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Down With Reticence: Modern Fiction, Censorship and the Politics of Sexual Representation

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By

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Abstract:

Down With Reticence: Modern Fiction, Censorship and the Politics of Sexual Representation

While in recent years the aesthetics and politics of British Modernism has been reevaluated and the concept and function of literary censorship redefined, Modernism's privileged status in the struggle against and the ultimate defeat of censorship remains largely unquestioned. This thesis argues, however, that the vital role played by Naturalist, New Woman and Edwardian writers in the battle against censorship and the dominant sexual ideologies that bolstered it has been significantly underestimated. It contends that late-Victorian and Edwardian writers not only produced transgressive sexual representations within the confines of an existent culture of censorship, but also reflexively incorporated themes and issues of censorship into their fiction. Moreover, the thesis situates this specific challenge to literary censorship within the broader intellectual challenge to traditional sexual morality posed by new scientific discourses, especially those that emerged from evolutionary biology.

After exploring recent critical conceptualisations and contextualisations of censorship in relation to other articulations of power, those texts that most forcefully contested Victorian sexual reticence are analysed. These include the Naturalist novels of Emile Zola, George Moore and Thomas Hardy, the New Woman fiction of Grant Allen and George Egerton, and the Edwardian sex novels of H. G. Wells, Hubert Wales and Herman Sudermann. While demonstrating how these texts deploy rhetorical strategies that challenge censorship and traditional sexual morality, this thesis also focuses on the

complex sexual politics of these narratives to demonstrate how texts can both oppose traditional morality but also reinforce dominant sexual ideologies in new paradigms of scientific rationality.

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Introduction: Showing the Wives and Servants

The complex relationship between the censorship of sexual representation and British modernism has been thoroughly investigated in recent years. In the last decade or so, three substantial studies, by Adam Parkes, Alison Pease and Celia Marshik, have analysed the importance of censorship to the development of modernism.[1] Parkes argues that "the development of literary modernism was shaped in significant ways by an ongoing dialogue with a culture of censorship"; Pease maps modernist interests in sexual representation from a "mutually generative dialectic" between the aesthetic and the pornographic to a modernist incorporation of "mass-cultural pornographic representations of the body, sex and sexuality"; and Marshik argues that a "censorship dialectic had a profound effect on modernism [...]" which "[...] contributed to the pervasive presence – both enlivening and politicised – of irony and satire in modernist works."[2] Although the strength and subtlety of the individual analyses offered by Parkes, Pease and Marshik should be acknowledged, all three studies emphasise the importance of viewing literary censorship through the lens of modernism and modernism through the exigencies of censorship. All three argue not only that censorship shaped modernism, but also that modernism challenged, and, to a considerable degree, delegitimized the censorship of literary texts. Although Parkes acknowledges that our readings of modernism continue to be conditioned by the "theatre of censorship", it was, he argues, modernism that implicitly put on trial the

[1] Adam Parkes, The Theatre of Censorship (New York: Oxford UP, 1996); Alison Pease, Modernism, Mass Culture, and the Aesthetics of Obscenity (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000); Celia Marshik, British Modernism and Censorship (New York: Cambridge UP, 2006).
[2] Parkes viii. Pease xii. Marshik 4.

culture of censorship.[3] In Pease's view, the vehicle of modernism was responsible for the acceptance of explicit sexual representations in literature[4] Moreover, while recognising that "censorship not only changes with the times but also changes the times", Marshik contests that the cultural history of modernism in relation to censorship is "[...] ultimately a story of success." "Modernism," she argues, "[...] responded to censorship and repressive purity crusades with a literature that placed 'purity' under scrutiny."[5] Interestingly, all three also locate significant late-Victorian antecedents to the modernist challenge to censorship. Parkes examines how Oscar Wilde's trials of the 1890's set "the stage for debates about the construction of subjectivity and sexuality that would surround modernism [...]"; Pease analyses how Algernon Charles Swinburne's poetry foregrounds "the increasingly charged dialectic between aesthetics and pornography"; and Marshik argues that Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his circle emerge "as privileged sites of modernist genesis".[6] All, to a greater or lesser degree, establish the work of significant late-Victorian literary transgressors as largely proto-modernist.

I begin with reference to the above studies because I will also explore the dialectic between censorship and literature, although I will not focus on transgressive modernist texts, but those published prior to the period of recognised literary modernism.[7] I will

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[3] Parkes argues, "that modern authors often dramatised issues of sexuality, literary expression, and censorship that surfaced in contemporary responses to their work." Parkes xi. In this way, modern novelists exploited, what Parkes calls, the theatre of censorship.
[4] Pease 13. Marshik 206.
[5] Marshik 206.
[6] Parkes 17-18. Pease 39. Marshik 14.
[7] The periodisation of modernism remains debatable. However, if it is acknowledged that its most recognised British practitioners produced their major fiction between 1915 and 1930 – Lawrence's The Rainbow (1915) and Women in Love (1920), James Joyce, Portrait of an Artist as A Young Man (1916) and Ulysses (1922), and Virginia Woolf, Jacob's Room (1922), Mrs Dalloway (1925) and To the Lighthouse (1927) – then the second and third decades of the twentieth century can broadly be considered as the most critical period of British literary modernism. The texts under discussion in this thesis were published between nearly thirty to five years before Lawrence's The Rainbow, and those that were written during the Edwardian period such as Wells's Ann Veronica are not usually classified as pertaining to Modernism. Such a periodisation of modernism also concurs with Michael Bell's "broad outlines" of the movement: "[...] its peak period in the Anglo-American context lay between 1910 and 1925." Michael

examine texts perceived as sexually transgressive not primarily as precursors to the modernist struggle against censorship, as in the work of the above scholars, but as transgressions within their own specific literary contexts and historical moments, and, above all, in relation to emerging scientific discourses of sexuality which, to a large extent, frame fictional representations of sex and sexuality in this period. By doing so, however, I seek to interrogate the relationship between modernism and censorship by examining how the strategies that pre-modernist, rather than proto-modernist, writers deployed expand or even problematise current conceptions of a pioneering modernism and its privileged, if complex, relationship with both censorship and sexual representation. My aim is thus not to begin with modernism as such but to end with it.

My analysis is also distinct from those mentioned above in examining texts outside the literary canon. I will examine established canonical texts of late-Victorian and Edwardian literature such as Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure (1895) and H. G. Wells's Ann Veronica (1909), but alongside largely forgotten novels such as Hubert Wales's The Yoke (1907) and Herman Sudermann's The Song of Songs (1909). I believe this is necessary to gauge the extent to which distribution, authorial intention, the valorisation of 'serious' literature, and reader reception and expectation influenced both censorship and the production of a variety of textual responses within a specific culture of censorship.

The reception of many transgressive texts shows that fiction was frequently read as posing political and social dangers through the moral pollution of the young, women, the lower classes and colonial subjects; groups frequently perceived as both the most vulnerable members of society, and, somewhat ironically, those most likely to threaten its stability. Crucially, though, this does not mean that such texts should be viewed as

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Bell, "The Metaphysics of Modernism," The Cambridge Companion to Modernism, ed. Michael Levenson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999): 9-32, at 9.

purely oppositional to dominant sexual ideologies. The assumption that novels that depicted sexual themes transgressively were, *per se,* politically emancipatory is complicated, for example, by New Woman novelists who often viewed male sexual pleasure in terms of female subjection, and chastity as liberation from male oppression. The overlap between feminism, social purity reform and eugenic belief also shows the complexity of the motivations to censor fiction. Each text examined complicates simple assumptions, showing complicities, concordances and ambiguities as well as antagonisms to dominant cultural positions. Furthermore, these texts frequently provide representations of sex and sexuality not only judged as transgressive by the dominant culture but also at variance with emerging cultures centred on sexual tolerance, psychological explication and self-definition through sexual identity.

Any study of the censorship of modern fiction needs to show awareness of how dominant national discourses of sexuality developed during this period.[8] There is still considerable debate about the hegemony and the precise periodisation of such movements as social purity and social hygiene as well as the strategies each adopted, be they those of

[8] There has been a plethora of studies about various aspects of Victorian sexual discourses. Below is by no means an extensive list of studies; however, the texts cited below offer a brief indication of the breadth of areas that have been researched. Discourses surrounding Victorian pornography have been thoroughly studied from Steven Marcus, The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England (London: Weidenfield, 1966) to Liza Sigel, Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England 1815-1914 (London: Rutgers UP, 2002). See also Walter Kendrick, The Secret Museum. Pornography in Modern Culture (Los Angeles: California UP, 1987). Studies on Victorian sexual behaviour and attitudes include Michael Mason, The Making of Victorian Sexuality (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995) and Judith R. Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London (Chicago: Chicago UP,1992). On the relationship between sex, gender and colonialism see Ann McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (New York: Routledge, 1995) and Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things (London: Duke UP, 1995). On sexual knowledge and ignorance: Roy Porter and Leslie Hall, The Facts of Life: The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain 1650-1950 (London: Yale UP, 1995). On prostitution and social purity movements see Paula Bartley, Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England 1860-1914 (London: Routledge, 2000), Alan Hunt, Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1999) and Frank Mort, Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830 (1987; London: Routledge, 2000). On the relationship between feminism and sexuality see Lucy Bland, Banishing the Beast: Feminism, Sex and Morality (London: Tauris Parke, 1995). On the growth of the sexology movement see Lucy Bland and Laura Doan, Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires (London: Polity, 1998).

coercion, regulation, anti-regulation, governance or suppression.[9] Reform groups and their tactics were diverse, and such diversity is further complicated when overlaid by gender and class constructions, as well as relations and affiliations to political movements such as feminism and socialism. Organisations such as the National Vigilance Association could foster a belief in individual self-governance, pressurise publishers and circulating libraries to withdraw offending material and appropriate the law in order to suppress what they considered objectionable and, in this, they were frequently abetted by a judicial and government willingness to prosecute.[10] The prosecutions of Henry Vizetelly for publishing Zola in 1888 and of John Long for publishing Hubert Wales's novel The Yoke twenty years later testify to the NVA's legal success. The social, political and cultural circumstances in which Henry Vizetelly was prosecuted for publishing the novels of Emile Zola might be distinct from those that led to the banning of Hubert Wales's sex novel, but there are also significant continuities of both ideology and practice throughout this period.[11] Censorship remained intimately linked with the control of subaltern groups and the limitation of access to texts that were considered socially dangerous should such groups have access to them.

Moreover, how subaltern groups were sexually represented remained of especial concern; the representation of female sexuality, in particular, was an abiding preoccupation. Indeed, what should become increasingly obvious during an investigation of the censorship of modern fiction is how important female sexuality was to the hegemony of the dominant national culture. As Alan Hunt notes, female sexuality formed the "fertile soil on which sexual discourses were constructed."[12] Notions of

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[9] For a discussion of critical approaches to social reform see Bartley. See also Alan Hunt 77-109 and Frank Mort 119-141 regarding the development of social hygiene.
[10] National Vigilance Association henceforth abbreviated to NVA.
[11] Henry Vizetelly was prosecuted twice in 1888 and 1889 for publishing expurgated versions of the novels of Emile Zola. His second prosecution earned Vizetelly three months in prison.
[12] A Hunt 91.

sexual correctness were at the core of patriarchal fears of the politicisation of women and of imperial preoccupations about the loss of empire.[13] It is only if such facts are acknowledged that a clear understanding can be grasped as to why such texts as The Song of Songs or The Yoke, seemingly innocuous in the twenty-first century, could be seen as so pernicious in the early twentieth.

This central importance of female sexuality to censorship debates was clearly a matter of political control. In a time of exceptional social and political uncertainty, and of the emergence of new reading cultures and literary genres, what the public read was deemed of considerable importance, especially to those who believed they were defending the values of the nation, often from 'degenerate' foreign influences. The belief that transgressive fictional representations of, especially, the female body could affect the health of the body politic is apparent in what I will call a rhetoric of disgust which invariably aligns moral disgust with fears of national debility. Its practitioners such as Samuel Smith and Arnold White indicate that literature could not only harm the individual but endanger the very health of the nation. Thus, I aim to stress throughout, as my title suggests, the politics of sexual representation, a politics that clearly emerges in the period under investigation and long before modernism.

A concomitant objective of this thesis is to demonstrate the complexity of the political challenge to a dominant national culture from the texts under examination. I do not wish to undermine the challenge writers as diverse as George Moore, Thomas Hardy and H. G. Wells posed to dominant cultural perspectives but to acknowledge the complexity of their sexual politics, which besides challenging Victorian sexual

[13] The opponents of New Woman writers, Iveta Jusová claims, "regarded the demands for the emancipation of women not as a remedy of the current social and economic crisis but as a cause of this social malady. They blamed the New Woman for the spread of socialism and nihilism, castigated her determination to redefine gender roles as undermining the long-term interests of the English nation, and sought to diminish the impact of the new fiction and drama by lambasting them as semi-pornographic and indecent." Iveta Jusová, The New Woman and The Empire (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2005) 4.

ideologies, could also reinforce such ideas, often by reinscribing them in new paradigms of scientific rationality.

In addition to recognising the complexities of social formations and cultural beliefs and practices, the complex processes of censorship also need consideration, especially as the broader parameters of censorial practice might include not only legal or even library censorship, but an array of other practices including moral censure and literary criticism. Therefore texts which were not judicially censored have also been included for discussion: George Egerton's Keynotes (1893), Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure (1895), Grant Allen's The Woman Who Did (1895) and H. G. Wells's Ann Veronica (1909) although not banned, suffered severe moral opprobrium and were in themselves clear responses to more direct forms of censorial practice. This study, then, is not only an examination of transgressive sexual representations in fiction within a specific historical period, but also an exploration of the way that texts can be ideologically appropriated and interpreted. It sets about the task of defining the function of discourses of sexuality within a dominant culture in a particular era through a consideration of those texts that such a culture censured and/or frequently sought to suppress.

The traditional view of literary censorship in the twentieth century sees censorship at its zenith during the period of modernism, locating censorship in an ideological struggle between a dominant national culture which advocated the increased regulation of sexual representation and an emerging liberal culture which endorsed greater sexual freedom and tolerance; a debate, taking the broad perspective, that, after the trial of Regina versus Penguin in 1959, seemed to have been conclusively decided in favour of an emerging culture of sexual tolerance.[14] The title

[14] During the period when Sir William Joynson Hicks was British Home Secretary from 1924 to 1929, there were nearly five hundred prosecutions. Alan Travis, Bound and Gagged. A Secret History of Obscenity in

of this introduction, indeed, comes from what has frequently been considered a critical moment, not only of that trial but also for the issue of artistic censorship in modern times. In the opening address for the prosecution, Mr. Griffith-Jones famously asked if Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928) was a book "that you would even wish your wife or your servants to read."[15] Griffith-Jones's rhetoric appeared risible because it inferred that certain class and gender-inflected ideological assumptions were still representative of the national dominant culture (including that men should control what women read, and of course, that most jury members had servants). Indeed, the position of censorship in the twentieth century appears to describe a parabola from its nineteenth-century valorisation as a viable instrument of social control where 'obscene' books no matter how 'literary' were perceived as threats to social order, to a general dismissal of their detrimental import, wherein the belief was widely held, and to a certain extent still is, that works of literary merit, by definition, cannot be considered obscene.

However, 'showing', as appropriated in my title, not only implies Griffith-Jones's meaning of allowing wives and servants to see what was deemed obscene literature, but also alludes to how women and servants were fictionally represented. Sexual representation cannot be separated from gender and class constructions as well as those of other subaltern groups. As 'showing' also implies an authority, invariably male, that permits someone to see and/or fictionally to represent sex and sexuality, I explore such authority, in the first case often judicial and, in the second, literary. The majority of novels censored by law, or for that matter by lending libraries, were written by men,

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Britain (London: Profile, 2000) 87. Hicks could boast, "Since January 1, 1923, there have been 73 prosecutions in this country in connection with the importation [...]." Parkes viii. However, it should be noted that in terms of volume more books were pulped by Scotland Yard in the fifties than in the thirties. In 1954, 167,000 texts were destroyed and "111 people were found guilty of publishing obscene libels compared with only 39 in 1935." Travis 95.

demonstrating the extent to which first-wave feminist issues were frequently appropriated by men. The reception of transgressive fiction was also gendered in the sense that women writers were more harshly criticised than their male counterparts, their morality often being divined through the nature of their subject matter. Writing of the appropriation of the figure of the prostitute in Virginia Woolf's fiction, Marshik comments, "Woolf's prostitutes had the power to sully their author in the eyes of a moralising readership."[16] One NVA worker could opine that "some of the vilest novels were written by women. It showed that when women gave way to sensual vices they were apt to sink to lower depths of degradation than men."[17] Such a gendered response to Woolf is not strikingly different from that to George Egerton, as the reception of her short stories demonstrates. The Athenaeum castigates the *femme incompromise* who instils a "feeling of repulsion" which "at times deepens into sheer disgust."[18]

This investigation will necessarily engage with various critical positions, theories and texts. Many such engagements will, of course, refer to specific texts, themes, and historical perspectives; however, there are three broad approaches that will need more thorough consideration. These I have called the polemical, the aesthetic and the deconstructive. The polemical approach, as Leslie Hall comments, "details the absurdities and biased assumptions under which the censorship of books, plays, pictures, and so on deemed obscene has taken place in Britain [...]."[19] This approach would include not only those who have written about specific trials and often defended certain texts (Max Ernst, Charles Rembar and Edward De Grazia for example), but also social

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[15] C.H. Rolphe, The Trial of Lady Chatterley: Regina v Penguin Books Limited (1961; London: Penguin, 1990) 17.
[16] Marshik 93.
[17] Marshik 93.
[18] "Short Stories," rev. of Keynotes, by George Egerton, Athenaeum 3 Feb. 1894: 146.
[19] Leslie Hall, rev. of Politics, Prudery and Perversions: The Censoring of the English

commentators such as Alan Travis and Nicholas De Jongh.[20] What I have called the aesthetic approach tends to focus on censorship through an examination of the significance of artistic movements such as modernism. Alison Pease, Adam Parkes, and Celia Marshik broadly typify such an approach. Both polemical and aesthetic approaches offer valuable insights and their contributions to the censorship debate are not mutually exclusive. It is the third approach, the deconstructive, strongly influenced by Michel Foucault's provocative analyses of power and repression in The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction (1976) which problematises the very notion of what censorship is, tending to delegitimize its significance as a form of social control in relation to other disciplinary techniques of power.[21] Because such an approach offers a radical critique that threatens to undermine any functional notion of censorship, it will be addressed at the outset. After discussing Foucault's influential critique of the repressive hypothesis that to a considerable extent provoked a fundamental questioning of the nature of censorship, I will consider some of those academics who have sought to extend Foucault's critique to the specific area of censorship.

Thus, the broad objectives of my approach should be clear. I aim to demonstrate that debates about the censorship of sexual representation in fiction emerge from an increasing 'scientification' of sexuality in the second part of the nineteenth century. I contend that it is these new scientific discourses of sexuality that challenge traditional and moral perspectives on sexuality and thus frame literary challenges to dominant sexual ideologies. Thus I challenge a perception that modernism, following the example of

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Stage, 1901-1968, by Nicholas de Jongh, Journal of the History of Sexuality 11 (2002): 504-513, at 504.

[20] Morris L Ernst and Alan U. Schwartz, Censorship: The Search For The Obscene (New York: Macmillan, 1965); Charles Rembar, The End of Obscenity: The Trials of "Lady Chatterley", "Tropic of Cancer" and "Fanny Hill" (New York: Random House, 1968); Edward De Grazia, Girls Lean Back Everywhere. The Law of Obscenity and the Assault on Genius (New York: Vintage, 1993); Alan Travis, Bound and Gagged: A Secret History of Obscenity in Britain (London: Profile, 2000); Nicholas De Jongh, Politics, Prudery and Perversion: The Censoring of the English Stage 1901-1968 (London: Methuen, 2001).

[21] Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality Vol. 1: An Introduction, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1976). Hereafter abbreviated to HS in the text.

proto-modernists, inaugurated a censorship dialectic that both challenged censorship and significantly affected the strategies and innovations of modernist writers themselves. Rather than privileging literary modernism in the battle against a dominant national culture, I shift the focus to view literary modernism's undoubted and often dramatic confrontation with censorship as very much part of an already well-established literary practice. This thesis contends that it was in what Raymond Williams refers to as the literary interregnum between Victorian and modernist masters that fiction set out to challenge traditional sexual morality.[22] Not only did pre-modernist novelists write within a culture of censorship, but they also incorporated themes and issues of censorship into their own fictional texts, often in very similar ways to the very different texts of modernism. Hence my argument accords with Fredric Jameson's denunciation of "the sterility of the standard aesthetic move, which consists in isolating 'modernism' as a standard by which to compare a whole series of historically and artistically incomparable writers," and, it might be added, to marginalise those writers that fall outside its aesthetic or its periodisation. I challenge the validity of judging pre-modernist writers through the lens of modernism as proto-modernist rather than writers responding to the seismic changes occurring within their own historical moment.[23] This study is, therefore, in broad agreement with Carola Kaplan and Anne Simpson's aim "to interrogate the critical tendency to designate literary periods under constricting aesthetic rubrics and to define

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[22] Williams wrote: "For us, our contemporaries, our moods appear in effect after the war of 1914-1918. D.H. Lawrence is a contemporary, in mood, in a way that Butler and Shaw are clearly not. As a result, we tend to look at the period 1880-1914 as a kind of interregnum. It is not the period of the masters, of Coleridge or of George Eliot. Nor yet is it the period of our contemporaries, of writers who address themselves, in our kind of language, to the common problems we recognise." Culture and Society 1780-1950 (New York: Columbia UP, 1983) 161.

[23] Fredric Jameson, A Singular Modernity: Essays on the Ontology of the Present (London: Verso, 2002) 28. Jameson proceeds to disparage the idea of a clear separation between realism and modernism, pointing out that "each new realism arises out of dissatisfaction with the limits of the realisms that preceded it, but also and more fundamentally that realism itself in general shares precisely that dynamic of innovation we ascribe to modernism as its uniquely distinguishing feature." Jameson 123.

them by discrete thematic preoccupations [...]."[24]

The complex sexual politics of writers of supposedly transgressive texts can often be overlooked by polemical writers seeking to emphasise the repressive nature of judicial or state censorship. Thus while my opening chapter challenges some of the tenets of what I have called the "deconstructive approach", and my broader theoretical aim is to dispute the favoured status of literary modernism upheld by the "aesthetic approach", I also seek to complicate some of the assumptions of the "polemical approach" which often moralises the issue of censorship between laudable progressive transgressors and risible reactionary censors, or, as Richard Burt notes, "the censors are demonic philistines, the censored *ipso facto* are clever, noble and good."[25] Hence, I hope to give a more complete account of the dynamics of literary censorship than the deconstructionist, aesthetic and polemical approaches generally allow.

Chapter One, "Power, Sex, Censorship and Repression," considers the recent debates about what censorship is and how it relates to the nature and function of power. This chapter aims to contextualise traditional perceptions of both state power and the socio-psychological function of sexual repression within these recent conceptualisations of censorship and power. It develops a post-productive hypothesis that seeks to examine the importance of hegemonic and state power within Foucault's broader analysis of power given in his critique of the repressive hypothesis. It also demonstrates how the specific challenge to censorship relates to emerging scientific discourses of sexuality that more broadly contested dominant ideologies of sexual behaviour. Such a framing of literary censorship is essential as less than modernist innovation, it is a new incitement to speak of sex specifically within these new scientific discourses that leads to a literary challenge

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[24] Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B. Simpson, introduction, Seeing Double: Revising Edwardian and Modernist Literature (New York: Saint Martin, 1996): vii-xxi, at vii.
[25] Richard Burt, introduction, The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism and the Public Sphere (Minnesota: U of Minnesota P, 1994): xi-xix, at xiii.

to Victorian sexual reticence. This chapter also contests that the culture of censorship needs to be situated within national and imperial ideologies so as to demonstrate that censorship functioned as a means of policing subaltern groups. Finally, this chapter appropriates Julia Kristeva's conception of abjection to link perceptions of moral disgust to social opprobrium.

Chapter two, "Bound to Reticence," considers the impact of the censored novels of Zola in their specific English context. This examination seeks to demonstrate not only the nature of Zola's offence and how it related to national and imperial ideologies, but also shows how Zola's novels reproduce social, aesthetic and political perceptions which bolster dominant national ideologies. Moreover, I explore the manner in which Zola intervenes in the contemporary debate that privileged a scientific view of biological instinct over the socio-cultural imposition of sexual morality.

Chapters three and four, "Queering the Scene in A Mummer's Wife and Esther Waters" and "Steeped in Sex", analyse how British realists, following in the wake of Zola's naturalist fiction, while not producing the graphic representations of sexuality to be found in Zola, do, nevertheless, challenge traditional views of sexuality and thematically incorporate issues of censorship within fictional texts long before modernist writers. Thus A Mummer's Wife (1885) is viewed as a fictional extension of Moore's polemical non-fictional attacks on the circulating libraries as Jude the Obscure is seen to echo Hardy's concerns about censorship raised in "Candour in English Fiction". However, I argue that Moore, in spite of his virulent opposition to a censorious society, is complicit with contemporary dominant ideologies of sexuality. I examine the anti-feminist strands of A Mummer's Wife, and show that by muting the effect of his earlier experimentation with Naturalism in Esther Waters (1894), Moore produces a novel that, for all its force as social critique, resonates with reactionary ideas of the race mother, and

valorises the role of motherhood at the expense of female sexual desire. Similarly, in chapter four, I demonstrate how Jude the Obscure is based upon an aesthetic which reinscribes the very polarities of class and gender the novel ostensibly attacks.

Chapter five, "Defying Mrs Grundy", and chapter six "Tommyrotics", examine censorship in relation to New Woman fiction, focusing respectively on Grant Allen's hill-top novels The Woman Who Did (1895) and The British Barbarians (1895) and George Egerton's collections of short stories Keynotes (1893) and Discords (1894). Allen's novels are viewed in the context of social purity reform and Christian morality. I demonstrate how The Woman Who Did can be read more profitably as a strident attack on social purity reformers and 'advanced women' than as fictional polemics espousing free love and/or New Woman values. As with George Moore's novels, The Woman Who Did and The British Barbarians thematically incorporate censorship issues and attack those social and political perspectives that underpin the literary censorship of sexual representation. George Egerton's short stories are also located within the context of the censorship dialectic. I show how Egerton's fiction contests and reinforces dominant cultural perspectives. In particular, I emphasise how Egerton's stories challenge ideas of male superiority by positing an essentialist view of women in direct opposition to patriarchal constructions of female identity.

Chapter Seven, "Saving England", views the Edwardian sex novel in the light of censorship, analysing two English novels – Hubert Wales's banned The Yoke (1907) and H. G. Wells's heavily criticised Ann Veronica (1909) – along with the banned English translation of Hermann Sudermann's Das hohe Lied (1908), The Song of Songs (1909). I show the extent to which these novels continue to polemically challenge traditional views of morality as well as assert scientific and pseudo-scientific viewpoints often aligned with imperial ideologies of national efficiency. As with previous novels discussed, I will

demonstrate the extent that these novels also participate in what Adam Parkes calls a theatre of censorship. However, while often attacking traditional views of Christian morality, as with earlier novels examined, Edwardian sex novels often reinscribe patriarchal values that privilege the role of women as mothers at the expense of intellectual, professional and political advancement. Finally, I read Hermann Sudermann's The Song of Songs as both an attack on traditional nineteenth-century morality and a transgression of the narrative logic of the Naturalist decline plot.

It is not surprising that issues of literary censorship should be reflected in current studies of modernism, as general interest in the censorship of sexual representation has recently reinvigorated debate. The difficulty of regulating new media technologies such as the internet has caused much public concern, as has the seeming 'pornographization' of mainstream culture through the increased presence of pornographic images and discourses. Walter Kendrick claims that there is also a "new public frankness about sexual organs and acts."[26] Moreover, feminist concerns about the sexual representation and abuse of women in pornography as well as gay protests against homophobic representations continue to complicate the notion that censorship consists of a conflict between a reactionary right and libertarian left as frequently perceived by, among others, the defence lawyers of celebrated literary texts.[27] Perennial concerns about the detrimental effect of rock and rap lyrics on the young also continue to raise the issue of the extent to which artistic representation can claim societal dispensation from charges of obscenity. The controversy surrounding Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses (1988), moreover, shows the complexity of censorship issues when the location of a dominant national culture becomes increasingly difficult in fragmented and ethnically diverse

[26] Kendrick 260.
[27] Charles Rembar and Edward de Grazia are prime examples.

societies. The issue of censorship, of whatever type, and in whatever media, is one that clearly resonates in the first decade of the twenty-first century. By examining issues of censorship of the past, I also seek to provide new perspectives on contemporary views of sexuality and censorship which emerged, in part, from the censorship struggles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Chapter One: Power, Sex, Censorship and Repression

Notions of what power is, how it operates and where it is located, or locates itself, have dramatically changed over the last thirty years or so. Specifically, Michel Foucault's contribution to the current understanding of power has been immense, plausibly causing the same kind of epistemic shift that Foucault claimed for the ideas of Freud and Marx.[1] The idea of a static, reified, hierarchical power imposed from above is jettisoned for a more complex notion of a dynamic, circulatory power of disciplinary technique; power is not possessed by one dominant agent but is distributed through social networks, and mediated through social alignments (HS 94). Power is centred less on legitimacy and sovereignty, but deployed through a variety of discourses and techniques. According to Foucault, power is no simple negation: "What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms, knowledge, produces discourses."[2] Foucault's 'analytics' of power challenges not only the significance of the idea of a centralised power wielded by the state, but also that of the ideological force of repression. The former is challenged by privileging both the operations of a diffused power from below and emphasising normative practices outside the law, and the latter by asserting an exponential growth in sexual discourses in the modern era. Such a conceptualisation of power is contrary to the idea of the imposition, self or societal, of the kind of silencing normally associated with repression or suppression. Consequently, a narrative of sexual emancipation in which sexually explicit or interested texts have

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[1] In his preface to Anti-Oedipus, Foucault writes, "During the years 1945-1965 (I am referring to Europe), there was a certain way of thinking correctly, a certain style of political discourse, a certain ethics of the intellectual. One had to be on familiar terms with Marx, and not let one's dreams stray too far from Freud." Michel Foucault, preface, Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: U of Memphis P, 2003): xi-xiv, at xi.

traditionally played a crucial liberational role is delegitimized by Foucault, who rejects the idea of what he calls the repressive hypothesis in favour of a more important "multiplication of discourses concerning sex" (HS 18). Thus, Foucault challenges the centrality of censorship to the exercise of judicial and ideological power.[3]

However, a Foucauldian conception of power is not as incompatible with such concepts as repression and censorship as it first appears. Although there should be no simple acceptance of traditional views of censorship, the Foucauldian consensus in its provocative challenge to traditional notions of a reified, sovereign power, not only tends to minimise the significance of both judicial and what might be called discursive power at the hegemonic level, but also, at times, produces a view of power which is as ahistorical as that which it seeks to replace. I will demonstrate that many elements of Foucauldian power can, in fact, be accommodated within an 'analytics' of power that recognises both the importance of the sites of judicial and ideological power and the operation of power in its more dispersed and mediated form.

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[2] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972-77, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980): 109-133, at 119.

[3] Foucault rejected the term 'ideological' as inadequate because of its economically determining nature, its reference "to something of the order of a subject" and that it is posited as always standing "in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth." Gordon 118. Commentators like McCarthy have noted Foucault's reductionist perception of power and how Foucault's own concerns with governance could be considered to concern a notion, if not directly stated, of ideology: "It is true that Foucault persistently rejected the notions of ideology and ideology critique and denied that ideology could be understood in those terms. But the concept of ideology he criticised was rather crude, and the criticisms he offered were far from devastating to the more sophisticated versions propounded by the Frankfurt school. It is, in fact, difficult to see why Foucault's efforts to analyse, "how we govern ourselves and others by the production of truth," so as to "contribute to changing people's way of perceiving and doing things' do not belong in the same genre." Thomas McCarthy, "The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School," Political Theory 18 (1990):437-469, at 440. My perception of ideology does not necessarily link economic determinacy with the "production of truth", nor in fact does it necessarily posit either an autonomous subject or a concept of truth beyond discourse. I will argue, however, that discourses can be dominant and also that they can relate to economic interests, which is not necessarily to disagree with Foucault but to draw attention to gaps within his work.

Foucault and the Repressive Hypothesis

The traditional history of censorship in the twentieth century dovetails neatly with what Foucault calls the repressive hypothesis. This hypothesis states that sexual repression developed in tandem with capitalism. It claims that the only legitimate sexual practices – illegitimate sexualities having been consigned to the brothel and the mental hospital – concerned conjugal and reproductive sex; that such practices were fostered by a work imperative suspicious of time-consuming and distracting pleasures, and that, consequently, the sexual liberation from "taboo, non-existence and silence" was intrinsically allied to, according to Foucault's interpretation of the repressive hypothesis, the cause of political liberation from capitalism. At the heart of sexual repression was the imposition of silence, clearly evident in state censorship. This repressive silence, so the traditional narrative of censorship claims, was forcefully challenged by modernist writers such as D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce who bravely risked social opprobrium and penury in a quest for artistic freedom that could often only be vouchsafed by a frank depiction of sexuality. Pitted against the forces of artistic and sexual liberation was a reactionary, philistine and, at times, doltish judiciary bent on keeping the ideological lid of sexual repression firmly in place.

Many of the protagonists of the struggle against censorship, such as Charles Rembar and Morris Ernst, both celebrated defence lawyers, perpetuated the narrative of brave new artist battling judicial suppression.[4] Referring to John Woolsey, the judge who 'liberated' Ulysses (1922) for the United States, Ernst and Schwartz perceive that the issue was largely a question of understanding the artistic pursuit of truth within the still contemporaneous Victorian context of sexual repression: "Because Woolsey knew how to

[4] See Rembar, and Ernst and Schwartz.

read he realised, as he says, that for Joyce to abandon his 'stream of consciousness' technique from time to time in order to satisfy the more Victorian among us would be dishonest and 'artistically inexcusable'."[5] As late as 1992, Edward De Grazia, another defence lawyer, was making a similar defence of artistic freedom, and, as the subtitle of his book suggests, viewing the law of obscenity as an assault on genius.[6] D. H. Lawrence also subscribed to the belief that genuine artistic endeavour had no truck with obscenity. Lawrence argued that his writing was only considered obscene by "censor-morons [...]. People without minds may go on being shocked, but they don't matter."[7] In reference to Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928), Lawrence argued that it was, "an honest healthy book, necessary for us today," as opposed to "genuine pornography" which "you can recognise by the insult it offers, invariably, to sex, and to the human spirit."[8] This view that the literary merit of a text voided the possibility that it could be obscene had perhaps one of its greatest advocates in Judge Woolsey himself who, in his 1933 milestone verdict, stated that "the effect of Ulysses on the reader undoubtedly is somewhat emetic, nowhere does it tend to be an aphrodisiac."[9] What others have referred to as Woolsey's "well intentioned lies" clearly viewed texts of aesthetic value as being inconsonant with pornography.[10]

In terms of the repressive hypothesis, Griffith-Jones's rhetorical remark about wives and servants at the Lady Chatterley trial marked, if not exactly the death of state suppression of what was deemed worthy literature, a body blow from which such state censorship would never quite recover. The dawning of the sexually permissive society,

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[5] Ernst and Schwartz 100.
[6] The title of Edward De Grazia's study is Girls Lean Back Everywhere: The Law of Obscenity and the Assault on Genius (New York: Vintage, 1993).
[7] D. H. Lawrence, Sex, Literature and Censorship, ed. Harry T. Moore (New York: Viking, 1953) 84.
[8] Lawrence Sex 84. Lawrence Sex 69. However, neither D. H. Lawrence nor Virginia Woolf extended such a view to Joyce's Ulysses. Both considered the novel obscene. D. H. Lawrence referred to it as "the dirtiest, most indecent, obscene thing ever written." Parkes 101. Woolf thought Ulysses "the conscious and calculated indecency of a desperate man who feels that in order to breathe he must break windows." Parkes 168.
[9] Ernst and Schwartz 100.

more tolerant and democratic than Griffith-Jones's patriarchal land of servile servants and docile wives had arrived. As the famed opening of Phillip Larkin's "Annus Mirabilis" states: "Sexual intercourse began/ In nineteen sixty-three/ (Which was rather late for me)/ Between the end of the Chatterley ban/ And the Beatles's first LP."[11] Charles Rembar also champions the revolutionary nature of liberation from artistic censorship. Writing in 1968 he comments:

> Until recently there was no contest; almost nothing that seriously offended certain prevailing concepts of morality and decency was allowed to be published. Now the fighting, which seems just begun, in a short time draws to a close. The radical nature of the change and the rapidity with which it has occurred earn it the name revolution.[12]

The traditional view of the twentieth-century struggle to liberate art from censorship is based on at least two contestable premises. First, that sexual liberation from a monolithic ideological repression was partly engineered by a literary vanguard – and Rembar would probably add their legal defenders – who challenged a post- but neo-Victorian repression of sexuality which itself was founded on a politico-economic rationale. Second, that these 'literary' representations of sexuality could not, by their very aesthetic nature, be either obscene or harmful; consequently, artistic representations of sexuality were separated from pornography which must be considered, by definition, without artistic merit. The latter point will be investigated in the course of this thesis; the former will be addressed here through a discussion of Foucault's critique of repression.

Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis problematises this traditional historical narrative of censorship. If, as Foucault asserts, censorship is but one local strategy within a range of sexual discourses, then the significance of the role censorship plays in the regulation of modern sexuality is minimised. Moreover, the paradigm shift

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[10] The phrase "well intentioned lies" was first utilised by Leslie Fielder but appropriated by Paul Vanderham in James Joyce and Censorship: The Trials of Ulysses (New York: New York UP, 1998).
[11] Phillip Larkin, Collected Poems, ed. Anthony Thwaite (London: Faber, 1988) 167.
[12] Rembar 11.

from sexual repression to sexual permissiveness is also brought into question by Foucault's analysis or, at least, contextualised by these more significant policings of sexuality. Furthermore, Foucault's critique opens up the possibility of viewing modern literature as another discourse, clearly distinct from discourses in the human sciences but like them in fostering the construction of a *Scientia Sexualis* based on confessional techniques and procedures. In this case, the modernist confrontation with censorship might be seen less as a political tussle between sexually progressive and reactionary forces, but rather viewed as providing yet another incitement to the modern subject to talk himself or herself more firmly inside the carceral society.[13]

Foucault does not totally dismiss the repressive hypothesis as such, but places it "[...] back within a general economy of discourses on sex in modern societies since the seventeenth century" (HS 11). Repression must be viewed in relation to the "veritable discursive explosion" (HS 17) surrounding sex and sexuality. Walter, the author of My Secret Life (1888), a journal of sexual libertinage written in the late nineteenth century, evidences less an honesty that, according to Steve Marcus, is "principled in character and is specifically directed against the prevailing moral code [...]" than, in Foucault's words, "[...] the most direct and in a way the most naïve representative of a plurisecular injunction to talk about sex" (HS 22).[14]

Any discussion of moral regulation, therefore, according to Foucault, cannot simply view repression, and specifically censorship, as the imposition of silence on sexual discourse. Censorship and repression must be viewed as one strategy of political regulation among other deployments of sexuality. Neither is silence the absolute limit of

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[13] This is very close to the approach that D. A. Miller adopts. As he claims, "To the extent that the novel belongs to the disciplinary field that it portrays, our attention needs to go beyond the policing forces represented in the novel to focus on what Foucault might call the 'micro-politics' of novelistic convention." D. A. Miller, The Novel and the Police (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1988) 21.

[14] My Secret Life: The Sex Diary of a Victorian Gentlemen (Amsterdam: Pendulum, 1888). Marcus 163.

discourse, but merely one element functioning in relation to others:

> Silence itself – the thing one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers – is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element which functions alongside the thing said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies (HS 27).

Censorship is not only placed within an economy of other discourses, but it also can no longer be viewed simply as an imposition from above, an attempt by the ruling classes to control working-class bodies and thus capitalist production: "On the contrary, the most rigorous techniques were formed and, more particularly, applied first, with the greatest intensity, in the economically privileged and politically dominant classes" (HS 120). Foucault also disputes that repression was built upon what he calls a juridico-discursive power where power, "[...] is incapable of doing anything, except to render what it dominates incapable of doing anything either, except for what the power allows it to do" (HS 85). Power, for Foucault, is "not something that is acquired, seized, shared, something that one holds or lets slip away – power is exercised from innumerable points in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations" (HS 94). Power comes from below and is not external to discourse. It is intentional but non-subjective and potentially productive. An analytics of power must be freed from the law, and this also applies specifically to our conception of power relations regarding sex: "We must construct an analytics of power that no longer takes law as a model and a code [...]. We must at the same time conceive of sex without the law, and power without the king" (HS 90-91).

That Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis has been influential is undeniable. When Robert C. Post, editing a book on censorship, can claim that Foucault has invited us to "escape from the limiting field of juridical sovereignty and State institutions, and instead base our analysis of power on the study of techniques and tactics

of domination", he is echoing a broad consensus of many academics.[15] Richard Burt, editor of another collection of essays on censorship, also champions a Foucauldian view of power by contesting the idea that "censorship involves a negative exercise of power" and moves "unidirectionally along a binary axis of the repressed and free".[16] The "broadly shared assumptions" of the book's other contributors are clearly influenced by Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis.[17]

However, the limits of Foucault's critique have also been noted. Roy Porter and Leslie Hall contest the view that a mere profusion of discourses denies the repressive hypothesis:

> To refute the repressive hypothesis, Foucault seemed to think it sufficient to adduce the mere fact of the multiplication of discourses and its genres. What he failed to do in respect to sexual discourse was to pay sufficient attention to its tone and implications, those whom it included, those it excluded, those it empowered, those it disqualified.[18]

Specifically, Foucault dismisses hierarchical power relations and declines to discuss how they might relate to his conception of power as a network in which all participate as both vehicle and effect. The problem has been neatly stated by Thomas McCarthy:

> And while he targets for genealogical analysis social institutions that are clearly marked by hierarchies of power, his own conception of power as a network of relations in which we are all, always and everywhere, enmeshed, devalues questions of who possesses power and with what right, of who profits and who suffers from it, and the like.[19]

McCarthy as well as Porter and Hall are right to insist that Foucault's "general economy of discourse" fails to discern the hegemonic differences of regulating professional sexual discourses, middle-class discourses of self-regulation and working-class regulation, alternative and frequently politically resistant discourses of both middle and working-

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[15] Robert Post, introduction, Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1998): 1-15, at 1.
[16] Burt, introduction, xvi.
[17] Burt, introduction, xvi.
[18] Roy Porter and Leslie Hall, The Facts of Life: The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain 1650-1950 (London: Yale UP, 1995) 9.

class sexuality and various discourses of class, sexuality and gender related to the colonial subject. Alan Hunt, who largely subscribes to Foucault's theoretical objective in The History of Sexuality, also finds Foucault's failure to differentiate the hegemonic significance of various discourses problematic:

> While I endorse Foucault's general theoretical objective of disrupting the equation of power with repression, this does not entitle him to refuse recognition to the fact that one of the results of "the incitement" to sexual discourse that he identified is that some discourses achieve a dominant or hegemonic position.[20]

Hunt reminds us that such dominant discourses can be unstable and that they can only "reproduce their primacy in competition with alternative discourses," but it seems undeniable that certain discourses achieve dominance.[21] Foucault's general economy of sexual discourses can only be accepted if repression retains, as Hunt suggests, its place in a dominant discourse even if it is viewed as functioning alongside other discourses designed to regulate sexuality. Hunt is correct in recognising a dominant discourse and in recognising that this dominant discourse "within which Victorians thought and spoke of sex was a repressive one."[22] The scientific culture of sexology which emerged in the late-Victorian period might have led, as Foucault claims, "to the medicalisation of the effects of confession [...]" placing sexuality "under the rule of the normal and the pathological" (HS 67), but it could also be co-opted by sexual liberation movements and, as such, be suppressed by the state. The banning of Havelock Ellis's Sexual Inversion (1896) comes to mind.[23] Porter and Hall claim that Ellis's name became "a metonym for the sexology

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[19] McCarthy 445.
[20] A. Hunt, 88.
[21] A. Hunt 89. Judith Walkowitz who is also "sympathetic to the operation of power in a Foucauldian sense, as a dispersed and decentred force that is hard to grasp and possess fully," still sets out to illustrate "how different individuals and social groups had access to different levels and sources of power." Walkowitz 8.
[22] A. Hunt 89.
[23] Havelock Ellis, Studies in the Psychology of Sex Volume 2: Sexual Inversion (Watford: Watford UP, 1897). However, it should be kept in mind that, according to Ruth Brandon, Sexual Inversion was largely banned because of a relationship between the book's publisher Dr. Roland de Villiers and the Legitimation League, an anarchist group which was under surveillance by the police partly for its publication of The Adult. The book was needed, as Brandon comments, as "a legally viable pretext to close down the League

of a liberal celebration of diversity."[24]

To summarise, what is accepted here about Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis is that first, repression was not the only regulatory strategy imposed on the population. Foucault is surely correct to cite other deployments of sexuality alongside those of repression. Second, there may well indeed have been an incitement to sexual discourse but such an incitement needs to be analysed in conjunction with the hegemonic relations that contextualise it. Third, that the nineteenth century did witness the supplanting of religious ethical discourses of sexuality by a medico-sexual regime which "took hold of the family milieu" (HS 42), even though ethical and religious discourses remained firmly residual. Fourth, that modern sexuality is constituted through discourse, and the denial of the myth that, "sex is outside discourse and that only the removing of an obstacle, the breaking of a secret, can clear the way leading to it [...]" (HS 34) can be accepted. Fifth, that any notion of regulation or indeed governance cannot merely concern itself with the agency of the judiciary or the state and a top/down notion of power.[25] The importance of socially diverse purity reform movements to the regulation of sexual practice in the late-Victorian and Edwardian period cannot be denied.

However, what can be challenged in Foucault's critique is the idea that discourses cannot be dominant, that a dominant if not completely stable, and certainly not static, discourse did exist, and that this discourse was ultimately a repressive one. In fact, what the period under analysis witnesses is a complicated struggle for dominance between

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and The Adult; and this was conveniently provided by Havelock Ellis's book on sexual inversion." Ruth Brandon, The New Women and the Old Men: Love, Sex and the Woman Question (London: Secker, 1990) 125. An account of the bizarre circumstances of the banning of Ellis's book can be found in Brandon 122-129.

[24] Porter and Hall 166.

[25] However, it should be acknowledged that as regards understanding processes of literary censorship and censure, and taking into account that there is some validity in accepting Foucault's displacement of the law in favour of a strategical model of power, the law itself actually aided the formation of a significant contestatory site (a theatre of censorship, as Adam Parkes calls it) between dominant discourses of traditional morality and a variety of emerging, competing and, at times, contradictory discourses.

discourses that frame sexual behaviour within a traditional religious morality and the emergence of discourses that delineate, classify and analyse sexual behaviour under the rubric of science. Such discourses often not only challenge traditional Christian morality *per se*, but specifically demonstrate its inefficacy in terms of abetting the project of nation and empire. Furthermore, Foucault's comments at the level of epoch generalise some of the specific and multiple historical formations of bourgeois culture apparent at the end of the nineteenth century, including the complexity of both feminist and socialist movements within a specific imperial context, as well as the influence of marginalised groups such as homosexuals and colonial subjects. Scientific culture was also more polyvalent and diverse than Foucault allows. Local conditions also problematise some of Foucault's generalisations. For example, the significance of the confessional to the development of sexual discourses, so Porter and Hall contest:

> [...] is somewhat problematic when applied to a Protestant country with a tradition of reticence [...]. The making of sexual knowledge in Britain has largely been characterised by attempts to get away from human confessions and into hormones, hamsters or dry statistics.[26]

It is precisely these local conditions of censorship in Britain that show considerable variance with Foucault's view of repression and censorship to the multiple operations of power. Below I will outline a post-Foucauldian model, a model which does not merely lapse back to a retrogressive Marxism, mechanically equating an ideology of social and specifically sexual control with the broader development of Western capitalism. Such a connection between sexual regulation and the progress of capitalism is untenable.[27] My post-productive hypothesis amalgamates aspects of Foucault's critique of a top/down

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[26] Porter and Hall 180.

[27] As Anna-Marie Smith states regarding France: "At times, for example, the capitalists themselves came into conflict with social purity movements. Where mid-nineteenth-century industrialists in France simply aimed to secure the most efficient labour performed by any able-bodied worker, social purity movements sought to keep men and women apart in the workplace and to keep children out of the factories altogether. The modern factory was threatening for the moralists of the day since, unlike domestic service and family home-based piecework, its structure did not reproduce the traditional patriarchal hierarchy." Anne-Marie

perception of repressive power with a modified view of power that can be both distributed through a variety of social networks but still pertains to a dominant culture that, at times, deploys the apparatus of the state at both executive and judicial levels in an attempt to maintain and extend its dominance.

A Post-Productive Hypothesis[28]

The first point to be made about this hypothesis is that it seeks to avoid the binary of scarcity/abundance that has so far been implied by the repressive/productive argument. As stated, a post-productive hypothesis needs to affirm the possibility of a dominant discourse but also a diffusion of power and technologies of power without contradiction. However, an example of this can be found in the operations of purity reform movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Such groups employed a variety of techniques of power aimed at the self and others alongside a struggle to enforce their objectives through the apparatus of state power. As Hunt argues, citing Foucault's essay "The Subject of Power", government:

> [...] designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or states might be directed: the government of children, of souls of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not cover only the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection, but also modes of action, more or less considered, which were designed to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others.[29]

This governance of the self directly relates to the way social purity groups functioned, specifically in terms of the education of self-control. However, many of these groups also

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Smith, "Missing Poststructuralism, Missing Foucault: Butler and Fraser on Capitalism and the Regulation of Sexuality," Social Text 19 (2001): 103-125, at 109.

[28] The term "Productive Hypothesis" is used in Carolyn Dean, "The Productive Hypothesis: Foucault, Gender and the History of Sexuality," History and Theory 33 (October 1994): 271-296.

clamoured for the reform of others and frequently leant upon judicial and executive power to enforce their goals. The socially diverse groups that constituted the purity movement certainly sought to put sex firmly under the control of the law: one member of the NVA insisted that "the law is schoolmaster to the whole community, preventing wrong by whipping most of the citizens into a condition of obedience."[30] In fact, taking the lead from several other socially diverse purity groups, the NVA had an enormous influence on a variety of sexual regulations in the late-Victorian and Edwardian era including The Indecent Advertisements Act (1889), The Vagrancy Act (1898), The Incest Act (1908) and The Criminal Law Amendment Act (1912), the latter a specific response to the spurious belief in white slavery.[31]

Thus, a post-productive hypothesis resists neither a notion of power as centralised in judicial or executive authority nor the idea of power as diffused throughout the governance of society. What it challenges is Foucault's strategic abandonment of judicial power in his privileging of other types of power relations. Foucault asserts: "We have engaged for centuries in a type of society in which the juridical is increasingly incapable of coding power, or serving as its system of representation" (HS 89). Although Foucault may well be correct to assert that power can be coded more capably in other forms, judicial power is still significantly residual in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; in considering this historical era, we have to conceive of sex as both inside and outside the law.

That groups like the NVA operated in conjunction with state power as regards literary censorship can be seen in the Vizetelly case of 1888. A private prosecution began against him by solicitors retained by the NVA soon became a crown prosecution.

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[29] A Hunt 4. Michel Foucault, "The Subject of Power," The Essential Works of Michel Foucault: Power 1954-84, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: New Press, 2000): 326-348.
[30] Katherine Mullin, James Joyce, Sexuality and Social Purity (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) 21.
[31] Mullin 24.

Vizetelly's son Ernest wrote that his father:

> [...] at first had felt fairly confident respecting the issue of the case, and, as an old journalist, had entertained nothing but contempt for the terriers of the profession who barked at his heels. But his confidence had been shaken by the intervention of the Government.[32]

As De Grazia convincingly demonstrates, the newspapers, the vigilantes and the legal profession demonstrated a similar repugnance for Vizetelly's desire to publish Zola.[33] In a letter to Cynthia Asquith on November the ninth, 1915, D. H. Lawrence also complains about how easy collusion between the law, the vigilance societies, the police and the judiciary could be:

> A magistrate has suppressed the sale of The Rainbow, and Methuens are under orders to deliver all existing copies. This is most irritating. Some interfering person goes to a police magistrate and says, "This book is indecent, listen here." Then the police magistrate says, "By jove we'll stop that." Then the thing is suppressed.[34]

It should be clear from the social composition of social purity movements, however, that a dominant discourse cannot simply equate with a dominant class, although a relationship may exist between discourse and class interest. Foucault's notion of a diffusion and dispersal of power is relevant here, as social purity reform clearly operated inside and outside the parameters of judicial and legislative power and sought to police both the self and others. However, the limitations of Foucault's productive hypothesis is that it cannot adequately account for how such discourses of social purity could guard gender, class, racial, economic and political interests against the perceived threat of women, the working class and the colonial subject. Neither can it explain how such groups as feminists, for example, could criticise patriarchy at the same time as appropriating racist

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[32] Ernest Vizetelly, Emile Zola. Novelist and Reformer: An Account of His Life and Work (London: Bodley Head, 1904) 274.

[33] According to De Grazia, Herbert Asquith referred to La Terre, Nana and Pot-Bouille as "the three most immoral books ever published." De Grazia 44.

[34] George Zytaruk and James Boulton, eds., The Letters of D.H. Lawrence, Volume II, June 1913- October 1916 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981) 431.

discourses to support their political and social claims.[35]

If such a post-productive hypothesis differs from Foucault's analysis of power, it is also distinct from traditional perspectives of power and repression. For example, it can accept Judith Butler's comments on power being both restrictive and productive:

> If power is understood in juridical terms, it limits and constrains the object on which it operates; if power is, however, also productive, then it contributes to making the object that it also constrains. Although somewhat paradoxical, this view maintains its own kind of sense: the power that acts on an object also constructs it in and through the operation of that constraint.[36]

Katherine Mullin has shown how Joyce's fiction "appropriated and engaged with social purity's various campaigns against 'vice' in its myriad contemporary form."[37] This confirms Butler's comments that censorship "precedes the text and is in some sense responsible for its production."[38] Censorship can, thus, be seen as a significant factor of literary production prior to any specific judicial act on a specific text, not simply through fostering self-censorship or writerly strategies to avoid legal sanction, but also by being thematically incorporated into literary fiction. Such strategies clearly predate modernist experimentation. The fiction of George Moore, Thomas Hardy, Grant Allen, George Egerton, Herman Sudermann and Hubert Wales clearly attacks censorship and the social purity reform groups who tried to enforce it. Censorship, then, cannot solely be viewed as a tool of repression and the imposition of silence. Adam Parkes claims that "in prosecuting The Rainbow, Ulysses, and The Well, the authorities produced them as public spectacles, visible sites for staging debates about morality, politics, art, and the relations among those categories."[39] Politicians like Samuel Smith, groups like the NVA, and social commentators like Hugh Stutfield and Arthur Waugh also staged debates about

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[35] For a discussion of the feminist appropriation of racialist discourses see Angelique Richardson, Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003).

[36] Judith Butler, "Ruled Out: Vocabularies of the Censor," Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation, ed. Robert C. Post, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1998): 247-260, at 247.

[37] Mullin 27.

morality, politics, and art, centred around censored or censured texts. Furthermore, as Jonathan Dollimore has argued, the canonisation of supposedly dangerous texts can work as a more effective form of censorship than judicial censure: "In short, both in and out of courts, some of the most effective censors of art have been its most earnest defenders."[40] Dollimore argues that the acceptance of modernist texts into the literary canon emasculated their potentially subversive power far more effectively than censorship. Alison Pease, following a similar logic, shows how critics' aesthetic interpretation of literary texts lessened the ability of such texts to cause offence:

> [...] modernist literary critics were pivotal in creating methods of approaching pornographic language and high-art texts in such a way that mitigated and/or rationalised those texts' ability to provoke the embodied response typical of pornography.[41]

Below, I wish to exemplify briefly the advantages of adopting a post-productive approach by showing how Foucault was surely correct to assert that there is incitement to sexual discourse, but how such incitement operated within a dominant discourse of repression.

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[38] Butler 248.
[39] Parkes 5.
[40] Jonathan Dollimore, Sex, Literature and Censorship (Cambridge: Polity, 2001) 97.
[41] Pease 165.

Perverts and Experts: Incitement, Repression, and 'The Cult of the Clitoris' trial[42]

The Cult of the Clitoris' trial, as it came to be known, caused a major scandal in England in May and June of 1918.[43] Maud Allan claimed that an independent member of Parliament, Noel Pemberton Billing, had libelled her in the Vigilante, a right-wing newspaper, by using the phrase 'the cult of the clitoris,' such a 'cult' in 1918 implying lesbian practice.[44] Pemberton Billing had also alluded that she, Maud Allan, and the producer of the play, Jack Grien, were traitors, linking their putative sexual decadence to the "mysterious influence" that had "dogged our steps through the whole conduct of the war."[45]

The significance of the trial is that it clearly evidences an incitement to talk about sex, in particular, homosexuality, and specifically lesbianism – which for many was an unknown or inconceivable practice – but within a dominant discourse of repression. When a bill in 1921 proposed to incorporate lesbianism, Lord Desart argued: "You are

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[42] Although in terms of the texts examined, the trial falls outside the period under investigation, a brief examination of such a trial does show both the longevity and tenacity of such a culture of repression well into the twentieth century. It also demonstrates the strength of Oscar Wilde's reputation as literary transgressor *par excellence*, as well as confirming Alan Hunt's theory of the emergence of medico-moral discourses discussed above. In the trial, the moral language of traditional Christianity coexists with the new terminological classifications of Kraft-Ebbing. The trial also offers a fascinating study of incitement and repression not only within the context of the law, but within the context of a trial that was specifically concerned with sexual slander. Needless to say, such a culture of repression can also be found in the rhetoric of disgust, discussed in this chapter, of earlier campaigners against Zola, such as Samuel Smith, and later literary critics such as James Douglas. One could also view the provocation of "The Maiden Tribute", ostensibly designed to suppress child prostitution, as sexual incitement. As Walkowitz writes: The Maiden Tribute" set in motion a movement to repress the obscene, yet it incorporated the entire repertoire of late-nineteenth-century pornography." Walkowtiz 122. The reception of "The Maiden Tribute" is discussed in the next chapter.

[43] Detailed accounts of this particular trial have been given elsewhere. See Philip Hoare, Oscar Wilde's Last Stand (New York: Arcadia, 1997), Jodie Medd, " 'The Cult of the Clitoris': Anatomy of a National Scandal," Modernism/Modernity 9 (2002): 21-49, and Lucy Bland, "Trial by Sexology? Maud Allan, Salome and the 'Cult of the Clitoris' Case," Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Cambridge: Polity, 1998): 183-198.

[44] As a category of sexual identity, lesbianism, or inversion as it was known, was still very recent. Lucy Bland argues that it was the publicity over the trial of Havelock Ellis's Sexual Inversion rather than the publication of the book which gave "some publicity" to lesbianism. Bland, Banishing the Beast 262. Moreover in her analysis of the specific trial, Bland argues that it was the idea that lesbians are masculinised and "the supposed enlarged clitoris was one signifier of this masculinity." Bland, Trial 184. Thus the significance of the reference to the 'cult of the clitoris'.

[45] Report on court proceedings, Times June 4, 1918: 4.

going to tell the whole world that there is such an offence, to bring to the notice of women who have never heard of it, never thought of it, never dreamed of it. I think that is a great mischief."[46] Phillip Hoare claims that "[...] for the tabloid-reading public, the Billing case would be their first introduction to the phenomenon."[47] This in itself surely implies the existence of a dominant repressive discourse.

Whatever interest the trial caused, neither the journalists reporting the scandal nor the lawyers in court could free themselves from a culture of repression. The very phrase on which the libel was based was unprintable as The Times commented on its report of the first day of proceedings.[48] In subsequent reports of the trial the title of the offending paragraph that led to Maud Allan suing Pemberton Billing merely "connoted unnatural practices." In fact, the slander that Maud Allan was a lesbian was reported without either mention of the offending reference to the 'Cult of the Clitoris' or specifically to her being a lesbian. This was as close as The Times came:

> A paragraph in a newspaper called Vigilante meaning that the said Maud Allan was a lewd, unchaste and immoral woman and was about to give private performances of an obscene and indecent character, so designed as to foster and encourage unnatural practices among women.[49]

The implication of the trial was that anybody who knew the meaning of the word clitoris was either a medical expert or a sexual pervert. No other person, according to Dr. Serrell Cooke, called as an expert witness for the defence, would have understood what the word signified. The title of Pemberton Billing's slander, as Cooke stated giving evidence, was "the best that could have been placed on matter dealing with such indecent a subject."[50] In fact, one of Pemberton Billing's main witnesses, Captain Spencer, felt it necessary at

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[46] Hoare 26.
[47] Hoare 126.
[48] Times May 30, 1918: 4.
[49] Times May 30, 1918: 4.
[50] Times June 1, 1918: 4.

the trial to explain how he called a village doctor to learn a certain anatomical term.[51] The ordinary healthy man, and indeed woman, should not know what a clitoris is, nor indeed what its function might be, as such a function was incompatible with the still prevalent view that sex for women was a biological duty, and any physical pleasure from the sexual act was unnatural.[52] Jodie Medd, referring to Ellis Hume Williams who led the prosecution, states:

> In Williams's interpretation, if 'clitoris' operates as a metonym for lesbianism, then its utterance in conjunction with a woman's name clearly constitutes the worst accusation to make against any woman: that she indulges a sexual desire extraneous to any biological or social reproduction for the state.[53]

The clear prevarication of the trial lawyers, their circumlocution, their euphemistic vagaries, all bespeak of a dominant discourse of repression, as does the 'chivalrous' defence of ladies in the court, and the calumny of unspeakable, unnatural and ultimately unnameable practices.[54]

This would have fitted snugly with a traditional view of repression. However, such a view would also deny that in this trial repression itself, through its obscure generalities, silences, and obfuscation, actually inflates the significance of the allegations already loaded with inferences of and equations with national betrayal and crimes against nature. Sex, and especially what are perceived to be unnameable sexually deviant acts, comes to represent cultural and national fears symbolically disproportionate to any literal effect. Thus, the location of deviant sexual practice within a discourse of national

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[51] Times May 31, 1918: 4.

[52] Bland argues that the "legitimation of their [women's] heterosexual desire" was, in part, also caused by the findings of sexologists, although it must be acknowledged that such ideas were still confined to limited groups. Bland, Banishing the Beast 258.

[53] Medd 35.

[54] The protection of women from sexual detail occurred in many court cases that involved sex. Bland, discussing a sexual assault case, claims: "Such cases were considered unfit for the ears of 'respectable women'." Bland, Banishing the Beast 254. Such chivalric protection reached absurd proportions in the US case of James Joyce's Ulysses, when, as Paul Vanderham writes, "One of the judges was therefore obliged to come gallantly to Margaret Anderson's rescue. Regarding her with paternal concern, he was inclined to refuse Forrester permission to read the obscenity in her presence... 'But she is the publisher,' said John Quinn, smiling." Vanderham 50.

security and national betrayal clearly heightens the significance of private to public spheres. This relation between private and public spheres, in part, accounts for the near hysterical scenes that accompanied the 'Not Guilty' verdict. As it was announced, The Times noted: "A more remarkable demonstration has perhaps never been seen in the Central Criminal Court. Mr. Justice Darling tried to give an order for its suppression but his voice could not be heard over the cheering [...] Shouting 'Hurrah' to the last, the demonstrators were all at last evicted."[55] A clear relation, among certain sections of the public at least, seemed to have been established between sexual practice and national defence, reinforcing an interest in sexual practices in terms of national well-being and security.

Medd states, moreover, that: "The 'Cult of the Clitoris' paragraph produces its distinct scandalous effects by staging an irresistible seductive scene of reading that initiates an elaborate sexual fantasy."[56] The trial, as well as the original libel, through its obfuscations clearly also incites such fantasies. Apart from the sinister overtones of secrecy and forbidden practice implied, an early twentieth-century reader of The Times would be wiser neither to lesbian practice nor to the location or function of a clitoris. All of the above are prone to epistemological gap-filling which might well encourage elaborate sexual fantasy. It would appear that repression itself causes incitement.

There are also other salient factors that should be considered: the medical expert Dr. Serrell Cooke is an example of the increasing importance of scientific and especially medical discourses in Britain in inciting discussion of sexuality but maintaining such discussion through the regulation of scientific or medical discourses.[57] The sexology, eugenics and social hygiene movements would become increasingly influential, and

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[55] Times June 5, 1918: 4.
[56] Medd 32.

increasingly listened to by both executive and legislative arms of the state. Although sexual knowledge is perceived to be suitably within the realm of medical discourses, such discourses of sexuality begin to pervade more public discourses and come to be seen as central to national health and welfare. In fact, the Pemberton Billing trial demonstrates that although scientific discourses of sexuality could challenge traditional moral discourses, they could also collude with them, perhaps most clearly evident in the frequently used term "moral pervert". As Bland notes the term combines "the older language of morality and the newer language of sexology."[58]

What the Billing case reveals is that there was incitement to talk about sexuality but within regulatory discourses that prohibited explicit mention of anatomical parts and functions. Legal counsel adjudicated the right to discuss matters of female sexuality to medical experts and sought to guard women from knowledge of their body and bodily pleasure. Moreover, the prosecution linked deviant sexual practice both with dangerous sexual knowledge and national threat, and, thus, reinforced a notion of sexual perversion as being alien to the English character. It may well be that Lord Desart was correct to be cautious, that public discussions of sexuality led to incitement to discourses of sexuality at various levels, but these discourses must be seen as being regulated by hegemonic discourses which were clearly repressive, as can be seen in the censoring of words, the censure of people, the concealment of meaning, the demarcation of power to 'experts', and the moral castigation of an unnamed sexual practice. What the Billing case reveals is both the medicalisation and marginalisation of sexual alterity; indeed, both regulation and repression, and regulation through repression.

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[57] As Hunt notes: "In both Britain and the United States the First World War hastened a process which resulted in the formation of a hegemonic alliance between the medical profession, the military and the state health administration, focused on the prevention and treatment of venereal diseases." A. Hunt 103.
[58] Bland, Trial 194.

Power and Censorship after Foucault

Following in the wake of Foucault's critic of the repressive hypothesis, many critics have challenged traditional perceptions of censorship. Such challenges warrant special attention not only because they treat the subject of censorship with greater specificity than Foucault's analysis of power but also because they extend and elaborate his argument in the context of particular historical conditions. For instance, in light of the modern complexity of identity politics and the failure of foundationalist assumptions of both the right and left, Richard Burt's strategy, among that of other Foucauldians, is to broaden the concept of censorship from a discourse of diversity to a discourse of legitimation. In such a discourse, the further opposition between censorship and criticism is somewhat blurred, or, as Burt claims, a discourse of legitimation is one "in which the diversity of a given discursive field will always be limited by the delegitimation, either conscious or unconscious, of particular discourses."[59] Burt insists that the concept of censorship and the understanding of how censorship functioned in the past need reconsideration. Burt claims that:

> censorship never operated in the modern terms in which it is generally thought to have operated – as negative, repressive exercises of power such as destroying materials, blocking access to them, limiting their distribution and circulation, and assigning penalties for collecting and consuming forbidden materials.[60]

Burt, among others, has persuasively complicated the notion of what censorship is, showing how the traditional concepts of censorship, criticism, regulation and even administration can no longer be viewed as being as discrete as they have historically been seen. The censorious obstacles that impede or transform literary production, as Burt shows, clearly exist in broader parameters than those imposed by the law. However, the

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[59] Burt, introduction, xv.
[60] Burt, introduction, xv.

negative aspect of Burt's approach is that by broadening the concept of censorship to include so many diverse power relations, he is in danger of exploding censorship's meaning beyond any functioning utility. As Burt states:

> What counts as censorship is not always clear. Indeed, it is hard to see how one could call many contemporary cases censorship without seriously either distorting the traditional understanding of the term or redefining it to include so many cultural practices [...] that the term is overwhelmed, even trivialised, its usefulness as a tool of cultural criticism called into question.[61]

At times, Burt also comes perilously close to making the same ahistorical judgements of which he accuses more traditional critics who "tend to assume that censorship operates ahistorically[...]."[62] The "never" in his claim that "censorship never operated in modern times" is one example of this. It is necessary to make a number of qualifications to Burt's critique of the concept of censorship. First, the traditional notion of censorship, and specifically state censorship, may have been complicated by post-war developments of political fragmentation and the dissolution of grand narratives, as Burt claims, but this does not alter the fact that during the period under study a significant increase in both the suppression of literary production and a willingness to limit access of texts to subaltern groups is clearly evident.

Furthermore, such censorship was long practised in Europe, if in diverse ways. Certainly, in post-Renaissance Europe, various practices of limiting the distribution of texts to certain groups is incontestable, specifically for the reason that such material was deemed to be dangerous should it be found in the wrong hands. If, moreover, Burt's general conception of censorship as being dispersed through a range of social agents (including critics, publishers, printers and indeed writers) can be accepted, what is predominant amongst those reasons to censor or self-censor is the overriding fear of prosecution. Damian Grant provides an interesting spatial metaphor in discussing D. H.

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[61] Burt, introduction, xiii.
[62] Burt, introduction, xiii.

Lawrence and censorship which acknowledges the complexity of censorship in its dispersed form:

> What we need to imagine is a series of concentric circles of censorship, moving outwards from the inherited reflex of self-censorship [...] to his family [...], his friends [...] his typists [...], his agents [...], his publishers [...], booksellers and libraries [...], reviewers [...], readers [...] and, finally, the actual intervention of the law, in the shape of the police, the Postmaster General, or customs officials.[63]

However, this model could as easily be reversed and the law placed at its explosive centre, its effects rippling out sometimes directly to the author but usually through the intermediaries mentioned above. Clearly, there is some justification for adopting Burt's model; as can be seen with Grant's metaphor, the process of censorship can include a "variety of regulatory agents and practices"; however, regulatory agents' practices often stemmed from the fear of prosecution that might be brought by such powerful groups as the NVA.[64] According to a letter written by Pound in 1916, the suppression of The Rainbow (1915) had an enormous effect on printers who, in Pound's words, "[...] have gone quite mad since the Lawrence fuss... Something has got to be done or we'll all of us be suppressed [...]."[65] This is not to deny that the censorship that followed in the wake of such cases was both "[...] a natural response by publishers and printers not only to the legal threat posed by vigilantes, but to the considerable popular support their campaign attracted."[66] Mullin argues that both the vigilance campaigners and public support for them encouraged many British newspapers like the Spectator and the Daily Chronicle to begin purity crusades themselves. Moreover, circulating libraries like Mudie's and W.H. Smith were also strongly influenced by purity groups and, in their turn, strongly

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[63] Damian Grant, "D. H. Lawrence: A Suitable Case for Censorship," Writing and Censorship in Britain, eds. Paul Hylands and Neil Sammells (London: Routledge, 1992): 200-218, at 200-201.
[64] The unfortunate case of Henry Vizetelly proved a warning of what could happen if prosecuted, a prosecution that had been brought about by the offices of the NVA. As Mullin comments, "For printers like John Falconer and publishers like Grant Richards and George Roberts, the Vizetelly case functioned as a cautionary tale; his example, as the National Vigilance Association hoped, deterring many from issuing 'sex problem' fiction." Mullin 7.
[65] Grant 205.
[66] Mullin 8.

influential in limiting the distribution of books deemed to be offensive.[67]

A more fluid relationship might be considered, then, between censorship and the writer and the various intermediaries between; one that complicates both a notion of individual struggle against state oppression, on the one hand, and, on the other, an idea of censorship which fails to discriminate between, say, a typist's blush, a sibling's critique and a state-authorised bonfire of confiscated texts. While accepting that the boundaries between criticism and censorship have always, to a large extent, been blurred, it is still plausible to clarify distinctions between the two. By keeping in mind both Grant's model and its inverse, a post-productive hypothesis is also confirmed, a hypothesis which accommodates viewing 'sex' both within and without the law. Burt has argued that: '[...] a dispersal and displacement model unsettles a traditional hierarchy of more or less repressive punishments insofar as it shows that no one form of legitimation or delegitimation necessarily has priority over others."[68] What is clear in the case of censorship, however, is that a dominant national culture exercised a disproportionate power over literary production. Moreover, the most powerful regulatory technique to control 'obscene' literature was suppression or at least the threat of suppression. If repression was a strategy to psychologically self-regulate the middle classes, then the suppression of sexual materials, as will be argued below, could be deployed to control subaltern groups and classes.

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[67] The significance of the censorship of the circulating libraries will be discussed in the next chapter.
[68] Richard Burt, "(Un)censorsing in Detail: The Fetish of Censorship in the Early Modern Past and the Postmodern Present," Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation, ed. Robert C. Post (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1998): 17-42, at 18.

The Fear of the Tavern and the Market Place: The Distribution of Pornography

> Certainly the censor Johannes Molanus saw pornography as a social threat warning '[...] of the danger of images being placed 'in the taverns and in the market place' [...].[69]

As the practice of limiting or preventing the access of texts to subaltern groups is essential to this thesis, Burt's specific claims regarding censorship will be addressed here. The example of pornography will be used to suggest that censorship has functioned in ways that Burt clearly claims it has not; specifically, censorship has historically been concerned with limiting both access and distribution of texts to those perceived to be vulnerable and/or potentially subversive. A charting of the development of the censorship of pornography can reveal why pornography was deemed to be so dangerous when found in the wrong hands.

It has been argued that "pornography as a regulatory category was invented in response to the perceived menace of the democratisation of culture," and was thus connected to the rise of literacy and the spread of education in the nineteenth century.[70] Consumption of obscene materials was regulated precisely in order to exclude the lower classes and women. Indeed, the protection of women and the lower orders from obscenity is evident as early as the advent of printing. Paula Findlin states: "Printing, as the formation of a new medium of exchange, had subverted the implicit pact of the *letterati* that confined the circulation of words and images to a circumscribed elite."[71] Mechanisms of censorship such as the Index of Forbidden Books, established by Paul IV in 1559, were put in place, and followed by the Council of Trent in 1563 which prohibited

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[69] Paula Findlin, "Humanism, Politics and Pornography in Renaissance Italy," The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity 1500-1800, ed. L. Hunt (New York: Zone, 1996): 49-108, at 101.

[70] Lynn Hunt, introduction, The Invention of Pornography. Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity 1500-1800 (New York: Zone, 1996): 9-45, at 12-13. The term in English was first cited in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1857, although the word appeared in French a half century before. L. Hunt 13-14.

[71] Findlin 55.

lascivious or obscene books.[72] Even pornographers like Vignali, a contemporary of the infamous Aretino, believed their work should be restricted to elite circles.[73] Regarding Vignali and his associates, Findlin states: "For them erotic and obscene dialogue is a closed circuit that includes only the men of wit, honour and social prominence who are capable of flirting with dangerous subjects without contributing to public vice."[74] Women and the lower orders were not only deemed worthy of protection from supposedly obscene material, but also from radical or scientific tracts. In fact, pornography was itself perceived to be radical, frequently employed to criticise social and religious hierarchies up until the eighteenth century. Alison Pease goes as far to suggest: "To be sure, the readership of an early eighteenth-century classic like Venus in Cloisters would have been as interested in the anti-authoritarian, anti-clerical sentiments as the sexual ones."[75] Pornography understood as an apolitical category of consumption did not exist in any real quantifiable sense until the nineteenth century. Before then pornography was frequently linked to "[...] free-thinking and heresy, to science and natural philosophy, and to attacks on absolutist political authority."[76] Therefore, obscenity is viewed as doubly offensive as it is also frequently associated with heresy and attacks on religious hierarchies.

According to Pease, the eighteenth century saw a developing dialectic between aesthetics and pornography and high and low culture. Renaissance pornography attempted to destabilise such cultural hierarchies in the same way that earlier pornography had destabilised social and religious hierarchies. Findlin claims: "Renaissance

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[72] As Findlin argues, "Books which professedly deal with, narrate or teach things lascivious or obscene are absolutely prohibited, since not only the matter of faith but also that of morals, which are usually easily corrupted through the reading of such books, must be taken into consideration, and those who possess them are to be severely punished by the bishops." Findlin 55.
[73] For a full discussion of the politics of the pornography of writers such as Aretino and Vignali in Renaissance Italy see Findlin.
[74] Findlin 90-91.
[75] Pease 5.
[76] L. Hunt 11.

pornographers destabilised the site of artistic and literary production by purporting to dissolve the boundaries between 'high' and 'low'."[77] Moreover, pornography could assert a natural law that was opposed to civil or religious law. As Margaret C. Jacob asserts: "Thus, pornographic or obscene literature frequently attacked the prevailing theories that justified political authority and mocked the representatives of that authority."[78] This could work in two ways: firstly by creating a Hobbesian baseness whereby all individuals are seen to act in their own selfish interests whatever their aesthetic or moral philosophy, and secondly by viewing sexual desire as both natural and good and the Church's strictures on sexuality as philosophically misguided. Perhaps the best known example of pornography's adoption of naturalist philosophy is John Cleland's Fanny Hill (1749). This privileging of natural sexual instinct over secular law gains new impetus in the late nineteenth century with the emergence of scientific discourses, especially those of evolutionary biology, and pseudo-sciences such as eugenics which follow in its wake. This opposition between unnatural Church strictures and natural sexual instinct is championed by writers such as Thomas Hardy, if in a very different kind of fiction, and if now influenced by late-nineteenth-century scientific discourses.

It is clear, then, that the distribution of 'obscene' literature from the time of the sixteenth century was seen as potentially dangerous to society. By depicting individuals primarily in relation to bodily desire, obscene literature levelled social hierarchies and frequently was deployed for the purposes of political and social propaganda. Representations of sexuality in the eighteenth and nineteenth century are often perceived as an anarchic attack on social order. Thus the governing classes associated base sexual behaviour with the lower classes, the uneducated, the vulgar, the instinctive, and the irrational. Sex is 'interested' whereas aesthetics is disinterested; it is selfish, whereas the

[77] Findlin 59.

aesthetic beliefs of the eighteenth-century tradition of Shaftesbury and Kant are social. Above all, it is dangerous if not controlled. As Lisa Sigel argues in her discussion of pornography and social change in the nineteenth century, even materials deemed purely aesthetic by the middle classes could become grubbily pornographic in the hands of the lower orders:

> High art that could be viewed in museums by the bourgeoisie became pornographic when reproduced and sold in the streets to the poor. Pictures of people of colour could be scientific, comic, educational, or erotic, but when people viewed pictures of naked whites, nakedness became pornographic and constituted a social danger.[79]

Sigel makes the convincing claim that it was especially when pornography became accessible to the working class, largely through mutoscopes and the distribution of cheap picture postcards, that concern about pornography reached levels of near panic: "The legal, religious and reforming communities believed that the multitudes could only be corrupted, not edified, by pornography and that access had to be limited through the eradication of objects like postcards and mutoscopes."[80]

As this thesis will demonstrate, the distribution of literary texts considered obscene was also frequently related to fears of their being read by the young and vulnerable. The prosecutor in the trial of Baudelaire's Les Fleurs de Mal (1859) claimed: "An immoral book that had no chance of being read or understood would not be pursued."[81] In a letter to D. H. Lawrence written on the thirty-first of December, 1920, Martin Secker makes the same case in very different circumstances, indicating how Lawrence can avoid censorship by limiting the distribution of Women in Love

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[78] Margaret C. Jacobs, "The Materialist World of Pornography," The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity 1500-1800, ed. Lynn Hunt. (New York: Zone, 1996): 157-202, at 172-3.
[79] Sigel 157.
[80] Sigel 149.
[81] E. S. Burt, " 'An Immoderate Taste for Truth': Censoring History in Baudelaire's 'Les bijoux'," Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation, ed. Robert C. Post (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1998): 111-146, at 111.

> It seems to me that the decision we have to come to – or rather the decision you have to come to – about Women in Love, is whether you will aim at a free circulation, necessitating two or three excisions or paraphrases in the text, or whether it is to be printed as it stands, and to be sold in booksellers' shops.[82]

David Saunders adopts Foucault's critique of the repression hypothesis to challenge the essentialist conceit of the state censorship of 'fine literature' in the mid to late nineteenth century in favour of viewing obscenity laws as specific regulatory practices concerning a "specific cultural demography".[83] He argues that The Obscene Publication Act of 1857 was not concerned with the "mass destruction of serious literature" but was established as a "seize and destroy procedure administered by the police and magistrates as part of the routine policing of the streets."[84] Even if a term like administration or regulation broadens the perception of censorial practice, it would appear that censorship did function in the way that Burt clearly contests it did not, "as negative, repressive exercises of power such as destroying materials, blocking access to them, limiting their distribution and circulation, and assigning penalties for collecting and consuming forbidden materials."[85]

Scientific Discourses of Sex and Sexuality

I now wish to turn to the specific discourses of sexuality that emerged and, according to Foucault, grew exponentially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Such a growth is clearly reflected in contemporary fiction's increasing interest in sex and

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[82] Martin Secker, Letters from a Publisher: Martin Secker to D.H. Lawrence and Others 1911-1929 (London: Enitharmon, 1970) 10.
[83] David Saunders, "Victorian Obscenity Law: Negative Censorship or Positive Administration," Writing and Censorship in Britain, eds. Paul Hyland and Neil Sammels (London: Routledge, 1992): 154-170, at 157.
[84] Saunders 157.
[85] Burt xv.

sexuality. Franklin Fostler, in his introduction to the American addition of Hubert Wales's The Yoke, wrote in 1908: "Authors who write sex-problem novels are increasing. So are the readers."[86] In an essay that largely concerns the NVA's involvement in the prosecution of Wales's novel, a member of the group complained of an epidemic "of an indecent form of novel purporting to deal with the sex problem" which "is most disastrous to young people."[87] The Evening Standard referred to such literature as "a glut of dirtiness masquerading as literature"; and an evil that "has become widespread."[88] Whether the sex novel was encouraged by publishers, condemned by social purists, or disdained by the press, there does seem to have been a broad consensus among both defenders and detractors that serious fiction concerning sexual themes and issues had exponentially increased. Concerns over the outbreak of the Edwardian sex novel mirror the preoccupations of the previous generation over the advent of the New Woman novel, as the reception of George Egerton's Keynotes (1893) and Grant Allen's The Woman Who Did (1895) testify, whether one considers the barbed satires of the New Woman in Punch or the strident criticisms of such fiction by writers such as Hugh Stutfield.[89]

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[86] Hubert Wales, The Yoke (New York: Stuyvesant, 1909) vi.
[87] William A. Coote, A Romance of Philanthropy (London: National Vigilance Association, 1916) 116.
[88] Coote, Romance 119.
[89] For the reception of George Egerton's fiction see Sally Ledger, introduction, Keynotes and Discords (London: Continuum, 2006): ix –xxvi; for the reception of The Woman Who Did see Peter Morton, The Busiest Man in England: Grant Allen and the Writing Trade 1875-1900 (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005): 147-172. Punch portrayed George Egerton as Donna Quixote with the caption "A world of disorderly notions picked out of books, crowded into his (her) imagination" – see figure 1. For a sample of other satires on the New Woman from Punch see Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, introduction, The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: *Fin-de-Siècle* Feminisms (New York: Palgrave, 2002) 1-38. For Hugh Stutfield's most famous attack on the New Woman see "Tommyrotics," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine 157 (1895) 833-45. However, as Jane Eldridge Miller argues, there was a significant difference between the fiction of the 1890s and later Edwardian fiction as regards sexual representation. Speaking of the later period she writes: "Overt expressions of feminist sympathies in fiction were still regarded with some suspicion, and publishers, wary of negative critical and public response, still demanded that authors delete potentially offensive passages; but in general the atmosphere was far more tolerant than that of the 1890s." Rebel Women: Feminism, Modernism and the Edwardian Novel (Chicago: U. of Chicago P, 1997) 44. Some of these distinctions will be discussed in chapter seven.

The interest, both in the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century, in exploring sex and sexuality through fiction can be attributed to a variety of interrelated causes. Included among them might be the emergence of a mass audience for fiction, the demise of an idealist aesthetic challenged by emerging literary movements such as Naturalism, the changing roles, perceptions, and political demands of women in society, and the general crisis of mid-Victorian hegemonic certainty. However, the increase in the production of 'sex novels' can also be considered as forming part of the long modern process which Foucault describes as "transforming sex into discourse" (HS 22). The period under discussion coincides with a critical phase of this process, marked by the growing importance of scientific discourses, which putatively claimed an understanding of sexual desire and behaviour. As Foucault comments:

> It was a time when the most singular pleasures were called upon to pronounce a discourse of truth concerning themselves, a discourse which had to model itself after that which spoke, not of sin and salvation, but of bodies and life processes – the discourse of science (HS 64).

