the story, and by extension Henchard's narrative, Rodden argues that the plot is controlled by different "intruders" or "character disappearances…[that] constitute the triggers for the collapse and reshaping of the legal and love triangles" (Rodden 57). He states that "the central scene in each act… concerns the keeping or revelation of a secret [that changes] its setting in a fitting chronicle of Henchard's progressive degeneration" (Rodden 57). Rodden's analysis allows us to focus on the way the storyline of Henchard's narrative is directly influenced by the different dynamics within each relationship triangle. This shifting of triangles demonstrates the central position Henchard inhabits within the ever-changing structures of the novel. Moreover, the fact that these interrelationship dynamics are driven by envy and desire displays the motives influencing each character's actions. Using Rodden's arguments, we can discern the ways that Henchard's eventual downfall is directly connected to the way he interacts with the novel's other characters. Furthermore, we are likewise able to understand Henchard's inability to refocus and think about other people before himself.

Caught in these relationship triangles that are driven by envy and greed, Henchard is incapable of demonstrating true selflessness.

Highlighting the fact that this story is one of "war" and not "romance," Rodden argues that "envy… governs the rivalry patterns, [where] each rival's ever-heightening desire as the Self is to imitate what the Other possesses" (Rodden 54). Stating that the individuals within the novel place more importance on themselves than others within their community, he reveals a dichotomy that is created throughout the novel between the "self" and "other" (Rodden 54). He asserts that "desire repeatedly explodes…spreading like wildfire… [and] manifesting itself in patterns of conflict that…shape the action of *The Mayor*" (Rodden 56). His claim not only demonstrates the motives that drive the plot--desire and envy--but his assertion also depicts the way the novel understands a community. In creating a contrast between the "self" and the "other," Hardy establishes a divide amongst the individuals in the story and creates a society where the residents do not see each other as neighbors but rather see individuals as being categorically different. By focusing on the "other" as being apart from the "self," Hardy enables his characters to extend beyond themselves and turn to help their fellow neighbors. Furthermore, Rodden's insight into the manner in which a self-driven perspective "spreads like wildfire" alludes to the way selfish motives spread within a society. If individuals won't turn to help each other, driven only by the "self," others within the community are unable to learn how to shift their focus. In lacking an example of selflessness, the community members are never prompted to change their focus. Later in the chapter, when I analyze Elizabeth-Jane's desire to forgive her father, I will discuss the exception to this claim. However, for the purpose of my immediate analysis, I want to highlight the way the novel establishes the dichotomy between the "self" and "other".

Similar to the narrator in *Les Misérables*, Hardy's narrator is omniscient and is able to discuss a multitude of individuals' internal thoughts, feelings and motives. When discussing Hardy's narrative choice in the novel, literary critic Jane Adamson highlights Hardy's assertions in his essay on "The Profitable Reading of Fiction." Hardy argues that "fictional style" is "identical with treatment, and treatment depends on the mental attitude of the novelist" (qtd. in Adamson 47). Adamson emphasizes the way Hardy is arguing for the inseparability of "form and content" (Adamson 48). In placing such focus on the form of the writing, Hardy permits the reader to understand the significance of his narrative choices. While he mainly focuses on Henchard's perspective, his omniscient narrator allows for insights that enable our understanding of a character's redemptive narrative and their connection to God. While drinking alcohol at the beginning of the novel, Henchard begins to talk about his marriage: "I married at eighteen, like a fool that I was… if I were a free man again, I'd be worth a thousand pounds" (Hardy 9). Moreover, the narrator remarks on Henchard's "contemplative bitterness" when discussing his current marital position (Hardy 9). Both of these descriptions demonstrate how Henchard is motivated by the "self," only talking about what he would have done had he not married when he was young and connecting this to a lack of accumulated wealth. Throughout the novel, because of the narrator's focus on his internal motives, we are likewise able to see the way he is driven by envy. As Farfrae's success grows, Henchard is unable to contain his envy, and thus his desire grows. However, while Henchard exhibits selfish behaviors, the narrator portrays Henchard in such a way that he evokes sympathy.

After Lucetta's death, Elizabeth-Jane resides in Henchard's home. Upon spending the morning with her, Henchard is described as having a new sense of hope for the future:

> In truth, a great change had come over him with regard to her, and he was developing the dream of a future lit by her filial presence, as though that way alone could happiness lie (Hardy 286)

The narrator describes Henchard's hopefulness in relation to Elizabeth-Jane. After he has experienced the death of Lucetta and the fight with Farfrae, Henchard's new-found hope and happiness allow us to feel optimistic for the conclusion of his narrative. By associating Elizabeth-Jane with imagery relating to light, the narrator is allowing the reader to understand Elizabeth-Jane as Henchard's hope for redemption. In the same way that Valjean's narrative is driven by imagery of light with respect to the Bishop, Hardy establishes the possibility of Henchard's future being "lit" by Elizabeth-Jane (Hardy 286). Moreover, in choosing to describe her in relation to her "filial presence," Hardy is advocating a focus on the heart. In discussing her presence--something that is felt--Hardy is connecting Henchard's possible happiness to internal emotions and not physical actions that can arise from her physical company. However, in the line immediately following this quotation, the narrator describes a conspicuous knock: "He was disturbed by another knock at the door and rose up to open it" (Hardy 286). Using the sound of the knocking to interrupt the previous narrative, the narrator refocuses the scene onto the new visitor: Elizabeth-Jane's biological father. This sudden appearance elicits empathy from the reader as the narrator describes Henchard's hopes as being shattered. While his actions are driven by selfish desires, the way the narrator discusses Henchard evokes compassion for his plight as he seeks to find companionship.