Sexual aetiology began to be utilised to explain a range of behaviours, infirmities and dispositions (HS 65).[90] There was a "demand that sex speak the truth [...] and we demand that it tell us our truth" (HS 69). It is, therefore, no coincidence that the growing interest in exploring issues of sex and sexuality in fiction occurs in the wake of an increasing valorisation of science in the 1860s and 1870s. Such men of science as T. H. Huxley, Charles Darwin, Francis Galton and Herbert Spencer carried considerable

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[90] Although Sigmund Freud published three landmark texts during the period, Studies on Hysteria (1895) (*Studien über Hysterie*) with Joseph Breuer, The Interpretation of Dreams (1899) (*Die Traumdeutung*) 1899 and Three Studies on the Theory of Sexuality (1905) (*Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*), Freudian ideas of sexuality would not be widely discussed until after World War One when Freud's theories would become well-known in intellectual circles. Elaine Showalter discusses the gradual acceptance of psychoanalytic techniques after World War One, partly as a consequence of their application in the treatment of war neurosis. She claims, "Psychotherapy and the ideas of Freud, strongly resisted by Darwinian psychiatrists, gained ground despite the hostility to German and 'Teutonic' science." Elaine Showalter, "Male Hysteria: W. H. R. Rivers and the Lessons of Shell Shock," The Female Malady: Woman, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980 (London: Penguin, 1985): 167-194, at 190. By the 1920s, as Peter Gay states, "psychoanalysis had come to stay", as was evident from the spread and

authority in *fin-de-siècle* Britain. That the ideas of such prominent scientific figures should also clash with religious orthodoxy is also unsurprising, as scientific naturalism, as it came to be known, was inherently anti-clerical. Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst write: "The persistent locus of attack was 'natural theology,' the subordination of natural knowledge to a religious frame – a position that was still rigorously argued by many prominent figures well into the 1890s [...]."[91] As the ideas of scientists such as Huxley and Spencer challenge religious precepts and presuppositions, many fiction writers championed a scientifically inspired naturalism, often by juxtaposing it to the failures and limitations of Christian morality.

This, however, does not signify that sex was only transformed into discourse through science, nor that fiction provided the only narrative representations of sexuality. Barbara Leckie makes an impressive claim for the importance of the publication of divorce cases in newspapers in which "sex is equally transformed into discourse both in the courtroom and then, more dramatically, in divorce court journalism."[92] Such reporting, she argues, served, "as the dominant discursive framework through which adultery was made visible in the Victorian and transitional modernist periods"[93] and "marked the crossing of adultery into the domain of legitimate representation."[94] The liberties allowed to such legitimate representation were in stark contrast to what writers were allowed to represent in fiction. Leckie also makes the claim that divorce court reporting had a significant effect on fictional representations of sexuality. The novel, she argues,

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popularisation of Freudian ideas and techniques throughout Europe and the United States. Peter Gay, Freud, A Life of Our Time (New York: Norton, 1998) 460.

[91] Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, The *Fin de Siècle*: A Reader in Cultural History 1880-1890 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 222.

[92] Barbara Leckie, Culture and Adultery: The Novel, the Newspaper and the Law 1857-1914 (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1999) 67.

[93] Leckie 62.

[94] Leckie 64.

> [...] adopts narrative strategies that are already legitimate in one arena of English print culture. These strategies both minimise the transgressive impact of representations of adultery by inflecting adultery as an epistemological, rather than a passionate, concern and by inculcating in the reader an attitude of wary regard and suspicion rather than rebellion and adulterous desire.[95]

In short, the novel of adultery in England becomes less the narrative of Madame Bovary's romantic disillusion and more an English novel of detection told from the viewpoint of Charles Bovary, the plot driven more by the revelation of adultery than the exploration of the feelings of the adulterer. Leckie cites Henry James's The Golden Bowl (1904) and Ford Maddox Ford's The Good Soldier (1915) as examples of how divorce court reporting could influence novelistic and specifically modernist innovation. However, two significant points need to be outlined. First, although adultery is the theme of the many narratives that were censored or heavily criticised for moral transgression, the narratives examined in this study generally maintain the viewpoint of the marital transgressor rather than that of the maritally transgressed. Second, the novels examined below consistently juxtapose scientific ideas of 'natural' sexual instinct with the social disapprobation of sexual aberrance evident in discourses of traditional morality. Neither James's nor Ford's novel transgress precisely because they stay within the parameters of a more traditional morality, although Leckie is correct to claim that James provides a salient example of the thematic incorporation of censorship into his work, by rendering "the story of English censorship" in The Golden Bowl.[96]

If literary attacks on censorship and, more generally, Victorian morality were influenced by emerging discourses of science, it would be inaccurate to view such a *Scientia Sexualis*, as described by Foucault, as simply supplanting discourses of sexuality based on "sin and salvation". In terms of censorship, moral discourses of sexuality could be firmly residual: sex might have become a "thing one administered" as Foucault

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[95] Leckie 109.
[96] Leckie 159.

claimed, but it also remained "something one simply judged" (HS 24). Critical responses to writers from Zola to H. G. Wells demonstrate the extent to which commentators could deploy the rhetoric of traditional morality against what they viewed as obscene literature. In fact, Alan Hunt argues, "[...] medical discourses on sexuality did not simply replace moral discourses, but rather distinctive versions of medico-moral discourses came to predominate."[97] Hunt's comments on medico-moral discourses can be extended to other branches of scientific endeavour. Eugenics provides a salient example of such a discourse. Although Francis Galton, in Essays on Eugenics (1909), wishes to "leave morals as far as possible out of the discussion", his arguments, alongside claims of empirical validity for eugenics, are loaded with subjective moral judgements often predicated on class prejudice.[98] He can write of the lower class: "From them come the battered figures who slouch through the streets and play the beggar and the bully. They render no useful service, they create no wealth; more often they destroy it. They degrade whatever they touch [...]."[99] In the same text, he claims: "Eugenics is the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race."[100] The eugenicist R. R. Rentoul writes:

> I consider that the most fiendish form of Christian devilry and torture is in our permitting diseased parents to beget diseased offspring [...]. We seem, indeed, to forget that the Almighty has practically said to man and womankind – 'I shall no longer create human beings. I appoint you to act as my deputy' [...].[101]

Even representatives of the church such as Reverent James Marchant, the director of the National Council of Public Morals, could declare in 1917: "It is now being fully recognised that all moral reforms for the regeneration of mankind must be brought about

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[97] Alan Hunt 196.
[98] Francis Galton, Essays in Eugenics (London: Eugenics Education Society, 1909) 35.
[99] Galton 19-20.
[100] Galton 35.
[101] Donald J. Childs, Modernism and Eugenics: Woolf, Eliot, Yeats, and the Culture of Degeneration (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001) 4.

by the combination of religion and science."[102] Marchant, here, gives a clear example of not only how embedded morality was in the social hygiene project but also how residual traditional Christian morality was, if now frequently aligned to new scientific discourses.

If discourses of science were, in a sense, 'moralised' by Christians like Marchant, they also could, and often while criticising traditional Christian moral positions, reincorporate similar moral values into scientific pronouncements.[103] Moral behaviour became increasingly equated with individual health, national virility and imperial strength.[104] If the positive mastery of sexual instincts partly supplanted the religious morality of celibacy and resistance to temptation, sexual incontinence could lead not only to damnation but also, under the impetus of evolutionary biology, to national degeneration and race suicide. Prostitutes were scientifically classified as atavistic.[105] Gender differentials constructed on the division of separate spheres were retained through a new polarisation of female and male sexuality in which women frequently still figured as the moral guardians of the nation as they were still believed to be less vulnerable to sexual urges.[106]

Another vital point to note regarding the development of discourses of *Scientia Sexualis* is the variety of such discourses and their complex and often contradictory nature. Referring to evolutionary biology, which was indubitably the area of scientific

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[102] Frank Mort 136.

[103] It should also be noted that even Darwin's bulldog T. H. Huxley declined to label science atheistic or materialistic. In a response to a critical article written by W. S. Lilly he could write: "Physical Science is as little Atheistic as it is Materialistic." T. H. Huxley, "Science and Morals," Fortnightly Review 46 (1886): 788-202, at 799.

[104] For a detailed discussion of the relationship between morality and science see Mort 79-93.

[105] Mort comments, "Contemporary studies of prostitutes and sexual perverts by the Italian criminologists Caesare Lombroso and William Ferraro and by Havelock Ellis defined them as atavistic — primitive throwbacks to an earlier stage of development." Mort 148.

[106] Mort again: "The woman of the future would be far more than a nurse or consoler, she would have a positive religion to realise as a high priestess of health. Eugenicists like Scharlieb and Alice Ravenhill insisted that biology now conclusively proved that responsibility for safeguarding the nation's morals lay with women. For Scharlieb, it was women's unique position as reproducers which made them so central to the physical and moral training of future generations." Mort 142.

enquiry that proved most disruptive to moral discourses of sexuality, Peter Morton claims:

> [...] during the few decades which elapsed between the publication of Origin and the foundation of Mendelian genetics around the turn of the century evolutionary biology was in a state of extraordinary confusion and ambiguity, and a wide range of writers were able to exploit the science for their own aesthetic or polemic ends.[107]

There was then no simplistic displacing of traditional moral discourses with amoral scientific discourses.

If a simple notion of a *Scientia Sexualis* supplanting moral discourses of sexuality is complicated by the idea of emerging scientific-moral discourses, so, too, is the idea that scientific discourses were privileged in the sense that they were exempt from public sanction or opprobrium.[108] Not only was Havelock Ellis's Sexual Inversion (1897) censored but Iwan Bloch's Sexual Life of Our Time (1906) was ordered to be destroyed in 1907, and Thomson and Geddes Evolution of Sex (1889) was thought by one reviewer of Nature to be "not fit for public consumption" even as it was praised for its "wealth of knowledge".[109] Texts that dealt with sex scientifically were clearly not immune from prosecution if they were available to the public. The criteria of censorship depended less on genre than on distribution. Sexual Life of Our Time was eventually allowed to be published but with a publisher's note insisting that sales be limited "to members of the legal and medical professions."[110] Two years before Vizetelly's prosecution, Dr. H. Arthur Allbutt was struck off the register for infamous conduct after the publication of A Wife's Handbook (1886), a sex education manual.

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[107] Peter Morton, The Vital Science: Biology and the Literary Imagination 1860-1900 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984) 6.

[108] Walkowitz, in fact, points out the seeming inconsistency of allowing the publication of W. T. Stead's lurid exposé of child prostitution in "The Maiden Tribute" and the censoring of a birth control tract. She writes that Charles Bradlaugh and Walter Besant, "could not help resenting the apparent tolerance of Stead's "highly coloured adaptions" of expensive "works printed abroad" when they had previously suffered prosecution [...] for distributing Knowlton's "dry physiological tract" on birth control." Walkowitz 124.

[109] Porter and Hall 165 and 157.

His offence, summed up in the verdict, to publish "at so low a price as to bring the work within the reach of the youth of both sexes, to the detriment of public morals."[111] As will be discussed below, limiting distribution to the public was equally important in the prosecution of Emile Zola's novels in England.

Significantly, scientific-moral discourses were inordinately concerned with female sexuality. This intense interest in female sexuality was most clearly reflected in the numerous debates concerning the problem of prostitution. Social purity reform invariably classified the prostitute as either "an innocent victim of male lust or as a "demon" and "contagion of evil".[112] Judith Walkowitz neatly encapsulates the social significance of the figure of the prostitute:

> The public symbol of female vice, the prostitute established a stark contrast to domesticated feminine virtue as well as to male bourgeois identity: she was the embodiment of the corporeal smells and animal passions that the rational bourgeois male had repudiated and that the virtuous woman, the spiritualised "angel in the house" had suppressed.[113]

This moral division remained, even if with the development of the medico-moral discourses of social hygiene, prostitution began to be associated with feeble-mindedness and treated as much as a concern for government regulation as a moral wrong.[114] Indeed, with the development of the social hygiene project concern about female sexuality was centred less on the professional prostitute than on the 'amateur'. As Mort writes:

> This scrutiny of active and dangerous female sexuality paralleled similar anxieties voiced earlier by the purity movement. But what distinguished hygienists' concern was the focus of their disquiet. It was no longer the 'professional prostitute' who was isolated as the source of danger but a new form of threat—the promiscuous girl who gave sex for free.[115]

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[110] Porter and Hall 165.
[111] Alan Hunt 152.
[112] Emma Liggins, "Prostitution and Social Purity in the 1880s and 1890s," Critical Survey 15 (2003): 39-55, at 39.
[113] Walkowitz, 21.
[114] Bartley 2. A. Hunt 147.
[115] Mort 149.

Although Bland locates the moral panic of the sexual amateur during the war, both Ann Veronica and The Yoke concern the troubling female sexuality of 'amateur' middle rather than 'professional' lower-class women like Nana, Arabella and even Esther Waters. [116] This is not to equate either Ann Veronica's or Angelica Jenour's sexual behaviour with prostitution but to note a shift away from concerns with working-class prostitution to the sexual behaviour of middle-class women.

However, whether moral or medical, professional or amateur, fears of the danger of promiscuity persisted, fears, as Bartley states with specific reference to prostitution, "[...] that it would infect the respectable world, destroy marriages, the home, the family and ultimately the nation led to attempts to regulate and reform the prostitute and to prevent and suppress prostitution."[117] Such fears of social purity reformers articulated a specific dread of the lower classes as the agents of bodily contamination, social destabilisation, national decline and racial degeneration; whereas Ann Veronica and The Yoke's Angelica Jenour, who, to some extent, can be perceived as defenders of social hygiene practice, are considered an affront to middle-class respectability and Christian morality.[118] As regards the framing of censorship, the emergence of scientific discourses concerned both lower-class regulation and middle-class self-governance.

Censorship, Readership and the Rhetoric of Empire

As literary censorship concerns limiting the access of materials to subaltern groups such as women and the working class, I now wish to explore the supposedly dangerous

[116] Mort 149.
[117] Bartley 2.

readership of such pernicious literature. Railing in the House of Commons against the obscenity of Emile Zola, Samuel Smith could declaim:

> There was nothing that so corroded the human character, or so sapped the vitality of the nation, as the spread of this noxious and licentious literature. [...] In a word it is dirt and horror pure and simple; and the good humoured Englishman, who might smilingly characterise the French novel as "rather thick" will be disgusted and tired with the inartistic garbage which is to be found in Zola's La Terre (PL 5-6).[119]

Samuel Smith posits the sane and fair "good humoured Englishman" against the "dirt and horror" of the foreign Zola. As a consequence of such literature, the "astounding laxity" of the French, according to the Saturday Review, "has allowed some parts of Paris to become nearly impassable to decent people" (PL 6). The appeal against Zola was clearly one of national defence as nothing "sapped the vitality of the nation" like licentious literature. Obscenity, thus, was not only a question of individual corruption but of national debility. Smith also situates women, especially working-class girls, as being in a particularly vulnerable position. Young girls were offered "every inducement" to read the "vilest class of literature" in shops that "were in league with houses of the worst class" (PL 8). Here Smith plays upon the "white slave" fear instigated by William Stead in his Maiden Tribute to Babylon published three years earlier.[120] Smith's concern is precisely with the spread of this literature to the masses: "If there was such a demand for this class of literature, at its present high price, was it not perfectly obvious that in a few years time it would descend to the masses?" (PL 9). Perhaps even more shocking, the problem resides not only in the metropolitan centre, but also in the outreaches of empire. In India, "he was surprised to find on all the bookstalls an unlimited supply of English

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[118] It should be noted that there was a considerable overlap between movements like the campaign for social hygiene, eugenics, feminism as well as medical environmentalism. Moreover, such movements should be viewed as contested sites containing a variety of competing and conflicting viewpoints.

[119] As Ernest Vizetelly reminds us, "[...] of an assembly numbering between six and seven hundred members, just forty were found sufficiently interested in the morals of their constituents to discuss the motion submitted by Mr. Smith, which was: 'That this House deplores the rapid spread of demoralising literature in this country, and is of the opinion that the law against obscene publications and indecent pictures and prints should be vigorously enforced and, if necessary, strengthened.' " Vizetelly 263-264.

translations of French novels, and almost nothing else" (PL 8). It was, as always, the young, even the middle-class young, who were vulnerable. There were agents going around "middle class and upper schools of the country, in order to place in the hands of boys and girls pictures of a vile kind, and advertisements of a vile kind, so as to induce them to purchase these demoralising works" (PL 7). French literature, then, as portrayed by Smith, is a foreign threat to the health of nation and empire. It threatens to undermine by corrupting the weakest, most vulnerable members of society.

It is interesting to compare Smith's rhetoric at the beginning of the period under discussion with that of the editorial of the Morning Post written on the sixteenth of June, 1918 in response to the verdict of the Pemberton Billing trial. Philip Hoare thinks the editorial bears the hallmarks of the thoughts and prejudices of Arnold White:

> The old English instinct is right in these matters; the play is not merely immoral; it is morbid and leads to the black and hopeless portals of criminal insanity ... These perversions of sexual passion have no home in the healthy mind of England. They have like scum on water, a floating root in the international population which drifts between capital and capital. It is like a pestilence of which sporadic cases and even epidemics are sometimes brought to our shores; but it is abhorrent to the nature of this nation – so abhorrent is it, indeed, that the mere suspicion of it is enough to destroy a career and blast a reputation.[121]

White, a febrile right-wing propagandist, social Darwinist and notorious anti-Semite, speaking at a particularly intense moment – the day after Pemberton-Billing was declared innocent – should not be taken as a particularly representative national figure, but his comments include a number of the tropes of the dominant national culture regarding sexual danger, which show considerable similarities with Samuel Smith's comments above.[122] England is reified into a veritable John Bull, akin to Samuel Smith's "good humoured Englishman." Such an Englishman has correct instincts, a healthy mind, and a

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[120] See Walkowitz 81-134.
[121] Philip Hoare, 182.
[122] White allegedly refused to "attend his son's marriage to a 'eugenically unsuitable' woman tainted by some unspecified hereditary flaw." Richard A. Soloway, Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birth Rate in Twentieth-Century Britain (Chapel Heath: U of North Carolina P, 1990) 54.

nature that abhors the immoral and morbid. England is steadfast in contrast to the "drifting" international population more prone to the "perversions of sexual passion." The language of mental health is explicit: the play is described as leading to the "hopeless portals of the criminally insane"; the pestilence comes from abroad, like epidemics brought to the native shore. Paradoxically, White privileges English sense over the mental instabilities of passion-ruled foreigners at the same time as expressing the clear fear of the contagion of foreign vice, thus articulating a sense of national superiority to, but also an ingrained anxiety about, the Other.

This sense of self-definition through both the denigration and fear of multiple others is central to the comments of White and Smith. In White, national character is identified with a woman, in this case Maud Allen, the performer slandered with the taint of lesbian practice. She is also a clear representative of troubling female, and to boot foreign, sexuality – she was Canadian but had lived in Berlin, the centre of German decadence. The nation is 'sanely' heterosexual whereas Salome (1894) was written by Oscar Wilde, his name synonymous with craven immorality. The healthy mind of England is obviously superior to the "international population". Moreover, the reference to the potential destruction of "career" surely implies that steadfast England is soberly middle-class. The most significant constituent of such a national other that White omits is the colonial subject, unless he or she can be seen as forming part of the international population. The colonial subject is highly significant as the dominant national culture was implicitly and, to a certain extent, explicitly, an imperialist culture. White's comments, like those of Smith, comprise what could be called a rhetoric of disgust, grounded in a nexus of xenophobic fears, sexual revulsion, and a pathologisation of class, gender and race.

White's comments refer to the already censored play, Salome, rather than directly to Maud Allan, the exotic dancer. It is the play which is immoral and morbid and leads to criminal insanity. White, like Smith, articulates the belief that literature can seriously damage society should it go unchecked, a belief widely held at a time when the valorisation of a specifically English literature was particularly high, and being used as a means to educate and, to a certain extent, pacify the English working class.[123] Chris Baldick argues that English Literature was seen by many to offer the potential of uniting diverse classes through a "non-material communism" which would be an effective defence against the more material kind. The idea was bluntly stated by George Sampson, a leading member of the Newbolt Committee: "Deny to working-class children any common share in the immaterial, and presently they will grow into the men who demand with menaces a communism of the material."[124]

This self-defining national ideology of the other as both subordinate and dangerous is evident in the popularity of the eugenics movement across cultural, intellectual and gender divisions. Eugenics made racial groupings into classifiable entities leading to a reification of race, gender and class stereotypes as congenital effects of evolutionary development. Both miscegenation and intermarriage with the lower class would lead to the degeneration of the nation. The fear of degeneration was not only the preserve of empire builders and state apologists. Donald Childs has explored the significance of eugenic ideas to the writing of modernists, even though Max Nordau's Degeneration (1895) clearly links artists with other types of 'degenerates' such as "criminals, prostitutes, anarchists and pronounced lunatics."[125] Speaking of Woolf, Eliot

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[123] Patrick Brantlinger writes, "The evangelising or utilitarian do-gooders wanted the masses to read, but they wanted the masses to read only purified literature; some impossibly nontoxic stuff that would do no moral damage." The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998) 9.

[124] Chris Baldick, The Social Mission of English Criticism (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 103.

[125] Max Nordau, Degeneration, trans. and introd. George L. Mosse (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1993) v.

and Yeats, Childs writes: "All three pretend to adapt the scientific discourse of the body as used by the eugenicist to the language and purposes of the imagination."[126] Angelique Richardson has also noted the significance of eugenics and specifically biological determinism for many feminists: "Biological determinism was central to the social and political agenda of a number of New Woman writers as they situated themselves in the cross fire of the debates on national health and heredity."[127]

Degeneracy theory, an obvious corollary to the belief in imperial progress, evidences an imperial xenophobia relating to a sense of both external and internal enemies. The precious British stock evidently didn't include the lower orders, as Francis Galton, the founding figure of the eugenics movement, makes clear in his Essays on Eugenics. Under the heading "The Worth of Children," he comments: "The brains of our nation lie in the higher of our classes."[128] The working class, like women were 'racialised', located by imperial culture in what Ann McClintock calls anachronistic space. McClintock writes:

> In the industrial metropolis [...] the evocation of anachronistic space (the invention of the archaic) became central to the discourse of racial science and the urban surveillance of women and the working class. Racial scientists and, later, eugenicists saw woman as the inherently atavistic, living archive of the primitive archaic.[129]

That sexual orientation provided another site of self-definition is most evident in the figure and legacy of Oscar Wilde. Wilde became an almost floating signifier for national otherness, solidifying mythic links wherever applicable between aestheticism, frivolity, effeminacy, decadence and degeneration, as figured by Max Nordau, and

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[126] Childs 14.
[127] Angelique Richardson, "The Eugenization of Love: Sarah Grand and the Morality of Genealogy," Victorian Studies 42 (2000): 227-252, at 227.
[128] Galton 11.
[129] Ann McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (New York: Routledge, 1995) 41.

contemporaneous views of homosexuality.[130] Apart from his sexual ambivalence, he was also a socialist of sorts and Irish. One is almost tempted to claim that Oscar Wilde *was* the national other. Clearly, one reason why Wilde was so vilified was that before his disgrace he was very much seen as an insider, at the very heart of fashionable society; as Parkes states: "Wilde provided upper- and upper-middle-class spectators with mirrors that allowed them to gaze upon, and consume, their own immaculately attired image."[131] A wartime lecture of the sculptor W. R. Colton places Wilde firmly at the core of what was wrong with English society before the war:

> It was high time that war should come with its purifying fire ... A wave of diseased degeneracy had submerged Philosophy, Music, Literature, and Art to such a depth that, looking forward, I venture to prophesy that future centuries will gaze back with pity upon this period of mistaken morbidness.
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> We find, perhaps, in the German philosophers and musicians the first crystallised expressions of this viciousness, but unfortunately we, with all other nations of Europe, cannot pretend that we are exempt. The morbid invention of the artistic mind is seen everywhere. We have Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, and others. The futurists, the cubists, the whole school of decadent novelists.[132]

Colton provides the usual tropes of illness and disease, alongside the common claims of morbidity and degeneracy. This morbidity is xenophobically linked - the invention of the artistic mind – to German philosophers and modernist movements – futurists and cubists – and, by naming Wilde and Beardsley, homosexuality is foregrounded as the dire consequence. The notion of world war as an agent for purifying degeneracy to return society to some originary state where art was wholesome and men were not all the multiple things that Oscar Wilde's name conjured seems astonishing. However, if such an idea appears shocking in its diagnostic simplicity, in the virulence of its attack on the artistic mind, and in its sinister belief in societal purification, it was a commonly enough

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[130] For example, Nordau states, "The ego-mania of decadentism, its love of the artificial, its aversion to nature, and to all forms of activity and movement, its megalomaniacal contempt for men and its exaggeration of the importance of art, have found their English representative among the 'aesthetes', the chief of whom is Oscar Wilde." Nordau 317.

[131] Parkes 12.

held view for those who sought moral justification for war. Homosexuals, then, like colonial subjects, the working class and women, were seen as atavistic, inhabiting an anachronistic space as, following the Darwinian model, more 'advanced' societies showed greater differentiation between sexes. The belief that lesbians had 'unnaturally' large clitorises was evidence that they were, as Siobhan B. Somerville states "anomalous 'throwbacks' within a scheme of cultural and anatomical progress."[133] Sexual alterity was also 'racialised'. The sexological and psychological movements of the early twentieth century often confirmed rather than challenged the connection between sexuality and the lisible text of the body which affected both perceptions of race and sexuality. As Somerville argues:

> Yet the assumptions of comparative anatomy did not completely disappear; although they seemed to contradict more psychological understandings of sexuality, notions of biological difference continued to shape cultural understandings of sexuality, particularly in popular representations of lesbian and gay men.[134]

The conjunction of threat and inferiority that often characterises the national other generates complex and contradictory representations of the colonial subject as eternal child and savage animal, woman as sex-disinterested progenitors and sex-predatory temptresses, the working class as aggressive political animals and passive consumers of substandard culture, and homosexuals as vilely repulsive and dangerously attractive, and all groups as both degenerative threat and regressive anomaly. That the threat of the national other was, in part, sexual is clear. Such a threat related to both a fear of miscegenation, interracial mixing and the ambivalently enticing if dangerous allure of the exotic testify. Those uncertain liminal states of gender ambivalence leave, as McClintock succinctly identifies, the insecure colonizer: "[...] suspended between a fantasy of

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[132] Samuel Hynes, A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture (New York: Athenaeum 1991) 182.

[133] Siobhan B. Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body," Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desire, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Cambridge: Polity, 1998) 67.

conquest and a dread of engulfment, between rape and emasculation, the scene so neatly gendered, represents a splitting and displacement of a crisis that is, properly speaking, male."[135] Women were clearly subjugated to broad stereotyping based around sexual continence. However there equally remains an overriding fear of female sexual pleasure as can been witnessed in the Pemberton Billing trial.

Finally, while avoiding equalising representations of women, the working class, nations or colonial subjects, the danger should be noted in viewing race, class and gender, as well as sexual orientation and national identity as wholly discrete groupings. It is well to recall McClintock's claim:

> [...] that race, gender and class are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other; nor can they be simply yoked together retrospectively like armatures of Lego. Rather they come into existence in and through relation to each other – if in contradictory and conflictual ways.[136]

The importance of multiple others to the construction of national identity seems highly significant to understanding processes and practices of censorship during the period, even if such notions of alterity need to be modified to account for the complexities of cultural formations.

In the last section, utilising Kristeva's notion of abjection, I demonstrate how concerns with the private sexual practices and fictional representations of subaltern others related to issues of national security and censorship by examining, perhaps the most strident critic of 'transgressive' modern fiction, and certainly one of the greatest practitioners of a rhetoric of disgust, James Douglas.[137]

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[134] Somerville 71.
[135] McClintock 27.
[136] McClintock 5.
[137] Even though writing later, Douglas merits consideration because his rhetoric demonstrates keen similarities with Samuel Smith's attack on Zola in the late 1880s. There is a clear comparison between Samuel Smith's desire to save the young from the horrors of Zola and James Douglas's wish to prevent the young from reading the modernists, by giving them prussic acid if necessary. Douglas's 1928 rhetoric of

The Sanitary Inspector of Literature: James Douglas, Abjection and the Rhetoric of Disgust

Abjection, as Krisetva states, "draws me toward the place where meaning collapses."[138] In terms of psychology, abjection horrifies the subject with an archaic memory of pre-individuation, before the necessary boundaries have been demarcated that separate the self and (m)other, subject and object. Abjection is linked with materiality, bodily fluids and deposits, the 'thingness' of death, whatever leads subjects to confront their subjectlessness. Abjection is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules" (PH 4). It is not an object but more a location, a frontier. As Kristeva comments it is, "above all, ambiguity" (PH 9). It haunts and fascinates, repulses and attracts. If primary abjection is related to independence and the failure to be totally independent from the maternal body, repeatedly reminding the infant of its intimate and stifling relationship with the mother, secondary abjection, as Valente states:

> [...] in fact, consists in a conscious reaction to/against a socially determined set of subject-object distinctions and grows out of an unconscious recognition that such diacritical markers are structurally unstable, i.e., susceptible, as a condition of their existence, of collapsing once again into a zone of indifference and interchangeability.[139]

The abject is concerned, then, with both the subject and the social. In adopting Kristeva's concept of abjection, my interest is, following McClintock, to view abjection as "that

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disgust shows the residual strength of traditional discourses of morality thirty years after Smith's speech in parliament.

[138] Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 2. Henceforth abbreviated in the text as PH.

[139] Joseph Valente, James Joyce and the Problem of Justice: Negotiating Sexual and Colonial Difference (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 74.

liminal state that hovers on the threshold of body and body politic", and thus avoid the psychologism for which Kristeva has been criticised.[140]

McClintock sees abjection as a part of modern industrial imperialism where, "[...] certain groups are expelled and obliged to inhabit the impossible edges of modernity: the slum, the ghetto, the garret, the brothel, the convent, the colonial bantustan and so on."[141] It is precisely this relationship between Kristeva's notion of a primary abjection which responds to the provocation of materiality – bodily fluids, death etcetera – and a secondary abjection socially constituted by multiple others that can be seen to inform individual and social acts of censorship. Abjection represents, in a sense, a crucial, even elemental alterity, positing metaphysical being against the materiality of non-being, which is to say, between the ego and its complete dissolution; it is an oppositional and irreducible presence which the subject needs to expulse continuously in order for the 'I' to survive. Moreover, secondary abjection should not be seen as wholly distinct from primary abjection. As Valente acknowledges: "[...] primary abjection turns out to be always already mediated by secondary abjection [...]" as the primary ambivalences of the child are formed not merely through separation from the mother but in a complex but concrete social, political, cultural and economic context.[142]

There are several ways in which Kristeva's conceptualisation of abjection can be fruitfully applied to the processes of literary criticism and specifically critical censure. First, abjection is constitutive of what I have labelled a rhetoric of disgust: it is the "dark

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[140] McClintock 72. See Nancy Fraser, "The Uses and Abuses of French Discourse Theories for Feminist Politics," Theory, Culture, and Society 9 (1992): 51-71. Kristeva's notion of abjection is, to say the least, overextended: "For all its local insights," Michael Andre Bernstein warns, "the sweep of Kristeva's account elides its specificity, so that her abject is hypostasized, functioning as a global concept that, depending on the circumstances, can be regarded, as at once a force, a condition, a drive, or a kind of frantic reaction in the face of mortality....an analysis of abjection that can move without hesitation from Oedipus at Colonus to taboos associated with menstruation, and then to the Holocaust, seems to me to abandon, by overextension, the explanatory force of the term." Michael Andre Bernstein, Bitter Carnival: Ressentiment and the Abject Hero (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992) 26.

[141] McClintock 72.

[142] Valente 72.

revolt of being" against disgust that spurs the desire to expel from the body and body politic; second, abjection is concerned with both the individual's and society's policing of its own threatened and threatening liminal spaces; and thus, third, abjection helps conflate boundaries between the subject and the social, forming a significant linkage between bodily disgust and social opprobrium.

The interrelation of these points becomes clear if a brief examination is undertaken of perhaps the greatest, and certainly the most infamous critics of the morality of modern fiction: James Douglas, the influential British journalist who was, as Adam Parkes notes, "instrumental" in bringing to court first The Rainbow (1915) and later The Well of Loneliness (1928).[143] The first quotation comes from Douglas's review of Ulysses (1922), the second, his most famous attack in The Sunday Express on Radclyffe Hall's The Well of Loneliness:

> I have read it, and I say that it is the most infamously obscene book in ancient or modern literature. The obscenity of Rabelais is innocent compared with its leprous and scabrous horrors. All the secret sewers of vice are canalized in its flood of unimaginable thoughts, images and pornographic words. And its unclean lunacies are larded with appalling and revolting blasphemies directed against the Christian religion and against the holy name of Christ – blasphemies hitherto associated with the most degraded orgies of Satanism and the Black Mass.[144]
>
> The book gives evidence of a pestilence afoot which is devastating young souls – called Sexual Inversion and Perversion. Those horrors are flaunting themselves in public places with increasing effrontery, and more insolently provocative bravado. Certain authors and publishers have assumed the position of serving as decadent apostles for the most hideous and loathsome vices, no longer deigning even to conceal their degeneracy and degradation... I say deliberately that this novel is not fit to be sold by any bookseller or to be borrowed from any library... I would rather give a healthy boy or a healthy girl a phial of prussic acid than this novel. Poison kills the body, but moral poison kills the soul.[145]

What perhaps strikes most forcefully is the hyperbole of Douglas's rhetoric. The superlative obscenity of Ulysses is matched by the comparative moral danger of The Well of Loneliness in relation to the physical danger of prussic acid. The blasphemies

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[143] Parkes 77.
[144] De Grazia 26.

contained within Ulysses are compared to "the most degraded orgies of Satanism and the Black Mass". Douglas's writing gives an impression of hysteria through both its immoderate diction and the appearance of heated urgency in the frequent clumsiness of its prose. To give just three examples of the latter: why, for example the "deliberately" in "say deliberately"? Why the qualification "healthy" in "healthy boy and girl"? If the adjective emphasises a contrast between health and moral contagion, it also leaves the reader wondering in what circumstances Douglas would give prussic acid to an unhealthy boy. Third, could a "clean" lunacy be imagined? It is, therefore, tempting to dismiss Douglas's comments as rather ridiculous overreactions, and to place Douglas, as he frequently has been, on the losing side of the battle for sexual tolerance, or to merely marginalise him as a representative of the increasingly sensational press fostered on British society by Lords Beaverbrook and Northcliffe. However, this would dismiss the influential role Douglas played in the prosecution of much literature and to ignore the popularity of his journalism. Douglas was supported by many and his viewpoint well-respected. It would also be to deny the continuity that clearly exists between Douglas's prose and the rhetoric of Samuel Smith and Arnold White.

The first significant point to consider regarding this rhetoric of disgust is the rather obvious one that Douglas's comments are themselves "larded" with evocations of repulsion. The adjectives he uses include leprous, scabrous, unclean, revolting, appalling, hideous, loathsome, degraded, as well as pornographic and obscene. In terms of rhetoric, the words incrementally substitute the supposed offences, never specifically mentioned, to be found in the texts of Joyce and Hall. Their novels are abject in that they produce a sensation of bodily disgust: they are indeed loathsome and, as Douglas argues, need to be expelled from the body politic, nor fit to be sold "by any bookseller or to be borrowed

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[145] James Douglas, editorial, Sunday Express, 19 August 1928: 37.

from any library". They make visible and material what should be unseen and immaterial. The secret sewers of vice are canalised, the unimaginable stated, sexual horrors are not only made visible but flaunt themselves with effrontery. As Kristeva states at the beginning of Powers of Horror:

> There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated (PH 1).

Joyce and Hall write beyond the scope of the tolerable and the thinkable; their texts cannot be assimilated and therefore must be expulsed to maintain mental health: they are leprous, lunatic, poisonous.

As Kristeva states, abjection is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules" (PH 4). This is implicit in the above quotations where Joyce and Hall's texts are placed in opposition to religious values, sexual morality and social decency. The rules of society based on Christian decency are clearly disturbed by Joycean blasphemy. Similarly, the body and the body politic, the very order of society, are threatened by the moral poison of Hall's The Well of Loneliness. Douglas makes this relationship more explicit in comments made about The Rainbow, which was also prosecuted at Douglas's instigation:

> Art is a public thing. It is a dweller in the clean homes and swept streets of life. It must conform to the ordered laws that govern human society. If it refuses to do so, it must pay the penalty. The sanitary inspector of literature must notify it and call for its isolation.[146]

Douglas's reading of these texts is reductive, assuming that they have only one intention. They are written to harm the individual and destabilise society. In Douglas's view there is clear transparency between authorial intention and textual effect. They have assumed

[146] R. P. Draper, ed., D. H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge, 1997) 94.

the role of serving vice successfully, producing their moral poison, which is why the young need to be protected from them.

Another interesting aspect of Douglas's rhetoric that links to abjection is its refusal to objectify the specific moral offences of the text. This leaves the reader with the impressionistic sense of moral outrage but with no specific knowledge of the moral crime. The texts are "loathsome" but Douglas does not specify why or how. In 850 words in which Douglas castigates the obscenities of The Rainbow, he mentions neither character nor plot and, apart from one reference to the denigration of the rainbow, little about symbolism. It could be argued that to state the offence might encourage the crime, but there does seem to be a disparity between the superlative rhetoric of effect and the obfuscation of specific offensive cause. Not one example is given to support Douglas's exorbitant claims. The rhetoric of disgust engages less in textual analysis than in moral assertion which beyond superlative generalities of condemnation refuses to discuss specifics. As with abjection, textual offence remains, or in Douglas's rhetoric is maintained relatively, objectless; it is merely something that needs to be opposed, or in Kristeva's words: "The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to the I."[147]

Douglas's strategy of obfuscation within his rhetoric of disgust is also effective in maintaining a hierarchical relation between Douglas, the prospective sanitary inspector of literature, and his readership who are told about rather than shown the nature of the offence. It is Douglas who demarcates the obscene, the blasphemous, the socially indecent; his polemical assertions are predicated upon an acceptance of his authority to discern the obscene.

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[147] Kristeva 3.

That the rhetoric of disgust is primarily concerned with the policing of liminal social spaces is also apparent in Douglas's prose. The intention of Douglas's rhetoric is precisely to block the sewers of vice, or to maintain their secrecy that is, to conceal the flaunting horrors of sexual inversion, to stop unimaginable thoughts becoming imaginable. The constant claim of such rhetoric is to protect the young and vulnerable from moral poison. Such tropes of flood, pestilence, poison, lunacy, degeneracy and degradation are common, tending to conflate the body and the nation imagined as the body as can be seen in the writings of the other practitioners of the rhetoric of disgust, such as Samuel Smith and Arnold White. In the rhetoric of Smith, White and Douglas, moral poison leads to personal and social degeneration, primary and secondary abjection merge, facilitate one another, the purity of boy and nation become one; "unclean lunacies" are contagious which is why books like Ulysses and The Well need to be banned. It is the job of the sanitary inspector of literature, and with the aid of the law if necessary, to keep the English body and body politic unsullied by vice, or, to misappropriate Judith Butler, it is because "the boundaries of the body" are "the limits of the socially *hegemonic*" that they need to be patrolled.[148]

The view I have presented here of power in relation to the censorship of literary texts is in broad agreement with Foucault's perception of the emergence of an era of bio-power in which "there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations [...]" (HS 140). In such diverse techniques, power must be seen as more than a negative imposition of sovereign will. However, this does not undermine the importance of repression as a significant technique in "the subjugation of bodies and control of populations." Who is allowed to speak and in

[148] Judith Butler, The Judith Butler Reader, ed. Sarah Salih (London: Blackwell, 2004) 106.

what type of discourse is highly significant, especially where sexuality equates with national defence. As Foucault himself claimed, it was the incitement to speak about sex "in the field of exercise of power itself" that was most important (HS 18). This institutional incitement to talk about sex through specific discourses does not contradict, but strengthens the notion that such incitement occurs in a dominant culture of repression. Fiction, partly because of the perceived nature of its readership, and especially serious fiction with its perceived role as morally meliorating that readership, was not seen as an appropriate vehicle for the discussion of sexual issues. Burt's claim that censorship may include a variety of forms beyond judicial or state censorship, and that it can have a productive and structural effect on texts is valid. However, this should not allow him to claim negative censorial actions like the limiting of such texts to subaltern groups were not of considerable significance either as constituting dominant cultural identity or as an effective strategy of ideological control. The distribution of texts believed to be pernicious was of overriding importance to nineteenth-century social purity reformers, whether such texts were sex manuals, French novels or scientific tracts. Genre was ultimately less significant than readership. Finally, I have identified those sections of society that were deemed to be in need of protection from the pernicious influences of literature either because it would damage them or more broadly threaten the health of the nation, race and empire. I have also tried to link the emergence of a Foucauldian bio-power with Kristevan abjection to show the interconnection between control of the body and the body politic, or control of the body politic through the control of the body.

I now wish to turn to a specific examination of some of those texts of modern fiction in which such ideological battles of sexuality were fought. No investigation of representations of sexuality, and specifically female sexuality, during this period could do justice to the subject without a consideration of the impact of what came to be known as

Zolaism. The publication of Zola's novels in English led to the imprisonment of his publisher, Henry Vizetelly, and some would claim was responsible for his death. George Moore looked at Vizetelly's death as a judicial murder.[149] Moreover, Zola is a pivotal figure in terms of sexually transgressive representations in nineteenth-century England. It was concern about the publication of Zola's novels in English and their widespread distribution which not only provoked outcry but also helped frame the public debate about the representation of sex and sexuality in fiction until well after the First World War.

[149] George Moore, Avowals (New York: Liveright, 1919) 109.

Chapter Two: Bound To Reticence: The *Bête Humaine* and the *Beau Ideal* in Zola[1]

> 'We are bound to reticence', says George Eliot, 'most of all by that reverence for the highest efforts of our common nature, which commands us to bury its lowest fatalities, its invincible remnants of the brute, its most agonising struggles with temptation, in unbroken silence.[2]
>
> There are many undesirable things of which men have knowledge, and of which only the evil-minded speak. It is the shame of Zola that he has put an end to reticence.[3]
>
> Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bore; / Down with Reticence, down with reverence – forward – naked – let them stare.[4]

The late-Victorian period marks an end to reticence about sex in what was deemed serious literature. Mid-Victorian fiction based on an accepted moral consensus on what could and could not be included in the novel, "the undesirable things of which men have knowledge" but only "the evil-minded speak," appears to break down first with Zola in France, then later with novelists such as George Moore and Thomas Hardy who continue to broaden the scope of the serious novel's subject matter. Although this end to reticence is concerned with the breaking of consensual silence, it is also about the manner in which that silence was broken. This chapter examines how Victorian reticence about sexuality was challenged by the publication of Zola's novels in English.

Indeed, it is difficult to understand the censorship debates of the *fin de siècle* and beyond, without appreciating the significant influence Zola had on English

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[1] I have taken the terms *bête humaine* and *beau ideal* to establish a contrast between the idealism of Victorian consensus and the offending depictions of humanity found in Zolean naturalism. The terms resonate with Toril Moi's depiction of an idealist aesthetics that was embodied in mid-Victorian realism juxtaposed with the realism of naturalism. As she astutely claims: "Idealists did not object to realism; they objected to realism that did not subscribe to idealist aesthetics. This kind of realism came increasingly to be called "naturalism", in the 1880s, and the question at the heart of the culture wars unleashed by naturalism was precisely whether anti-idealist realism (not realism in general) could be art." Toril Moi, Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism. Art Theater, Philosophy (Oxford; Oxford UP, 2006) 67.

2 W. S Lilly, "The New Naturalism," Fortnightly Review 44 (1885): 240–256, at 245. Eliot's original comments come from her last collection of essays and poems, Impressions of Theophrastus Such (London: Blackwood's, 1879) 7.

[3] The Western Morning News qtd. in William Alex Coote, Pernicious Literature 25.

[4] Alfred Tennyson, "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Longmans, 1969) 1365.

literature as regards the representation of sexuality in fiction. Zola's naturalist transgressions became a benchmark for both later writers and commentators. The fiction of George Moore, Thomas Hardy, and George Gissing was frequently either condemned or defined in terms of similarities to and distinctions from the naturalist novels of Zola.[5] New Woman fiction was also often censured for its naturalist concentration on sexuality and for inciting the same kind of reader response as Zola's novels. As Lyn Pykett states,

> Certainly, despite the fact that many writers of the New Fiction employed nonnaturalistic modes and eschewed the naturalist stance of scientific objectivity, discussions of the modern woman novel recapitulated and recirculated many of the terms of the earlier debates about naturalism and Zolaism.[6]

The idea that reading Zola's novels could endanger the young and vulnerable lasted well into the twentieth century. In reference to Norah March's Towards Racial Health, a book written as last as 1915, David Trotter writes

> When facts about the 'sad things of life' pass through the brain of a Dickens or a George Eliot they become 'purified and educative'; when they pass through the brain of a Zola, they become 'pernicious and infective as with deadly moral plague.'[7]

In March's comments, Zola's name is still associated with his "handling of unclean things" and the effect of reading him is still as dangerous.[8]

There were four specific, if interrelated, ways in which Zolean fiction, and responses to it, helped form the contested ground of censorship for at least the next twenty-five years. First, Realist, New Woman and Edwardian writers all fought censorship battles on the specific Zolean terrain of the representation of female

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[5] For discussions on the influence of Zola on Moore and Hardy, see respective chapters. For a recent discussion of the influence of Zola on George Gissing, see Emma Liggins, George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

[6] Lyn Pykett, "Representing the Real: The English Debate About Naturalism 1884-1900," Naturalism in the European Novel, ed. Brian Nelson (New York: Berg, 1992):167-188, at 184.

[7] David Trotter, The English Novel in History, 1895-1920 (New York: Routledge, 1993) 207.

[8] The phrase "handling of unclean things" is attributed to Henry James. Trotter 115.

sexuality. Second, later sexual representations provoked national anxieties about the social destabilisation of sexual actions in similar ways to Zola's novels; English novels which were considered obscene were often read as being somehow un-English. Obscenity was characteristically thought to remain the preserve of foreigners and franker sexual representation even by English writers was considered by many to be an unwelcome foreign import. Third, transgressive fictional representations caused concerns about the increasingly easier access subaltern groups might have to such texts. That the fiction of George Moore, George Egerton and Grant Allen was published in formats that could avoid circulating-library censorship caused especial concern to those who morally disapproved of their work. As has been noted in the first chapter, fictional works could be considered as being dangerous to specific groups, especially the young and women. Finally, Zola's novels are as influenced by emerging scientific discourses that challenge traditional moral positions as those of later literary transgressors. As will be seen, the scientific impetus of Zola's objectivity frequently places his novels in opposition to the mid-Victorian aesthetics of the novel.

In the first section, I will argue that objections to Zola's portrayal of sexuality were caused largely by Zola's dislodging of the *bête humaine* from the moral precepts of the *beau ideal.*[9] Zola's narratives dispense with the moral framework in which sexuality, and specifically female sexuality, was viewed in Victorian Britain.[10] In the

[9] It should be acknowledged that the moral precepts of what I have called the *beau ideal* rest upon broadly accepted philosophical and aesthetic assumptions as regards sexual representation. Toril Moi's comments in reference to Schiller describe much broader resonances in nineteenth-century ideologies of sexuality: "The representation of human sexuality requires idealization, or it will be vulgar. In order to become properly poetic, sex must be sublimated, ennobled, and beautified [...]. In order to avoid the course and vulgar, consciousness must transcend the body; morality, duty and will must conquer mere material nature." Moi 78-9.

[10] However, it should be acknowledged that Zola was not always consistent in his approach to sexual amorality. In Au Bonheur des dames (The Ladies' Delight), Denise Baudu is ultimately rewarded with marriage for her "virgin's determination" against the continual sexual advances of the philandering Octave Mouret. After another of Mouret's attempts to seduce her, Denise thinks he "spoke in that way and she saw him so moved, so devastated, she could not think any longer why she refused him; and it was only later, in the very depths of her nature as a wholesome young woman, that she found the pride and

second section, I examine the publication of Zola's novels in their English context; I will argue that the objections to Zola's challenge to reticence show how central sexuality was to hegemonic discourses not only of gender, but also nationality and class. In the third section, I argue that contrary to the moral offence Nana caused to social purity reformers, among others, Zola's representation of sexuality is strikingly consonant with Victorian fears of contamination from female, working-class sexuality. This chapter, however, makes no claims to being a comprehensive study of Emile Zola or his novels in respect to their sexual representations, but aims to demonstrate how the publication and reception of Zola's novels frame much of the later censorship debate. The chapter also offers examples of how Zola's novels contest and concur with dominant discourses of sexuality, and how they are, in many respects, themselves sites of competing discourses of gender, sexuality and class.

Nana and the New Naturalism

David Saunders argues that the Victorian social concern with the use of pornography "underwent mutation to become the object of a discipline whereby sex was aestheticised and aesthetics sexualised."[11] Although he locates this development in the era of D. H. Lawrence, such a change was plausibly in process much earlier. With the introduction of "pernicious literature" from abroad, abroad largely signifying France, sex and sexuality began to be established as a central thematic of serious fiction, provoking spates of moral outrage and occasional calls for censorship especially, but not exclusively, from social purity reformers. Although Flaubert, Maupassant and

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good sense that kept her upright, with her virgin's determination." Au Bonheur des dames (The Ladies' Delight), trans. and ed. Robin Buss (London: Penguin, 2001) 344.

Baudelaire, among others, were considered writers of such pernicious literature, more than any other writer of fiction, the charge of literary obscenity was levelled against Emile Zola.[12] Henry Vizetelly's prosecutions and subsequent imprisonment were due to his publication of Zola's novels.[13]

A consideration of contemporary responses certainly demonstrates the impact Zola's novels had in England. W. S. Lilly, writing in the Fortnightly Review in 1885, argued that Zola has supplied the most pregnant illustration known in literature that "the visible when it rests not upon the invisible becomes the bestial."[14] Lilly complains:

> In Nana there is not a vestige of the '*beau ideal*'. Blank and crude materialism, the trivial, the foul, the base of animal life, is the staple of the book from beginning to end. The heroine, whose role, M Zola deems to embrace the whole keyboard of human existence is "a beast no more," indeed rather less.[15]

What appears to offend is that Zola's naturalism incorporates the bestial, or, in modern parlance, inscribes the sexualised body into serious fiction. The opposition between elevating aesthetic ideal – the ethereally invisible – and foul animal, the all too visible base, collapses in Zola; his New Naturalism "eliminates from man all but the ape and tiger. It leaves him nothing but the *bête humaine*." Lilly continues:

> The issue of the Naturalistic Evolution is the banishing from life of all that gives it glory and honour: the victory of fact over principle, of mechanism over imagination, of appetites, dignified as rights, over duties, of sensation over intellect, of the belly over the heart, of fatalism over moral freedom, of brute force over justice, in a word, of matter over mind.[16]

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[11] Saunders 163.
[12] Adam Parkes claims that Flaubert's Madame Bovary (1857) and Baudelaire's Les Fleurs de Mal (1857) "galvanised the British Parliament into passing Lord Campbell's Obscene Publication Act (1857)." Parkes 6. In an article written for The Quarterly Review, one commentator criticized Maupassant for throwing "down his lively sketches of a depravity which has long since passed the bounds of permissible speech." William Frierson, "The English Controversy Over Realism in Fiction 1885-1895," PMLA 43 (1928): 533-550, at 537.
[13] The ensuing controversy inspired Havelock Ellis to compare the mention of Zola's name to an anarchist's bomb. Clarence R. Decker, The Victorian Conscience (New York: Twayne, 1952) 108.
[14] Lilly 251.
[15] Lilly 256.
[16] Lilly 252.

Lilly's perception of Zola's fiction as a victory of sensation and matter over mind and intellect not only equates sexuality with animality, but also correlates to the belief held by many Victorians that as civilisation advanced, human reason would conquer animality and thus sexual passion would decline.[17] In this sense, Zola's insistence on portraying the *bête humaine* could be perceived as an attack on the very idea of the advance of civilisation and through the very medium, literature, that was increasingly deployed as a prime agent of such a civilising process.[18] Moreover, this separation between the *beau ideal* and the *bête humaine*, as Lilly makes clear, is a distinction between mind and matter, and, as Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall illustrate, the mind/matter binary had a strongly gendered dimension:

> The mind/matter distinction generated a picture of women as sexually inert, innocent, and ignorant: the man/animal distinction generated a picture of both women and men as potentially bestial. But, in so far as it urged the supremacy of rationality in the pursuit of perfection, it made women of necessity more akin to the animal than to the essentially human.[19]

Thus the fear of the bestial that Lilly rails against in Zola can be read as a precisely the fear of the danger of unleashed female sexuality, clearly evoked in Zola's novel Nana.

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[17] As Alan Hunt states: "The persistence of the medieval view that nature exists for the benefit of man and that God had ordained that man have dominion over nature found expression in a belief that equated sexuality with animality. The march of civilisation, widening the gulf between human and animal, would thus be manifest in a decline in sexual passion. This struggle was also played out within every individual in the contest between the higher and the lower realms of human nature, between reason and appetite." Alan Hunt 93. Credence for such a belief could also be found in the views of Herbert Spencer who contended: "[...] evolving organisms became more complex and differentiated, their reproductive energies diminished. The process as Spencer described it in 1867 was not cyclical but progressive; it was characteristic of an evolutionary continuum of "individuation and genesis" in which the absorption of energy to sustain heterogeneity and cerebral advancement came at the expense of more primitive procreative capacity." Soloway 49. The relationship between civilisation, reason and sexuality proved durable. Blair Bell, a gynaecologist, could write as late as 1916 that "The higher type of woman, with a more developed reasoning faculty had less need for the lure of sexual gratification to ensure the perpetuation of the race." Porter and Hall 172.

[18] Although the novel was increasingly valorised for the role it could play in educating subaltern others, the aesthetic value of the novel was still contested. Barbara Leckie points out that Matthew Arnold did not include the novel as a genre in Arnold's "category of aesthetic culture." Leckie 7. Leckie argues that even as late as the mid-eighteen-eighties the novel's "status as art was still by no means established." Leckie 7.

[19] Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall, Sexuality and Subordination Interdisciplinary Studies of Gender in the Nineteenth Century (London: Routledge, 1989): 1-20, at 9-10.

At the most basic level, however, it would appear that Zola was banned and Vizetelly tried because Zola's writing refused to be bound to reticence. Zola's novels incorporated depictions of sexuality that were beyond the pale of the English novel. Max Nordau in Degeneration (1895) certainly picked up on Zola's satisfaction with "lingering libidinously over human acts".[20] Nordau claims:

> That he is a sexual psychopath is betrayed on every page of his novels. He revels continually in representations from the region of the basest sensuality, and interweaves them in all events of his novels without being able in any way to assign an artistic reason for this forced introduction.[21]

Certainly La Terre depicted sexuality more graphically than it had ever been shown in the respectable English novel. From the first chapter when Françoise, intent on having her cow inseminated, "grasps the bull's penis firmly in her hand," to her eventual brutal rape by Buteau and the "violent spasm of pleasure" it produces, La Terre contains numerous sexual representations which readers accustomed to a diet of Dickens would have found shocking.[22] In the following example, Buteau sexually pursues his sister-in-law, Françoise: "And there was always the same scenario: he pushed his arm up her skirt and caught hold of a handful of flesh and hair, as when mounting an animal [...]."[23] The Solicitor General, opening the first case against Vizetelly, and echoing Lilly's concern with the *bête humaine*, "did not believe there was ever collected between the covers of a book so much bestial obscenity as was found in the passages of this book" (PL 17). Certainly one juror at the Vizetelly trial was so offended by such

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[20] Nordau 500.
[21] Nordau 500.
[22] Douglas Parmee, introd. and trans., The Earth [La Terre] by Emile Zola (London: Penguin, 1980) 29. In Vizetelly's original 1888 translation, the diction is less direct but the action of Françoise is still quite clear: "Raising her arm with a sweep she aided the animal in his efforts, and he, gathering up his strength, speedily accompanied his purpose" , The Soil (La Terre) (London, Vizetelly, 1888) 12. Where Parmee describes Françoise's "spasm of pleasure" Vizetelly's translation is also less frankly stated but the meaning is not difficult to grasp: "she had fainted beneath a sensation such as she had never felt before" 399. Also there is no direct mention of Buteau placing his hand up Françoise's skirt but his frequent attacks on her are mentioned. Françoise is firmly "seized around the waist" and after Buteau's attack, "the girl straightened her clothes and limped away, feeling bruised and sore." 258. Parmee 432.
[23] Parmee 298.

descriptions that when the passage cited above about bull-mating was read out by the prosecution, he interrupted and asked if all "objectionable passages" needed to be read, to which the Solicitor General replied that it was as unpleasant for him to read as it was for the jury to listen (PL 18).[24] Such objectionable passages in La Terre include the violence of rape and attempted rape – one such depiction describes how Hilarion attempts to rape his grandmother Le Grande and is killed in the process – references to incest between brother and sister, Hilarion and Palmyre, several to prostitution from the high class courtesan Suzanne Legliane to the sexual dalliances of 'Jesus Christ's' daughter La Trouille with Nenesse and Delphin. La Terre also depicts the brothel-keeping of the hypocritically prudish and respectable Charles family as well as the drunken and rather casual cuckolding of Becu by his wife. Nana adds lesbianism and sadomasochism to the sexual activities portrayed in La Terre. Pot Bouille (1882) critiques bourgeois mothers for the prostitution of their daughters into marriage, and includes Narcisse Bachelard's paedophiliac exploitation of his child mistress Fifi.

Even though Zola's fictions contained subject matter never explicitly dealt with in the English novel, Zola's literary offence should not be considered merely explicitness. Lilly's reference to mechanistic fact hints at the putative scientific detachment of Zola who, as one commentator stated, "appears to look upon an atrocious villain as a doctor looks on some horrible development of disease."[25] Zola's novelistic portrayals, or vivisections as another contemporary critic had it, decline the elevation of

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[24] Sir Edward Clarke was also involved in the other great literary trial of the late nineteenth century: he defended Oscar Wilde. According to Vizetelly's son Ernest, Clarke's literary authority to regard Zola's La Terre as containing no literary merit might well be questioned by his clear lack of knowledge of French. Vizetelly writes, "Ernest Vizetelly,who was seated at the solicitors' table, then turned and perceived several French newspaper correspondents and others striving to preserve their gravity, which had been disturbed by the curious manner in which Sir Edward Clarke pronounced the French names confronting him in the pages of The Soil. For a time one might have imagined he was reading a novel of the kail-yard, for he persistently pronounced 'Jean' as if it were a Scottish." Vizetelly 278.

[25] Decker 104.

the mind for the realistic – scientific – depiction of brute matter.[26] Thus it is not only the graphic nature of Zola's "vivisections" that causes offence but it is that such portrayals privilege analysis over inspiration, social determinism predicated on evolutionary biology over individual will and banish "glory and honour" from the fictional representation of life.[27] Much has been made of the scientific nature of Zola's writing, particularly influenced by the work of the experimental physiologist Claude Bernard. In The Experimental Novel (1880), Zola draws attention to an: "illustration of Claude Bernard, which struck me as very forcible [...] 'The experimentalist is the examining magistrate of nature.' We novelists are the examining magistrates of men and their passions."[28] Such an examination of nature precludes any notion of fixed, upright character, the stable centre of Victorian ideology.[29] If Nana is a character then she is a character governed by strict laws of heredity and environment rather than the eternal verities of the Victorian soul, and it is such factors that fuel Zola's study of degeneration. As Irene Gammel states

> Creating "*l'histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire*," Zola chose to show the workings of heredity in a line of degeneration, exposing the "fatality" of sexual (and generational) reproduction: the Rougon family (respectable middle class) is joined with the Macquart (lower class), the latter endowed with negative genetic material (Macquart is an alcoholic).[30]

However dubious Zola's scientific claims, Zola's novelistic approach evidences how the naturalist attack on bourgeois morality was filtered through a rhetoric of scientific validity. In the second paragraph of Zola's influential essay "The Experimental Novel"

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[26] According to Decker, "The editor of The Times accused Zola of confounding vivisection with art - a butcher's carcass, however faithfully reproduced, can inspire no elevating feeling." Decker 96.
[27] Frierson argues that "[...] the critics protested against naturalism as a social philosophy; it was deterministic and therefore disillusioning and depressing; it was analytic and therefore not elevating or inspiring." Frierson 538.
[28] Emile Zola, "The Experimental Novel," The Experimental Novel and Other Essays, trans. Belle M. Sherman (New York: Cassells, 1893).
[29] Daniel Pick has traced other significant scientific and intellectual influences on Zola, including Cesare Lombroso, Hubert Spencer, Gustave le Bon, Hippolyte Taine and Charles Darwin among others. Daniel Pick, Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder 1848-1918 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1989).
[30] Irene Gammel, Sexualising Power in Naturalism (London: U of Calgary P, 2000) 19.

he states: "It will often be but necessary for me to replace the word "doctor" by the word "novelist", to make my meaning clear and to give it the rigidity of a scientific truth."[31] One does not have to accept Zola's own belief in the scientific truth of Naturalism to acknowledge the pervasive influence of scientific discourses on Zola's fiction.[32] In his preface to the second edition of Thérèse Raquin, the scientific grounding of Zola's fictional exploration is described even more starkly: "My aim was primarily scientific [...] each chapter analyses a curious physiological case [...]. I simply performed the analytical work on two living bodies that pathologists typically carry out on cadavers."[33] There is no simple correspondence, however, between the scientific discourses of Charles Darwin or say Hippolyte Taine and Zola's fiction. Daniel Pick gives one example of how Zola can even subvert his own claim to scientific validity. In reference to the last novel in the Rougon-Macquart series, Doctor Pascal (1893), Pick argues that the novel "represents the crisis of Zola's naturalism". As Pick notes:

> Dr Pascal ends 'optimistically', concluding the Rougon-Macquart cycle with a happy ending – the vision of motherhood beyond Pascal's death. But the terms of that optimism involved calling into question a scientific discourse on degeneration which had by now projected the social narrative into very bleak representations.[34]

However scientific discourses are negotiated, appropriated or even questioned, it is clear that Zola's representation of sexuality and his attack on Victorian reticence are

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[31] Zola Experiment 1-2. As Brian Nelson points out Zola was most truly a naturalist novelist in terms of basing his fiction on scientific theory in the early novels like Thérèse Raquin (1868). By the time Zola wrote The Experimental Novel in 1880 "theory and practice had diverged." In The Experimental Novel, as Nelson quite rightly points out, "Zola fully acknowledges the importance, indeed the artistic necessity, of the selecting, structuring role of the individual artist and of the aesthetics he adopts." Brian Nelson, ed., "Zola and the Nineteenth century," The Cambridge Companion to Emile Zola (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007): 1-19, at 4.

[32] Zola's documentary methods have also been questioned. As Chantal Pierre-Gnassounou comments: "If the author of les Rougon-Macquart succeeded in perpetuating the image of the documentary novelist, whose descriptions could be considered to constitute the core of his writing, his planning notes betray him by revealing the extent to which his novels are marked by the temptations of fiction, to the point of his sometimes ignoring the constraints of his source material." Chantal Pierre-Gnassounou, "Zola and the Art of Fiction," The Cambridge Companion to Emile Zola, ed. Brian Nelson, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007): 86-104, at 102.

[33] Emile Zola, Thérèse Raquin, trans. and introd. Leonard Tancock (London: Penguin, 1962).

still grounded in them. Zola's fiction demonstrates that the new challenges to the Victorian novel were firmly constructed upon new emerging scientific discourses.

Although it is commonplace to dismiss Zola's claims to scientific detachment, one claim of such detachment is the creation of what Elizabeth Ermath called a "depersonalised consciousness", which in Zola might be figured more accurately as a depersonalised conscience, by which I mean the apparent withdrawal of a subjectively moral narrative guide.[35] The absence of a morally guided narrative allows for transparency through which the reader can share the voyeuristic gaze from the viewpoint of a character, Buteau, but in language that is clearly not representative of how he speaks. Both Parmee's and Vizetelly's translation are given below to emphasise that the description of Françoise is no less voyeuristic in Vizetelly's publication than in Parmee's much later translation.

> Françoise put the bottle to her lips and took a long draught; she was not squeamish. And as she lent backwards, arching her back, with her breasts pressing hard against her flimsy dress, he watched her. She too was steaming with perspiration in her cotton print dress, half undone, with her bodice unbuttoned at the top showing her white flesh. Under the blue handkerchief protecting her head and neck, her eyes seemed very large, set in her flushed, taciturn face.[36]

> Françoise took a deep draught from the bottle without repugnance. While she bent backward, with her loins curved, and her rounded bust straining the thin material of her dress, he looked at her askance. She also was dripping with moisture, in a print dress half undone, the body being unhooked at the top and showing her white flesh. Under the blue handkerchief with which she had

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[34] Pick 82.

[35] As Parmee notes in his introduction to The Earth that by the time Zola wrote La Terre even he had grown sceptical of his "scientific enthusiasms." 5. Ermath uses the term in her discussion of narrative technique in Jane Austen's novels. Elizabeth Deeds Ermath, Realism and Consensus in the English Novel (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998) 144. The complex relationship between narrative viewpoint and perceived immorality is perhaps most impressively discussed in Dominic La Capra, Madame Bovary on Trial (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982). This consideration of Zola follows La Capra's argument that a major reason for the opprobrium and censure of novels such as Flaubert's and Zola's was, as it was for Pined, the prosecuting lawyer in the Bovary trial, that, "there is no stable, secure, or reliable position within the novel from which to condemn Emma." La Capra 39. It should also be noted that Zola's novel Nana clearly follows other French writers' approach to the subject of prostitution, especially J. K. Huysman's Martha: histoire d'une file (1876) and Edmond Agincourt's La File Elise (1877).

[36] Parmee 240.

> covered her head and neck, her eyes seemed very large in her quiet face, glowing with the heat.[37]

Zola, here, writing in 1879, not only provides significant erotic detail, but erotically exposes, rather than merely presents, Françoise before the reader and Buteau's gaze. The voyeur's gaze ends resting on Françoise's "flushed taciturn face" which is as much erotic detail as expression of character, and is contextualised by both the description of her sexualised body and Buteau's desire for it. David Trotter claims that such detail, "was scandalous because it ignored the assumption, widespread in Victorian fiction, that a face consists of features rather than surfaces, and that those features express character."[38] Françoise's face and body are clearly figured here as objects of desire rather than signifiers of character. Although this description of Françoise may not be strictly called pornographic, its appropriation of the voyeur's gaze surely is one example of the utilisation of pornography long before, according to Alison Pease, modernists incorporated, "pornographic tropes and images into literary works of serious aesthetic aspiration [...]."[39] To paraphrase Saunders, sex is aestheticised in Zola's La Terre if in a considerably different way from that of later writers such as D. H. Lawrence.

The eponymous heroine of Nana is also clearly figured as an object of sexual desire as she, too, is caught in the voyeur's gaze of both the audience watching her and the reader. Nana's sexual appeal is emphasized from her first entrance on the stage:

> When she came to the end of the verse, her voice failed completely, and she realised that she would never get through the whole song. So, without getting flustered, she thrust out one hip which was roundly outlined under a flimsy tunic, bent backwards, so that her breasts were shown to good advantage, and stretched out her arms. Applause burst forth on all sides. In the twinkling of an eye she had turned around and was going upstage, revealing the nape of her

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[37] Vizetelly 204.
[38] Trotter 202.
[39] Pease xii.

> neck on which her reddish hair looked like an animal's fleece. Then the applause became positively frantic.[40]

Not only is there a clear concentration on Nana's sexualized body – breasts, hips and nape – but such erotic detail also informs Nana's character.[41] The surface, the signifier of her character, becomes feature. Nana's sexuality is registered on the surface of her body in the resemblance of her reddish hair to an animal's fleece, which is precisely what provokes the audience's frantic response. When Muffat first encounters her it is, "a warm supple skin which sent a thrill through him" (N 68). In fact, Nana has less Victorian character, than modern personality, and her modern personality is specifically informed by the surface appeal of her sexuality.[42] Nana's inner self, such as it exists, reflects the immediate concerns of her outer life: her material desires, her fight for money, her manipulation and distrust of men, her selfishness and struggle to survive. She is not granted the same degree of introspection as Muffat. The quotation below is symptomatic of Zola's *style indirect libre* when the narrative merges with Nana's viewpoint:

> For a moment she was worried at not being able to recall where she had put her fifty francs on changing her dress. But then she remembered: they must be on the corner of her dressing table under an inverted pot of pomade. As she was getting to her feet, there was a long ring on the bell. Another one! It would never end (N 67).

Nana's relationship with Fontan is based less on love than finding a practical solution to the "world crumbling about her" (N 242). Her feelings for him are concretely related to the remembrance of material possessions: "And for three weeks the two sweethearts led

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[40] Emile Zola, Nana, trans. George Holdon (London: Penguin, 1972) 33. All subsequent references to Nana are to this edition. Hence abbreviated as N in the text.

[41] This idea was generalised by Otto Weininger in his infamous polemic Sex and Character (1906) written some twenty years later. Weininger claimed that "woman is engrossed exclusively by sexuality, not intermittently, but throughout her life; that her whole being, bodily and mental, is nothing but sexuality itself." Otto Weininger, Sex and Character (New York: Fertig, 2003) 260.

[42] As Hunt claims character was "[...] marked by a different set of dispositions and behavioural traits [...] the late-Victorian period marked the high-water mark of character formation; by the beginning of the twentieth century it was transformed into an emphasis on 'personality', a more individualistic and individuated project." A. Hunt 157.

a really delightful life. Nana fancied she was back in the early days when her first silk dress had caused her such indescribable pleasure" (N 247). When she briefly falls for Georges, she is described as finding herself "subject to the fancies of a sentimental girl" (N 191). Even Nana's feelings for Louiset, her son, cannot escape the note of superficial sentimentality; her emotional response seems as false and fickle as her feelings for her lovers. She abandons him at Mme Leret and frequently forgets about him, for a fortnight at one stage, before she is seized "with a fit of maternal love" (N 325). When she is travelling to La Mignotte she thinks about her son coming to visit her: "In the railway carriage between Paris and Orleans she spoke of nothing else; her eyes were full of tears; she mingled together flowers, birds and child in a sudden access of maternal affection" (N 177).

Not only is Nana's sexualised body presented as visible to the reader, but Nana's sexuality is presented as a natural, intractable force, and a natural force that has the power to destabilise social hierarchies. In a preliminary outline of the novel, Zola made the following note:

> The philosophical subject is as follows: A whole society hurling itself at the cunt. A pack of hounds after a bitch who is not even on heat and makes fun of the hounds following her. The poem of male desires, the great leveller which moves the world. There is nothing apart from cunt and religion" (intro, N 11).

Nana is most obviously about the power of sex, a "poem of male desires" wherein, as Lilly recognised, Zola signifies the victory of "the belly over the heart", although the victory might be metonymically located less euphemistically in the male anatomy. Nana is the incarnation of the body. As Zola claimed, "[...] she is nothing but flesh, but flesh in all its beauty" (intro, N 13). She may be emotionally and intellectually shallow but she is physically irresistible, and thus all human motivations and aspirations including the austere religious beliefs of Muffat cannot compete with sexual desire, and such desire inevitably disables and destroys. In fact, much of the power of the novel

derives from the contrast between Nana's lack of depth, her egotism and indifference to her suitors and the extreme effect that she has on them, especially the pious and eminently respectable Muffat whose: "whole being was in revolt; the way in which Nana had slowly taken possession of him for some time past terrified him, reminding him of the pious stories of diabolic possession which he had read as a child" (N 155). As Nana operates very much like the "force of nature" (intro, N 12) that Zola claims, the reader is denied the moral framework from which to judge her actions. It is worth recalling Lilly's comments about Zola's novels showing the "victory of fact over principle, of mechanism over imagination, of appetites, dignified as rights, over duties, of sensation over intellect, of the belly over the heart, of fatalism over moral freedom." Nana as a character, or rather personality, clearly lacks principle, substantial intellect, and introspection, and, as a force of nature, lacks moral freedom and consequently the potential for melioration. Nana is symptomatic, or perhaps more accurately, emblematic of Lilly's portrayal of the offensive New Naturalism. For all of her dreams of social improvement, Nana is represented as being unable to act in any other way than she does, her amorality clearly ironically related to the moral damage her actions cause others. Thus Zola's narrative is not detached in the sense that scientific objectivity claims detachment; it depicts actions that the middle class reader might well have found immoral, but amorally: through eroticising female bodies, presenting sexual desire as irresistible and morality as frangible, and absenting a morally guiding narrative voice, Nana's 'naturalism' not only challenges the aesthetic binary of human beast and beautiful ideal but also breaks the moral binary of demon whore and seduced victim.

Zola in an English Context

If Zola's novels are examined within a specific English context and the prevalent views of sexuality which frequently underpin censorship, the moral outrage that novels like La Terre and Nana caused can be better understood.

Of prime importance in understanding the prosecution of Henry Vizetelly for publishing Zola's novels was the publication of William T. Stead's series of articles called "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" which appeared in the Pall Mall Gazette in 1885. Stead's articles were a sensational exposé of prostitution in London. The effect of "Maiden Tribute" is difficult to overestimate. Adrian Frazier claims that "Maiden Tribute" sold 100,000 copies.[43] In his biography of Zola, Ernest Vizetelly quotes George Moore on the immediate effect Stead's revelations had on London.

> For more than a week, until The Daily Telegraph took the matter in hand, the sale of The Maiden Tribute converted London into a pandemonium. None who lived in the vicinity of the Strand at that time will forget the shouting of the vendors of the obscenity, often children only twelve years of age.[44]

The "pandemonium" led to meetings being held by Stead, Josephine Butler and Catherine Booth in which an agreement was reached that local vigilante committees should be formed under the direction of the NVA. Thus Stead's articles which were satirized in some quarters for having "out-Zolaed Zola in the matter of dirty realism" led to the formation of the organisation which in due course prosecuted Vizetelly's for publishing English translations of Zola.[45] Indeed, as Ernest Vizetelly demonstrates, it was Stead's article about Ernest Vizetelly's father, after Stead had requested information regarding the company's translations of French novels, that sparked public

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[43] Adrian Frazier, George Moore 1852-1933 (London: Yale UP, 2000) 129.

[44] Vizetelly 258. Ironically, considering that Stead's articles led to the formation of the NVA that led the prosecution against Zola, George Moore's initial reaction, cited by Frazier in a letter Moore wrote to Zola on August 16th, was that Stead's articles "indicated that there was a public in London for a more truthful depiction of contemporary reality." Frazier 129.

ire over the publication of Zola's novels.[46] More broadly, according to Celia Marshik, "Stead's crusade would put publishers and printers in the dock, a position they would periodically occupy through the middle of the twentieth century."[47] Thus the English reaction to Zola's novels needs to be viewed in the light of the moral panic regarding juvenile prostitution which Stead's articles caused.

The "Maiden Tribute" was also highly significant in other ways. Although the ostensible object of Stead's set of articles was the suppression of child prostitution, it was itself an incitement to talk about sex and, even to commit vice. One commentator writing in the Pall Mall Gazette, in which the "Maiden Tribute" was first published, believed that it had "put the notion of buying a virgin into the heads of a great many men who had never entertained it before, and even "told them how much it would cost."[48] Some of Stead's critics attacked him for having "democratised pornography". As Walkowitz comments: "for a mere one penny he had put into circulation lurid images and narratives that were usually restricted to readers of three-guinea volumes."[49] Thus those who were supposed to be protected from pornography had now been given access to it by Stead's articles, or, paraphrasing Liza Sigel, Stead had put filth in the wrong people's hands.

How then did Stead, unlike Zola's publisher Henry Vizetelly, avoid prosecution for obscenity?[50] Walkowitz describes Stead's appropriation of a multiplicity of literary genres:

> To construct his narrative, Stead drew on older cultural forms – particularly melodrama and the literature of urban exploration – but grafted on newer forms–

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[45] Frazier 128.
[46] Vizetelly 256-258. It was from Stead's article from the Pall Mall Gazette that Samuel Smith quoted Vizetelly. PL 5.
[47] Marshik 2.
[48] Walkowitz 124.
[49] Walkowitz 125.
[50] Stead did actually go to prison but for unlawful abduction, not for obscenity. An account of Stead's trial can be found in Walkowitz 106-120.

> late-Victorian pornography and fantasy, the Gothic fairy tale – that were also not of his own construction [...]. His narrative was taken up, reworked by different constituencies and social forces. These multiple transformations gave rise to complex political effects, which were not exhausted in the nineteenth century.[51]

Such complex political effects can be seen both in the desire certain members of parliament had that Stead's articles be banned under The Obscene Publications Act (1857), as they were banned by W.H. Smith, and in the formation of the NVA in the wake of the publication of the "Maiden Tribute." Of course, apart from the narrative complexity of Stead's New Journalism, and the growth of a different readership for which the Pall Mall Gazette catered, there is another reason why Stead's articles were not banned, and Zola's novels were. Stead's articles, unlike Zola's novels, were couched in the language of moral outrage and repugnance. They were direct calls to action whereas Zola's novels claimed merely objective scientific detachment. If Zola's naturalist intention, as Brian Nelson notes, was to understand "the laws determining the material conditions of human life" so that "man would only have to act on this understanding to improve society" such clinical novelistic depictions which were the result of Zola's naturalist intentions went against the ideological expectation of the mid-Victorian novel as morally edifying.[52] Whereas Stead's articles stirred middle-class and working-class wrath at aristocratic licentiousness as the well-established tradition of working-class melodrama frequently did, Zola's novels inflected with pretensions of scientific objectivity, withdrew, as described above, authorial moral guidance.[53] As the "Maiden Tribute" created further concern about the distribution of pornography to

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[51] Walkowitz 85.
[52] Nelson 246.
[53] Walkowitz writes: "Melodrama became a customary and familiar form of storytelling that was widely deployed in radical politics, in good part because the melodramatic representation of power and virtue was entirely compatible with the democratic, antiaristocratic, and antistatist traditions of popular radicalism." Walkowitz 87.

subaltern others, Stead could largely protect himself from claims of lubricity through shrouding his sexual narratives in the argot of campaigning moral zeal.

This is significant as at the heart of the NVA's moral campaign against pernicious literature was the issue of limiting distribution to subaltern others. It should be remembered that Vizetelly's editions of Zola's novels were one-volume editions – a practice Vizetelly had begun with George Moore, thus bypassing the censorship of the immensely powerful circulating libraries. As Nicholas Hiller notes: "The circulating libraries [...] served a small and unrepresentative sector, but its purchasing power nevertheless allowed them to dominate the British book market."[54] The consequence of Vizetelly adopting the one-volume system was to lower the price of novels, which made fiction more accessible to a popular audience.[55] George Moore certainly hoped that Vizetelly's publication of his own novel, A Mummer's Wife, might bypass the censorship of Mudie's.[56] His attitude towards Mudie's and the power they wielded was one of bitter indignation, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[54] Nicholas Hiller, " 'Can't you find me something nasty?': Circulating Libraries and Literary Censorship in Britain from the 1890s to the 1910s," Censorship and the Control of Print 1600-1910 (Winchester: St Paul's, 1992): 123-144, at 127.

[55] Decker 82.

[56] Guinevere Griest states: "Rather than a dictatorship, of which he was often accused, Mudie had set up a protectorate of books. He looked on his subscribers as his responsibilities, and they, in turn, placed their confidence in him; they admired him for risking the success of his business by "excluding anything that would corrupt the public mind." Guinievere L. Griest, Mudie's Circulating Library and the Victorian Novel (London: Redwood, 1970) 215. Lewis Roberts has noted the power of Mudie's Select Library in its central role in maintaining and promoting the triple-decker format. Lewis asserts that "the dominance of this particular format can largely be seen as a result of the economic power which Mudie's Library exerted on novel production [...]." Lewis Roberts, "Trafficking in Literary Authority: Mudie's Select Library and the Commodification of the Victorian Novel," Victorian Literature and Culture 34 (2006): 1-24, at 1. Moreover, as George Moore claimed, Mudie's library became an arbiter of literary taste, the library consciously distinguishing itself from previous circulating libraries which were often viewed as "catering to vulgar reading tastes by providing access to the lower orders of fiction." Roberts 8. As Roberts argues, "The list of titles served to show the character of the entire collection representing the library as an institution which valued, and circulated, only those novels which measured up to the standards, the character, and the respectability of the most serious genres." Roberts 9. However, and perhaps most significantly for those writers who wanted to explore more realistic subject matter, Mudie's criteria for excluding books was less literary than moral. According to Roberts, "In its role as barrier [...] Mudie's Library provided a service, a convenience for its subscribers. [It] allowed them to distance themselves from inferior and immoral texts." Roberts 12. Roberts goes on to argue that Mudie's created a "privileged reading community. The "real privilege" here [...] applied equally to readers and texts." Roberts 14. Mudie's and its privileged reading community was a national instituition which became part of the imperial project, its "boxes of books transported the textual representations of British culture."

The Whitehall Review, in its scathing attack on the publication of Zola's novels, made the precise point that Zola's novels were being distributed cheaply:

> It is of no use to say these books are literature. It may be right that they should remain in our libraries in the original languages, or perhaps in English, accessible to students of literature or of manners. That is no reason why they should be distributed broadcast in cheap issues, unexpurgated, or in careful selections of the most indecent parts, specially for the corruption of young people" (PL 21).

It was certainly the widespread circulation of Zola's texts that perturbed the MP. Samuel Smith. Before attacking Vizetelly for being the chief culprit in the spread of this pernicious literature, he complained:

> It had become the rule with a class of low booksellers in London to provide indecent literature for young girls, to offer them every inducement to come into the shops and read the books, to provide them with private rooms stocked with the vilest class of literature, where on making the small deposit of 6d., they are supplied with this literature (PL 8).

Smith clearly equates the danger of the cheapness of Vizetelly's publications to their corrupting influence on young girls. A writer in The Sentinel stated that after reading two pages of a Zola novel in a shop window, "The matter was of such a leprous character that it would be impossible for any young man who had not learned the Divine secret of self-control to have read it without committing some form of outward sin within twenty-four hours after"(PL 6). The Times concurred, stating after the Vizetelly trial, and with specific reference to La Terre and Pot Bouille, that these novels "[...] are published purely for the sake of gain, and for gain which cannot be realised except by the corruption of those who buy and read them" (PL 19). The usual language of corruption, contamination and morbidity ensued. The Star claimed that La Terre was simply "unrelieved and morbid filth" (PL 22), The Globe that La Terre was "an outrage

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Roberts 15. Thus, an argument could be made that Vizetelly was not only challenging English morality as represented by Victorian reticence by importing a lax foreign morality but also the power and authority of those national institutions like the circulating libraries that had come to be among its most strident defenders.

on common sense and common decency" (PL 23). The Morning Advertiser asserted that Zola's novels ministered "to the lowest passions of human nature" (PL 23).

This rhetoric of depraved youth and corrupted nations needs to be contextualised by widespread contemporary beliefs in the acute danger to the individual and the nation of sexuality if unleashed from its rigid conjugal, and, to many, merely biological function. Although the NVA's attack on the 'immoral' European novel culminated in the Vizetelly's prosecution in 1888, such an attack was not isolated but part of a continuing strategy to suppress public displays of sexuality.[57] This could include lectures on health and biology, birth control literature, advertisements for medicines that produced abortions, immodest speeches, music hall posters and even "objectionable" Christmas cards.[58] Such attitudes to the regulation of representations and illicit discourses of sexuality provide, if such were necessary, another example of a late-Victorian incitement to discourse about sex but within a dominant discourse of repression, as well as giving a further demonstration that scientific discourses of sexuality, especially those located outside the privileged realm of the scientific expert, could also be deemed pernicious.

The offence that Zola's novels caused must, therefore, be seen in its specific English contexts: first Zola's depiction of graphic female sexuality offended a dominant national culture concerned about the societal destabilisation of sexual actions, which could ultimately lead to the destruction of the nation; second, Zola transgressed an English aesthetic which, more so than the French, bound writers to stricter reticence in representations of the sexual body, and which implied an ethical commitment to a "reverence for the highest efforts of our common nature" rather than the objective depiction of the *bête humaine*; and third, Zola's novels, which fell outside these

[57] A. Hunt 141-2.
[58] Bartley 19.

parameters of literary taste and sexual reticence, transgressed in the sense that Vizetelly intended to distribute Zola's novels widely and relatively cheaply. Samuel Smith complained that Vizetelly had "leashed a million copies of French novels on the general public" (PL 5).