While we can identify with Henchard, it is also important to analyze the motives behind his actions and attempt to understand how Henchard is driven by his ambitions. Throughout the opening scene, the narrator discusses the way the child and wife keep talking to Henchard about finding a place to stay for the evening even as Henchard ignores them in favor of his drink. The

narrator reports that Henchard heard the pleas of his wife as if they were "bird-like chirpings" (Hardy 8). The way the narrator discusses Henchard's thoughts of his wife in relation to an animal's sound demonstrates how he entirely disregards his family (Hardy 8). Connecting Hardy's use of animal imagery to Hugo's depiction of animals in relation to outcasts, I argue that, in comparing Susan to a bird, Hardy is demonstrating how Susan is perceived as an outsider by Henchard. He does not see her as a wife but rather as an outcast whom he ostracizes. By drawing the reader's attention to Henchard's selfishness, the narrator is illustrating how Henchard interacts with individuals prior to entering into a covenant with God. Knowledge of Henchard's actions and sentiments prior to his covenant allows us to gauge possible changes that occur as the novel progresses. When talking about his wife, Henchard says that "the woman is no good to [him]" (Hardy 10). In not using his wife's name and saying that she is "no good to him," Henchard is stripping his wife of her identity and making his needs the focus of his discussion (Hardy 10). The fact that he is saying this while his wife and daughter are hungry and in need of shelter for the night is meant to be ironic and further depicts Henchard's self-focused mentality. This behavior is prominent throughout the opening scene and peaks during his sale of Susan and Elizabeth-Jane.

After finding himself alone the morning after his sale, Henchard goes to a church, and on the Communion table, makes a promise not to drink for twenty-one years:

> I, Michael Henchard, on this morning of the sixteenth of September, do take an oath here in this solemn place that I will avoid all strong liquors for the space of twenty years to come, being a year for every year that I have lived. And this I swear upon the Book before me; and may I be stricken dumb, blind, and helpless if I break this my oath (Hardy 18)

This passage marks the creation of Henchard's covenant. Unlike Valjean, Henchard makes a spoken promise not to drink alcohol for 21 years. The confirmation in Henchard's oath is

different from that made in Valjean's. Henchard's oath is entirely verbal in nature; in contrast, Valjean never speaks while creating his covenant. The difference between these oaths demonstrates a key distinction between the covenants. Reflected by its outwardly spoken nature, Henchard's oath is carried out through speaking. The verbal nature of his promise illustrates how Henchard is focused on the external. In contrast, Valjean's oath takes place within the deepest parts of himself. Throughout the creation of his covenant, he never utters a single word but rather is depicted as praying.

The distinction between the two promises shows how Valjean's oath is internal, manifesting itself in true change within the heart, whereas Henchard's covenant is legalistic, only presenting itself in external words and actions. This difference shows how Valjean's covenant is one of the heart, while Henchard's promise is one of works. Valjean does not set any conditions or limitations on his promise but rather changes in every facet of his life; in contrast, Henchard focuses only on those actions he listed in his oath. His promise focuses on change specific to the act of drinking alcohol. However, he uses specific language when discussing the type of alcohol. In only making a promise in relation to "strong liquors", Henchard is allowing for the possibility of other forms of alcohol to still be permissible (Hardy 18). Moreover, the word choice in this passage is legalistic. Fully stating his name and the date, saying his location before talking about the specific nature of his promise, and articulating the things which are at risk if he were to break the oath, Henchard is structuring his covenant as if it were a legal contract.

His covenant's contractual nature demonstrates that it is not focused on the "spirit" of the law but rather the law itself (Corinthians 2:3). He is not only superimposing a works-driven mentality on his covenant, but he is also illustrating the way his covenant is related to society. A contract is a social construction that, by definition, requires more than one more person and is

upheld within a society. By applying a socially-driven understanding of a promise in a covenant with God, Henchard is illustrating the way he is influenced by society. In the same way that Javert understands society's law as a religion, Henchard is merging his understanding of religion and social law. The similarity highlights the way that both characters are shaped by society. In their attempts to belong, both characters have adopted society's external laws into their hearts--as seen in their adoption of social law as religion.

In contrast, Hugo's description of Valjean's covenant is metaphorical in nature. Through the allegorical use of imagery relating to light and God, Hugo allows the reader a glimpse into the way that Valjean is shifting his focus not only from himself but also from the darkness that has engulfed him and obscured God. As the description of this scene ends, the narrator removes himself from the events and states that a bystander saw Valjean kneeling as if in prayer. In choosing to construct this scene in such a manner, Hugo is enabling Valjean to have privacy. He is allowing the reader to understand the events that are taking place while also illustrating the importance of the covenant itself. He is arguing that the creation of the covenant needs to be between Valjean and God alone and thus during the creation of Valjean's covenant, the narrator allows for Valjean's privacy in only speaking from a bystander's point of view while Valjean prays.

Furthermore, Henchard's language demonstrates how focused he is on the external. He blames the alcohol that he consumed for his past transgressions instead of his selfishness and lack of attention. This shift in blame illustrates how Henchard is not making a true change within his heart but is rather using his understanding of the law to make amends with his past. It is important to note that as the founder and owner of a business and the mayor of a town, Henchard would be accustomed to working with legal documents and lawyers, thus enabling his

knowledge of contractual exchanges. While he has yet to acquire this knowledge when establishing his covenant with God, it is important to note how his career choice is directly related to transactional and legal language.