Zola, Social Purity Reform and Working-Class Sexuality

Writing about the theme of sexuality in Nana, Brian Nelson claims:

> But Zola differs from his contemporaries in that there is no corresponding affirmation of bourgeois virtues in his treatment of the theme; on the contrary Nana focuses on the social and moral corruption around her, exposing the underlying depravity of those presumed to be morally and socially superior.[59]

Nelson is correct in seeing Zola's depiction of sexual desire as a great social leveller that demonstrates that class hierarchies are not constructed on grounds of moral or ethical superiority but arbitrarily – in fact, in Pot Bouille middle-class respectability is seen as little more than social hypocrisy.[60] However, Zola's representations of sexuality can also be read as consonant with Victorian middle-class fears of the consequences of an illicit, largely proletarian female sexuality. This is not to argue that Zola's novels champion the middle class – clearly Zola's tone and purpose in presenting his depiction of working-class sexuality is different from that, say, of purity

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[59] Brian Nelson, Zola and the Bourgeoisie: A Study of Themes and Techniques in les Rougon-Macquart (London: MacMillan, 1983) 12-13.

[60] Pot Bouille, written two years later than Nana, depicts middle-class respectability as a thin veneer which hides the rapacious appetites of the bourgeoisie. The middle class are figured in a moment of epiphany, in the thoughts of the complicit priest, Father Mauduit, as moribund and degenerate. Pot Luck [Pot Bouille] trans. and introd. Brian Nelson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999) 355. Their exploitation of the working class is made clearly and frequently explicit, most graphically in the solitary child-bearing of Adele who has been sexually used by both the landlord of the building where she works and the philandering Hector Turbot.

reformers – but to assert that Zola's presentation of sexuality in Nana reiterates specific fears of the detrimental effect of the working-class prostitute on society.[61]

Mary Jeune, writing for the Fortnightly Review in September, 1885 distinguishes between two types of prostitute: the first type consists of those that can be rescued from degradation by "sympathy and kindness", while the second type are "the lowest class of fallen women" whom reformers "cannot rescue or restore to any position, in any society [...]. Many of them are too degraded to accept or wish for any help."[62] In such a dividing practice, Nana would figure as a prostitute of the latter order as she is beyond redemption, or rather, moral redemption is irrelevant to the trajectory of Nana's character. Nana is a representation of what Elizabeth Blackwell, a leading member of the NVA, referred to as a "growing army of shameless women."[63] She is, indeed, the pauper's revenge, the "golden fly" of Fauchery's article, "a plant nurtured on a dungheap" (N 221).[64] The causality between lower-class sexuality and the contamination of the ruling classes is made explicit by Fauchery: "With her the rottenness that was allowed to ferment among the lower classes was rising to the surface and rotting the aristocracy" (N 221). Nana infects the respectable world represented most clearly by the religious Muffat reduced from the sombre figure who "dominated the household with his devout upbringing, his penances and fasts" (N 81) to role-playing a dog for Nana's mildly sadistic pleasure: "And he loved his degradation,

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[61] A similar claim could be made of L'Assomoir (1877) in that in the relentlessly grim portrayal of Copeau, Lantier and especially in the depiction of the decline of Gervaise, the narrative demonstrates, if not with direct moral intention, the evils of alcoholism.

[62] Mary Jeune, "Saving the Innocents," Lesser Questions (1885; London: Remington, 1894) 183,

[63] Liggins, "Prostitution" 39.

[64] Interestingly, the image of a plant nurtured on a dung-heap is included as an epigraph in George Gissing's The Nether World. The image is taken from Ernest Renan's Vie de Jesus (1863): "A painting of a dung-heap might be justified if a beautiful flower grew out of it; otherwise the dung-heap is merely repulsive." Stephen Gill, explanatory notes, The Nether World, by George Gissing (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992). However, in Gissing's novel, although the dung-heap certainly represents the nether world, the flower painted by Gissing more likely symbolises uplifting morals and those who uphold them like Jane Snowdon in their "protest against those brute forces of society which fill with wreck the abysses of the nether world" rather than a character like Nana who escapes pauperism through prostitution. Gissing 392.

enjoying the pleasure of being an animal. He longed to sink even further and would cry – "Hit harder... Woof woof! I'm a mad dog! Hit away!" (N 442). Muffat as much as any other character in literature of the time illustrates the social dangers of unleashed sexual desire. As Frederick Brown states: "What Nana mobilises is not the procreative libido but an instinctual force that overwhelms men despite themselves and their authority, casting them adrift in the wreckage of traditional values."[65]

Nana specifically demonstrates another concern of social purity reform, namely, the deleterious effects sex could have on the young. The attempted suicide and eventual death of Georges Hugon as well as the disgrace of his brother are clear examples of the devastating effect sexual desire has not only on young people but also, as the following quotation illustrates, on the families that raise them: "Without a sound Madame Hugon bent down. Yes it was the other one, it was Georges. One of them disgraced, the other murdered. She felt no surprise, for her whole life was collapsing about her" (N 424).

What Nana clearly depicts is the disintegration of social hierarchies and the discriminations on which social order is believed to be built. Nana is, in fact, the great *vagina dentata* ruining French society as the following quotation with its reference to "gobbling up" and "teeth-snapping" demonstrates: "In a few months Nana gobbled them up, one after the other. The growing needs of her life of luxury sharpened her appetite, and she would clean a man out with one snap of her teeth" (N 434).[66] As Zola commented in his notes on Nana:

> Nana ends up regarding man as material to exploit, becoming a force of nature, a ferment of destruction, but without meaning to, simply by means of her sex

[65] Frederick Brown, Zola: A Life (London: MacMillan, 1996) 427.

[66] The *vagina dentata* was not an uncommon motif among naturalist writers. Edmund Goncourt, writing in his journal about a woman in a dream who danced on a table, comments: "Then she started to dance, and while she was dancing took steps that showed her private parts armed with the most terrible jaws one could imagine, opening and closing, exposing a set of teeth." Pick 96.

> and her strong female odour, destroying everything she approaches, and turning society sour just as women having a period turn milk sour (intro, N 12).

That the force of intractable female sexuality, and a specifically working-class sexuality, ultimately causes national ruin is also implicit in the novel, as Nana dies on the eve of the Franco-Prussian war. The corruption of Nana in Louis Napoleon's Second Republic leads to defeat and humiliation. Read in an English context, the connection between the sexual immorality of the working classes and national degeneracy could not be much more explicit.

Zola's task in the Rougon Macquart novels is, in part, to chart the downfall of the bourgeoisie in the reign of Louis Napoleon. Doctor Jullierat's thoughts in Pot Bouille underline such a decline: "In all this Jacobin frenzy one heard, as it were, the inexorable death-knell of a whole class, the collapse and putrefaction of the bourgeoisie whose rotten props were cracking beneath them."[67] However, in Nana, the vehicle of such a collapse is the eponymous heroine herself. Sexuality is perceived as a danger coming from the lower classes, a danger which would disrupt the natural order of society. The need for the purification of society that Josephine Butler called for is evidenced by the corruptive influence of sexuality in Zola's Nana.[68] In fact, Nana's explosive influence on other characters within the novel is replicated by social purity reform fears of the novel Nana's explosive influence on society. First, Georges's suicide is mirrored by Samuel Smith's and the NVA's fear of the novel's deleterious influence on the young. Second, Muffat's reduction to role-playing a dog resonates with the 'bestial' nature of Zola's novel: The Universal Review comments that Zola's "literary cynicism equals the practical indecency of those ancient 'Dogs' who degraded

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[67] Zola, Pot Luck 355.

[68] Writing in regard to the portrayal of working-class women as sexually aggressive, Liggins claims, "Such images of sexually active working-class women were used by feminists and social purists to enlist women's help in what Butler called 'the purification of society'; by advocating alternative standards of

their human nature to the level of the beasts. [...]."[69] Third, Nana's superficiality and indifference, which has such disastrous effects on other characters, is reflected in Lilly's comments that Zola's fiction represents the disgraceful victory of mechanistic fact, implying that Zola's scientific detachment emphasises unpleasant surface detail at the expense of intellectual and emotional depth. Finally, national decline implicit in the onset of the Franco-Prussian War in the novel is reflected in Samuel Smith's comment that the moral fibre of the English race will be destroyed by such pernicious literature, Smith employing, interestingly enough, the same trope of being eaten as Zola does describing the effect Nana has on the lives of men: "They were to stand still while the country is wholly corrupted by literature of this kind? Were they to wait until the moral fibre of the English race was eaten out, as that of the French was almost?" (PL 6). The outrage to Victorian sensibilities is clear enough to writers like Lilly who see the novel as a vehicle for moral edification and spiritual elevation, as well as to politicians like Samuel Smith who fear that the novel will slacken the moral fibre of those subaltern others more vulnerable than the solid Victorian gentlemen. However, and in ways which are not dissimilar to middle-class fears, Zola presents working-class sexuality as an agent of moral devastation and social destruction. While the novel's 'scientific' objectivity seems to expose middle-class ideologies as artificial, transient and contingent, the novel also replicates subjective bourgeois fears of material and moral contamination. This seeming contradiction between transgressive sexual representation and concordance with dominant sexual ideologies is not unique to Zola. Such a contradiction highlights the complex interaction between authorial intention, the ideological premises of emerging scientific discourses as well as the limitations and

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sexual morality, middle-class women would be able to 'strengthen and guide the sexual virtue of a people' according to Blackwell." Liggins, "Prostitution" 38.

[69] Decker 96.

contradictions of naturalist methodology. In Nana, middle-class fears of female working-class sexuality are not as much challenged by new scientific approaches as reinscribed within them. Nana might reveal the artificial and self-seeking and self-promoting constructs of middle-class morality, but as a symbol of degeneration such fears of working-class contamination are firmly relocated in new scientific discourses. Below I will demonstrate how George Moore and Thomas Hardy's novelistic, if not naturalist, representations of female sexuality also both challenge and reinscribe dominant ideological perspectives in their own transgressive novels.

Chapter Three: "Queering the Scene" in A Mummer's Wife and Esther Waters: George Moore, Naturalism and Censorship

As early as 1928, William Frierson argued that in the wake of Zola, British naturalism adapted rather than imitated French naturalism for the benefit of a British audience largely unsympathetic to the precepts of Zolaesque experimentation. Frierson comments: "[...] undiluted naturalism has never been congenial to the Anglo-Saxon temperament."[1] To a large extent, Frierson is right, if the accuracy of such an essentialist conceit as "Anglo-Saxon temperament" is placed in abeyance, especially as regards the Irish George Moore. As represented by writers like Thomas Hardy, George Gissing and George Moore, British realism invariably falls short of the full-blown naturalism of Zola, and in the case of the latter two, often resorts to optimistic Victorian plot closure which ultimately privileges moral character over the incidentals of heredity and environment – as in say Gissing's The Unclassed (1884) or Moore's Esther Waters (1894).[2]

Apart from Naturalism's lack of congeniality to the Anglo-Saxon temperament, it could be argued that another reason why French naturalism was adapted rather than imitated in Britain lies with the NVA's success in prosecuting Zola's publisher, Vizetelly. Noticing how the victory of English realism brought "no new licence of expression in the matter of sexual treatment", Frierson writes: "One result of the Vizetelly trial [...] was to make English publishers very timorous in accepting work

[1] William Frierson, "The English Controversy Over Realism in Fiction 1885-1895," PMLA 43 (1928): 533-550, at 549.

[2] George Gissing, who has frequently been associated with British naturalism, might treat the subject of prostitution in novels like The Unclassed, but Ida Starr, the novel's main protagonist, in conventional Victorian fashion, must eventually reform to be worthy of her lover Osmond Waymark.

which dealt too intimately with carnal relationships."[3] Hugh Stutfield also thought a remaining fear for Mrs. Grundy prevailed into the 1890s: "And our pale English imitations of Continental decadentism are almost as objectionable as their originals. They are less highly seasoned, no doubt, because the authors (or their publishers) have still some fear of Mrs. Grundy before their eyes."[4]

Zola's fiction might have led the way to a general acceptance of broader subject matter in the English novel, but this did not include more graphic representations of sexuality. There was no frank naturalist depiction of sexuality as Britain had witnessed with Zola. Moreover, at least until 1894, the powerful economic position of the lending libraries also provided a strong incentive for writers and publishers to stay within the bounds of Victorian reticence. Although the next major sex scandal involving literature would be caused in the mid-1890s by the New Woman fiction of writers such as Sarah Grand, Grant Allen and George Egerton, the later novels of Thomas Hardy, and the trials of Oscar Wilde, no offending fictional texts were actually prosecuted.[5] The offence such writers caused invoked calls to the general public to follow good sense in rejecting pernicious literature rather than a clamour for such literature to be banned, although the possibility of legal intervention was not forgotten, as Hugh Stutfield reminded his readers in 1895: "If public opinion should prove powerless to check the growing nuisance, all the poor Philistine can do is to stop his ears and hold his nose until perhaps the policeman is called into his aid."[6] The policeman would eventually be

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[3] Frierson 550. In fact, it has been argued that Moore's attack on the circulation libraries led to the kind of legal regulation in which Vizetelly was prosecuted. Troy Bassett claims that, "The change in the mode of literary production – from the three-volume format favored by the libraries to the one-volume format – forced a corresponding change in the structure of censorship from an informal system exercised by the libraries to a formal system policed by the courts." Troy Bassett, "Circulating Morals: George Moore's Attack on Victorian Censorship," Pacific Coast Philosophy 40 (2005): 73-89, at 85.

[4] Stutfield 834.

[5] Egerton and Allen's fiction were less affected by circulating library censorship than other contemporary fiction as they were both published in cheap one-volume editions by the publisher John Lane.

[6] Stutfield 844.

called in to the Philistine's aid, but the text was Havelock Ellis's Sexual Inversion, published in 1897.

Although Stutfield's policeman was not called to prosecute him, George Moore appears to have had a natural propensity for not only challenging dominant cultural ideologies but for riling establishment figures and attacking the values they held so dear. As early as 1881, Pagan Poems was heavily censored for its alleged obscenity.[7] A Drama in Muslin (1886) was described by William Wallace as "daringly and disgustingly suggestive, and descriptive of what ordinary writers of fiction leave undescribed."[8] The novel was inevitably banned by the circulating libraries. Confessions of A Young Man (1886) caused an outrage in Paris and led to many rifts between Moore and former friends in France including Zola. Moore's later *memoirs*, Hail and Farewell (1911-14) would cause a similar scandal in literary Ireland. Parnell and His Island (1887) was likewise lambasted and led to Moore's exile from Ireland for eight years. It was memories of both books that, according to Frazier, led to Moore being blackballed from the Irish Literary Society many years later.[9] Spring Days (1888) was described by one reviewer as "one of the most worthless novels seen in twenty-five years of reviewing."[10] As late as 1916, Alfred Douglas, the 'reformed' lover of Oscar Wilde, took out a summons for blasphemous libel after the publication of The Brook Kerith (1916).[11] George Moore was clearly no stranger to literary controversy.

An examination of A Mummer's Wife (1885) reveals an absence of the kind of frank sexual depiction that Stutfield felt might need a policeman's aid, but Kate Ede clearly departs from the middle-class, moral and romantically inclined heroine of much

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[7] Frazier, 77.
[8] Frazier 136.
[9] Frazier 101.
[10] Frazier 176.

Victorian fiction. In fact, her character is formed in opposition to such a heroine. Kate Ede is clearly a provocative challenge to the narrow constraints of Mudie censorship that Moore railed against in "Literature At Nurse".[12] To make an anachronistic use of a phrase from A Mummer's Wife, the narrative "queers the scene" of social purity rhetoric by challenging the religious and social ideologies which underpin literary censorship.[13] Moreover, by projecting moral concerns about the pernicious effects of naturalism onto romantic fiction, Moore disturbs the logic of Mudie censorship which, while censoring Naturalism, promotes the kind of romantic fantasy that encourages a dangerous *bovarisme.* In A Mummer's Wife, Kate Ede's idealised view of Bill Lennox influenced by romantic fiction leads her to embark on the road to immorality, despair, alcoholism and prostitution. Frierson is then correct to point out that British Naturalism brought, "no new licence of expression in the matter of sexual treatment", but he does not explore the extent to which the early novels of George Moore can still be read as a concerted attack on censorship.[14]

George Moore's novels clearly evidence the kind of fictional attack on censorship that modernist scholars recognise in the fiction of James Joyce or Virginia Woolf. Celia Marshik argues that the censorship dialectic, "shaped modernism by encouraging or forcing writers to take up censorship as a theme in both their non-fiction prose and creative writings."[15] Such a dialectic is clearly evident in the fictional

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[11] Frazier 402.
[12] W.B. Yeats famously called A Mummer's Wife the first realistic novel in the language which was presumably the reason, according to Adrian Frazier, he forbade his sisters to read it. Frazier 242.
[13] When Kate Ede is given her first dialogue to speak on the stage a chorus girl sabotages Kate's speech by prematurely bursting into laughter. George Moore A Mummer's Wife (1885; Bibliobazaar, 2006) 190. "Queering" in this sense does not imply its specific modern usage as understood in say Queer Studies, but stands for an act of combative disruption. A Mummer's Wife henceforth abbreviated to MW in the text.
[14] Adrian Frazier comments: 'The story, the style, the packaging, and the marketing campaign of A Mummer's Wife were all designed as a free-market, free-speech attack on the immorality of monopoly and censorship. Moore would deploy the English tradition of liberty against English Low Church monopoly capitalism." Frazier 96.
[15] Marshik 5.

writings of George Moore, shaping the narratives of his novels long before it shaped the texts of literary modernism. Furthermore, writing about the publication of Virginia Woolf's first novel The Voyage Out (1915), Marshik claims: "Her novel thus emerged at a historical moment when it was becoming increasingly clear that politicians and moralists watched fiction with suspicion [...]."[16] This seems to ignore the fact that politicians and moralists had been suspicious of serious literature for a considerably longer time as both the prosecution of Vizetelly and Moore's campaign against censorship testify. To do justice to Marshik's conception of modernism, she does include Dante Gabriel Rossetti and George Bernard Shaw in her analysis, but Rossetti is used "to illustrate the roots of censorship," while Shaw is seen as "a figure of transition between Rossetti and the novelists who would battle censorship in the 1920s and 1930s."[17] Thus Marshik, while acknowledging the influence of earlier writers in a censorship dialectic still centres her argument on the aesthetic category of literary modernism and locates the dialectic most firmly in the period between the publication of Lawrence's The Rainbow (1915) and Radclyffe Hall's The Well of Loneliness (1928), when, she argues, "the censorship dialectic was most active."[18] By periodising in such a way, Marshik effectively marginalises writers such as George Moore who battled censorship as fiercely as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Moore, as Marshik claims of the modernists, strategically incorporates an attack on censorship into his fictional texts.

If Moore attacks censorship, his writing also shows complicities with repressive sexual ideologies as did the fiction of later modernists. Marshik makes the claim that there was a compliance "with the assumptions of reformers and censors" and such compliance "points to the deeply rooted beliefs that modernism confronted as it

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[16] Marshik 95.
[17] Marshik 14. Marshik 85.

advanced the ethics of indecency."[19] Needless to say, A Mummer's Wife and Moore's later novel Esther Waters (1894) are never purely oppositional to dominant social and cultural perspectives. As will be shown, Moore's novels can also be complicit with patriarchal sexual ideologies.

Below I will show how the offence that A Mummer's Wife caused was rooted in the specific literary movement of Zolaesque naturalism, rather than viewing it as a precursor of literary modernism or seeing Moore as a transitional figure leading to the more significant writers in the censorship dialectic such as Virginia Woolf or James Joyce. Second, I examine how Moore inscribes those censorship issues discussed in Literature at Nurse or Circulating Morals in the narrative of A Mummer's Wife. Third, I show how the novel's naturalistic representation of society reinforces as well as challenges dominant late-Victorian views of sexuality. Finally, I examine the representation of women in Moore's later novel Esther Waters to demonstrate the extent of Moore's retreat from French naturalism into Victorian conventionalism.

Zola's Ricochet[20]

In 1885, the same year that A Mummer's Wife was published, George Moore wrote Literature at Nurse, or Circulating Morals, a scathing attack on the censorship of the circulating libraries, particularly of Mudie's Select Library which had severely limited the circulation of Moore's first novel A Modern Lover (1883). This quotation gives some indication of the biting tone of Moore's rhetoric:

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[18] Marshik 94.
[19] Marshik 10.
[20] In a letter to his mother, Moore writes of being a Zola offshoot in England *"d'être enfin un ricocher de Zola en Angleterre."* Joseph Hone, The Life of George Moore (New York: MacMillan, 1936) 101.

> Instead of being able to fight, with and amid, the thoughts and aspirations of men, literature is now rocked to an ignoble rest in the motherly arms of the librarian. That of which he approves is fed with gold; that from which he turns the breast dies like a vagrant child; while in and of his voluminous skirts runs a motley and monstrous progeny, a callow, a whining, a puking brood of bastard bantlings, a race of Aztecs that disgrace the intelligence of the English nation. Into this nursery none can enter except in baby clothes.[21]

As some feminist critics have illustrated, Moore, like many other writers of the period, rails against the "feminisation" of both censorship and literature, the male librarian is figured here with "motherly arms" and "voluminous skirts" wherein runs his bastard progeny.[22] This gendering of both literature and censorship is significant to both the representation of women and the novelistic presentation of censorship in A Mummer's Wife.[23] In Literature at Nurse, Moore criticises not only the restrictions which the circulating libraries impose, but the "feminised" literature promoted by Mudie's, which insults the male intelligence of the nation. Moore makes the claim that "English literature is sacrificed on the altar of Hymen", as the circulating libraries cater for the masses of "young unmarried women who are supposed to know but one side of life" (LAN 21). As regards such restrictions, Moore can claim, "And yet it is certain that never in any age or country have writers been asked to write under such restricted conditions" (LAN 19). Under such restrictions, a masculine naturalist literature characteristic of the nineteenth-century's "nervous, passionate life" is denied. The "nervous" life echoes Zola's naturalism as does Moore's comparison between the realist novelist and the physician: "To analyse you must have a subject; a religious or sensual passion is as necessary to the realist novelist as a disease to the physician" (LAN 20). Zola had made a similar comment in his defence of Thérèse Raquin (1867)

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[21] George Moore, Literature at Nurse, or Circulating Morals, ed. Pierre Coustillas (Guildford: Harvester, 1976) 18. Henceforth abbreviated in the text to LAN.

[22] See Lyn Pykett, The 'Improper' Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing. (New York: Routledge, 1992), and Ann Ardis, New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism (London: Rutgers UP, 1990).

comparing the naturalist writer's dispassionate interest in corruption to a surgeon's professional interest in his patient's illness.[24]

A Mummer's Wife narrates the downfall of Kate Ede in typically naturalistic fashion from the stultifying boredom of her married life in the Potteries, via an itinerant life as an actress, to her eventual alcoholic demise. A brief comparison with Nana shows how much George Moore was influenced by Zola when he was writing A Mummer's Wife.[25] In both novels the comforting closure of a Victorian happy ending is forsaken for a naturalist decline plot in which the main protagonist dies miserably. Both characters are prostitutes, but Nana's decline may well be seen as a consequence of her life as a prostitute while Kate Ede's prostitution is a consequence of her decline, as her moral collapse through alcohol prefigures her imminent physical death. In similar fashion to Zola, Moore analyses the combined forces of heredity and environment that lead to such a downfall. Kate's dull but virtuous life leads her to elope with the decent, if less than virtuous, Dick Lennox and to seek experiences for which her previous life has not prepared her. The nature of such an existence as an actress, its tensions, hardships, itinerancy and competitiveness, as well as the louche character of her lover all contribute to her downfall. If in her nature there is a propensity to intense jealousy, sentimentality and alcohol addiction, her drab virtuous life, her Wesleyan mother-in-law and asthmatic husband provide scant opportunity for Kate to succumb to such traits of heredity. As the novel closes with her death, Kate, in the context of both her virtuous and vice-led life, is described as a weak woman. Narrative voice combines traits of inherited weakness with details of social

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[23] A complicity with British imperialist racism can also be found in Moore's depiction of a race of Aztecs disgracing the English nation.
[24] Zola, Raquin 23.
[25] However, in the *bovarisme* of Kate Ede, in her horribly realistic death, and in Moore's appropriation of indirect free style, A Mummer's Wife is also clearly indebted to Flaubert's Madame Bovary (1857).

circumstance to account for Kate's demise. Viewed from an evolutionary perspective, Kate's desire to change and the courage she demonstrates in leaving behind her dire life are insufficient in themselves to aid her adaptation to a new environment; moreover, her sexual selection of first Ralph Ede and then Bill Lennox produces neither personal happiness nor healthy offspring. She is a casualty of the brutal interconnected realities of both society and biology in similar ways to Hardy's Sue Bridehead and the protagonist of Gissing's New Grub Street (1891), Edwin Reardon. Whether the reader views Kate's demise as caused more by environmental circumstance than heredity, the novel's presentation of Kate Ede is far from the stability of Victorian character and certainly locatable in Zolaesque blood and nerves.

The experimental element of Zola's naturalism is evident in Moore's transposing of Kate Ede from a nonconformist background to the amoral atmosphere of a theatre troupe in which the forces of heredity and environment combine to bring about her downfall.[26] The novel contains, moreover, much gritty, naturalistic detail. Arthur Symons commented:

> The actor and his wife are really living people; we see them in their surroundings, and we see every detail of those surroundings. What is most wonderful, perhaps, is the atmosphere. Mr. Moore, when he turned from painting to literature, preserved the essential quality of the painter. He might have painted his impressions badly in oils; in words he paints them well. [27]

Moore portrays the surroundings of the theatre, dressing room, railway carriage and public house, and, perhaps most graphically, Kate Ede's various stages of wretched inebriation but he avoids, as Zola did not, sensual detail. The most sensual moment is, perhaps, Lennox's forced kiss, which Kate strenuously resists, but only after she

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Flaubert's influence on Moore has long been acknowledged. See W. D. Ferguson, The Influence of Flaubert on George Moore (Philapdelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1934).

[26] Another area in which Moore followed Zola was in his dedication to studied observation. Moore joined a theatre troupe to gain first hand experience for his novel. As his biographer Joseph Hone comments, "Moore then applied among his friends at the Gaiety Bar for introductions to some touring

"abandoned herself to an ineffable sentiment of weakness, or ravishment [...]" (MW 71).

Plausibly Moore's greatest moral departure from mid-Victorian fiction is his utilization of free indirect style. Such a narrative style problematises judgment of Kate Ede's adulterous behaviour because, as the events that lead to her adultery are refracted through her consciousness, the reader is denied moral guidance from the narrator.[28] Both her desire for the lodger Dick Lennox and the extenuating circumstances of her dreary life are rendered sympathetically. On Lennox's second return, Kate Ede thinks about the possibility that he might try to kiss her again:

> Well there was just a possibility that he might try to kiss her before going away. She felt irritated with herself for this thought, but could not rid herself of it; a bitter sense of voluptuousness burnt at the bottom of her heart, and she railed against life sullenly. She had missed him on Sunday; Monday had ended as abruptly as an empty nut, and Hender's questions vexed and wearied her; she despaired of being able to go to the theatre. Nothing seemed to be going right (MW 107).

Here, the tense, competing emotions that Kate Ede feels are described from her viewpoint; the oxymoronic "bitter sense of voluptuousness" captures both her sexual desire for Lennox and the tormenting effect such desire has on her. Her railing "against life sullenly" equally balances her desire that life should be different with an acceptance that it is not. Although the passage registers the irritation Kate feels with herself for desiring that Lennox kisses her before he leaves, the accumulative short clauses starting from "She had missed him on Monday" reflect her encompassing anxiety should Lennox depart without incident. Whereas Zola's Nana is depicted largely as an amoral force of nature, Kate Ede becomes a site of the competing forces of natural desire and social expectation. Through adopting free indirect style which filters events through

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players who were bound for the town of Hanley. He toured for several weeks with the second company of Les Cloches de Corneville, visiting Hanley and certain factory towns." Hone 98.

[27] Arthur Symons, "Literature: Impressions and Opinions," Academy 39 (1891): 274-75, at 275.

[28] La Capra 57-59.

Kate's thoughts, the reader views both Kate's instinctual desires and her resistance to them.

The tedium of her life as wifely drudge and obedient daughter-in-law to the puritanical Mrs. Ede is also foregrounded by narrative perspective, further providing extenuating circumstance for her elopement:

> But as Kate lectured she could not help wondering how it was that her life passed by so wearily. Was she never going to do anything else but work? She often asked herself, and then reproached herself for the regret that had risen unwittingly up in her mind that life was not all pleasure (MW 39).

Such dreary dutifulness is also framed by Kate's own socialised passivity, her accepting social being which reproaches her for not being able to contain her desires for a more pleasurable life. The narrator compares her existence to a colliery: "every wheel was turning, no respite day or night; her life would be always the same, a burden and a misery" (MW 58). Society has turned Kate into an obedient, functioning machine, which prohibits any desire that interferes with efficient performance. Again Kate's instinctual desires and the internalised social forces which seek to repress them, her irritation for desiring to be kissed and her self-reproach for wanting a better life are juxtaposed with a specific industrialized culture which pervades the early part of the novel. Hanley, the "ugly little brick town" where she lives in the Potteries, the commercial enthusiasm of her husband, as well as the religious fanaticism of her mother-in-law, are the constricting socio-cultural forces of such an industrialized culture that restrain Kate from both nature and her natural instincts:

> [...] raising her eyes from the streets, she watched the sunset die out of the west; purple and yellow streaks still outlined the great expanse of the hills, making the brick town look like a toy. An ugly little brick town – brick of all colours; the pale reddish brown of decaying brick-yards, the fierce red brick of the newly-built warehouses that turn to purple, and above the walls scarlet tiled roofs pointing sharp angles to a few stars (MW 37).

The "purple and yellow streaks" of nature contrast with the insistent repetition of the

red and scarlet bricks of the industrial town in which she is trapped. Her own nature is figured as lying beyond the narrow confines of the socio-cultural constrictions of industrial performativity. Lennox views the town as a "town of work" where "the shrill scream of the steam train as it rolled solemnly up the incline seemed to be man's cry of triumph over vanquished nature" (MW 62).

If a sympathetic portrayal of Kate Ede's divided self, as well as ample demonstrations of the claustrophobic and dreary nature of her existence, temper the reader's instinct away from easy moral judgement, Moore's naturalist approach, as Zola's with Nana, complicates the location of Kate Ede on the binary of seduced victim/demon whore. The internal struggle between individual desire and individuated obligation problematises any notion of viewing her as having simply been corrupted or as corrupting others. As she lies dying, her lives of virtue and vice confuse and ultimately conflate:

> It was like a costume ball, where chastity grinned from behind a mask that vice was looking for, while vice hid his nakedness in some of the robes that chastity had let fall. Thus up and down, like dice thrown by demon players, were rattled the two lives, the double life that this weak woman had lived, and a point was reached where the two became one, when she began to sing her famous song: "Look at me here, look at me there" (MW 368).

The hardset Victorian demarcations of vice and virtue commingle and coexist within Kate Ede. The simple binary of Victorian morality, as it pertains to female sexuality, is replaced by the competing forces of natural instinct and societal formation, the former helps destroy Kate Ede's sexual fulfilment and bring about alcoholism, the latter entails sterility and stultification. The dice thrown that rattled the two lives speaks of the chance elements of nature and nurture which replace the Christian metaphysics of soul, sin and divine justice. As the above quotation demonstrates, if Kate Ede is condemned for anything, it is ultimately her weakness, both in accepting, as passively as she does,

the virtuous life that she has largely been forced to live in the Potteries, and in being unable to fight the demons of jealousy and alcoholism in her life of 'vice'.

Kate Ede is a more naturalistic and threatening character than Moore's Esther Waters. Conventional moral judgement is held in abeyance by narrative viewpoint, at least in the first half of the novel. Her desire to elope with Lennox is presented sympathetically from her perspective, which emphasises her mechanical, dreary life with an unlovable husband and the restrictions imposed upon her by the moral surveillance of her mother-in-law. However, two other aspects of Kate Ede's character, while not necessarily leading to moral censure, alter the reader's sympathetic view of Kate. The first is clearly her slide into drunkenness and obsessive jealousy, related with increasing narrative distance, and the second is the pernicious influence that romantic literature has upon her behaviour. This influence, I will argue, is utilized, in part, as the explicatory force for Kate's lapse into disillusionment which leads eventually to alcoholism and prostitution, but it also forms a counterattack on the womanly Mudie librarian who permits romantic fiction in his, or her, select library but expels the realism of Moore's naturalist fiction.

The Other Pernicious Literature: Digging a Dagger into the Heart of the Sentimental School

In a letter to Emile Zola in 1884, George Moore wrote:

> The success of my first novel (which has been noticed in the great reviews) has put me on my feet, and if I succeed, as I expect, in digging a dagger into the heart of the sentimental school, I shall have hopes of bringing about a change in the literature of my country – of being in fact Zola's offshoot in England.[29]

[29] Hone 101.

The comment is revealing for two principal reasons. First it shows, at the time of writing A Mummer's Wife, the extent to which Moore feels indebted to Zolaesque scientism, and, second, it reveals what Moore believes to be the real enemy of naturalism, what he refers to as the sentimental school. In A Mummer's Wife, Moore juxtaposes the realism of the novel to the romantic fiction of the sentimental school. In doing so he echoes Zola's own comments about Naturalism. In his preface to the second edition of Thérèse Raquin, Zola writes: "The group of naturalist writers to which I have the honour of belonging has enough courage and energy to produce powerful works containing their own defence."[30] By attacking romantic fiction within his naturalist novel, George Moore produces a work that emphatically contains its own defence.

The narrative of A Mummer's Wife actually incorporates two oppositional voices to naturalist fiction. The first rejects any secular form of entertainment and is represented most distinctly by Mrs Ede but is also present in Kate Ede's memories of her own mother: "Kate remembered how she used to be told that novels must be wicked and sinful because there was nothing in them that led the soul to God" (MW 93). The second is the escapist romance that influences Kate Ede herself, the type that deals "in the love fortunes of doctors and curates" (MW 41). It is this kind of young girl's literature that Moore scorns in Literature at Nurse or "things fit to amuse a young girl's fancies" as he refers to it in A Mummer's Wife (MW 43). What becomes apparent in Moore's novel is that the kind of romantic fiction that respects Grundian barriers both denies the truth of human nature which Moore seeks to reveal, and is, moreover, itself a pernicious influence on those that read it. As the reader is told: "[...] when the London journal came for the first time across her way, with the story of a broken heart, her own

heart melted with sympathy; the more sentimental and unnatural the romance, the more it fevered and enraptured her" (MW 40-41). Kate Ede's interest in romantic fiction is juxtaposed to the dreary life she leads as a dressmaker, but it also counterpoints Moore's novel which is "natural" and "unsentimental". The young girls' fiction that Kate Ede enjoys is treated pejoratively, its poetry is described as "tawdry" (MW 42) and as a "grotesque mixture of prose and poetry" (MW 41). Although she realises that "the romances which used to fascinate her were merely idle dreams, having no bearing upon the daily life of human beings" (MW 43), she still identifies herself with the heroine of her favourite romance (MW 49) and Dick Lennox's visit makes her return to her "sentimental self" (MW 91) until:

> [...] a remembrance of her favourite novel seized her; she became the heroine of the absurd fiction, substituting herself for the lady who used to read Byron and Shelley to the gentleman who went to India in despair [...]. George was the husband's name in the book, she was Helene, and Dick was the lover to whom she could not, would not, give herself, and who on that account had gone away in despair. The coincidence appeared to her as something marvellous, something above nature, and she turned it over, examined it in her mind, as a child would a toy [...] (MW 92).

The reader is clearly distanced from Kate Ede's romantic misreading of Dick Lennox as being "so much more like the heroes of novels" (MW 131).[31] The fiction is "absurd"; Kate Ede's own situation as drudge could not be more removed from that of the fictional lady; the coincidence of the character's name being Dick helps lead to his reification as a romantic hero although Dick Lennox is not in the least romantic. This coincidence is described as being "something above nature", an idea that the naturalist Moore continually undercuts by drawing the reader to the mutual sexual attraction of

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[30] Zola, Raquin 20.

[31] In a sense, Alice Barton in A Drama In Muslin (1886) is a counterpoint to Kate Ede. She rejects the girlish obsession with romance and romantic literature and begins a career as a writer; she marries sensibly, defying her mother's wishes to marry with someone of her own class; and, tellingly, she has not only Shelley, Keats, Pater and Swinburne on her library shelves but most notably "many volumes in yellow covers, evidently French novels." Moore, A Drama in Muslin (Gerard's Cross: Colin Smythe 1993) 327.

Lennox and Kate Ede, which romantic fiction centred on eternal values and spiritual ideals of love must invariably erase, sexual desire being transitory, animal and self-interested. Kate is palpably sexually attracted to Lennox although she does not know "whether his animalism irritated or pleased her" (MW 46). She is disturbed by the fact that he does not "cover up his big bare neck" (MW 45). Rather than being led to noble despair and exile like the suitor of the lady of the romantic novel who refuses him, Lennox tries to persuade Kate Ede to kiss him by telling her that he loves her but the reason he gives has little to do with the eternal devotion of courtly love, it is simply that she is a "deuced pretty woman". His eventual efforts to force her to kiss him lead to a brutal struggle although it leaves Kate "pale and trembling" (MW 72) and ultimately attracted to his coarse and sensual aspects (MW 73). Lennox's implied sexual brutality does not lead Kate to question his intentions but to poetize the "prosaic and vulgar" articles of his portmanteau (MW 78). Later the intonation of his voice causes Kate "an involuntary feeling of voluptuousness" (MW 86). After Kate's night at the theatre which makes her yearn "for her lover and the fanciful life of which he was the centre" (MW 116), Lennox again confesses he loves her "better than anyone in the world" (MW 119) but this is mere prelude to her "proving" her love by having sex with him.

Kate Ede's falsely romantic and self-deluding perception of Dick Lennox and the romanticized life he seems to offer her away from her monotonous existence leads to her elopement, and puts in motion the events that will bring about her demise. Her desire for something beyond Hanley is neatly encapsulated when, confessing to Lennox she has never left the town, she says: "Here it is all brick, but in novels they never speak of anything but gardens and fields" (MW 60). Her subsequent disillusionment with her itinerant thespian life clearly relates to such inflated romantic perceptions: "She had done what she had so often read of in novels, but somehow it did not seem at all the

same thing. This was a startling discovery to make, but of the secret of her disappointment she was nearly unconscious [...]" (MW 147). While desirous of the durable kind of romantic love she has read about where "if one really loves once one must always love" (MW 160), she hears that "love in an actor's heart is brief" (MW 148), a truism confirmed as the narrative concludes with Lennox's platitudinous comment about her death being "a happy release" for his wife, with Lennox turning distractedly to ask Laura Forest is she had finished the second act of her play (MW 369). Moreover, Kate discovers that the novelistic gardens and fields symbolic of the life beyond Hanley are illusory: "Kate learned to regard locality as a mere nothing [...]. Wherever she went her life remained the same. She saw the same faces, heard the same words" (MW 177). Such a life is bathetic largely because of her inflated perception of escape engendered by reading romantic fiction. Her life of repetitive drudgery which she hoped would be replaced by novelistic leisure in gardens and fields is transformed into the monotony of continual movement which eventually leads her to be homesick, not for Hanley specifically, but for a home where she can "settle down in a house for a while" (MW 209). The theatre which initially provided the theatre of her romantic fantasies where, "The light music foamed in her head like champagne, and in a whirling sense of intoxication a vision of Dick in a red coat passed and repassed before her" (MW 115), becomes the site of her pathetic drunken rantings against her husband where she seems instead "more like a demon than a woman as her screams echoed through the empty theatre" (MW 314).

Kate's unrealistic outlook, influenced by reading romantic literature, is also suffused with the moralism of a Mudie's librarian which is rather incongruous considering her occupation as an itinerant actor. Thinking about the understandably temporary liaisons of the actors in the acting company, she asks herself "if the company

did not admit fornication among the sins" (MW 167). Even though she, herself, is guilty of fornication, her romantic view of all-sufficing love allows her to envisage her own actions differently. She views the other actors in the dressing room with prim superiority: "The conversation in this room is perfectly horrid. [...] And really Miss Goddard, I think you might manage to dress yourself with a little more decency" (MW 185). Although Kate decides to leave Hanley of her own accord, when she becomes drunk, she blames Dick Lennox for her predicament: "It was you who seduced me, who got me away from my husband" (MW 316). In terms of her romantic worldview, the romantic hero has been simply transformed into the seductive villain. Kate ultimately recognises the gulf that always existed between her husband and herself. Speaking to the equally sentimental Montgomery, she says: "I think he loved me but it was not the love I dreamed of. Like you, I was always sentimental, and Dick never cared for that sort of thing" (MW 337). That sort of thing she dreamed of was "[...] the life of devotion spent at the feet of an ideal lover, that life of sacrifice and tenderness which had been her dream, and which she had so utterly failed to attain, again rose up to tantalize her like a glittering mirage" (MW 337). Reading this "vision" through the deceptive dangers of romantic fiction, it could be argued that Kate never attained this love precisely because it was always unattainable, a "glittering mirage" of her imagining.

The pernicious romantic literature that has formed Kate Ede imprisons her in an unreality in which she is incapable of handling the life to which she has committed herself. This leads her to jealousy and alcoholism. Because of her desire for romantic stability, she cannot follow Miss Leslie's advice to get over her jealousy and "take things easily" (MW 207). When Kate complains that they are "living in a life of sin" (MW 216) the transgression is as much romantic as religious. The character of Dick

Lennox is the opposite of the sentimental hero of romantic fiction that Kate desires. The failure of Kate Ede's romantic elopement leads her back to the Family Herald which infuses Kate's imagination (MW 264) but this time when she reads she also drinks. The Family Herald signified for the naturalist the most obvious and accessible literature for the masses. As Herbert Crackanthorpe states: "There will still be novel writers who address the gallery, and who will keep up the gaudy old convention, and the clumsy Family Herald evolution, but they will no longer be distinguished men of genius"[32] In Literature at Nurse, Moore had written: "Let us renounce the efforts to reconcile these two irreconcilable things – art and young girls" (LAN 21). In A Mummer's Wife, Kate Ede cannot reconcile her new artistic life as an actress with the young girl's romantic illusions she still holds.

Pernicious literature in Moore's A Mummer's Wife is, then, the self-deluding literature of romance, which, unlike the naturalism Mudie had personally declared himself against, was freely allowed to circulate.[33] Moore makes the point clear in "Literature At Nurse": "The close analysis of a passion has no attraction for the young girl. When she is seduced through the influence of a novel, it is by a romantic story, the action of which is laid outside the limits of her experience" (LAN 22). Such a romantic book "leads to sin; it teaches the reader to look to a false ideal, and gives her [...] erroneous and superficial notions of the value of life and love" (LAN 22). In A Mummer's Wife, this 'other' pernicious literature is constantly undercut by the naturalistic realism of the novel as unrealistic, delusional and upholding an over-restrictive sexual morality inconsonant with natural instincts and desires. The trajectory of the novel takes Kate Ede from romantic illusion to brutal realism and thus in Moore's attack on this other pernicious literature, among other things, A Mummer's

[32] Hubert Crackanthorpe, "Reticence in Literature," Yellow Book 2 (1894): 259-274, at 268.
[33] Frierson 39-40.

Wife can be read as a novelistic extension of Moore's attack on the circulating-library censorship that had banned his first novel. As Moore's attack on censorship and romantic fiction is negatively gendered, it is not surprising that his female protagonist, sympathetically portrayed in the early part of the novel, proves both destructive to others and to herself, largely because of her romantic misreading of reality.

Punishing the Mummer's Wife

If the sexual transgression of A Mummer's Wife is Kate Ede's abandonment of her disabled husband, then, in true Victorian manner, she is heavily punished for it. Not only do her relationship with Dick Lennox and her new life prove bathetic, but her baby dies, she becomes an alcoholic, suffers the hardship of poverty, is abandoned by her lover, turns to prostitution and eventually dies horribly. The retribution for transgression is not swift but long and painful. This grim narrative of progressive decline could be explained as Moore's attempt to write a naturalist account of the interplay of the forces of heredity and environment, but it could also be read as a cautionary tale of what happens to romantically inclined young women should they abandon their husbands to go on the stage. The importance of narrative viewpoint and the perspectival shifts of sympathy they produce in the novel, moreover, clearly undermine the dubious naturalist claim to scientific objectivity.

There is, indeed, almost relish in the continuous description of Kate Ede's suffering in the latter stages of the novel. In the earlier stages, events are shown sympathetically through the consciousness of Kate, but as the novel progresses, the reader is invited to voyeuristically dwell on Kate's suffering. When she is drunk, the

reader is located as a spectator with the rest of those in the street who watch her disgraceful behaviour:

> It was in the narrow street [...] and Kate raved against Dick in language that was fearful to hear amid the stage carpenters, the chorus-girls, the idlers that a theatre collects standing with one foot in the gutter, where vegetable refuse of all kinds rotted. Her beautiful black hair was now hanging over her shoulders like a mane; someone had trodden on her dress and nearly torn it from her waist, and, in avid curiosity, women with dyed hair peeped out of a suspicious-looking tobacco shop (MW 315).

The narrative perspective is partly that of Dick Lennox, as it will be increasingly as he suffers her drunken behaviour, the language that is "fearful to hear" is fearful to him among those with whom he works, and thus the reader's primary sympathy is drawn to Lennox rather than to his drunken wife. However, Kate is also produced as a drunken street spectacle before "women with dyed hair", which is indicative of the social depths to which she has plummeted. The reference to rotting vegetable refuse resonates with the sense that she too has become gutter waste; her black hair like a mane demonstrates the animality of her uncontrollable rage. She has become less than the sentient human being who wishes to escape the dull confines of Hanley. The final stages of her drunkenness are also vividly portrayed:

> As the days went by her mind became denser, she fell into obtusities out of which she found it difficult to rouse herself. Even her violent temper seemed to leave her, and miserable and hopeless she rolled from one lodging to another, drinking heavily, bringing the drink back with her and drinking in her bed until her hand was too unsteady to pour out another glass of whisky. She drank whisky, brandy, gin, and if she couldn't get these, any other spirit would serve her purpose, even methylated spirit (MW 361).

Again Kate is described from a distance, free indirect style is abandoned, and in its place her progressive decline is described iteratively which further distances the reader from the immediacy of her suffering. She no longer anticipates being kissed by Lennox or reproaches herself for the thought; the action of drinking alone has come to dominate her life. As the novel progresses, Kate Ede is increasingly seen rather than permitted to

see. Moreover, if Kate Ede is punished, she is punished less specifically for sexual transgression, but for the female sentimentalism that led her to elope with Dick Lennox. Kate Ede may well be compared with Laura Forest whose masculine intelligence, although somewhat satirized, counterpoints Kate's sentimental weakness. Laura Forest is clearly spiritual, free-thinking, knowledgeable, and independent whereas Kate is conventionally religious, restricted by her romantic illusions, generally ignorant, and dependent on her husband and later on alcohol. Significantly, Laura rejects passion for imagination. She tells Lennox: [...] you brought, I fear, lewdness into your conjugal life, and lewdness is fatal to happiness whether it be indulged within or outside the bonds of wedlock" (MW 307). Later speaking of her own platonic relationship with a Bulgarian, she, "maintained that it wasn't passion, which is but another name for lewdness, but imagination that had prompted this elopement [...]" (MW 307). The appearance of the able and independent Laura Forest not only marks the final stages of Kate's decline, but throws into relief the limiting, sentimental nature of Kate Ede. Laura's strength illuminates Kate's weakness. Laura is produced as a rather mannish counterpoint to the womanly weakness of Kate Ede, the young girl gone astray on Mudie's fiction. Thus Moore's narrative reinforces those gendered biological fixities of character, the sentimental weak and vulnerable woman placed in contrasts to the mannish defeminised woman, the precise type that would be figured a decade later as the independent cigarette-smoking, bicycle-riding New Woman. As Moore challenges a simple binary between moral women as sexually pure and immoral women as sexually interested, the moral Christian view that frequently separates the sheepish good wife from the goatish bad whore, he also reconfigures another ideological binary between 'womanly' women as weak, vulnerable and sentimental and 'mannish' women as strong, independent, and sexually uninterested. Moreover, by stressing Kate Ede's

womanly weakness as regards fiction, if towards romantic rather than naturalist fiction, Moore also reinforces the idea that women were susceptible to dangers that strong carnivorous men were not, and thus, it could be argued, were in need of certain protection, the standard argument deployed against Zolaesque naturalism.

Esther Waters

If A Mummer's Wife is heavily influenced by Zola, then Esther Waters, although discernibly treating naturalist subject matter, largely shows Moore's abandonment of a specifically Zolaesque naturalism. In fact by 1888, Moore had broken with Zola over his attack on the Frenchman in Confessions of a Young Man, a *memoir* itself far removed from the rubrics of Naturalism.[34] In 1894, the year before The Woman Who Did and Jude the Obscure received a largely opprobrious response, Esther Waters was greeted with considerable approbation. The novel's success has been credited to Moore's British naturalization of naturalism, or as David Skilton states: "a British naturalization of a French approach, and not the lifeless imitation of a foreign model."[35] David Trotter claims: "Esther is, in the French manner, the victim of forces beyond her control; but she has been equipped, in the English manner, with moral resilience."[36] Molly Youngkin comments: "Moore reached his desired commercial and literary success in the early 1890s, with the publication of Esther Waters (1894), by applying a softer, more English form of realism to the woman-centred subject matter he had

[34] As Frazier comments: "Part of the whole joke of Confessions of a Young Man was supposed to be that readers, having heard of the author as a Zolaesque pornographer, would be hungry for lubricity, and then would find something else indeed – a surprisingly scholarly statement of aesthetic controversies among the avant-garde, along with ironic philosophising about the condition of the late nineteenth-century male." Frazier 161.

already used in his earlier, more naturalist novels."[37] The novel was praised by Gladstone and considered to be safe enough to be eventually allowed into the lending libraries of Mudie's and W.H. Smith. Feminists, too, approved the novel. Sarah Grand wrote to the Daily Chronicle in favour of lifting the ban initially imposed by the circulating libraries and the novel was also championed by the feminist magazine Shafts.[38] Esther Waters was particularly praised for its representation of motherhood. Gertrude Kapteyn, reviewing the novel in Shafts, commented: "[T]he author is perfect in his picturing of the unfaltering perseverance and self-denial, the love and passion characteristic of true motherhood."[39]

Gladstonian and New Woman approval, as well as eventual Mudie acceptance, give some indication of how far the author of the "first realistic novel in the language" had travelled from Zolaesque naturalism. In Confessions of a Young Man, Moore writes:

> Zola and Goncourt cannot, or will not understand that the artistic stomach must be allowed to do its work in its own mysterious fashion. If a man is really an artist he will remember what is necessary, forget what is useless; but if he takes notes he will interrupt his artistic digestion, and the result will be a lot of little touches, inchoate and wanting in the elegant rhythm of the synthesis.[40]

However, despite the novel's broad acceptance by the general public and its general abandonment of unpopular Zolaesque principles, the novel still, echoing Zola's words, contains its own defence, or perhaps more specifically continues to attack the same targets of Christian morality and social purity that are present in Literature At Nurse. Both Esther Walters and A Mummer's Wife, criticise those elements in society that

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[35] David Skilton, introduction, Esther Waters, by George Moore (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999): vii-xxii, at xiv.
[36] Trotter 119.
[37] Molly Youngkin, "George Moore's Quest for Canonization and Esther Waters as Female Helpmate," English Literature in Transition (1880-1920) 46 (2003):117-140, at 119.
[38] See Youngkin.
[39] Youngkin 126.
[40] George Moore, Confessions of a Young Man, introd. Susan Dick (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1972) 115.

wished Moore's books banned. However, in many ways, Moore's characterisation of Esther Waters is a regression from that of Kate Ede, complicit in a way that the representation of the protagonist of A Mummer's Wife is not, with a sexual binary which privileges biological reproduction over female sexual desire.

Esther Waters and the Censorious Society

If A Mummer's Wife can be read as a critique of the principles of Mudie censorship through the incorporation of a specific attack on romantic fiction, then Esther Waters can be read as an attack on the prudish society that supports Mudie's censorship. The novel does this not by inscribing a critique of romantic literature but rather through narrating responses to Esther's predicament as an unmarried mother. These responses reveal a hypocritical middle class that morally condemns women like Esther at the same time as economically exploiting them.

The honesty and frankness of Esther Waters, like the honesty and frankness Moore ascribed to the naturalist novel – a literature characteristic of the nervous, passionate life of the nineteenth century – is juxtaposed with the hypocrisy and duplicity of those members of society who seek to either expel Esther Waters from good society or castigate her for her sexual crime. The sympathetically portrayed Mrs Dunbar sees early that Esther is a "good girl" and respects "her scruples."[41] Although Esther, like Kate Ede, is "full of romantic love," it is "for the earth, and of a desire to mix herself with the innermost essence of things" (EW 57) rather than Kate Ede's delusional fantasies of all-sufficing love between men and women. Esther, in fact, is

[41] George Moore Esther Waters (New York: Liveright, 1942) 40. All future references to Esther Waters refer to this text. Henceforth abbreviated in the text to EW.

dubious about romantic love in a way that Kate Ede is not. When William Latch declares himself in love, Esther replies sceptically: "'I wonder if that is true. What is there to love in me?' " (EW 87). Esther's religion, although of "the sternest Protestantism" (EW 94), is largely reflective of her simple moral probity. In fact, the narrative skilfully separates the moral integrity of Esther from the negative effect that religion has on her. Religion leads Esther to believe that she has sinned and "[...] the Lord had punished her for her sin, and she must bear her punishment uncomplainingly, giving Him thanks that He had imposed no heavier one upon her" (EW 104), although the text actually provides little evidence that Esther was particularly complicit in the ambiguously described sexual act:

> The wheat stacks were thatching, and in the rickyard, and in the carpenter's shop, and in the warm valleys, listening to the sheep bells tinkling, they often lay together talking of love and marriage, till one evening, putting his pipe aside, William threw his arm round her, whispering that she was his wife. The words were delicious in her fainting ears. She could not put him away, nor could she struggle with him, though she knew that her fate depended upon her resistance, and swooning away she awakened in pain, powerless to free herself ... Soon after thoughts betook themselves on their painful way, and the stars were shining when he followed her across the down, beseeching her to listen (EW 91).

In defence of Esther's sexual morality, it could be argued that, for Esther, talking about love with William Latch is inseparable from talking about marriage. The words that are delicious to her are those which declare that she will be Latch's wife. The passage begins with background nature but there is a clear separation between the sexual nature which appears to lead William to put aside his pipe and Esther's view of what is natural which is being united in marriage. Although her ambivalence is implied in her being unable to "put him away" nor "struggle with him" and her "swooning away", her failure to resist could be read as evidence of either Esther's momentary moral incontinence or her physical inability to protect herself from being raped. Even if the act implies moral

rather than physical weakness then the societal punishment Esther receives appears inordinately harsh in relation to the offence.

The novel's critique of the middle-class response to Esther's situation begins with her pregnancy. While Esther's Christian humility and patriarchal socialisation places blame on herself for the act – "It is always a women's fault" (EW 109) – Margaret her roommate consoles: "We don't think any the worse of you; why, that's an accident that might happen to any of us" (EW 113). Likewise Mrs Saunders, Esther's mother, declines to impart any moral blame, insisting: "A girl can't know what a man is thinking of, and we take the worst for the best" (EW 132), although the unsympathetically portrayed Jim Saunders views Esther's pregnancy as evidence of her religious hypocrisy claiming that, "The goody-goody sort are the worst" (EW 128). Even the largely sympathetic Mrs Banfield, who, as Esther confesses to being pregnant, looks at her with "something akin to admiration" (EW 108), helps her financially, and acknowledges that Esther is a victim (EW 109) cannot keep her in her employ "on account of the bad example to the younger servants" (EW 108). Mrs Banfield asks Esther if she can "feel her sin" and asks her to "say honestly before God that [you] repent" (EW 111) and to "pray to God to give [you] strength in the future to stand against temptation" (EW 112). However, Esther's other middle-class employers respond more harshly to Esther's status as unmarried mother. One employer, Mrs Rivers, refers to Esther's baby as a "poor little bastard child" (EW 176); another, Mrs Trunbar, confesses she wouldn't have employed her (EW 196) while her son insists that they "can't have loose women about the place" (EW 198). Esther realises that her illegitimate child indelibly taints her: "It was thus that she learnt her lesson that she must keep her child secret, and in her next situation she shunned intimacy with her fellow servants, thereby exposing herself to their sneers" (EW 199).

Her suitor, the rather sanctimonious Fred Parson, who, significantly, does "not approve of novels" (EW 216) as they are "very often stories about the loves of men for other men's wives" (EW 217), also views Esther's having a child in terms of sin and salvation asking if since that time she has "been a good woman" (EW 220). His response to her confession momentarily tempers Esther's sympathy for him: "Esther did not like him any better for his purity, and was irritated by the clear tones of his icy voice" (EW 220).

Thus responses to Esther's 'sin' mirror moral responses to many naturalist novels. Whatever Esther's responsibility, her seduction is frequently perceived in simple moral terms that neither take account of the circumstances of her sexual seduction, nor of the extreme difficulties of her present life. In response to Fred Parson asking if she has repented, Esther remarks: "I should think I had, and been punished too, enough for a dozen children" (EW 220). Esther becomes reducible to her sin, as naturalist fiction was often reducible to its perceived immorality and thus its potential to contaminate readers. If the hard complexities of the world in A Mummer's Wife are blurred by Kate Ede's rosy vision of romantic fiction, in Esther Waters, they are reduced to a moral binary that indelibly marks Esther as a sinner that society must perpetually punish.

Apart from showing how the respectable middle class casts out women like Esther Waters from good society, Esther Waters effectively depicts the moral bankruptcy of such society by demonstrating how harsh moral judgement of Esther is frequently accompanied by severe economic exploitation. The hypocrisy of respectable middle-class women claiming moral superiority to their socially inferior servants while immorally exploiting them is neatly summarised in an exchange between Esther and Mrs Bingley. Concerned about how Esther spends her money, she declaims: "It is my

duty to know what you do with your money, and to see that you do not spend it in any wrong way. I am responsible for your moral welfare [...] I know the temptations that a young girl's life are beset with [...]", to which Esther replies, "There ain't much temptation for them who work seventeen hours a day" (EW 193). As Mrs Bingley's sense of morality is largely concerned with Esther's sexual behaviour, Moore foregrounds the true immorality of Esther's economic exploitation. The same effect is achieved earlier with irony. Esther informs Mrs Rivers that she will give up working as a wet-nurse: "But, Waters, you won't leave my baby. It's cruel of you" (EW 175).[42] A page later Mrs Rivers, who won't let Esther visit her own sick child, exclaims, "Next time I engage a nurse I'll try to get one who has lost her baby, and then there will be no bother." Mrs Rivers, who knows that "the life of her child had been bought with the lives of two poor children" (EW 176) proceeds to dismiss Esther to the street without a shilling knowing that Esther has no money and she and her baby will be destitute.

Esther, then, is a clear victim of respectable society. She is dismissed from the Trubner house because they discover she has a child, and from the next because the son of the house declares his love for her. She is also a victim of a sexual double-standard: she is punished for keeping her child while its father who abandoned her is not; she is punished for being an object of sexual desire, while the desiring subject is not. While Esther struggles to keep herself and her child from the workhouse, one agency declares that "tall servants are all the fashion" (EW 205). Indeed authorial intervention makes clear the nature of the narrative: "Hers is an heroic adventure if one considers it: a

[42] It is interesting that Moore should have made Esther a wet-nurse after producing a pamphlet against censorship called Literature At Nurse, wherein, as Lyssa Randolph correctly notes, "[...] the act of breast-feeding becomes a negative troping on literary production; the inferior compromised level at which the novel under censorship is obliged to write has the same cultural value as this degrading maternal act." Lyssa Randolph, "The Romance of Race: Grant Allen's Science as Cultural Capital," Grant Allen, Literature and Cultural Politics at the *Fin de Siècle*, eds. William Greenslade and Terence Rodgers (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005): 65-80, at 68. Grant Allen also produces the same trope in the introduction to The British Barbarians: "when I wished to purvey strong meat for men, I was condemned to provide milk for babies." The British Barbarians (1895, London: Dodo, 2002) ii.

mother's fight for the life of her child against all the forces that civilisation arrays against the lowly and the illegitimate" (EW 200). Moore does not remove sexuality from a moral framework and upset mid-Victorian reticence as French naturalism had done; instead, in Esther Waters, he juxtaposes Esther's heroic struggle, that of "the lowly and the illegitimate" with the moral bankruptcy of Victorian respectability. In this sense, Moore rejects French Naturalism's claims to scientific objectivity and moral neutrality, and produces a highly moral novel that articulates social injustice and highlights the hypocrisy, callousness and economic exploitation of those largely middle-class elements of society that were often most vociferous in condemning his writing and that of other writers who challenged the conventions and moral restrictions of both Victorian literature and society.

In Moore's foregrounding of a lowly maid as the protagonist of his novel, he keeps naturalist faith, but his depiction of her condition as well as that of the respectable society, or the forces of civilisation, as he ironically refers to them, show a movement away from naturalism and toward an affinity with the mid-century social problem novels of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens. This dilution or at least appropriation of naturalist material to a more traditional British novel highlighting moral resilience and ending with optimistic narrative closure can account, to some extent, for the novel's success. This is not to say that the novel's critique of society is not severe, but social critique framed by moral perspective did not unsettle the Mudie's librarian, or Mrs Grundy for that matter, as much as troubling morally ambiguous representations of sexually 'interested' women like Nana or Kate Ede.

Esther Waters as Race Mother

It has already been noted that the Shafts reviewer of Esther Waters complimented Moore on his portrayal of motherhood. Motherhood, under the impetus of Social Darwinism and eugenics, was increasingly seen by those who championed scientific perspectives as women's overriding responsibility. In "Plain Words on the Woman Question" (1889), published five years before Esther Waters, Grant Allen wrote that, "[...] the vast majority of women must become wives and mothers; that on those women who become wives and mothers depends the future of the race."[43] While many feminists challenged the reduction of women to their biological function, others saw motherhood as being crucial to the feminist cause. Motherhood was, as Angelique Richardson has recently commented, "an ideological minefield."[44] Hadria Fullerton, the New Woman heroine of Mona Caird's Daughters of Danaus (1894), can exclaim: "I deny that motherhood has duties except when it is absolutely free, absolutely uninfluenced by the pressure of opinion, or by any of the innumerable tyrannies that most children have now to thank for their existence."[45] Caird is clearly antagonistic to the reactionary nature of the new eugenic emphasis on motherhood in which science demands concepts of motherhood "are left as they are. Women are made for purposes of reproduction; let them clearly understand that. No picking and choosing."[46] Whereas other women like social purity feminist Laura Chant could state that:

> Motherhood shall be recognised as the inner sanctuary of all that is holiest on earth, and passion be lifted by the strong and tender hand of mutual love, out of the selfish and base region of mere animalism, into the noble aspiration of noble marriage.[47]

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[43] Grant Allen, "Plain Words on The Woman Question," Fortnightly Review 52 (1889): 448-58, at 456.
[44] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 209.
[45] Mona Caird, Daughters of Danaus (London: Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1894) 342.
[46] Caird 258.
[47] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 76.

Much has been written about the central importance of motherhood to the progress of nation and race. Angelique Richardson encapsulates this centrality:

> [...] responsible motherhood was a moral obligation and a woman's first act of citizenship in late-Victorian Britain. It conferred nobility, prestige and power. At a time of concern over national efficiency and empire, motherhood and imperialism were drawn into an alliance in which the function of reproduction was crucial.[48]

George Moore's Esther Waters is clearly complicit in such an ideology. Even if the Victorian reader believes Esther partly responsible for getting pregnant, her greater "moral obligation" as a mother is unrelentingly met in her struggle to raise her child, a struggle in which she sacrifices everything. Indeed her struggle confers "nobility, prestige and power" in Moore's authorial comments; such a struggle is an "heroic adventure" and as the feminist Gertrude Kapteyn noted shows "the unfaltering perseverance and self-denial, the love and passion characteristic of true motherhood." Motherhood in the novel lifts the character out of "the selfish and base region of mere animalism" as Chant commented. It is also highly significant that the son that Esther produces should be a soldier. The final passage where Esther introduces her son to Mrs Barfield is worth considering in some detail:

> She was only conscious that she had accomplished her woman's work- she had brought him up to man's estate; and that was her sufficient reward. What a fine fellow he was! She did not know he was so handsome, and blushing with pleasure and pride she glanced slyly at him out of the corners of her eyes as she introduced him to her mistress.
>
> "This is my son, ma'am" (EW 441-442).

Esther has raised a soldier, a defender of the empire; mother and imperialism then are in Richardson's words "drawn into alliance". Her woman's work for the nation and race is accomplished, and like Silver Braid, the horse that won the Stewards Cup, Esther can be put out to grass. From a eugenic perspective, the fact that her son is handsome and "a fine fellow" implies that she has raised a healthy specimen for the nation too.

Significantly, it is to her mistress, probably along with Miss Rice the most sympathetic and certainly acceptable face of the middle class, that Esther, the servant, presents her son. The largely Christian forces of civilization arrayed against lowly but tenacious Esther lose out to the biological instinct of motherhood and the greater victory goes to race and nation.

In Esther Waters, Moore not only privileges biological instinct over social and moral constriction, but he also privileges the biological instinct of motherhood over that of female sexual desire. Kate Ede is recognisably a sexual being (if duped by romantic literature) who willingly embarks on an adulterous relationship and is equally attracted and repulsed by Lennox's "animalism" (MW 46). Esther, however, seems to have little sexual interest and is reduced primarily to her role as mother, and secondarily to her function as wife. Her youthful dream of relationships with boys is as romantic as Kate Ede's but it lacks any real sexual interest:

> The beauty of the evening and the sea breeze instilled a sensation of immortal health, setting her thinking that if a young man came to her as young men came to the great ladies in Sarah's books, it would be pleasant to talk in the dusk, seeing the bats flitting about the barns and byres vanishing into nothingness (EW 57).

In fact, to a large extent, Esther is a social purity reformer's dream. If Emma Bovary and Nana are past redemption and Kate Ede too far gone on the road to perdition, Esther Waters is precisely the kind of woman that Mary Jeune could save, for Esther belongs to the kind of,

> class for which a great deal can be done – that of the woman who has just fallen and is thrown on the world, deserted by the man who has deceived her and left her, with her child, in such a state of weakness and misery that she is easily reached by sympathy and kindness.[49]

Before her fall, Esther rejects the celebrations after the victory of Silver Braid: "She felt that all this dancing, drinking and kissing to the arbours was wicked" (EW 89). Kate

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[48] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 38.

Ede might also be occasionally prone to Christian moralising but the depiction of her own sexual desires and her adulterous elopement with Lennox rather undermine her position. While Kate Ede abandons herself in romance and reveries over Lennox's theatrical red blazer, Esther abandons "herself in prayer" (EW 106). Esther's interest in William Latch hardly appears very ardent as "while she gazed dreamily on the hills he admired the white curve of her neck" (EW 90). Esther's attraction for Fred is largely due to his having "saved her" (EW 219). Moreover, if she decides later to live with William Latch it is because she fears that her son will "never take kindly to Fred as a stepfather" (EW 265) having met his real father. Although reluctant to take the road "to the public house and the race course", she does so because "William had promised to settle £500 on her and Jackie" (EW 272). It would appear that her self-sacrificing heroism can only be gained at the expense of Esther remaining largely sexually uninterested.

Although Moore's foregrounding of a humble servant to be the eponymous hero of his novel shows him treating naturalist subject matter, gone is anything that might be deemed sexually threatening. His social critique is severe but then so too was that of many feminists. Furthermore, Moore produces a sexually uninterested woman who can clearly be located as innocent on the sexual binary of social purity, the victim of male lust and of a patriarchal society that frequently not only ignores the plight of such women but economically exploits them as wet-nurses and overworked servants. Esther clearly does not get the kind of help that the NVA and other social purity groups extended to the reformed and repentant. To be heroic, however, Esther must remain relatively sexually pure. Thus the conventions of naturalism, especially naturalist concerns with sexuality and specifically natural instinct give way to the stabilities of

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[49] Jeune 183.

Victorian character and moral resilience, even as that character is imbued with biological instincts, and even if Moore attacks the social ideologies that produce such moral stabilities. While Esther Waters attacks the hypocritical morality of a censorious society, and elevates a lowly maid to heroic status, such elevation can only be achieved within the framework of celebratory motherhood, whose iconoclastic status denies sexual interest and pleasure to the novel's main protagonist and is, therefore, complicit in the dominant culture's view that a woman's first responsibility is as a race mother who, if need be, must sacrifice everything for her children. As Hadria in Mona Caird's Daughter of Danaus complains:

> A mother disappointed in her children must be a desperately unhappy woman. She has nothing left; for has she not resigned everything for them? But is sacrifice for ever to follow on sacrifice? Is life to go rolling after life, like the cheeses that the idiot in the fable sent running downhill, the one to fetch the other back?[50]

From the narrative perspective of George Moore's Esther Waters, it is the duty of women to keep the cheeses rolling down the hill, which is to say, that it is precisely this maternal sacrifice that George Moore, like many other writers, glorifies, and which ultimately reduces poor Esther Waters, for all her pluck, to her, largely, biological function.

While Moore clearly resists the censorship of Mudie's by producing a Zolaesque naturalist novel, by publishing it with Vizetelly and by inscribing a critique of censorship into A Mummer's Wife, he also reproduces a Victorian race mother consonant with patriarchal ideas of the prime importance of childbearing to women in Esther Waters. Such ideas could be interpreted as Christian duty in traditional moral discourses or aligned with race instinct in scientific discourses. The popular success

[50] Caird 38.

and general critical acceptance of Esther Waters can partly be explained by Moore's accommodation of late-Victorian sexual ideologies in a novel that highlights moral resilience, sexual uninterest and upright character. In similar ways to Zola, Moore attacks the society that morally and often hypocritically disapproves of women whose sexual behaviour places them beyond the parameters of social acceptance while also reinforcing repressive sexual ideologies; in Moore's case that of race motherhood; in Zola's, the middle-class fears of the societal damage caused by lower-class prostitutes. This is highly significant regarding the naturalist attack on conventional Victorian morality. Naturalism appears to radically assault the traditional Christian morality on which Victorian ideology was, to a large extent, constructed. However, while challenging the validity of Christian morality specifically as it relates to constraints of sexual behaviour, both Zola and Moore reinforce Victorian ideologies of race, class and gender, but now largely predicate them on new objective scientific values of natural sexual desire. Zola foregrounds the sexuality of women in his fictional world, but by largely emphasising the devastating effects such sexuality can have on upper-class society. Moore dramatically demonstrates the frustrations of Kate Ede's small town life or the brutally harsh treatment meted out to unmarried working-class mothers like Esther Waters, but he cannot envisage an alternative to Kate Ede's life that does not end miserably in her alcohol-induced death, nor an alternative to Esther Waters's that does not entail the maternal sacrificing of her own life for her eugenically healthy son. Naturalism, as represented by Emile Zola or George Moore, might have been the most effective fictional assault on middle-class hypocrisy and specifically on the restrictions that middle-class sexual morality imposes on both men and women, but Naturalism did little to disturb the ideological hegemony of middle-class men.

Chapter Four: Steeped in Sex: Jude the Obscure and the Culture of Censorship

1895 has been described as a year of literary crisis.[1] Peter Morton views the year as "one of the most extraordinary in the history of modern British literature."[2] Such an extraordinary year was not only, and most obviously, due to the trials and imprisonment of Oscar Wilde in the spring, but also related to the publication of The Woman Who Did by Grant Allen and Gallia by Ménie Muriel Dowie, as well as, if for different reasons, the first appearance in English of Degeneration by Max Nordau. All these texts provoked enormous and often heated debate.[3] Concerns over the depiction of sexuality in Naturalism and the sexual politics of New Woman fiction reached, according to Jane Eldridge Miller, a "peak of abundance and emotional intensity."[4] B. A. Crackanthorpe and D. F. Hannigan defended greater frankness in fiction in "Sex in Modern Literature" and "Sex in Fiction" respectively, while Punch's mockery of the New Woman reached its zenith. The Yellow Book, in its second year, published among other provocations, "Theodora, A Fragment" by Victoria Cross.[5]

Even, then, without considering the trial of Oscar Wilde, such texts mark 1895 as a tumultuous year for literature. Eldridge Miller, however, singles out one publication, that of Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure in November, as bringing "the literary crisis of 1895 to a climax of anxiety and hysteria."[6] Certainly it is difficult to

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[1] Eldridge Miller 31.
[2] Peter Morton, The Busiest Man 145.
[3] Admirers of Nordau such as Hugh Stutfield used Degeneration in "Tommyrotics" to attack the New Woman novel, while George Bernard Shaw pilloried Nordau's book for its "sham-scientific vivisection." George Bernard Shaw, "The Sanity of Art; An Exposure of the Current Nonsense about Artists being Degenerate," Revised edition of article originally composed in 1895, for the anarchist newspaper Liberty. Sally Ledger and Roger B. Luckhurst, The *Fin de Siècle*: A Reader in Cultural History *C.* 1880-1900 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 22.
[4] Miller 30.
[5] B. A. Crackanthorpe, "Sex in Modern Literature," Nineteenth Century (1895) 607-16. D. F. Hannigan, "Sex in Fiction," Westminster Review 143 (1895): 616-25. Miller states: "The campaign that the humour magazine Punch waged against the New Woman also reached an apex of derision and mockery in 1895" 208. Victoria Cross, "Theodora: A Fragment," The Yellow Book 4 (1895): 156-188.
[6] Miller 32.

think of any novel written by an established and respected British writer in the nineteenth century that caused such furore as contemporary reviews of the novel indicate.[7] Certainly Hardy's status as a novelist and the intense level of critical debate surrounding issues of sexuality were significant contributory factors to the critical reception of Jude the Obscure, but neither authorial kudos nor the context of literary crisis can wholly account for the level of moral outrage Jude the Obscure provoked.[8]

Through comparing Jude the Obscure with Hardy's earlier novel, The Woodlanders (1888), analysing the novel's transgressive content, and evaluating its critical reception, this chapter will, indeed, try to account for why Jude the Obscure caused such a scandal. Moreover, apart from demonstrating the 'scandulous' nature of Jude the Obscure, this chapter explores the novel's critical response to censorship. As with George Moore's A Mummer's Wife, Jude the Obscure can be read as a fictional extension of Hardy's own non-fictional assault on censorship, an extension in which the novel incorporates a rhetorical attack on the values and ideas of those who would be most offended by reading it.[9] Indeed, Hardy's novel provides further evidence that a censorship dialectic existed before the advent of literary modernism, and, moreover, that the culture of censorship was often most attacked by those writers of fiction most likely to suffer under its restrictions. Finally, as an examination of Jude the Obscure's relation with censorship would not be complete without consideration of Hardy's own complex sexual politics, the chapter will conclude by showing how the novel's assault on Victorian sexual ideology is counterpointed by an aesthetic perspective that

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[7] The most famous critique came from Margaret Oliphant, "The Anti-Marriage League," Blackwood's Magazine, 159 (1896): 135-149. Henceforth abbreviated in the text to AML. The Pall Mall Gazette referred to Hardy's novel as "Jude the Obscene" and the London World as "Hardy the Degenerate".

[8] Jude The Obscure, ed. and introd. Patricia Ingham (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998). All future references to the novel are taken from this text. Hence abbreviated to J in the text.

[9] Hardy especially attacked censorship in "Candour in English Fiction". This will be discussed below. Thomas Hardy, "Candour in English Fiction," The *Fin De Siècle*: A Reader in Cultural History C.1880-1900, ed. Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000): 116-120. Henceforth abbreviated to CIF.

reinscribes the polarities of sex and class that Jude the Obscure ostensibly exposes and opposes. This is not to challenge the intent or effect of Hardy's novel, but to emphasize the difficulty Hardy, as well as other Victorian writers, had in overcoming not only the values of what Hardy terms "the accepted school of morals", but the entrenched ideas embedded in aesthetic beliefs and practices. Such complexities are often underplayed by those who view censorship as a mere battle between progressive writers and conservative censors.

Hardy and the Anti-Marriage League

Thomas Hardy had probed the bounds of Victorian reticence two decades before the NVA's attack on pernicious literature evidenced in Vizetelly's prosecution, and a decade earlier than the publication of George Moore's A Mummer's Wife. A reviewer of Hardy's first published novel could comment: "there are certain expressions to be met with in the book so remarkably coarse as to render it almost impossible that it should have come from the pen of an English lady."[10] Praising the author's depiction of peasant life in the same novel, the Spectator declaimed: "The scenes allotted to these humble actors are few and slight, but they indicate powers that might and ought to be extended largely in this direction, instead of being prostituted to the purposes of idle prying into the way of wickedness" (THCH 4). In a review of The Return of the Native (1878) in the Athenaeum, Clym Yeobright and Eustacia Vye, described as "both selfish and sensual", know "no other law than the gratification of their own passion." Eustacia Vye, furthermore, is the Madame Bovary type "which English opinion will not allow a novelist to depict in its completeness" (THCH 46). Harry Quilter, writing in the

Spectator in 1883 finds Two on a Tower (1882) objectionable and claims "in its mingling of passion, religion, and false self-sacrifice, appears to us to approach very near to the repulsive" (THCH 102). This gives some indication that it was not exclusively under Zola's influence that British writers sought to challenge the prohibitions of Victorian reticence. Apart from moral censure, Hardy also had to work within the bounds of rather stringent editorial censorship, most notably that of Leslie Stephen, the editor of Cornhill Magazine, who according to Patricia Ingham sought to "sanitize any sexual reference" in Far From The Madding Crowd (1874) and blankly refused The Return of the Native because "he feared that the relations between Eustacia, Wildeve and Tasmin might develop into something dangerous for a family magazine."[11]

The critical reaction to Jude the Obscure was, however, significantly different to previous qualms about Hardy's portrayals of relations between the sexes in earlier novels.[12] In fact, the novel's franker depiction of sexual relations and instincts marks Jude the Obscure as something of a threshold text as it places sexual desire at the centre of both character explication and motivation in ways that Hardy's previous novels had not. In Jude the Obscure, sexual desire is more than what a reputable Victorian must either resist or confine to the conjugal bed; it becomes an essential force of nature that society woefully fails to accommodate in its social, cultural and religious arrangements. Hardy's novel is a virulent attack on the social and religious ideology of Victorian matrimony, and, as such, and even if Hardy seems to have been shocked by the ferocity of some of the responses to the novel, was bound to provoke outrage in some quarters.

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[10] Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage, ed. R. G. Cox (London: Routledge, 1979) 1. Hence abbreviated in the text to THCH.

[11] Patricia Ingham, Thomas Hardy: Authors In Context (London: Oxford UP 2003) 87-89.

A brief comparison between The Woodlanders (1888) and Jude the Obscure is instructive in showing how much further the later novel tests the bounds of Victorian morality.[13] Although both novels explore the constrictions of marriage and depict double standards of sexual behaviour, The Woodlanders does not stray far beyond Victorian reticence whereas Jude the Obscure takes as its subject matter the very morality of Christian marriage. If The Woodlanders might be less polemical in its attack on matrimony, it does effectively highlight the rigidity of the existing marriage laws. George Melbury's erroneous belief in "a new law in the land" which permits women the same rights to divorce as men and would thus enable his daughter Grace to "get rid" of her adulterous husband is confounded by the harsh reality that "Fitzpiers's conduct had not been sufficiently cruel to Grace to enable her to snap the bond."[14] This refers to the double standard of The Matrimonial Causes Act (1857) which allowed a man to divorce his wife on grounds of adultery alone, where a woman needed further aggravated cause such as cruelty or desertion.[15] The Woodlanders further highlights the inequity of such a law by having Giles Winterbourne succumb to death rather than risk the reputation of the married Grace Melbury by sleeping in his own hut where Grace is temporarily housed. Within the context of both Fitzpiers's desertion for an adulterous

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[13] The Woodlanders did, it must be acknowledged, attract some criticism but this was largely confined to the novel's portrayal of the immoral Fitzpiers. R. H. Hutton writing in the Spectator complained that it was difficult not to feel, "indignation and disgust towards Fitzpiers which Mr. Hardy not only does not express, but even renders it impossible for us to suppose that he entertains." Hutton continues, "Mr. Hardy's story is written with an indifference to the moral effect it conveys." (THCH 143). Hutton's comments, though, were exceptional, and in comparision to the ferocity of attacks on Jude the Obscure, relatively mild, as will be seen below.

[14] Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders, ed. James Gibson (London: Penguin, 1981) 353. Henceforth abbreviated in the text to TW.

[15] According to Porter and Hall, "The Divorce Law of 1857 laid down that mere adultery in man, as opposed to wife, was no matrimonial crime unless exacerbated by other offences. Porter and Hall 132. The difficulty of divorce forms the narrative dynamic for John Galsworthy's second volume of The Forsyte Saga, In Chancery. Soames tells his sister Winnifred of the rather farcical options she has if she wants to divorce her absconded husband Dartie: " 'It must be divorce,' he said decisively; 'failing cruelty, there's desertion. There's a way of shortening the two years, now. We get the Court to give us restitution of conjugal rights. Then if he doesn't obey, we can bring a suit of divorce in six months' time." John Galsworthy, The Forsyte Saga Volume One (1922, London: Penguin, 2000) 395. The novel, although written more than two decades later, is set in 1895.

relationship with Mrs Charmond, and Grace's revitalised love for Giles, such sexual probity emphasises, if rather melodramatically, the injustice of the lovers' situation. As Grace exclaims, "Can it be that cruel propriety is killing the dearest heart that ever woman clasped to her own" (TW 379).

Even as The Woodlanders emphasises the double standard of divorce, however, it still champions the purity of Giles's nature and thus stays within acceptable moral confines. As the narrator comments, "[...] his freedom from the grosser passions, his scrupulous delicacy, had never been fully understood by Grace till this strange self-sacrifice in lonely juxtaposition to her own person was revealed" (TW 381). Grace's marriage vows are vouchsafed by Giles's purity. The binary between the *bête humaine* – the grosser passions from which Giles is free – and the *beau ideal* of his chivalrous sacrifice is clearly established. In Jude the Obscure, however, Sue Bridehead's "freedom from everything that is gross" might have elevated Jude, but the effort of self-control is now something that he "should never have dreamt myself capable of, or any man, a year or two ago" (J 279). In Jude the Obscure, purity is seen less as an essential character trait of the Victorian hero, than the societal imposition of impossibly demanding moral standards that test human endurance beyond its limits.

The offence of adultery in The Woodlanders is, moreover, not committed by Grace Melbury, the central female character, but by Mrs Charmond and Edred Fitzpiers. Hardy's novel may be subversive to the extent that Grace Melbury's physical reaction to Fitzpiers "undermines the traditional pictures of the pure middle-class girl", but Grace does not have sex outside marriage even with an "unvarnished man" (TW 276) whose association with nature compares favourably to Fitzpiers's social pretensions.[16] Furthermore, Mrs Charmond, the novel's adulteress and a generally

[16] Ingham, Hardy 140.

unsympathetic character from the beginning of the novel since the purchase of Marty South's beautiful hair, is unceremoniously despatched by an ex-lover for her adulterous behaviour, while Fitzpiers is only allowed to return to his wife as a considerably chastened man who understands that he can only reunite with Grace if she "can really love" him and not because she feels a sense of duty to do so (TW 410). Whether Fitzpiers will remain faithful is doubted, but at least in the novel's narrative time, the marriage is not sundered and Grace is reconciled to her errant husband, and so the reconfirmation of marriage vows allows for optimistic closure. In Jude the Obscure, however, the inflexibility of marriage law is not only held up to scrutiny as in The Woodlanders, but marriage itself leads to both despairing tragedy and ultimately cruel farce. In a sense, the plot closure that marriage brings in Jude the Obscure is a parody of the kind of optimistic ending that occurs in The Woodlanders: Sue's marriage to Phillotson is symbolic of her rejection of love and her masochistic submission to the cruelties of Victorian conventionalism, as Jude's remarriage to Arabella demonstrates his complete resignation in the face of those forces that he cannot defeat. Indeed, in Jude the Obscure, the narrative consistently attacks matrimony. The novel depicts marital suffering as commonplace. When Arabella leaves the tent at the agricultural fair with Cartlett, whom she has bigamously married, the narrator wryly comments: "And they left the tent together, this pot-bellied man and florid woman, in the antipathetic, recriminatory mood of the average husband and wife of Christendom" (J 311).