Moreover, when talking about his promise to his employee Farfrae, Henchard says that he has spent 18 years without drinking; however, he does not think that this decision "counterbalances [his past] immoral years" (Hardy 76). In talking about his decision to abstain from alcohol as a "counterbalance" measure, Henchard demonstrates how he sees his oath as a way to pay off past debts that have accumulated and not as an opportunity for true change. Moreover, looking back at the language of the oath itself, he says that if he breaks his promise, he "may…be stricken dumb, blind, and helpless" (Hardy 18). In saying this, Henchard is metaphorically placing his intelligence, sight and ability as possible collateral in his contractual covenant with God (Hardy 18). In both of these examples, Henchard's language demonstrates his understanding of his oath as a business transaction. His focus on "the Book," or the Bible, illustrates how he understands this promise being tied to God; however, the different components of his oath do not align with the New Testament notion of redemption. In the first chapter, I discussed the way redemption in the Bible is focused on several components: repentance, forgiveness, selflessness, self-knowledge and love. However, Henchard does not experience any of these elements.

Upon awakening after spending the night drinking, Henchard recalls having a "confused picture" of the events (Hardy 15). The narrator remarks that it was "enough" to recall the memories one more time to confirm that the events concerning the auctioning of his family had occurred (Hardy 15). Upon this revelation, Henchard says that he "must get out of this as soon as [he] can" (Hardy 16). This phrase shows how Henchard is self-focused. Upon remembering the

events that had occurred, his first thought is not concern for his family but rather himself. He is focused on removing himself from the situation. He is not driven to ask for forgiveness and thus does not gain any self-knowledge after selling his family.

Furthermore, in his book, *A Psychological Approach to Character and Conflict in Literature*, literary scholar Bernard Paris argues that Henchard's "original 'crime' is committed in the name of ambition," and it is because of this that he "ultimately fails" (Paris 169). In his desire to accumulate wealth, Henchard begins his journey focused on himself and thus, as Paris argues, is doomed to fail, for he never broadens his mind beyond his own needs. In only thinking of himself, he never sees the need to turn to God and ask for forgiveness. In his chapter, "Imagined Human Beings: A Psychological Approach to Character and Conflict in Literature," Paris highlights the passage in which the narrator talks of Henchard's soul: "higher things than his soul, in its half-formed state, [he] had been able to accomplish" (Paris 169). By calling Henchard's soul "half-formed," the narrator is drawing the reader's attention to the way Henchard is not forming his soul properly (Paris 169). In speaking of his soul as if it is not fully developed, the narrator is alluding to the way in which Henchard has neglected the cultivation of his soul. Paris is highlighting the fact that he has ignored the formation of his internal nature.

Additionally, Paris argues that one of the reasons Henchard is unable to find his family once he begins searching for them is that he is unable to "effectively publish the search due to the fact that he is so ashamed" (Paris 170). Allowing his shame to supersede the search to find his family, Henchard is putting himself above his family. It is because he does not want to be seen in a negative light by society that he abandons his family. In analyzing his actions, we are thus able to gain an understanding of what motivates Henchard's actions and desires: society. As I discussed in the introductory chapter, while society is composed of numerous individuals, it is

also dominated by guiding principles and rules that render single voices speechless. It is the laws, both in relation to the government and social etiquette, that rule over society within Hardy's novel that drive Henchard's actions.

Society plays a large role in shaping Henchard's understanding of the law and his desire to appear lawful. An example of this external law-driven desire can be seen when Henchard tells Susan that they have to pretend to court one another and remarry so that society will not know of his past transgressions. Moreover, the way he places the external above the internal can also be seen when Henchard describes himself to Farfrae: "You see now that the Mayor of Casterbridge is not so thriving in his mind as it seems he might be from the state of his pocket" (Hardy 79). In talking about himself in the third person and discussing the way in which his "pocket," or wealth, is "thriving" but not his mind, he demonstrates that he has placed an emphasis on his external circumstances over the past 18 years rather than think about his internal maladies. Furthermore, his wording also highlights how he views himself. In not using his name but rather his title, Henchard illustrates the manner in which he is focused not only on the external but also on his role within society.

However, once his wealth is threatened by Farfrae, Henchard finds himself in a vicious cycle of resentment that is fueled by his desire. Rodden applies the work of French historian René Girard when analyzing the relationships in the novel. Girard's work focuses on the "systematic exploration of the dynamics of imitative or 'mimetic desire'" (Rodden 60). Girard sought to investigate the way individuals' inner desires drive their imitative actions (Rodden 60). He is concerned with how people learn to desire things by observing what other people value. Quoting Girard, Rodden discusses how mimesis "possesses two sides":

> 'One that disrupts the community and another one that holds it together'. Mimetic desire is triangular. It moves from the Self's acts of admiration and

> desire- exemplified by its assumption of a 'model' or 'mediator' for its 'goal' or 'object of desire'- to conflict when the Other as model forbids possession of the same object. The Other then quickly turns from model to 'rival' and antagonism grows (Rodden 61)

Rodden's analysis allows for an insight into the relationship dynamics that surround Henchard and the way in which his mimetic desires are fueled by a law-driven perspective of the world. In understanding everything as a transaction or debt, he is driven by a checks-and-balances system. As previously discussed, Henchard's mentality can be understood in relation to his profession as a business owner and Mayor. The connection Henchard makes between his work and the manner in which he constructs his interpersonal relationships demonstrates how he enables his external work to influence his own internal notions. In being the Mayor of the town and distributing corn to the city, he is working in fields that impact and associate with the wellbeing and order of society. In choosing to allow his work to influence his heart, Henchard is illustrating the way he has constructed his internal and external assertions to revolve around society. The choice to focus one's work with respect to society can likewise be seen in Javert. In choosing to be a policeman, Javert decided to center his life internally and externally on the ordering of society's outcasts. Furthermore, Rodden argues that what starts as "admiration" in Henchard turns to "antagonism" when there begins to be a competition between both parties (Rodden 61). Once Farfrae begins to accumulate wealth and power, the dynamic that Rodden alludes to can be seen between Henchard and Farfrae throughout the novel.

At the beginning of the story, Henchard fights for Farfrae to remain in Casterbridge. In a note that he passes to Henchard, Farfrae describes a way to restore grown wheat. In response, Henchard offers him a job. He tells Farfrae that he is "bad at science… bad at figures--a rule o' thumb sort of man"; however, he states that Farfrae is "the reverse" and that he's been "looking for such as [him] these two years" (Hardy 48). But because Farfrae was planning on moving to

America, he declines the job offer. The way Henchard describes Farfrae as the "reverse" of himself illustrates how Farfrae possesses qualities and abilities that Henchard does not. This knowledge drives Henchard's initial admiration of Farfrae. In his ability to admire a man who is the opposite of himself, Henchard demonstrates a form of humility. He is able to recognize that he is incapable of accomplishing certain tasks and thus turns his attention toward Farfrae. Henchard's ability to admire Farfrae complicates his narrative and shows how he is capable of emotions that extend beyond himself. However, his sentiments are soon turned to focus on himself. Upon thinking about Farfrae, Henchard says that he finds himself "drawn" to the "fellow" and that is due to the fact that "[he is] so lonely" (Hardy 56). He says that he would have "given [Farfrae] a third share [of his business] to have stayed!" (Hardy 56). He is not concerned with how staying will impact Farfrae but rather is solely focused on how Farfrae's presence will benefit him. His statement illustrates how Henchard is impressed by the newcomer, but it also shows how he is driven to act by selfish desires. It is because of his fear of loneliness that he wants Farfrae to stay.

By the conclusion of the novel, however, Farfrae has taken all of Henchard's possessions for himself. Farfrae is able to take from Henchard everything for which he has worked so hard. Farfrae courts Elizabeth-Jane, marries Lucetta, buys Henchard's business, and is expected by the Council to be the next Mayor of Casterbridge. Both Hugo and Hardy discuss the jealousy that their protagonists feel when their respective daughters have the prospect of marrying someone. In conceptualizing the daughters as if they were possessions, both novels present these women in relation to the men in their lives. Elizabeth-Jane is understood with regard to Farfrae once his wife, Lucetta, passes away, and Cosette is known with regard to Marius. This creates a problematic narrative in which the women are dependent on their respective spouses. While both

authors include the narrative perspective of the women in their novels, both plots revolve around the male characters' actions.

Looking specifically into Henchard's reaction once everything is taken from him, when Henchard meets Lucetta, he talks about the "resentment" that he feels. Moreover, when interrupting a Council meeting, Henchard tells them that he will not allow Farfrae to take his place: "I am not going to be sat upon by Farfrae, or any of the rest of the paltry crew" (Hardy 260). Henchard's remarks demonstrate not only his disdain for Farfrae but also the value that he places on society. He is angered by the prospect of not having a role within the Council and is upset that Farfrae may take his place, thus increasing his own power in the town. Later branding Farfrae an "infernal fool" during his downward spiral, Henchard turns against Farfrae. Even when he sees Farfrae, Henchard's anger manifests itself as a physical reaction: "Henchard watched [Farfrae] with his mouth firmly set, the squareness for his jaw and the verticality of his profile being unduly marked" (Hardy 267). In focusing on Henchard's face instead of his internal emotions, Hardy invites the reader to discern Henchard's internal thoughts as his emotions are described through his facial expressions. In doing so, Hardy engages the reader and allows Henchard's internal state to remain ambiguous as he describes his features. Furthermore, Henchard's shift in attitude illustrates a change in the way he sees Farfrae. Once Farfrae begins taking all of Henchard's possessions, Farfrae's relationship with Henchard turns from one of admiration to one of resentful competition.

Upon meeting Farfrae, Henchard initially sees the Scotsman as an opportunity to expand and improve his business. Yet Farfrae aids Henchard not only economically but personally. Once Farfrae begins working for him, after deciding not to leave for America, Farfrae becomes one of

Henchard's only confidants. During one meeting, Henchard tells him everything about his past in relation to Susan and Elizabeth-Jane:

> 'It is odd,' said Henchard, '…that at the end of the first day I should wish to speak to 'ee on a family matter… I am a lonely man, Farfrae: I have nobody else to speak to" (Hardy 75)

While it could be argued that this expression of honesty is an example of Henchard's gaining self-knowledge, the manner in which he analyzes his past is not for the purpose of change but rather for the friendship of Farfrae. He is opening up to him not because he wants to reflect internally but because he desires the companionship of Farfrae. Moreover, in labeling the event as a "family matter," Henchard is displacing his culpability (Hardy 75). In saying that the selling of his wife and child is a problem of the family, he is shifting the focus of the narrative from himself to the group. This passage represents how Henchard views Farfrae not only in relation to his business but also to his personal life. In having Farfrae's friendship, he is able to have someone to speak with, a confidant, who not only increases his overall wealth but also keeps him company and shares his personal burdens.

However, once Farfrae starts acquiring all of Henchard's possessions, Henchard begins to resent him. His admiration manifests itself in a form of resentful obsession that can be seen in the following internal monologue about Farfrae and Lucetta:

> [Lucetta] has supplicated to me in her time; and now her tongue won't own me, nor her eyes see me!... And he--how angry he looked. He drove me back as if I were a bull breaking fence… But he shall pay for it, and she shall be sorry (Hardy 266)

This internal discussion illustrates how Henchard understands both these individuals as people who have abandoned him and turned against him. Furthermore, it illustrates his perspective on the law. By highlighting the past actions of both characters, Henchard is focusing on what they should do for him in order to repay his past kindness. Their lack of repayment lies at the source

of his resentment. Furthermore, in using descriptions relating to a bull in order to describe Farfrae, Henchard is attempting impose upon Farfrae imagery that is associated with outcasts; however, the language he uses--saying that Lucetta won't look at him and Farfrae pushed him away--indicates that he is the social outsider. This switch in imagery demonstrates Henchard's attempt to insert himself into society by adopting their language and attempting to shun others. Driven by his own desire, he is angered by the thought of both of them having the life that he wanted: wealth and power within society. He envies the money that Lucetta and Farfrae possess and the societal position they have acquired that enables them to have power within the town.