If Jude the Obscure, unlike Zola's novels, avoided prosecution, the objections frequently raised against it were not greatly different from those advanced against Nana or La Terre. Not surprisingly, Hardy's novel was criticised for being influenced by the Frenchman. Even Hardy's wife Emma claimed that Jude the Obscure was "in the

manner of Zola" although Hardy himself played down any Zolean influence on Jude the Obscure.[17] In a letter to Edmund Gosse, he commented:

> As to the 'coarse' scenes with Arabella, the battle in the schoolroom, etc., the newspaper critics might, I thought, have sneered at them for their Fieldingism rather than for their Zolaism. But your everyday critic knows nothing of Fielding. I am read in Zola very little, but have felt akin locally to Fielding, so many of his scenes having been laid down this way, and his home near.[18]

In "The Anti-Marriage League," the novelist Margaret Oliphant attacks Hardy on very similar grounds to those made against Zola although Oliphant admits to never having read the Frenchman (AML 138). According to Oliphant, Hardy's novel contains scenes and dialogue which transgress what should be decently represented in serious novels. Oliphant writes of Arabella's conversation with her workmates that: "The colloquy between her and her fellows in their disgusting work, after her first almost equally disgusting interview with Jude, is one of the most unutterable foulness [...]" and, "the country lasses at their outdoor work is more brutal in depravity than anything which the darkest slums could bring forth" (AML 139). Oliphant states that "[...] nothing so coarsely indecent as the whole history of Jude in his relations with his wife Arabella has ever been put in English print—that is to say, from the hands of a Master" (AML 138). Oliphant criticises Hardy for proclaiming a creed,

> which puts foremost and prominent as the chief fact of life, for discussion and

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[17] Robert Gittings, The Older Hardy (London: Penguin, 1980) 116. Gitting charts the rupture Jude the Obscure caused between Hardy and Gosse, after Gosse had told Hardy that Jude the Obscure was the "most indecent novel ever written", which caused for the first time in their relationship Hardy to become angry with his friend." Gittings 114. One can only imagine the difficult undertaking it must have been for Gosse to review Hardy's novel.

[18] Florence Emily Hardy, The Later Years of Thomas Hardy 1892-1928 (New York: Macmillan, 1930) 42. Hardy, according to Sarah Bird Wright, "did not admire Zola as a novelist. Florence Henniker had assumed he did, but he wrote on March 31, 1897, that she was mistaken." Thomas Hardy A-Z: The Essential Reference to His Life and Work (New York: Checkmark, 2002). Even if Hardy's comments about Zola were influenced by the critics and his wife's comparison of Jude the Obscure to Zola's novels, it is clear from Hardy's essay in The New Review that he was skeptical about Zola's scientific realism. Speaking of Zola's claim that his novels were based on science, Hardy writes: "That it should ever have been maintained by such a romancer as M. Zola, in his work on the Roman Experimental, seems to reveal an obtuseness to the disproof conveyed in his own novels which, in a French writer, is singular indeed. "The Science of Fiction," Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings, ed. Harold Orel. (1891; Lawrence: U of Kansas P, 1966): 134-138, at 134.

> display, that which even the savage keeps more or less private to himself, and which the sacredness and mystery wherein the wonderful origins of life are instinctively shrouded, preserve alone from its natural resemblance to the traffic of the lower creation (AML 149).

Hardy stands accused of reducing the human to base, animal instinct by dismissing the *beau ideal* in a brutal depiction of the *bête humaine*. In one short paragraph, Oliphant refers to Arabella as "fleshly animal", "a human pig", and as being "ready to gratify him (Jude) in whatever circumstances they may meet [...]" (AML 139). In Oliphant's opinion, Jude's marital problems are a consequence of giving in to the instincts of the lower animals (AML 141). Apart from portraying the human beast, Hardy's writing, or rather its acceptance by readers, is equated with national degradation wherein not only the weakest members of society might well be adversely affected but the ordinary reader. Speaking of Hardy's practice of reinstating passages in novel publication that had been editorially censored in serialisation, Oliphant claims:

> If the English public supports him in it, it will be to the shame of every individual who thus confesses himself to like and accept what the author himself acknowledges to be unfit for the eyes – not of girls and young persons only, but of the ordinary reader [...]. That the prophets should prophesy falsely is not the most important fact of national degradation: it is only when the people love to have it so that the climax is attained (AML 140).

According to Oliphant, the novel is, "[...] intended as an assault on the stronghold of marriage" (AML 141). In a very partial reading of the novel, Oliphant argues that if Jude had "shown himself superior to the lower animals by not yielding to that new and transitory influence [...] he might have met and married Susan and lived happily ever after" (AML 141).

In terms of reticence, then, it is clear that Hardy offended Mrs Oliphant on several levels. To a certain extent, R. Y. Tyrell was right to claim that the novel is "steeped in sex" (THCH 293).[19] Sexual desire first checks Jude's academic aspirations

[19] If Jude the Obscure was considered to be overly concerned with sex by writers like Oliphant, then a considerable amount of recent criticism of the novel has also been, in Tyrell's words, "steeped in sex",

in the form of Arabella and later checks his aspiration "towards apostleship" in the form of Sue (J 228). The fear of Jude renewing sexual relations with Arabella leads to Sue agreeing to have sporadic conjugal relations with him as Sue's later perception of sexual sin leads to her rejection of Jude. Sue's feelings of sexual repulsion regarding Phillotson first motivates her to leave him, and her ultimate acceptance of sexual relations with Phillotson, her bringing her body "into complete subjection" (J 410), marks her self-destructive submission to both Phillotson and Christian morality. The novel might not be as sexually graphic as Zola's La Terre but Arabella, at times, is sexually objectified as Françoise is in La Terre. Early in their courting days, Arabella lies on the ground in front of Jude, "her form heaving and falling in quick pants, her face flushed, her full red lips parted, and a fine dew of perspiration on her skin" (J 50). The reader is invited to view Arabella, lying supine on the grass offering herself to the sexually naïve Jude, her flushed face and perspiration reminiscent of Zola's description of Françoise, in which Françoise leans "backwards, arching her back, with her breasts pressing hard against her flimsy dress [...] her eyes seemed very large, set in her

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especially since Penny Boumelha's Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form (Sussex: Harvester, 1982), a groundbreaking study in which Hardy's sexual ideology is contextualised by a variety of contemporary discourses including New Women writing. Consonant with Boumelha's work, Patricia Ingham in The Language of Gender and Class: Transformation in the Victorian Novel (New York: Routledge, 1996) has shown the extent to which Hardy's novels challenge Victorian sexual ideologies, but also how such challenges demonstrate "a struggle full of inconsistences". Thomas Hardy: Authors In Context (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003) 152. In terms of Hardy's 'feminism', Jill Larson has argued that "in its treatment of emotions and sexual relationships, Jude the Obscure shares both the feminist concerns of the New Woman writing and its ethically complex treatment of emotion, reason, and gender." Ethics and Narrative in the English Novel, 1880-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001) 50. Some other notable academic explorations include Elizabeth Langland's study which explores "the extent to which patriarchal constructions of masculinity become constrictions and, when inflected by class, create contradictions for individual males." "Becoming a Man in Jude the Obscure," The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy, ed. Margaret R. Higonnet (Illinois: Illinois UP, 1993): 32-48. Sarah Nicholson appropriates Judith Butler's idea of gender performativity to argue that Hardy performs feminine genders through appropriating the subjectivity of his female characters." "The Woman Pays: Death and the Ambivalence of Providence in Hardy's Novels," Literature & Theology 16 (2002): 27-39. For a historical survey of literary criticism regarding Hardy, sexuality and gender, see Kristin Brady, "Thomas Hardy and Matters of Gender," The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999): 93-110.

flushed, taciturn face."[20] As with Françoise's flushed face, Arabella's "red parted lips" are a clear signifier of sexual allure.

The novel's depiction of sexual desire is, however, considerably different from how naturalist writers like Zola perceived sexuality. In Nana, sexual desire takes possession of the respectable Muffat, destroying the religious principles on which he has based his life, and thus sexual desire, by implication, destroys social order, whereas, in Jude the Obscure, it is less significant that sex leads to social disintegration but that its confinement within the institution of marriage can bring tragic consequences to the individual. Jude the Obscure, moreover, shares with both the sexology movement and later writers like D. H. Lawrence an acceptance of the centrality of sex in shaping personality rather than the commonly held Victorian perception of sex as a mere snare for upright character. Even more significantly, it propounds a belief that the thwarting of natural sexual instincts leads to immense personal dissatisfaction, intellectual perversion and social repression. [21]

Sex, though, in Jude the Obscure, as in Nana, is still perceived as an overpowering force. When Jude meets Arabella, desire for her is "almost against his will" (J 37) and "Jude was lost to all conditions of things in the advent of fresh and wild pleasure" (J 39). The narrator compares such desire seizing hold of Jude as "a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power" (J 40-1). When Jude is separated from Arabella and rededicates himself to his Christminster aspirations he castigates himself for giving vent "to an animal passion for a woman" (J 92) but it is the same animal passion that he cannot conquer when he falls in love with Sue Bridehead, and is blinded "to the real nature of the magnetism" (J 93). Although the Christian Jude finds

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[20] Zola, The Earth 240

"the situation was growing immoral" and "he felt it his duty to pray against his weakness" (J 99), he claims his desire is not just an "erotolepsy" but reflects "a wish for intellectual sympathy, and a craving for loving-kindness in my solitude" (J 99). This is also significantly different to Zola's depiction of sex in Nana, as Jude's desire for Sue is not merely limitable to animal passion as Muffat's is for Nana, but that sexual desire is an integral part of his broader infatuation with Sue. Even Phillotson acknowledges that "it is not an ignoble, merely animal feeling between the two [...]" (J 242). Listening in to their conversation, Phillotson found "from their manner that an extraordinary affinity, or sympathy, entered into their attachment, which somehow took away all flavour of grossness" (J 243). Thus Jude the Obscure inscribes bodily desire into the traditional discourse of Victorian romantic love. While idealised love for a woman might be linked with the Divine, the human, in this case Jude's desire for Sue, remains more powerful (J 217). Considering whether he will accept her invitation to see Sue, Jude ponders that it is only "the earnest men he read of, the saints" who "would have shunned such encounters" (J 217).

As Oliphant acknowledged, Jude the Obscure is a clear criticism of Christian morality. The novel specifically attacks Christian marriage for its unrealistic assumption that human beings can always repress their natural sexual instincts as saints may do. Jude no longer wishes to become "the soldier and servant of a religion in which sexual love was regarded as at its best a frailty, and at its worst damnation" (J 227). Thus it is not the weakness of women that is to blame, but, as Jude states, "the artificial system of things, under which the normal sex-impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who want to progress" (J 228). The social imposition of traditional morality, "the artificiality of things", destroys

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[21] Hardy's novel can be seen to endorse Havelock Ellis's statement that "sex is the central problem of life." Rita Felski "Introduction," Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires, eds. Lucy Bland

natural desire by the gin of marriage.[22] To underscore the point, rather unsubtly, the narrator graphically describes the potential suffering of a rabbit caught in a gin on the night the couple are respectfully separated in Marygreen, Hardy even using the marital argot of "good and bad catches" (J 224). In short, whereas Margaret Oliphant commenting within a traditional Victorian discourse moralises Jude Fawley's weakness as sexual incontinence, Hardy's novel, resonating with emerging scientific discourses of evolutionary development, dramatises the irresistible and natural force of sexual desire clashing with unrealistic and socially imposed, religiously based moral dogmas.

Interestingly, given that Sue is often perceived as sexless, Hardy dramatises the intellectual battle between natural instinct and marital convention most effectively in Sue's desire to be released from her marriage to Phillotson. Speaking to Jude, Sue declaims:

> I have been thinking [...] that the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns. I am called Mrs Richard Phillotson, living a calm wedded life with my counterpart of that name. But I am not really Mrs Richard Phillotson, but a woman tossed about, all alone, with aberrant passions and unaccountable antipathies (J 215-6)

The novel's assault on marriage is specifically an attack on conformity and conventionalism. Marriage is a social construction which "moulds civilization". Morality that insists on the irrevocability of marriage vows does not take into account human variability and change. As Sue argues, "Domestic laws should be made according to temperaments" (J 223). Quoting John Stuart Mill, Sue states such conformity leaves, "no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation" (J 234). Thus Hardy liberates libidinal desire from marriage, making it central to human fulfilment. Jude the Obscure juxtaposes the sexual ideology of Christian marriage with

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and Laura Dolan (Cambridge: Polity, 1998): 1-8, at 7.

healthy, because natural and not socially constructed, sexual instincts. By doing so, the novel contends the Christian view of sexuality as essential and eternal, seeing it rather as a cultural production of a particular society and historical moment.[23] As Sue comments, "When people of a later age look back upon the barbarous customs and superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in, what will they say!" (J 226).[24] This accords with Hardy's belief that the modern task of the novelist was to "[...] show Nature's unconsciousness not of essential laws, but of those laws framed merely as social expedients by humanity, without a basis in the heart of things [...]" (CIF 116). Marriage law is, thus, framed as a social expedient without a basis in natural instinct. In the postscript to the 1912 edition of the novel, Hardy quoted Diderot's belief that "the civil laws should only be the enunciation of the law of nature" (intro J xxxvii). The point is made in the novel not only through plot, but also through occasional narrative comment frequently rendered from Jude's viewpoint. One suspects, however, as in the following rhetorical flourish, the narrator is less vague and dim about the trap of marriage than the duped Jude:

> There seemed to him, vaguely and dimly, something wrong in a social ritual which made necessary a cancelling of well-formed schemes [...]. He was inclined to inquire what he had done, or she lost, for that matter, that he deserved to be caught in a gin which would cripple him, if not her also, for the rest of a lifetime (J 60).

In The Woodlanders, the critique of marriage is still framed by the Victorian morality of sexual chastity and Victorian reader expectation is validated by the nobility of character shown by the saintly Giles Winterbourne. Ultimate narrative closure

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[22] George Egerton also takes up the idea of natural sexual instincts being placed in opposition to a specifically artificially constructed morality but with Egerton such an artificial morality is clearly gendered as male. See discussion in George Egerton chapter.

[23] Again, George Egerton refigures essentialist moral beliefs as socially constructed although Egerton herself posits an essentialist view of women in opposition to them. See chapter for full discussion.

[24] This rhetorical strategy of labelling what was deemed the most advanced civilization as barbarous is a strategy that Grant Allen also adopts in The British Barbarians (1895) a book which to a certain extent answers Sue's question about what people will say in the future, as the hero of Allen's novel, Bertram

comes about through the renewal of marriage vows. In Jude the Obscure, Hardy challenges the morality of inflexible marital conventions which thwarts sexual instincts. Such an attack on marriage did seem to be gratuitous to many, including Hardy's wife Emma. Whatever the personal impetus for such an attack, Hardy's Jude the Obscure can clearly be situated within the broader challenge emerging scientific discourses of sexuality offered to traditional moral perspectives of sexuality.

Jude the Obscure and the Approved School of Morals

The publication of Jude the Obscure did not create the same kind of clamour for the novel to be banned as Zola's novels. One significant reason for this was Hardy's status as a respected English, rather than a disreputable French, novelist. As R. Y. Tyrell commented in reference to Jude the Obscure: "It differs in no wise from the 'hill-top' novels, save in the note of distinction and the power of touch which must discriminate Mr. Hardy at his worst from the Grant Allens and Iotas at their best" (THCH 293). If the novel's detractors were in the majority, and were generally more vociferous, Jude also had numerous defenders. The fact that Jude the Obscure was strenuously defended is significant in that the novel provided something of the theatre of censorship Parkes claims for the novels of later writers such as D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce.[25] Jude the Obscure occasioned much debate about the importance of censorship itself, and the novel's defenders attacked censorious attitudes and championed, as Hardy had himself, candour in fiction. For example, Edmund Gosse, admittedly Hardy's friend, wrote: "But it does not appear to me that we have any business to call in question the right of a

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Ingledew, is a time-traveller from the twenty-fifth century. See next chapter on Grant Allen for further discussion.

novelist of Mr. Hardy's extreme distinction to treat what themes he will" (THCH 268). D. F. Hannigan, writing in the Westminster Review could write of Jude the Obscure that: "It is certainly 'strong meat', but there is nothing prurient, nothing artificial in this work; it is *human* in the widest sense of that comprehensive word" (THCH 273). Hannigan criticises those who have condemned the novel, "[...] on the ground of its outspokenness and its flagrant disregard of Mrs Grundy's tender feelings" (THCH 270). A review in The Idler refers to, "a grossly unjust and exceedingly pointless and clumsy attack recently made upon Mr. Hardy by no other than Mrs Oliphant" (THCH 278). H. G. Wells, writing in The Saturday Review, speaks of how "[...] the reviewers [...] have changed with the greatest dexterity from a chorus praising 'outspoken purity' to a band of public informers against indecorum" (THCH 279).

Hardy, himself, had previously performed in such a theatre of censorship by championing the rights of novelists to depict sexual relations with greater frankness in "Candour in English Fiction", an article which appeared in The New Review along with others written by Walter Besant and Eliza Lynn Linton. Below I will show how Jude the Obscure inscribes a critique of both censorship and English prudery that is consonant with Hardy's earlier polemic in The New Review.

In "Candour in English Fiction", Hardy forcefully attacks the circulating libraries and the magazine's serial format for a "monopolising of literary space" which tends to exterminate the "growth of the novel which reflects and reveals life" (CIF 117). Hardy argues that household reading leads to a situation in which "the taste of the majority" is seldom tempered "by the ripe judgement which desires fidelity" (CIF 117). Hardy continues:

> What this practically amounts to is that the patrons of literature – no longer Peers with a taste – acting under the censorship of prudery, rigorously exclude

[25] Parkes xi.

> from the pages they regulate subjects that have been made, by general approval of the best judges, the bases of the finest imaginative compositions since literature rose to the dignity of art (CIF 117-8).

Hardy uses the example of what would happen to a Shakespeare play if "newly published as a novel": "One can only imagine the answer that William would get for his mad supposition of such fitness in any one of the gentlemen who so correctly conduct that branch of the periodical Press" (CIF 119).

Ralph Pite has argued that Hardy's difficulty in finding a publisher for Tess of the D'Urbervilles fuelled the wrath of "Candour in English Fiction".[26] Pite also argues that in rewriting Tess of the D'Urbervilles for volume publication, Hardy rewrote Angel Clare as a personification of English prudery:

> Hardy's harshest words in the novel are reserved for Angel Clare, however, and in that respect the book carries on the angry protest he made in "Candour in Fiction" [...] Angel, despite seeming 'enfranchised' – that is, liberated and progressive in his views – turns out to be as narrow-minded and moralistic as the worst of his contemporaries.[27]

Pite is correct to note the extent to which in Clare's moral rejection of Hardy's character Tess, he comes close to representing the same English prudery that rejected Hardy's novel Tess of the D'Urbervilles. However, while accepting the validity of Pite's comments, Hardy's greatest attack on English prudery, and thus on those who wished to censor or bowdlerise his novels, occurs most forcefully in Jude the Obscure.

Throughout Jude the Obscure, both Sue and Jude are pitted against the forces of a censorious society. The first and perhaps most striking example of such societal views is the Training School that Sue attends at Melchester, which bears all the hallmarks of the kind of English prudery that Hardy had attacked in "Candour in English Fiction". Similar to how the circulating libraries want writers to "whip and

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[26] Pite writes of Hardy's article: "In it, Hardy makes a sustained and impassioned attack on the magazine publishing system that had rejected Tess of the D'Urbervilles." Pite 307.
[27] Pite 319.

scourge" their characters "into doing something contrary to their natures, to produce the spurious effect of their being in harmony with social forms and ordinances" (CIF 118), the Training School imposes its rigid regime on its girls and reduces Jude's complex character in the novel to simplistic moral judgement: "This young man was discharged from his work at Christminster for drunkenness and blasphemy in public houses, and he has come here to live, entirely to be near her" (J 147). A contrast is created between a readerly sympathy for Jude's complex and conflictive emotions and a simplistic view of Christian morality in which to be unconventional is to be beyond the pale of society. The Training School can be read synecdochically as representative of the society that seeks to limit Jude's sexual desire and social aspirations within the confines of Christian marriage and class position. Jude appropriates such a misrepresentation of himself after the death of his children, but such an appropriation probes the disjunction between what he is labelled and what he feels: "I have seemed to myself lately [...] to belong to that vast band of men shunned by the virtuous – the men called seducers. It amazes me when I think of it! I have not been conscious of it, or of any wrongdoing towards you, whom I love more than myself" (J 362). As society condemns Jude for acknowledging his own intractable sexual feelings, it also censors the novel's author for writing about them. In fact, in a novel that is consistently if not quite unrelentingly bleak, one momentary sense of optimistic liberation comes when Sue dramatically escapes from the Training School. When she is free, she walks "through the largest river in the country" (J 149) to meet Jude. Her courage in refusing the injustice of the Training School equates with Hardy's in refusing to "belie his literary conscience" (CIF 118) by producing a novel that goes so much against the grain of Grundian morality. Hardy, in Jude the Obscure, seems prepared to "bring down the thunders of respectability on his head" (CIF 118) as opposed to the Matron of the Training School

who was horrified by Sue's escape, "not so much at the possible death of Sue, as at the possible half-inch column detailing the event in all the newspapers" (J 148).

In Hardy's critique of censorship, moreover, the originality of the artist is pitted against "the patrons of literature acting under the censorship of prudery," in similar ways that in his critique of society in Jude the Obscure, the crowd is pitted against the eponymous hero. In the same way that the writer is cudgelled into making his characters falsely harmonise with "social forms and ordinances" (CIF 118), so Jude suffers in the battle between "the commonplace majority" and "the exceptional few" (CIF 116). Marriage is the social form of sexual conformity, especially for women. As Jude states when meeting Sue shortly after her marriage to Phillotson: "Wifedom has not yet assimilated and digested you in its vast maw as an atom which has no further individuality" (J 197). If Sue escapes from the Melchester Training College and then later her first marriage, neither she nor Jude can escape from the ubiquitous influence of censorious society. In a sense, Sue and Jude and their children are, indeed, 'censored', forced to leave for Christminster as their "personal histories and past conduct" have been read by "ordinary opinion" and judged immoral. Quoting from Corinthians, Jude explains to his son why they must leave: "Because of a cloud that has gathered over us; though "we have wronged no man, corrupted no man, defrauded no man' " (J 324). Although the epithet of the novel's title can refer to Jude's failure to distinguish himself socially, it might also be read as an ironic signifier of his 'dark' refusal to conform to the commonplace values of Christminster figured to the young Jude as "The Heavenly Jerusalem". Contrasted to Jude's obscurity, Christminster can be seen "on a clear day" or indeed "in a blaze of flame" at night (J 15-6).

Jude the Obscure also demonstrates that the censorious society, which tends to shackle all fiction by convention (CIF 119), also destroys those that act

unconventionally. In Jude the Obscure, this can be seen in how society treats Sue and Jude, but even with a more conventional character like Phillotson who when acting out of humane principle confronts the iron restrictions of Victorian standards of behaviour. As Phillotson informs his friend Gillingham: " 'They have requested me to send in my resignation on account of my scandalous conduct in giving my tortured wife her liberty – or as they call it, condoning her adultery' " (J 259). Phillotson who has acted nobly in liberating his wife, has, in terms of society, acted immorally. This morality is essentially the morality of the same class that prohibit Jude's social aspirations. At the public meeting held to discuss Phillotson's future it is the "respectable inhabitants and well-to-do fellow natives of the town" who are against Phillotson "to a man" (J 260) whereas a "curious and interesting group of itinerants" support him. It is such respectable inhabitants who are the greatest proponents of English prudery and who police "the respectable magazine" and "select library". Phillotson will lose his job as a "teacher of youth" because the young must be protected (J 259) from him as they must also be protected from the "explicit novel" (CIF 119).

The final tragedy of the novel, moreover, is not ultimately the death of Sue and Jude's children, but that Sue cannot overcome her own conventionalism. As the novel traces Jude's journey away from youthful aspirations to conventional respectability to religious cynicism and rejection of societal conventions such as marriage, it also traces Sue's journey in the opposite direction, from being "quite Voltairean" (J 157) to her acceptance of a deadening religious conformity. Although the extent to which Sue is unconventional is frequently questioned by Jude who sees her as having "nothing unconventional at all" about her (J 143), by the end of the novel, Sue has turned into a frightening exemplar of Victorian conventionalism, a true Mrs Grundy in her obedience to conjugal duty and the thwarting by repression or suppression of natural sexual

instincts. When Jude argues with her that she has been fearless, both as "a thinker and a feeler", Sue replies: "Don't say that Jude! I wish my every fearless word and thought could be rooted out of my history. Self-renunciation – that's everything! I cannot humiliate myself too much. I should like to prick myself all over with pins and bleed out the badness in me" (J 364). Sue internalises the same Victorian morality that has castigated her for thinking and feeling fearlessly. Those around her, however, see how life-negating such a retreat into religious fanaticism is. Jude views Sue's return to Phillotson as a "fanatic prostitution" (J 381). Mrs Edlin criticises her religious rigidity: "Lord you be too strict. What do ye use such words for, and condemn to hell your dear little innocent children that's lost to 'ee!" (J 385). Even the morally conformist Gillingham wonders about the morality of the marriage of his friend Phillotson, and whether "[...] his own physical wishes would make Phillotson more orthodoxly cruel to her than he had erstwhile been informally and perversely kind" (J 387).

Thus Hardy extends his polemic against English prudery in "Candour in English Fiction" to his novel Jude the Obscure. Christian morality thwarts natural instinct and censors Hardy's desire to fictionally explore such instincts by writing about life as a physiological fact. As Hardy complained in "Candour in English Fiction", "English society [...] opposes a well-nigh insuperable bar" to the honest portrayal of sexual relationships (CIF 117).

Two Urban Misses: The *Bête Humaine* and the *Beau Ideal* in Jude the Obscure

In her introduction to Jude the Obscure, Patricia Ingham notes: "[...] Hardy was struggling towards, and sometimes momentarily achieved, beliefs subversive of the

whole established society [...] Contemporary society recognized a revolutionary when it saw one" (J xxii). Above I have outlined some of the areas in which Hardy attacked and fell foul of the conventional morality that even some of his defenders recognized he had transgressed.[28] However, if Hardy attacks Victorian censorship and the English social system that, in part, sustains it, he also colludes with repressive Victorian ideologies of both gender and class.

A recent study by Rosemary Jann has favourably compared Hardy's class constructions with the more conventional notions of class in the Victorian novel; the latter are seen as largely advancing bourgeois ideas and values. Recognising the shift in the Victorian novel away from "family, money and titles" towards "appropriate conduct as the justification for a character's claim to gentility", Jann argues that many of Hardy's "middling characters" (themselves frequently caught like Stephen Smith in A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873) or Michael Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886) – or some may argue even Hardy himself – between class identities) "were constructed as implicitly meriting their higher level of social distinction by virtue of their internalisation of middle class standards of decorum and behaviour."[29] Jann contests that it is only in the later novels of Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure that Hardy's confidence in such strategies breaks down and that "Tess and Jude's endorsement of middle-class mores contribute to their victimization rather than to their success."[30] Jann is correct to assert this in so far as Jude the Obscure certainly challenges the idea of both the possibility and desirability of bourgeois advancement as well as attacking many of the middle-class values of character and behaviour that were

[28] As Havelock Ellis astutely commented: "It seems, indeed, on a review of all the facts, that the surer a novel is of certain immortality, the surer it is also to be regarded at first as indecent, as subversive of public morality" (THCH 308).
[29] Rosemary Jann, "Hardy's Rustics and the Construction of Class," Victorian Literature and Culture 28 (2000): 411-425 at 413. Jann 411.
[30] Jann 411.

advanced by the Victorian novel. Jude's inability to control his sexuality in the manner in which a Victorian hero should be able to do leads Oliphant to criticise Jude for behaving like the lower animals. Jann claims:

> The novel tended to reward those who seemed least interested in advancing themselves, and to gratify those who demonstrated that they could police their own unruly desires and subdue the embarrassing physicality of their body, a physicality always implicitly at odds with the figuration of middle-class superiority.[31]

Jude clearly breaks with the typical hero of a Victorian novel by being unable to "police his unruly desires." However, Hardy's depiction of both a complex male and female sexuality as well as his critique of bourgeois matrimony which challenge the "figuration of middle class superiority" are still constructed on a binary that tempers the subversive potential of Jude the Obscure. Hardy's aesthetic frame is constructed upon the separation between elevated mind and animal instinct, the same distinction, in principle, between George Eliot's *beau ideal* and W.S. Lilly's *bête humaine.*

Hardy's novel asserts this idealist aesthetic dualism most clearly through the characterisation of Arabella and Sue Bridehead. Arabella remains a "substantial female animal" (J 36), who, like an animal, kills without compassion, as the slaughter of the pig demonstrates – "for the meat to be well bled the pig must die slowly" (J 63). Although Arabella's realistic practical nature allows her to show an understanding of human behaviour that the more ostensibly ethereal Sue lacks, Arabella's baseness is still juxtaposed to Jude's rather idealistic "tender heart". Arabella is still posited as a lower-class woman with little introspection or feeling beyond self-interest. Whereas Sue's interior life reflects intellectual depth and Jude keeps his thoughts private, thinking tenderly of his early love for Arabella and their first kiss, Arabella's life, like that of Nana's, is lived on the surface, a public life that seeks its own gains and cares

[31] Jann 413.

little for the privacy of others. Arabella "relates word for word some of his tenderest speeches" (J 46) making public what Jude privately stores. While Jude romanticises their relationship so her absence left, "a void [...] in his heart that nothing could fill" (J 46), Arabella plans to ensnare him in matrimony. From her very first appearance, Arabella clearly figures as the female animal that deflects Jude's "attention from dreams of the humaner letter" (J 36) through her sexual attraction: not only does she first attract Jude by throwing the most sexual part of the "lowest" animal at him as he recites the Greek, Latin and early Christian writers he has studied, but she is: "[...] a fine dark-eyed girl, not exactly handsome but capable of passing as such at a little distance, despite some coarseness of skin and fibre. She had a round and prominent bosom, full lips, perfect teeth" (J 36). Her prominent bosom, full lips and teeth emphasise her sexuality, the coarseness of her skin reflects, in Trotter's sense of the Victorian character, the coarseness of her person.[32] Arabella is "not exactly handsome" because she lacks those rather nebulous human attributes that Sue appears to possess. However, Sue is also described as neither handsome nor beautiful, because she plausibly lacks the more obvious physical appeal of Arabella. However, when Sue first looks at Jude: "She looked right into his face with liquid, untranslatable eyes, that combined, or seemed to him to combine, keenness with tenderness, and mystery with both [...] (J 90). Sue's emotional and intellectual appeal, where everything she does "seemed to have its source in feeling" (J 104) is juxtaposed with Arabella's animal coarseness. Arabella neither has untranslatable eyes, nor mystery nor feeling nor "niceness".

Jude ponders when he first sees Sue: "She was quite a long way removed from the rusticity that was his. How could one of his cross-grained, unfortunate, almost

[32] Trotter 201-2.

accursed stock, have contrived to reach this pitch of niceness? London had done it, he supposed" (J 90). Niceness here is highly significant if read as a class signifier. Although technically Arabella is lower middle class – her father is a pig farmer and later a butcher – and Sue represents skilled labour – her father being a valued craftsman described as "an ecclesiastical worker in metal " (J 31), it is Sue, on one level, who embodies Jude's middle-class aspirations. Not only does she have "niceness", she also lives in Christminster, the citadel of learning, and is well-educated herself, knowing "most of the Greek and Latin classics" (J 152); moreover, she is unconventional and geographically removed from Jude's own background.

If Jude's background represents rusticity – Jude still connects with the land and thinks when he is courting Arabella, of the "great age of the trackway, and of the drovers who had frequented it, probably before the Romans knew the country" (J 52) – Arabella is situated as belonging less specifically to the land but to a generalised mass culture, epitomised by her working as a barmaid, her emigration, metropolitan drift, and her father's occupational change from rural pig farmer to urban butcher. As such, Arabella, juxtaposed with Sue's "pitch of niceness" and Jude's rusticity, is situated as both ahistorically representative of a body politic determined by unreflexive self-interest and bodily desire, and, historically, as a member of an emerging urban class increasingly dislocated from the traditional life and values of the countryside: in short, the masses. Thus both characters are "urban misses", as Jude refers to Sue (J 144), but Sue's city life reflects her advanced culture and metropolitan sophistication whereas Arabella's urban experience bespeaks of rural dislocation and the potential threat of mass society.

However, the ethereal Sue, as Arabella's other, must somehow be explained as part of Jude's family but, at the same time, as distinct from both Jude and Arabella.

"London had done it" attempts to do this, by not only juxtaposing city and country but also educated refinement with both Jude's rusticity and Arabella's lower-class self-interest. Sue's London is clearly not that of Arabella in the sense that London did not "do it" for Arabella. Moreover, Sue's not talking "quite like a girl [...] who has had not advantages" (J 152) is further explained by her general lack of fear of men and her "friendly intimacy with an undergraduate at Christminster" (J 153). In this way, through metropolitan relocation, and student association, the narrative accounts for Sue's lack of class affiliation, and thus explains her embodiment of the *beau ideal* as opposed to Arabella, the *bête humaine*. Arabella exemplifies both the limitations of Jude's cultural environment and the snare of sexual desire. The aesthetic of the novel insists on maintaining a binary between intellectual disinterest figured ultimately as classless in the character of Sue and lower class 'interest' figured as unreflexive, sexual and selfish through Arabella. Thus, at the same time that the novel criticises those societal institutions like marriage which can restrict natural sexual desires, it reinscribes through the portrayal of Arabella the very correlation between body and body politic, presenting a base sexuality aligned to the growing urban masses, which in late nineteenth-century Britain, was perceived to threaten both social stability and national health through either revolution or cultural adulteration. As Patrick Brantlinger notes:

> The rise of the labour parties, starting with the German Social Democratic Party in the 1870's, sharpened the Marxist identification of the masses with the industrial proletariat. But this definition was blurred by another – the masses as the anonymous, apparently classless 'crowd', the indiscriminate urban conglomeration. The masses in the first sense threatened upper-class hegemony through revolution. The masses in the second, perhaps equally frightening sense, threatened class distinctions through entropy and apathy, overwhelming social boundaries by sheer numbers and blunting the weapons of socialism in the process. [33]

[33] Patrick Brantlinger, "Mass Media and Culture in *Fin de Siècle* Europe," *Fin de siècle* and Its Legacy, eds. Mikuláš Teich, and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990): 98-114.

It was precisely this class which endangered society as, being susceptible to the contamination of pernicious literature, they were more likely to be agents of contamination themselves. A letter from Lord Mount-Temple written in support of the indefatigable campaigner against Zola, Samuel Smith, and published in The Times makes a clear connection between mass education and the gratification of "fleshly impulses":

> Compulsory education has developed a capability for reading among classes who formerly had little interest in books, and the cheapness of sensational publications makes easy the gratification of this taste [...]. This desire for reading and the curiosity about forbidden gratifications have suggested to many vile persons an easy way of earning money by foul sensational publications, which stimulate the animal passions, and enable fleshly impulses to domineer over conscience and duty.[34]

This is to say that, in one sense, for people like Mount-Temple, "penny dreadfuls" were dreadful precisely because they were a penny.

Pernicious Arabella contaminates the aspiring Jude, stimulates his animal passions and enables his fleshly impulses to dominate his conscience. As Jude tries and fails to assault the imposing university walls to gain access to Christminster learning and thus break down those class barriers which prevent working-class men like him from entering, Hardy reconstructs an elitist aesthetic foundation grounded in a juxtaposition of disembodied intellectual disinterest and an unreflexive, self-interested and sexualised mass culture on which, in part, the ideology of the university is built.[35]

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[34] Lord Mount-Temple, letter, Times 28 Aug, 1888: 11.

[35] As Mathew Potolsky comments in regards to aesthetic ideology which underpinned the university education that Jude sought: "The theory of aesthetic education asserts that the beauty of art and literature can be a means of moral improvement and of bringing about – in the words of Matthew Arnold, its most consistent Victorian advocate – the harmonious perfection of humanity." Potolsky continues, "Jude's story belies this ideal, suggesting that human perfection remains a privilege of the wealthy" "Hardy, Shaftesbury, and Aesthetic Education," Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 46 (2006): 863-878, at 865. As Potolsky points out, the view of aesthetic education can be traced back to Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury. Alison Pease, echoing Hardy's critique of such an education being a privilege of the wealthy, claims that such eighteenth-century philosophies of taste that "relied on disinterest constituted a social hierarchy between those who had taste and manifested it through an elective distance, and those who lacked taste and manifested it through a sensually and economically interested mode of consumption." Pease 24. Thus Hardy's novel both critiques the philosophy of

While Hardy, like Jude, may perceive that the pursuit of education is founded on "the manual toilers in the shabby purlieu" (J 119), his novel cannot escape the elitist framework of aesthetic idealism.

It should be clear then from the analysis above, and even taking into consideration the aesthetic frame of the novel, that Hardy was perceived by his detractors to challenge prevailing expectations of the novel as both morally elevating and sexually reticent. Neither is the offence solely that he writes about sexual matters which are deemed to be beyond the pale of reticence, but that he writes outside and against the moral framework in which traditional discourses of sexuality, based on what Foucault calls "sin and salvation", locate sexual behaviour. Thus the transgressive nature of Jude the Obscure resides not in graphic depiction but in producing representations of female sexuality that both disrupt and complicate Victorian morality. Hardy's self-sacrificing and restrained Sue is, in many respects, more dangerous and damaging than carnal Arabella. Moreover, sexual desire is equated with natural law and conventional Christian morality regarding sex as a perverse and impractical societal imposition. Thus Hardy's novels can be aligned specifically to those emerging scientific discourses of sexuality which invest sexuality with the power of, in Foucault's words, telling us our truth, and going beyond moral discourses that merely judge right and wrong actions

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aesthetic education at the same time as reinforcing its basic class polarities in the characters of Arabella and Sue.

Chapter Five: Defying Mrs Grundy: The Hill-Top Novels of Grant Allen[1]

Hardy's novel was pejoratively referred to as a New Woman novel, and although Hardy dismissed the claim, the novel's concern with censorship, sexuality and the position of women in society resonates with other New Woman fiction.[2] Hardy's novel is, in fact, illustrative of the complex relationship that existed between New Woman fiction and British realism. While realist writers increasingly explored social issues through female subjectivity as can be witnessed in the novels of Moore and Hardy, New Woman writers were clearly influenced by the franker treatment of sexuality in realist novels. Eldridge Miller claims of the narratives of New Woman writers that: "[...] their sexual frankness, their almost scientific scrutiny of psychological responses and physical sensations, and their efforts to confront the hidden and sometimes sordid aspects of life were all influenced by the new realism [...]."[3] Rita S. Kranidis's argument that, "Realists simply utilised and re-presented a problematised female subjectivity already constructed by the feminists, both in their novels and through their social activism," ignores the mutually generative aspect of the complex relationship between realists and New Woman writers.[4] This complex interaction between realist and New Woman writing can be seen in a writer such as George Gissing who was influenced by both French Naturalism and New Woman writing. Emma Liggins locates Gissing's novels "in the naturalist tradition" but also explores "his

[1] The term hill-top is taken from Allen's own aspiration to write novels designed to represent "the world as it appears to me, not as editors and formalists would like me to represent it." The British Barbarians (1895, London: Dodo, 2002) i. Henceforth referred to in the text as BB.

[2] Most notably R. Y. Tyrrell in the Fortnightly Review: "If we consider broadly and without prejudice the tone and scope of the book, we cannot but class it with the fiction of Sex and New Woman, so rife of late" (THCH 293). Needless to say, many contemporary critics have also examined Hardy in terms of New Woman writing. Jil Larson argues "that in its treatment of emotions and sexual relationships, Hardy's Jude the Obscure shares both the feminist concerns of the New Woman writing and its ethically complex treatment of emotion, reason, and gender." Larson 50. John Kucich compares Hardy to Sarah Grand arguing that their fiction, "in the 1890s shares the terrain of the New Woman and particularly the cultural debate over candour in relation to female sexuality." John Kucich, The Power of Lies: Transgression in Victorian Fiction (New York: Cornell UP, 1994) 242.

[3] Eldridge Miller 18.

contribution to the developing genre of New Woman fiction."[5] Gissing, as Liggins notes, received praise from New Woman writers like Ménie Muriel Dowie and Ella Hepworth Dixon.[6] George Egerton, moreover, claimed that Thomas Hardy was her favourite author, and Hardy was a keen admirer of George Egerton's short stories as well as a friend of Mona Caird, while Sarah Grand's novels have been considered as belonging "alongside that of British followers of the French school of Naturalism.[7] Lyn Pykett sees a different kind of overlap between realist writing and New Woman writing. In her opinion, both "reveal the same struggle to either fix the meaning of woman or to expand the semantic field of the word woman, as Zola had enlarged the field of the novel."[8] This struggle was clearly gendered. Many male writers, including Grant Allen, associated with New Woman writing, gendered censorship as female, as George Moore, among others, had done. Eldridge Miller claims that "the call for candour and masculinity in fiction [...] backfired into an explosion of creative activity which derived its momentum from women and feminism."[9] George Egerton's fiction is a prime example of such "an explosion of creative activity". Interestingly, and contrary to male realist novelists, Egerton perceives censorship to be a construction of male ideology. Understanding the different ways in which censorship and literature could be gendered is key to appreciating the significance of the New Woman attack on traditional morality and will be discussed in the following chapters which examine two very heterogeneous strands of New Woman writing: the 'hill-top' fiction of Grant Allen and the short stories of George Egerton.

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[4] Rita S. Kanidis, Subversive Discourse: The Cultural Production of Late Victorian Feminist Novels (New York: St Martin, 1995) xvi.
[5] Emma Liggins, George Gissing, the Working Woman, and Urban Culture (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) xix.
[6] Liggins, Gissing xxiii.
[7] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 160. Ingham, Authors 130. Richardson, Love and Eugenics 193. Richardson, Love and Eugenics 126.
[8] Pykett, "Representing the Real" 170.
[9] Eldridge Miller 14.