However, even though Henchard hates Farfrae, when fighting with him, Henchard is unable to kill him: "God is my witness that no man ever loved another as I did thee at one time" (Hardy 271). This confession allows us to understand the way Henchard not only conceptualizes love but also the way his internal hatred and envy of Farfrae manifest themselves in a form of adoration that renders him unable to kill Farfrae. In attesting before God that he once loved Farfrae, Henchard allows us to understand how his love for Farfrae is motivated by his desire not to be alone. Throughout the novel, any positive remark about Farfrae remains focused on Henchard. He appreciates Farfrae's company and knowledge, and it is because he is able to feel less alone that he grows to love Farfrae; however, he has never been selfless in his love for Farfrae. His love is driven by his desire to have companionship. Upon any victory or triumph that Farfrae experiences, Henchard thinks only of the resentment he feels and of what he is being robbed. These examples illustrate how Henchard's love for Farfrae remains selfish throughout the novel. Furthermore, this analysis demonstrates that Henchard's inability to kill Farfrae is fueled by self-focused thoughts and not the well-being of Farfrae. In desiring Farfrae for himself, Henchard once again places his own needs above those of others. This can be seen at the

conclusion of the fighting scene when Farfrae walks away and Henchard says that he will now "hate [him] and despise [him] forever" (Hardy 271). The fear of having Farfrae hate him illustrates Henchard's concern not only with their relationship, wanting the admiration that he feels for Farfrae to be reciprocated, but also with his loneliness--the main driving force behind his love.

In understanding love in relation to himself and his needs, Henchard is incapable of placing anybody above himself. Throughout the novel, he reveals how he uses a law-driven perspective to focus on himself and improve his standing in society. Following Susan's death, Henchard turns his focus to Lucetta, whom he contemplates marrying due to her economic status. During one conversation between them, Henchard talks to Lucetta about having an extended engagement; however, in response, Lucetta asks him if she could "do something of a different kind" (Hardy 208). This type of language indicates the way an engagement is understood between them as something she would do in order to repay him. Her subsequent statements further illustrate this: "I am full of gratitude to you--you have saved my life. And your care of me is like coals of fire on my head. I am rich, Surely, I can do something in return for your goodness" (Hardy 208). Lucetta's language and word choice demonstrate how she understands her relationship with Henchard as an exchange. In refusing his offer of engagement, she offers him a monetary solution. In response, Henchard asks for her help with his creditor, Grower (Hardy 208). This back and forth is not driven by any form of emotion or sentiment but rather is focused around a negotiation of debts. Beginning with Henchard's desire not to be alone and without money, the dialogue is followed by Lucetta's need to thank him for the kindness he has shown her. Their conversation is legalistic in nature. They are attempting to find a suitable solution, other than marriage, in order to repay past actions. Henchard's first proposal to Lucetta

is of a similar nature. He only asks for her hand in marriage because of rumors that have spread throughout Jersey about their affair. This example demonstrates not only Henchard's legalistic mentality, wanting to marry her to pay for the burden she has had to endure, but it also shows the importance he places on social opinion. For fear of being disgraced within the social arena, Henchard is moved to action.

Another illustration of Henchard's understanding of marriage as a transaction can be seen when the narrator notes Henchard's "business-like determination" when he begins to pursue Susan (Hardy 79). The word choice shows how Henchard associates marriage with business. He understands the exchange of vows between two individuals as denoting a legal, business oriented, contract and not one relating to his heart. Moreover, his fear of appearing unlawful also shows the importance he places on society. These examples show how Henchard is not motivated by the internal but rather thinks of his interpersonal relationships in relation to legal transactions that must look lawful before society.

Another example of how Henchard understands the law with regard to relationships can be seen in his interactions with Elizabeth-Jane. Upon learning that Elizabeth-Jane is his daughter and making the arrangements to marry Susan once again, he talks to Susan about his desire to legally change Elizabeth-Jane's last name:

> Now, Susan, I want to have her called Miss Henchard--not Miss Newson. Lots o' people do it already in carelessness--it is her legal name--so it may as well be made her usual name--I don't like t'other name at all for my own flesh and blood. Ill advertise it in the Casterbridge papers (Hardy 86)

In asking Elizabeth-Jane to change her last name, Henchard reveals that he does not give importance to the internal relationship and feelings between himself and his daughter but rather focuses on the external component of having her last name be the same as his. This can be seen

in the way he cites the fact that they are biologically related as his reasoning for his desire to change her last name. However, there is also a social component related to his request.

Henchard's request focuses on the external manner in which he and his daughter are perceived by society. He wants her to outwardly, publicly, be known as Elizabeth-Jane Henchard. The importance he places on social regard can additionally be seen in his desire to publish Elizabeth-Jane's new name in the newspaper. In citing both of these reasons, Henchard enables us to recognize the motives that are driving this request. He is focused on the external component of his daughter's last name. Since he believes that he is her biological father and since everyone in town already calls her by the name of Miss Henchard, he pushes for her to change her name. He wants the thoughts of society to be true within his own personal life and household. The need he exhibits illustrates how he places more importance on the external than on the internal. However, upon learning that Elizabeth- Jane is not his biological daughter, Henchard becomes distant with her. The changes in Henchard's behavior demonstrate how his feelings for his daughter are not grounded in love but rather in the societal expectation that a father should care for his daughter. He places a high importance on the biological connection he thinks he has with his daughter and on the societal obligations that follow, instead of the love that he has for her. Henchard's relationship dynamic with his daughter contrasts markedly with that of Jean Valjean and Cosette. While Valjean knows that he is not the biological father of Cosette, he nonetheless remains steadfast in his love for her. Even when she decides to marry Marius, a decision that deeply impacts Valjean, he maintains her interests above his own. While Henchard's love for Elizabeth-Jane originates from self-serving notions, later in the novel, the narrator remarks on Henchard's attempt to turn away from his selfish actions.

As Henchard discusses the betrayal that he experiences in learning that Elizabeth-Jane is not his daughter, he talks about the regret that he feels for past actions. He says that "he had been sorry for all the [actions] long ago; but his attempts to replace ambition by love had been as fully foiled as his ambition itself" (Hardy 313). Taking into consideration that many of his plans were unsuccessful due to external sources, the fact that Henchard creates a connection between his ambitious failures and his inability to refocus on love is insightful. In doing so, he is attributing outside reasons for his failure to replace ambition with love. However, Henchard's choice to replace his ambition with love illustrates that he is able to recognize the way that his motives are in need of change. Despite this, he says that in the same way he is unable to maintain his goals, he is incapable of refocusing his life on love. His word choice illustrates his warped understanding of his past indiscretions. He does not correlate his lack of concern and attention for others as the root of his problem but rather his greed.

Moreover, in his inability to refocus his life, Henchard is left vulnerable. At the conclusion of the novel, Henchard seems hopeful to re-establish a relationship with Elizabeth-Jane. The formation of their relationship could have acted as a catalyst for change; however, in Newson's arrival, Henchard's hope for love is destroyed by the worry that Newson will return and discover Elizabeth-Jane is alive. The panic that Henchard experiences when faced with this problem shows how Henchard is unable to handle problems that arise in daily life. During his "spiritual collapse," Valjean experiences great internal turmoil and turns to dark thoughts centered around hatred; however, he is able to gain composure, and it is then said that the "darkness falls" (Hugo 975). In his ability to handle the discovery of Cosette's letter, Valjean illustrates how his internal mind is ordered in such a way that, while the events impact him, he is able to maintain his actions focused on love. In contrast, Henchard is moved by compulsive

actions and is driven by opportunistic decisions. The distinction between the characters highlights the way that Valjean is able to re-align his life so that he is able to learn to live within society and cope with future tribulations.

In contrast, as soon as Newson arrives to see Elizabeth-Jane, Henchard does not take the time to evaluate the situation. Rather, he immediately lies and tells Newson that Elizabeth-Jane is dead. The dissimilarity between the men's ability to handle stress illustrates the way that Valjean, having a stable inner state in relation to love and God, can handle mental struggle, while Henchard, who is isolated from everyone, is incapable of evaluating his decisions. This divergence may be one of the repercussions of Henchard not having a guiding figure in his narrative. As I previously discussed, the lack of guidance Henchard experiences, never having a figure like the Bishop to aid in his redemption, renders him incapable of change. Because his society labeled him an "outcast," Henchard is unable to obtain the help he needs in order to change his life (Hardy 313). There is not a figure within the novel that combats society's alienation of individuals in an effort to improve the suffering of others. Henchard's narrative illustrates the possible reactions society can produce within an individual. In the same way that Javert continuously seeks to be a part of society, Henchard wants nothing more than to have a status within the community.

Refocusing my analysis on Henchard's deceit when confronted with the possibility of losing his daughter to Newson, I want to highlight the motives behind these actions. When explaining Henchard's "impulse" of an answer, the narrator remarks that Henchard is driven by his desire not to be alone: "the regard he had lately acquired for Elizabeth, the new-sprung hope of his loneliness that she would be to him a daughter of whom he could feel as proud as of the actual daughter she still believed herself to be…[led to a] greedy exclusiveness in relation to

her" (Hardy 289). This action, similar to his previous interaction with Farfrae, demonstrates that Henchard is not motivated by the internal love that he has for Elizabeth-Jane. Instead, he is driven by his desire to have company. Throughout the novel, Henchard is dependent on the society around him, constantly fearing solitude. When he has power, wealth and the friendship of the townspeople and Farfrae, Henchard does not show any appreciation for his daughter; however, it is only in the face of losing everything that he clings to her. His fear-driven love illuminates his selfish motives. He disregards her desires throughout the novel, not letting her continue forming a relationship with Farfrae, all because of his personal motives. His focus on Elizabeth-Jane can be seen in his persistence to spy on her with a telescope when she meets Farfrae. Citing the fact that there are rumors of their courtship, Henchard begins to believe that a marriage between Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane is unavoidable. In both *Les Misérables* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the fear of isolation influences the protagonists and underlies the way understand their paternal obligations.

Upon discovering that Cosette and Marius are in love, Valjean is driven to despair due to his fear of being left alone and apart from Cosette. In the same manner, Henchard is driven by his fear of solitude. He wants nothing more than to have Elizabeth-Jane live with him and understands his relationship with her as a means to find happiness. However, in the conclusion of their narratives, both characters find themselves isolated. Upon learning of Valjean's past, Marius asks Valjean to remove himself from Cosette's life; similarly, once Newson returns to meet Elizabeth-Jane, Henchard decides to leave Casterbridge. Both cases illustrate the way truth has served as a catalyst for change. In Valjean's case, Marius' misinformed opinion of Valjean drives his request. In showing how Marius made a rash decision, Hugo is highlighting how Marius is acting the same way as the inhabitants of Digne at the beginning of the novel. He does

not take the time to hear Valjean's testimony--an action that he regrets once he discovers that it is because of Valjean that he survived his protest at the barricades. Moreover, Henchard senses his impending isolation as he sees Farfrae court Elizabeth-Jane and learns of Newson's arrival in town to meet Elizabeth-Jane. When Newson appears, Elizabeth-Jane learns of Henchard's past deceit; however, by then Henchard has chosen to leave Casterbridge. The similarity in narrative illustrates how an understanding of society in relation to outcasts, and groups labeled as the "other," drives individuals to find themselves isolated once they are ostracized from the community. It is because both of these men are understood outsiders that they feel the need to isolate themselves once their past actions are unveiled to those they love. In reacting this way, both characters show the way they are still influenced by society. In feeling shame for their past discretions, they impose upon themselves the same isolation that society dictated at the beginning of their narratives. The everlasting impact illustrates the degree to which these men are influenced by society's understanding of how its outcasts should act.

Moreover, the way Henchard is driven by his personal desires can likewise be seen in his understanding of the law in relation to his covenant. Because he is entirely focused on what benefits him, he does not take the time to analyze the heart, or faith, behind his oath; instead, he literally counts down the days until his oath is over:

> 'Only a fortnight more!'-'Only a dozen days!', and so forth, lessening his figures day by day…in twelve days I shall be released from my oath… and then I mean to enjoy myself (Hardy 227)

This monologue illustrates how Henchard understands his oath as contractual. He does not care about the merits, or heart, associated with his promise never to drink again but merely understands his promise as a debt that is owed. In counting down the days and starting to drink once the 21 years are done, he handles his oath is if it were a prison sentence. He served the time

that he had promised to God, and once he did, he felt as if this change was no longer required. In using this economic language, Henchard illustrates a mentality that is similar to Javert's. A covenant is transactional; however, within a religious context, the focus of the individual entering into the covenant should not be part of the exchange itself but rather the heart behind the oath. Both Henchard and Javert are influenced by a debt-focused perspective. Both understand their actions in relation to an exchange. In the same way Javert is unable to fathom owing an individual who is outside of society, Henchard understands his promise not to drink for 21 years as his part of the debt which is now payed and thus, he is free to act as he desires. In both men's attempt to be a part of society, allowing their professions within the government and business to influence their internal conception of the laws, they have adopted an extreme understanding of the law and applied it to every circumstance--even one that is meant to be focused on God and the heart and not societal laws.

It is the lack of internal, ever-lasting change that illustrates Henchard's selfish motives. In saying that he can once again "enjoy himself," Henchard reveals his self-driven aspirations (Hardy 227). He has not seen the last 21 years in relation to good but rather as a burden that he can now stop living with and enjoy himself. He never goes through any of the required changes within his own heart that could lead to redemption. Any love and self-awareness are driven by personal needs and thus are not genuine. Henchard never focuses on internal self-reflection for the purpose of changing his heart. Instead, he simply thinks about himself and the fact that he does not want to be alone. Paying attention to the society around him, and focusing on his fear of loneliness, he never gains true redemption. This is most clearly seen in one of the concluding scenes of the novel: his death.

At the conclusion of his narrative, Henchard calls himself an "outcast" (Hardy 314). Connecting this self-imposed label to the first chapter, I argue that this word illustrates the way Henchard should be understood as an individual outside of God's redemption. Unlike Valjean, who begins his story as an outcast and concludes it alongside his family and God, Henchard finds himself an outcast at the conclusion of his journey. This shows that he does not evolve or grow into the different components that lead to redemption but rather begins as an outcast and remains one throughout the novel. His death is never explicitly depicted in the novel. Once Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae, having married each other after the death of Lucetta, decide to return to Henchard, out of a "softened heart," they discover that he has died (Hardy 317). In saying that it was their heart that drove their decision to see Henchard, the narrator is allowing us to understand the merits of a heart-driven narrative. He allows us to see that there are individuals who are motivated by pure actions. While they have nothing to gain from seeking to re-establish a relationship with Henchard, they internally believe that it is the right thing to do. In not even discussing his death, the narrator emphasizes the way Henchard remains isolated in his demise. He is unable to gain the forgiveness and love of his family, but rather dies alone and never receives a proper burial. Henchard explicitly leaves a note asking not to be "bury'd in consecrated ground" (Hardy 321). He says that he does not want "mourners… [or] flours…" (Hardy 321). This note highlights the way Henchard, in his old age, surrenders himself to his fate. He asks for nothing but to be forgotten (Hardy 321). Even in memory, he desires not to be connected with anyone but rather to be left alone. He does not want anyone to remember him; instead, he is left, at the conclusion of his narrative, as an absolute exile from both society and God. In his inability to have a burial, he is unable to have his last experience with society by

means of the ritual surrounding mourners, flowers, and psalms sung in unison. Likewise, in never receiving redemption, he is also isolated from God.

In his article, "*The Mayor of Casterbridge* as Tragedy," literary scholar John Paterson highlights the fact that after having "forsaken Farfrae, [been] blasted by the disclosure that Elizabeth-Jane is not his daughter, and [been] deprived of the love and loyalty of Lucetta… Henchard will be forced… to rediscover in suffering and sorrow the actuality of the moral power he had so recklessly flouted" (Paterson 153). Paterson argues that the actions that Henchard commits throughout the novel leave him to endure a lonesome death due to his inability to uphold the "moral power" (Paterson 153). In furthering Paterson's claims, I argue that Henchard understood the external rules that govern society; however, he never took the time to pay attention to the internal spirit of the rules. He never examined the heart behind the moral tenets and did not change himself internally. It is because of his focus on the external that he finds himself suffering internally at the conclusion of the novel. In being tormented by his isolation and loneliness, he is not allowed peace at the conclusion of his narrative. Because Henchard does not internally change, he experiences ceaseless internal suffering and thus is not redeemed. In contrast, while Valjean experiences torture throughout his life, due to his changed heart, he is able to have a peaceful death. The difference between both scenes highlights the importance of the heart. While the narratives of Valjean and Henchard are similar, the differentiating factor lies in their internal motives. In showing the ability to die in peace, with God and those you love, Valjean's redemption narrative illustrates the importance of helping suffering individuals. It is because of the Bishop's help that Valjean is able to die peacefully. While, in contrast, finding himself isolated his entire life, Henchard dies entirely alone.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

The narratives that drive Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Thomas Hardy *The Mayor of Casterbridge* demonstrate how different individuals can be affected by society's understanding of the law and the way society treats its outcasts. Jean Valjean, Javert and Henchard each exhibit a distinct reaction towards being ostracized. Due to society's actions, Valjean's heart is hardened. He finds himself convicted by his fellow citizens and thus turns to hate. Permitting hatred to fill his heart, Valjean allows his internal nature to be altered because of society. However, due to the guidance and monetary help he receives from the Bishop, Valjean is able to change his heart by entering into a covenant with God thus obtaining redemption. Javert, having been born in a prison--a building that is by definition constructed for the purpose of imposing order on society's outcasts--rebels against his origin. He develops an extreme perception of the law and, in his attempt to be a part of society, adopts the understanding of the stark contrast between society's citizens and its outlaws. However, because he is driven by a debt-focused mentality that is directly correlated with society, Javert is incapable of understanding the heart behind a covenant with God and thus is unable to gain redemption. Henchard likewise adopts an exchange-driven mentality that does not allow him to enter into a faith-based covenant with God since he in entirely focused on his own motives and desires-- impeding his ability to achieve redemption.

The individual who is able to obtain redemption is the one who enters into a covenant with God and turns his attention beyond his own needs. In contrast, the characters that die alone are driven by their desire to integrate into society. Their deaths allude to an afterlife without God, thus illustrating that these individuals were unable to obtain redemption. The difference between each character's afterlife highlights how these novels serve to argue for the redemption of

society. In an effort to allow individuals an opportunity to die in peace, these novels serve to illustrate the changes that need to occur within society. Their comparison is important because it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how society can influence an individual.

Each narrative shows how a person can be affected by society and its creation of an outcast class. In its own intricate manner, each novel demonstrates the struggle associated with an individual's coping with society's influence. In doing so, the authors of both works are urging their readers to shift their understanding of their community from a societally driven rhetoric that aims at division to one that serves to help those found in the outcast class. Focused on giving society's outsiders aid, by means of describing characters such as the Bishop or writing a narrative that serves to create sympathy for Henchard, both authors are advocating that the societally marginalized receive help and thus gain the ability to experience the different components of redemption.

Works Cited

Adamson, Jane. "Who and What Is Henchard?- Hardy, Character and Moral Inquiry." *The Critical Review*, vol. 31, 1991.

Carson, Marion L.S. "PROSTITUTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT." *Setting the Captives Free: The Bible and Human Trafficking*, Lutterworth Press., 2015, pp. 78–91.

Carter, Tim. "Labelling Sinners in Luke." *Forgiveness of Sins*, James Clarke & Co Ltd., 2016.

Eastman, Susan. "Forgiveness and Redemption in Christian Understanding." *Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation: Christian and Muslim Perspectives*, Georgetown University Press., 2016, pp. 75–82.

Gasbarrone, Lisa. "RESTORING THE SACRED IN 'LES MISÉRABLES.'" *Religion & Literature*, vol. 40, 2008, doi:https://www.jstor.org/stable/25746527.

Grossman, Kathryn M. "Homelessness, Wastelands, and Barricades: Transforming Dystopian Spaces in Les Misérables." *Utopian Studies*, vol. 4, 1991.

"Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge: THE INFERNAL TRIANGLE ." *Between Self and Society: Inner Worlds and Outer Limits in the British Psychological Novel*, by John Rodden, University of Texas Press, 2016.

Hugo, Victor. "Détruire La Misère, Discours à L'Assemblée Nationale Législative 9 Juillet 1849." *Https://Fr.wikisource.org*, https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Détruire_la_misère,_Discours_à_l%27Assemblée_nationale_législative_9_juillet_1849

Hugo, Victor. *Les Misérables*. The Project Gutenberg, 2010.

Hugo, Victor. *Les Misérables*. Translated by Norman Denny, Penguin Books, 2012.

Lewis, Briana. "The Sewer and the Prostitute in Les Misérables: From Regulation to Redemption." *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, University of Nebraska Press, 11 June 2016, doi.org/10.1353/ncf.2016.0002.

Paterson, John. "'The Mayor of Casterbridge' as Tragedy." *Victorian Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, Dec. 1959.

Sanders, E.P. "Faith and Works in Ancient Judaism." *Comparing Judaism and Christianity: Common Judaism, Paul, and the Inner and the Outer in Ancient Religion*, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers., 2016, pp. 379–394.

Schoberg, Gerry. "Jesus' Table Fellowship with Tax Collectors and Sinners." *Perspectives of Jesus in the Writings of Paul: An Historical Examination of Shared Core Commitments with a View to Determining the Extent of Paul's Dependence on Jesus*, James Clarke & Co Ltd., 2013, pp. 28–63.

Tadmor, Naomi. "PEOPLE OF THE COVENANT AND THE ENGLISH BIBLE." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 22, ser. 6, 2012, pp. 95–110. *6*.

"The Mayor of Casterbridge." *Imagined Human Beings: a Psychological Approach to Character and Conflict in Literature*, by Bernard J. Paris, New York University Press, 1997.

"The Number of People." *A Brief History of the Masses: (Three Revolutions)*, by Stefan Jonsson, Columbia University Press, 2008.