The fact that writers as diverse as Thomas Hardy, Grant Allen and George Egerton could be considered to have authored New Woman novels rather challenges the utility of employing the New Woman term either as cultural phenomenon or as literary genre.[10] For example, Grant Allen's hill-top novels, ostensibly polemics against conventional morals and social mores, could not appear to be further removed from Egerton's short stories, which psychologically explore, in Egerton's own words, the "*terra incognita*" of the female self.[11] Moreover, grouping writers together under the New Woman label was very much a strategy of opponents of feminism.[12] Subtle distinctions regarding the fictional practice and the feminist positions of writers such as Sarah Grand, Ménie Muriel Dowie, Mona Caird and George Egerton were often blurred by a general sense of outrage directed against what was perceived to be transgressive New Woman ideas.[13] Reviewers would often concentrate on attacking depictions of immodest women, critiques of Christian marriage and unconventional viewpoints regarding female sexuality at the expense of a consideration of the nuances of craft or even of the promise of literary talent. The reception of George Egerton's collection of skilfully crafted stories, Keynotes (1894) is typical. The Athenaeum review, largely ignoring Egerton's literary talent, attacks Egerton for her "strange desire to make Mrs. Grundy's flesh creep." She has committed the error of treating subjects "which it was the custom until recently, to let alone." She is the type of New Woman writer who

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[10] In contrast to the array of women who agitated for their rights, Talia Schaffer refers to the media concept of the New Woman as, "this grotesque buffoon, whether bicycling in bloomers, ogling men, or thrusting her fist in the assembled faces of Parliament was a media construct [...]." Schaffer 39.

[11] Pykett, The 'Improper' Feminine 153.

[12] According to Ardis it was the anti-New Woman Ouida who first used the term in an essay published in the March 1894 issue of North American Review. Ardis 10. Ouida writes: "The Workingman and The Woman, the New Woman, be it remembered meet us at every page of literature written in the English tongue; and each is convinced that on its own especial W hangs the future of the world." Ouida, "The New Woman," North American Review 158 (26 May 1894): 610-619, at 610.

[13] As Richardson and Willis note: "The New Woman fictionalised by writers such as Sarah Grand was created as a means of advancing sexual and social change. The 'journalistic myth', on the other hand, simplified and satirized the New Woman's real concerns over social and moral issues." Richardson and Chris Willis, introduction, The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: *Fin-de-Siècle* Feminisms (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 1-38, at 24.

leaves, "her good manners behind; she listens at keyholes, she treads on the reader's corns, she asserts her claim to the full enjoyment of the literary franchise, in an altogether too aggressive and noisy fashion.[14] By parodying new women as naturally aberrant, as hysterical feminists, sexless bluestockings or bicycling Amazonians, the conservative press could, if not bypass, then often minimise, trivialise or ignore the political and social issues raised by New Woman fiction. Hugh Stutfield's attack on the "new Ibsenite neuropathic school" of New Woman writing is symptomatic of this pathologisation of the New Woman.[15] What was specifically true of New Women writers was generally true of first-wave feminists. In reference to cultural responses to suffragettes, Elaine Showalter claims: "It was an easier explanation to see women's desire for emancipation as a form of unbalance in the reproductive system and mind than to take it seriously."[16] Certainly by 1895, as Talia Schaffer points out, "the label, 'New Woman' – like 'politically correct' a century later – had become a largely skewed, reductive media concept which did not represent the real lives and work of those people it purported to describe."[17]

However inaccurate or politically loaded the New Woman label could be, there are clear similarities in how New Woman writers responded to censorship and the shrill critical response their work often received. There are, moreover, similarities between how New Woman writers and realist writers responded to censorship. Such similarities could plausibly be explained by the fact that both groups were, as Eldridge Miller notes, "struggling with the same kinds of tensions between the feminist content of their fiction

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[14] Rev. of Keynotes, by George Egerton, Athenaeum (February 3, 1894): 146.
[15] Hugh Stutfield 835.
[16] Elaine Showalter, Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle (London: Virago, 1992) 24.
[17] Talia Schaffer, " 'Nothing but Foolscap and Ink': Inventing the New Woman," The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: *Fin-de-Siècle* Feminisms, eds. Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 39-53, at 49.

and traditional narrative forms."[18] Although such tensions might be resolved in different ways, both realist and New Woman writers, by treating controversial issues in their fiction that directly concerned with female sexuality, exposed themselves to censorious attitudes. Even writers as diverse as Allen and Egerton share similar approaches in challenging censorship and the sexual ideologies that reinforce it. Both Allen and Egerton's assaults on censorship can be contextualised by emerging scientific discourses of sexuality, and, as such, their texts explicitly challenge residual discourses of Christian morality. Moreover, as novels examined in previous chapters, the fiction of Allen and Egerton problematises the binary of sexual innocence and guilt on which female identity was frequently constructed. Both writers also disavow, if in significantly different ways, the notion of Victorian reticence; and, partly as a consequence, both, to differing degrees, inscribe censorship issues into their texts. Finally, Allen and Egerton's fictions complicate the traditional polarity of viewing representations of sex in fiction as simply either progressively liberating or regressively repressive.

This chapter concentrates on Grant Allen's hill-top fiction.[19] In it, I demonstrate the nature of Allen's challenge to residual discourses of morality. I will locate Allen in the emerging tradition of realist writers such as Moore and Hardy who attack Victorian censorship through their fiction. Allen, however, challenges not only advocates of censorship such as Christian moralists and social purity reformers but also the feminists of which he himself was erroneously thought to be in favour.

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[18] Eldridge Miller 21.

[19] The choice of Grant Allen as a representative of New Woman writing might be found objectionable on the grounds that Allen's views are, and were considered, anti-feminist. However, possibly with the exception of Jude the Obscure, Allen's novel created the greatest controversy regarding New Woman fiction. It is both the scandal that the novel caused, as well as the novel's attack on censorship that makes it a suitable choice. Moreover, the inclusion of a male New Woman writer shows the extent to which men appropriated feminist issues, if, as one might suspect with Allen, the fashionable New Woman tag also helped sell books.

The Offence of The Woman Who Did

Although only banned in Ireland, The Woman Who Did provoked a furore in Britain, inciting harsh censure, several parodies, as well as at least one novel-length response.[20] As a consequence, and perhaps predictably for such a literary *succès de scandale,* the novel made its author a relatively wealthy man.[21] The novel, published in the same year as Hardy's Jude the Obscure, and the same month as Ménie Muriel Dowie's Gallia, was famously cited, along with Hardy and Dowie's novels, in Oliphant's "The Anti-Marriage League." Oliphant declared that the "twenty editions of Mr Allen are not a joke to be laughed at [...]" and that the example of Herminia Barton led to a disastrous "effect on the general mind and conversation [...]. It puts life out of focus altogether, and distorts hopelessly its magnitudes and its littleness" (AML 145). Punch parodied the nature of Herminia's Christian suffering and her positioning as proto-martyr for a potentially utopian future. As Peruguino Allan, an apparent conflation between author and male protagonist states: "*We* may not live to see this Millennium, but future Fabians may. What we want is a proto-martyr in the cause."[22]

The reception for such a flawed, contradictory novel can be explained by a variety of other factors, not least the moral panic caused by the trial that year of Oscar Wilde and the general sense of literary crisis outlined in the previous chapter. Peter

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[20] Clodd writes: 'But the monopolists of the book stalls in Ireland refused to sell the serial, declining, as they informed Mr. Stead, 'to be made the vehicle for the distribution of attacks upon the most fundamental institution of the Christian State.' " Edward Clodd, Grant Allen: A Memoir (London: Grant Richards, 1900) 163. Novel-length responses came from Lucas Cleeve's, The Woman Who Wouldn't (1895) and Victoria Cross's published The Woman Who Didn't (1895) but the latter evidences less a novelistic response to Allen than the skillful opportunistic marketing of John Lane. The Woman Who Did was also wittily parodied in Punch. Punch 108 (1895) 153.

[21] As Peter Morton writes: "In the first fortnight after publication copies flew out of the bookstores at the rate of 500 a day, and it was reprinted at least twenty times in its first year." Peter Morton, "Grant Allen: A Centenary Reassessment," English Literature in Transition 1880-1920 4 (2001): 404-440, at 405. The legalising of D. H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928) would have a similar impact on the population sixty-five years later.

[22] Punch 153.

Morton has also argued that similarities between the novel and the Edith Lanchester court case helped "secure even more publicity" for the novel.[23] Edith Lanchester, in Lucy Bland's words, "was a self-declared 'new woman' " who refused to marry her lover and was, as a consequence, incarcerated in a lunatic asylum by her family.[24] Grant Allen's own skilful self-publicity as well as John Lane's careful marketing of the Keynote series and William Stead's skilful advertising were also significant contributory factors.[25] Morton writes, "Thanks to Lane's marketing and Stead's advertising, not to mention his own wonderfully salacious title which instantly became a catchphrase used for years afterwards with a knowing smirk, it made him at least £1,000 at once."[26] Most significantly, Allen's novel did not only upset conservatives, but also liberals. As Peter Morton notes, the severest attacks on the book "came from the more liberal, or more consciously feminist wing, who felt that Allen stood revealed as a turncoat or closet reactionary."[27] The fact that Allen's novel provoked censure from both left and right goes a considerable way to accounting for the level of moral censure it received. In fact, to understand why Allen's novel caused such offence, much greater emphasis should be placed on The Woman Who Did as a virulent attack on *fin-de-siècle* feminism, social purity reform and Christian moral values rather than read, as it has often been, as a misguided and ultimately unconvincing polemic for free union or, indeed, women's rights. This is to say that the novel's offence may be better understood if read in the light of what The Woman Who Did is against rather than what

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[23] Morton, The Busiest Man 149.
[24] Bland, Banishing the Beast 159.
[25] Lane developed the Keynote series, the title coming from George Egerton's first collection of stories. Lane had a reputation for publishing racy but serious literary works. He launched the infamous Yellow Book, and still had battles with censorship over Hermann Sudermann's The Song of Songs (1909) fifteen years later. As can be witnessed from the impact of his "Maiden Tribute of Babylon" articles, Stead was an incredibly effective publicist. Morton argues that Stead was at the height of his influence in 1895. He made The Woman Who Did "Book of the Month" in his Review of Reviews. Morton, The Busiest Man 149.
[26] Morton, The Busiest Man 149.
[27] Morton, The Busiest Man 156.

it is supposedly for. Allen's novel sets itself in opposition to both progressive feminism and reactionary Christianity and the various unsteady alliances between the two as can be witnessed in such complex formations as social purity feminism and eugenic Christianity.

Allen's Offence to Advanced Women

In a review of The Woman Who Did, Millicent Fawcett points to some of the specifics of the novel's transgression:

> [...] he really believes that chastity is "impossibly wicked, and cruel," and so on; he really loathes his own country, cursed as he says it is with the "leprous taint of respectability," and regards patriotism as one of the "lowest of vices," as vicious even as fidelity to marriage vows. England is to him "the shabbiest, sordidest, worst organized of nations.[28]

There seems little in Fawcett's complaint against Allen with which traditionalists such as Margaret Oliphant would not agree. Fawcett's comments demonstrate the complexity of *fin de siècle* feminist politics, showing Fawcett's broad affiliations to ideologies of nationalism, her reverence for moral respectability as well as her endorsement of marriage. Fawcett, not unlike Allen, both challenges aspects of patriarchal ideologies but also shows compliance with them.[29] In her critique, the novel, like its hill-top counterpart The British Barbarians, is more explicitly anti-British than many other censured novels of the time such as Mona Caird's Daughters of Danaus or even Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure. Allen, a Canadian, roundly denounces patriotism as vicious and England as sordid at a time of both increasing imperial pride and anxiety. As with many naturalist novels, which The Woman Who

[28] Fawcett 626.
[29] For a discussion on the complex politics of New Woman writers, see Richardson, Love and Eugenics.

Did clearly is not, the novel asserts a morality loosened from the prevailing religious beliefs and traditional morality to which Fawcett to a large extent accepts. Allen thus intervenes in the same debate as Zola, Hardy and Moore. The Woman Who Did, if rather more polemically, champions the scientific truth of natural sexual relations in opposition to what is portrayed as the dysfunctional social values of sexuality based on an outmoded and atavistic belief system.

Allen's repudiation of chastity seems to cause Fawcett particular offence. Chastity utilised as a female strategy to escape from the shackles of marriage was championed by feminists such as Henrietta Muller, the founder of the Woman's Penny Paper, and Lina Eckenstein, a member, like Muller, of the "Men and Women's Club."[30] Allen, moreover, ignores feminist concerns with marriage reform in favour of the abandonment of marriage itself, angering both traditionalists like Oliphant who viewed the novel as "a shame to society, and a most dangerous precedent" (AML 145) and a New Woman such as Sarah Grand who argued that the novel demonstrated, "that women have nothing to gain and everything to lose by renouncing the protection which legal marriage gives."[31] Millicent Fawcett found the idea that free unions could liberate women more successfully than reformed marriage repellent. As she comments: "People who ... think marriages should be dissolvable at will ... are in effect anarchists ... none of the leaders of the Women's Movement in England have ever countenanced for a moment anarchic methods or anarchic aims."[32] The kind of free union that Herminia Barton proposes to Alan Merrick would give men greater sexual licence and consequently make the position of women more vulnerable and lead to "the

[30] Muller, a feminist debater in the Men and Women's Club and member of the NVA, stated: "It stands to reason because the physical in us is definite, limited, mechanical; the mental and spiritual alone is infinite in power and unlimited in its range." Bland, Banishing the Beast 42. Lina Eckenstein also defended celibacy. Walkowitz writes: "[...] Lina Eckenstein used her training in historical research gained from the club to write her historical defence of celibacy and women's community, Woman under Monasticism." Walkowitz 165.

immeasurable degradation of women."[33] As Showalter comments: "But the socialist ideal of the free sexual union assumed that men and women had equal stakes in the relationship, whereas the unaddressed problem of the legitimacy and care of children put women at much greater risk of abandonment."[34] Paradoxically, Allen shows the exceptionally difficult circumstances single women were placed in trying to raise children in his portrayal of Herminia Barton's struggle to raise her daughter.

Recent feminist critics have wryly noted the extremely limited and contradictory nature of Allen's supposed feminism. Allen's text, as Ann Ardis notes, clearly punishes Herminia Barton for her rebellion: "Her New Womanly gesture of defiance is just that—a gesture, an action effectively countered by her death and by her daughter's aggressive conservatism."[35] Unsurprisingly, given the huge influence the ideas of Herbert Spencer had over him, Allen's 'feminism' remains predicated on reading gendered constructions as, if not essentialist differences, then certainly evolved ones. While having greater choice over sexual partners than religious, social or economic circumstance normally allows, and, as The British Barbarians asserts, greater choice to leave partners if desired, women, in Allen's hill-top fiction, have no control over, and to a large extent are reducible to,0 their capacity to reproduce. Herminia Barton clearly remains trapped by biological duty. The novel ultimately fails in William Greenslade and Terence Rodgers's opinion because:

> like other leading *fin-de-siècle* progressives and socialists, Sidney and Beatrice Webb being prime examples, Allen ultimately found it impossible to reconcile an intellectual commitment to the widening of women's rights of citizenship and social autonomy with scientific and personal convictions about the nature of femininity, the reproductive family, and 'the holiness of motherhood'.[36]

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[31] Showalter, Anarchy 52.
[32] Bland, Banishing the Beast 134.
[33] Barbara Caine, Victorian Feminists (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992) 234.
[34] Showalter, Anarchy 50.
[35] Ardis 51.
[36] William Greenslade and Terence Rodgers, "Resituating Grant Allen," Grant Allen: Literature and Cultural Politics at the *Fin de Siècle* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005): 1-22, at 13.

Herminia's life is indeed, as Stead claimed, a deterrent for anyone who would follow her. In fact the novel can be read, as it frequently was in the 1890s, as being anti-feminist. It scorns advanced women "who talk as though motherhood were a disgrace and a burden, instead of being, as it is, the full realisation of woman's faculties, the natural outlet for woman's wealth of emotion."[37] In Allen's worldview, women are ultimately inferior:

> The man must needs retain for many years to come the personal hegemony he has usurped over the woman; and the woman who once accepts him as lover or as husband must give way in the end, even in matters of principle, to his virile self-assertion. She would be less a woman, and he less a man, were any other result possible (WWD 83).

The perception of women given in Allen's novel and elsewhere surely undermines any notion of taking Allen seriously as a feminist. The precepts outlined in "Plain Words on the Woman Question", which appeared in the Fortnightly Review in October 1889, concern a woman's duty to bear children, a duty which overrides all others. Speaking of women's rights, Allen boldly states: "They are pursuing a chimera and neglecting to perceive the true aim of their sex. They are setting up a false and unattainable ideal, while they omit to realise the true and obtainable one which alone is open to them."[38] Even in terms of Grant Allen's limited view of what a brave feminist should be, the novel according to Peter Morton fails:

> His heroine barely follows the precepts of his essays at all: his Woman Who Did is less notable for what she did than what she did *not* do. Heroines who run off abroad with their lovers and unmarried heroines who bear bastards out of the public eye were of course the common stuff of fiction throughout Allen's career, and long before.[39]

Morton's comments figure Herminia Barton as a failed exemplar of Allen's precepts. If Herminia Barton is perceived in this way, she clearly falls short of representing Allen's

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[37] Grant Allen, The Woman Who Did (London: John Lane, 1895) 146. Henceforth abbreviated to WWD in the text.
[38] Grant Allen, "Plain Words on The Woman's Question," The Fortnightly Review 52 (1889): 448-58.

views. She lives under a regime of social purity and Christian morality that condemns her to social marginality and ultimately, through the agency of her daughter, to death. The novel offers no comforting portrayal of the victory, either present or future, of the new woman, even one imagined from Allen's perspective. A Darwinist conception of nature over social and specifically religious convention does not triumph. On the contrary, The Woman Who Did presents the consequences of what occurs should women be brave enough to challenge the outworn moral conventions, as Allen perceives them, of late-Victorian society.

The social purity narrative of The Woman Who Did

Greenslade remains convinced that Allen's hill top novels, The Woman Who Did and The British Barbarians, were conceived as morally distinct from Allen's usual commercial fiction: "He had faced down his anxiety about his lack of Jamesian credentials by constructing for very public consumption, a purity narrative in which the bulk of his fiction, the potboilers, were cast as soiled, imperfect products."[40] However, Allen's novel can be read as a purity narrative in a significantly different manner: Allen appropriates the tropes of a Christian morality and its contemporary religious rhetoric of purity precisely to oppose what he sees as a hypocritical and repressive Christian morality. In fact, it might be more justified to say that The Woman Who Did was less, as Allen stated, the novel in which he had put his religion, as the novel in which he had put his irreligion in the sense that The Woman Who Did is a concerted attack on the moral values and beliefs of contemporary Christianity.

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[39] Morton, "Centenary Reassessment" 434.
[40] Greenslade and Rodgers 5.

Morton argues that the moral indignation that is "The Woman Who Did's driving force comes from one source only: the issue of prostitution, considered in its widest aspect."[41] Morton conjectures that this moral indignation stems from Allen's contempt for the prudent marriage. The prudent middle-class marriage was only made possible, given established ideas about the intractability of male sexual desire, by working-class prostitution. The basic flaw in the novel, according to Morton, is that although "its moving force is moral outrage [...] the reason for it is never properly articulated because Allen lacked the ability to find an adequate objective correlative."[42] Morton is correct to identify Allen's moral outrage at prudent marriage and the prostitution which it causes as a motivating force for The Woman Who Did, although Allen's attack is not limited to prudent marriage, but embodies a much broader critique of Christian moral values.

The nature of the novel's assault on prudent marriage is, however, consistent with Allen's overall attack on Christianity. The novel deploys a strategy of moral inversion, crediting vice to conventional Christian practice and virtue to those that oppose it.

> What is commonly called prudence in such concerns is only another name for vice and cruelty. The purest and best of men necessarily mate themselves before they are twenty. As a rule, it is the selfish, the mean, the calculating, who wait, as they say, "till they can afford to marry." That vile phrase scarcely veils hidden depths of depravity. A man who is really a man, and who has a genius for loving, must love from the very first, and must feel himself surrounded by those who love him (WWD 25-26).

Such diction is not distinct from the language of social purity reformers: "vice and cruelty" "vile phrases", "depths of depravity"; however, now it is the conventionally prudent who are selfish, mean and calculating. Prudence itself is defined as "another name for vice and cruelty". "Till they can afford to marry" is a vile phrase hiding the

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[41] Morton, The Busiest Man 164.
[42] Morton, The Busiest Man 170.

depths of depravity, while the purest of men mate, noticeably not marry, when they are young. A man who is a real man loves from the very first. Allen utilises a rhetoric of disgust here but directs it against conventional morality. In The Odd Women (1893), George Gissing also draws attention to the convention of prudent marriage, and, to a certain extent, satirises the patience of the Micklewaites, but Gissing remains sympathetic to the couple and their seventeen-year wait until Thomas Micklewaite is sufficiently wealthy to support a wife, whereas Allen merely moralises the "cowardice" of the prudent.[43] This illustrates Allen's appropriation of a distinctly moral rhetoric, but it also points to the novel's limitation in comparison to Gissing's more realistic consideration of both moral convention and financial restriction.

Allen also attacks the conventional morality of the prudent marriage by applying the logic of social Darwinism. The impetus to marry young is biological. Allen states in "Plain Words on the Women Question": "For note, by the way, that these women must also for the most part marry young; as Mr Galton has shown you can quietly and effectively wipe out a race by merely making its women all marry at twenty-eight."[44] The reason to marry young is not only to avoid the social misery of prostitution but also to encourage young and healthy procreation. As masturbation and celibacy can harm and debilitate young men and by implication the racial stock, then the only way to avoid the pitfalls of prostitution is to encourage young marriage. There is an alignment in Allen's novel between reason, morality and nature in opposition to Christianity, which Allen attacks as being neither rational, nor moral, nor natural. In reference to Iota's Yellow Aster (1894) and Allen's The Woman Who Did, Ann Ardis states: "Their references to sexual instinct simply increase the traditional polarisation of mind and

[43] George Gissing, The Odd Women (1893, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000): 104-105. Gissing's marriage to Nell Harrison, a prostitute, would have also enabled him to see a clear connection between working-class prostitution and the middle-class prudent marriage.
[44] Allen, "Plain Words" 451.

body (reason and passion) even as they establish body (sexuality) as the determinant of mind (subjectivity)." [45] However, at one level, in The Woman Who Did, a natural sexual instinct is opposed along with reason and morality to the failed and hypocritical morality of Christian marriage. Allen utilises both reason and instinct to battle against social and moral convention. Reason is aligned to nature and nature decrees that women have babies. In fact, both mind and body, under the impetus of Darwinian sexual selection, are placed in the service of nature against social convention based on wrong thinking. Allen is ultimately arguing for the health of the race over the selfish interests of certain sections of society including the Church, purity reformers, celibate feminists, as well as the middle-class convention of the prudent marriage.

Besides prudent marriage, Allen vents his anger at broader aspects of Christian morality such as its denial of scientific logic and its censorial practices. A shift in narrative perspective in reading Allen's novel in terms of what it attacks rather than what it proclaims does not, of course, make Herminia's actions less inconsistent, but it does show that such inconsistencies are partly caused by the emphasis the narrative places on attacking Christian values rather than on showing the exemplary nature of Herminia Barton. Allen challenges such hypocrisy by adopting not only the tropes of Christian purity but also the plot of evangelical martyrdom. Herminia Barton is, to a certain extent, an ironic Christ figure, *à la* Dostoevsky's Christ in "The Grand Inquisitor" in The Brothers Karamazov (1880), doomed to suffer at the hands of conventional Christian morality.[46] This appropriation of a specifically religious diction is also evident in the following quotation which figures Herminia as, if not quite a Christ-figure, then someone who will suffer in Christ-like fashion for her convictions.

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[45] Ardis 109.

[46] Feodor Dostoevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor," The Brothers Karamazov, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (1880, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990): 246-264.

> For whoever sees the truth, whoever strives earnestly with all his soul to be good, must be raised many planes above the common mass of men around him; he must be a moral pioneer, and the moral pioneer is always a martyr. People won't allow others to be wiser and better than themselves unpunished. They can forgive anything, except moral superiority. We have each to choose between acquiescence in the wrong, with a life of ease, and struggle for the right, crowned at last by inevitable failure. To succeed is to fail, and failure is the only success worth aiming at. Every great and good life can but end in a Calvary (WWD 43).

Herminia, like Christ, is a moral pioneer and a martyr who is punished for being better than society. She is, like Christ, morally superior, choosing the stony path of moral conviction over the easy life of acquiescence wherein social success is ultimately moral failure and moral rectitude leads inevitably to Calvary. Moreover, as with Christ, her suffering is redemptive in the sense that it is an act taken in the knowledge of responsibility, in her case for her sex. As she rejects Alan's marriage proposal she knows that:

> I haven't only myself to think of. I have to think of right and wrong; I have to think of the world; I have to think of the cause which almost wholly hangs upon me. Not for nothing are these impulses implanted in my breast. They are the voice of the soul of all women within me (WWD 61).

The act she commits is for the benefit of womankind. Later she describes her free union with Alan Merrick as the "day of salvation" wherein she must act so as not to sin against her ideas of decorum. Herminia Barton is the sacrificial lamb of eugenic feminism. She makes Alan Merrick, "understand and sympathise with the motives which led her stoutly on to her final martyrdom, which made her submit without a murmur of discontent to her great renunciation" (WWD 40). In rejecting Merrick's proposal of marriage, Herminia declaims:

> My conscience won't let me. I know what marriage is, from what vile slavery it has sprung; on what unseen horrors for my sister women it is reared and buttressed; by what unholy sacrifices it is sustained, and made possible. I know it has a history, I know its past, I know its present, and I can't embrace it; I can't be untrue to my most sacred beliefs (WWD 40).

Here is a clear inversion of the usual seduction scene in which the innocent woman clings virtuously to the morality of Christian marriage and thwarts her male seducer's wicked intentions. Here, the intention of Alan Merrick is honourable Christian marriage, which Herminia fails to embrace because her eugenic conscience won't let her because marriage is a "vile slavery". The language then, of iniquity, of purity and earnestness, of martyrdom and renunciation is the language of both Christianity and social purity. In terms of the narrative, it locates Herminia as the necessary first fictional victim of societal scorn, a revolutionary free unionist whose suffering is for the future happiness of procreating womanhood. Herminia's monopolising of the moral high ground is clearly antagonistically provocative to social purity reformers and Christians and defensively strategic as it couches Herminia's 'illicit' sexual behaviour in the language of moral virtue.

The Woman Who Did is not the first example of Allen ironically employing Christian rhetoric to argue against Christian morality. As Allen's biographer Edward Clodd states: "Twenty years after leaving Oxford, he writes as the conclusion of the whole matter of the "Gospel according to Herbert Spencer": "Know yourself and your own place in the universe about you."[47] Allen here utilises the idea of gospel and its imperative language to argue the case against Christianity. This view of Allen as a proselytising Darwinist and atheist is confirmed not only by his authoriship of Evolutionist at Large (1881) but also in correspondence with those who objected to his writing on religious grounds.[48] In response to one detractor, Allen wrote: "To me the first religious duty of man consists in the obligation to form a distinct conception for himself of the universe in which he lives and his own relation to it." Later, in the same letter, he states: "I don't think the theory of Christianity is historically justifiable; and if

[47] Clodd 15.
[48] Evolutionist at Large (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881).

it is not true I cannot do other than endeavour to point out its untenability to others."[49] In response to The Rector of Haslemere, he inverts the usual language of vice and evil in reference to matrimony: "Regarding the whole existing system as thus closely bound up together, I feel constrained to call attention to it as far as I can, because I feel that many good women tolerate this 'regime' of vice and immorality simply because they do not recognise and realise its evils."[50]

Neither is The Woman Who Did the only novel in which Allen challenges Victorian morality through inversion. In Allen's other hill-top novel, The British Barbarians, the British are perceived as barbarians, their cultural practices based on the same totems and taboos as those that the supposedly civilised demarcate as savages. The British Barbarians uses this strategy specifically to attack marriage. The alien, Bertram Ingledew, thinking aloud, ponders:

> Yet, nowhere, he thought to himself, had he seen any system which entailed in the end so much misery on both sexes, though more particularly on the women, as that system of closely tabooed marriage, founded upon a broad basis of prostitution and infanticide, which has reached its most appalling height of development in hypocritical and puritan England (BB 49).

Conventional beliefs about class are also inverted: natural sexual practices are more likely to be found in the working class. As Ingledew states: "In all these matters, your poorer classes are relatively pure and simple and natural. It's your richer and worse and more selfish classes among whom sex-taboos are strongest and most unnatural" (BB 42). Religion is based:

> on some fetich or bogey or other non-existent supernatural being; and they mostly go on to regard certain absolutely harmless – nay, sometimes even praiseworthy or morally obligatory – acts as proscribed by him and sure to be visited with his condign displeasure (BB 72).

Allen attacks many of the same targets in both hill-top novels, challenging the precepts on which views of subaltern others were inscribed into dominant national

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[49] Clodd 168.

culture. Although often Allen cannot escape the same reductive binaries, nor the ideological position that insists on the central reproductive function of women, his embrace of subaltern groups, be it Celt, savage or proletarian, allows a logical scrutiny of imperial ideologies. This strategy of inversion, to a considerable extent, provides critical space.

Mrs. Grundy and her Daughters: Grant Allen and Censorship

If Allen employs a rhetoric of social purity against social purity reformers and underscores such rhetoric with a narrative of martyrdom, he also strategically embodies the thematic of censorship within the novel. The novel is framed and structured by *fin-de-siècle* concerns about the censorship of sexual representations; precisely those types of sexual representation, post 1885 – in the wake of the Maiden-Tribute scandal and the formation of the NVA – that could cause offence to both Christian clients of Mudie's Select Library and to social purity feminists such as Millicent Fawcett.

That Grant Allen's literary production was highly influenced by the censorship issues of the late-Victorian period is indubitable. In a letter written to a friend a few years before writing The Woman Who Did, Allen writes:

> I shall make novels pay: I'm almost sure. I have ability enough to accommodate myself to the environment [...]. All I mean is, this being so, oughtn't I rather to follow the better chance than by overestimating my own powers (which I started prone to do), throw [ing] away the substance and clutching at the shadow? In other words, I believe by carefully drilling myself (as I am now doing in the novels I have written since Philistia) I can succeed in getting a fair contemporary circulating-library reputation: I can't succeed in writing anything that would finally live.[51]

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[50] Clodd 170.
[51] Morton, "Centenary Reassessment" 425.

Apart from the prescient truth of the last sentence – as there is, indeed, something quite stilted and lifeless about the prose of Allen's most famous novel – the letter reveals, as much of Allen's writing before the hill-top novel period does, a man writing in mercenary fashion for developing fictional markets. Any writer seeking a "contemporary circulating-library reputation" would be aware of the stringent limitations that such a reputation imposed on errant moral, political and especially sexual views. In terms of his fiction writing, Allen had chosen financial comfort over literary daring.[52] However, such a choice did not stop Allen being acutely aware of the effect that censorship had on fiction and on the broader cultural climate.[53] Allen's views on censorship were not dissimilar to those of Thomas Hardy or George Moore. As they had done, Allen wrote a tract against censorship, "Fiction and Mrs Grundy", in which he lambasts the ubiquitous figure of Mrs Grundy as immoral, defining her as, "[...] the average specimen of English middle-aged matronhood, with all its petty prejudices, all its selfish narrowness, all its hatred of right, all its persistent clinging to every expiring form of wrong or injustice."[54] And if Mrs.Grundy was bad, her daughters were worse: "They stifle at its source the expression of the higher and nobler manhood of the country."[55] Censorship, being feminine, was feminising literature, or at least the type of literature permitted in Mudie's Select Library.

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[52] The issue of how Allen gained cultural capital from his fictional and non-fictional writing is dealt with intelligently in Randolph's essay.

[53] Allen was frequently lampooned for complaining about the censorship of serious fiction when his own fiction was little beyond the class of potboiler. The National Observer commented: "You make soap for so much a year; for so much a year less you could make pictures. You go on making soap, and complain that you are not rich enough to make pictures. Truly a just and manly complaint. Yet are you better than he who, making soap, yet clamours for the credit of making pictures." Morton, The Busiest Man. 140. Whether Morton's tentative supposition is correct that the germ of Henry James's short story "The Death of a Lion" was based on "Allen's well-publicised but seemingly infinitely deferred manuscript" is correct might never be known, but Allen's promise to produce a more serious work was well publicised as his letter "The Worm Turns" demonstrates. Morton, The Busiest Man 138.

[54] Morton, "Centenary Reassessment" 427.

[55] Morton, "Centenary Reassessment" 427.

Allen's trenchant views regarding censorship frame the publication of The Woman Who Did. In a letter sent to the Athenaeum in July 1892 entitled "The Worm Turns", Allen writes of asking a friend for advice about a novel that he wishes to publish: "After reading it, he implored me in the strongest terms not to publish. He said the book would ruin me. Nobody would afterwards take any other novel of mine. It would spoil my future."[56] Many critics understood The Woman Who Did to be the book to which Allen referred. In her review of the novel, Millicent Fawcett ironically referred to Allen "producing a great work of art which he had withheld in deference to Mrs Grundy and the British nation."[57] Compared to Allen's genre novels, The Woman Who Did is certainly more polemical, and it does seem as if Allen has put his soul and religion into it.[58] The novel itself bears the epigraph, "For the first time in my life / wholly and solely to satisfy my own taste and my own conscience."[59] Although the novel proved to be his most financially rewarding, the epigraph is an indication of Allen's intention to be driven less by market forces than a desire to publicise his own beliefs. Certainly the Spencerian sympathies expressed in the novel had remained constant since his youth. Moreover, Allen's novel was published in John Lane's Keynote series which provided opportunity for both greater commercial enhancement and authorial sincerity.

One specific way in which Allen incorporates the thematic of censorship into The Woman Who Did is through the *mise-en-abyme* of Herminia Barton's novel, a "work of genius" as even the conservative Spectator allows. Herminia's fictional novel clearly represents not only Allen's novel but also Allen's strategic positioning of

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[56] Grant Allen, "The Worm Turns," letter, Athenaeum (July 30th 1892) 160.
[57] Fawcett 625. Morton is also convinced that the novel was an earlier draft of The Woman Who Did. Morton, The Busiest Man 139.
[58] Grant Allen, "Worm".

himself as a fighter against and a victim of censorship. As Allen didn't know how hugely successful The Woman Who Did would be, the inclusion of Herminia's novel could be evidence of Allen's pre-emptive self-defence against his novel's potential public failure. Like Herminia, he is not to be recognised in his own time or in his adopted country because his novel, like Herminia's, "was earnestly and sincerely written; it breathed a moral air, therefore it was voted dull; therefore nobody cared for it" (WWD153). This is certainly consonant with the ideas expressed of the type of philistine readership for which Allen felt he had previously catered. Herminia's novel has all the qualities that Allen claimed for his own hill-top novel. Her sincerity can be equated with Allen's proclamation to express his thoughts candidly, restated in the preface to The British Barbarians. Allen would produce his hill-top novels, "in order to mark the distinction between these books which are really mine – my own in thought, in spirit, in teaching – and those which I have produced, sorely against my will, to satisfy editors" (BB ii). The reception of Herminia's novel is certainly akin to the reception such candid books might receive in the late-Victorian climate of Grundian prudery. The Spectator believes: "The book is mistaken; the book is poisonous; the book is morbid; the book is calculated to do irremediable mischief" (WWD 152). The reviewer of the Spectator in Allen's novel echoes the usual diction of condemnation evident in say the NVA's criticism of a writer such as Zola. Again, Allen deploys social purity rhetoric in stating why Herminia's book is so pernicious: "Its very purity makes it dangerous" (WWD 152). The paradoxical phrasing of the Spectator's objection to Herminia Barton's novel underscores Allen's inversion of social purity rhetoric and thus the Christian morality which preaches purity and condemns women to either vile marriage or, if they are brave like Herminia Barton, to martyrdom.

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[59] This was something of a shot in the foot. Millicent Fawcett, following earlier commentators such as J. M. Barrie, was quick to illustrate that Allen was no Tolstoy restricted by censorship. The Woman Who

Allen's novel, then, incorporates the culture of censorship through the censorious criticism of Herminia Barton's fictional novel in the same way that many modernist novels also inscribe, respond to and are structured by concerns of censorship. Referring to modernist writers, Celia Marshik has argued: "By positioning themselves as anti-censorship, they appealed to like-minded readers and inscribed themselves in the social text as bold defenders of artistic freedom."[60] Herminia's work of genius is surely such a fictional inscription. It aligns the reader with both Herminia's novel which is itself aligned with The Woman Who Did. It assumes a like-minded reader's sympathy for the purity of Herminia Barton's fictitious novel. As society must somehow be impure as purity is dangerous to it, Herminia's novel contests the moral definition of the concept of purity, as Allen throughout the novel contests the rhetoric of social purity. Herminia's novel reflects Allen's battle against censorship enacted against what George Moore referred to as literature's wet-nurse, what Thomas Hardy condemned as English prudery, but what Allen preferred to denominate as Mrs Grundy.

If greater emphasis is placed on the novel's dialectic with censorship, social purity and feminism, then the ending of the novel can also be more clearly understood. Sabine Ernst has argued that The Woman Who Did offers romantic closure when New Woman romance fails: "The New Woman's romance fails utterly, but conventional courtship succeeds and overcomes all obstacles."[61] Ernst makes a convincing argument that could also be supported by reference to other New Women novels of the early 1890s that also end in death, suicide or capitulation to conventional marriage. As Gail Cunningham has argued: "The incidence of death or despair amongst fictional New Women is extraordinarily high [...]. And of those New Women who survive in some

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Did, she claimed, was "a fair sample of what he is capable of producing." Fawcett 625.
[60] Marshik 5.

serenity, a positive ending is purchased at the expense of principle."[62] It does seem that romantic closure and New Women principles did not easily coexist. Chris Willis demonstrates how in popular genres like detective stories, romantic closure takes precedence over crime-solving and New Woman intelligence is counterbalanced by 'womanliness'. Speaking of the threat to convention that the professional woman detective represented, Willis writes, "Her threat had to be negated by offering proof of her compulsion towards marriage and maternity, demonstrating that she was 'womanly' enough to be incomplete without a husband and children."[63] In the serious fiction of polemical New Woman writers such coexistence was largely impossible. However, Ernst's positing of the victory of romantic closure over New Woman rhetoric does not exhaust all interpretative possibilities. The ending of Allen's novel can also be read as the return of Miss Grundy, represented by the character of Dolly Barton. This emphasises again the extent to which the novel is a polemic against censorship, social purity reform and Christian moral convention as much as it is a tract in favour of free union and women's rights. Dolly Barton is described thus:

> Dolores early began to strike out for herself all the most ordinary and stereotyped opinions of British respectability. It seemed as if they sprang up in her by unmitigated reversion. She had never heard in the society of her mother's lodgings any but the freest and most rational ideas; yet she herself seemed to hark back, of internal congruity, to the lower and vulgarer moral plane of her remoter ancestry. She showed her individuality only by evolving for herself all the threadbare platitudes of ordinary convention (WWD 193-194).

The daughter is the complete opposite of her mother, an atavistic throwback from Herminia's progressive enlightened politics. Dolores harks back to a "lower and

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[61] Sabine Ernst, "The Woman Who Did and 'The Girl Who Wouldn't': The Romance of Sexual Selection in Grant Allen and Ménie Muriel Dowie," Grant Allen: Literature and Cultural Politics at the *Fin de Siècle*, ed. William Greenslade and Terence Rodgers (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005):81-94, at 82.
[62] Gail Cunningham, " 'He-notes': Reconstrcuting Masculinity," The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: *Fin-de-Siècle* Feminisms, eds. Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 94-106, at 95.

vulgarer moral plane". Her opinions are the "stereotyped opinions of British respectability", the very same respectability that Allen rails against in both The Woman Who Did and The British Barbarians. Her individuality is only antithetically posited to her martyred mother and is couched in "threadbare platitudes of ordinary convention". Whereas Herminia Barton blazes a trail to a brighter future of eugenic logic where "the freest and most rational ideas" will prevail, Dolores Barton, who supposedly is the bright future, "the baby that was born to regenerate humanity!" (WWD 227) is degenerate. She is also symbolic of the societal target of Allen's polemic. Dolores Barton *is* Miss Grundy. In his polemic against the Miss and Mrs. Grundys, Allen wrote:

> How much easier', they say, 'to accept what we are told by our dear mammas, and let this world wag on its own bad way, lies, injustices, and all, just the same as usual!' [...]. It is my deliberate conviction that many of the worst among the moral cancers which eat into the very heart and life of England, making the other nations of Europe marvel awestruck at our vice, our hypocrisy, our greed, our selfishness, may be directly traced to the influence of our women, and to the low, conventional and vulgar morality they impose upon our literature.[64]

Of course Dolores Barton does not follow her mother, but the similarities between Dolores and Miss Grundy are striking. Dolores will let "this world wag on its own bad way" as long as she can "dwell in a manor-house with livery servants of her own, and [to] dress for dinner every night of her existence" (WWD 216). She shares "the low, conventional and vulgar morality" of Miss Grundy, and, it could be assumed, that her conventional morality will acquiesce in the censure of hill-top novels like Allen's. Dolores Barton would not take a book like The Woman Who Did from Mudie's Select Lending Library even if she could find it there.

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[63] Chris Willis, " 'Heaven defend me from political or highly educated women!' Packaging the New Woman for Mass Consumption," The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms, eds. Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 53-65, at 59.
[64] Morton, "Centenary Reassessment" 427-8.

The romantic closure of the youthful Dolores/Miss Grundy's happy marriage to her seemingly perfect eugenic mate, which emphasises the continuation of the British barbarians at the expense of the "freest and rational ideas", is juxtaposed with and accomplished by her mother's suicide. If Herminia Barton is killed figuratively by convention in the form of Miss Grundy, her hill-top twin, Bertram Ingledew in The British Barbarians is killed literally by convention's representative, the jealous Robert Monteith. Suicide also offers closure in The British Barbarians as the socially wronged, but, judged by conventional standards, sexually transgressive Frida Monteith "walked on by herself, in the opposite direction, across the open moor and through the purple heath, towards black despair and the trout-ponds at Broughton" (BB 87). However, here the promise is that Frida will meet her free-thinking lover again in the twenty-fifth century. In both hill-top novels, closure is granted by the suicide of the social and sexual transgressor and by romantic closure. However, in The Woman Who Did, the martyrdom of Herminia Barton, a killing by convention, emphasises the ignorance and barbarity of respectable society that will not accept the rationality and morality of her actions, whereas, in The British Barbarians, after a killing by convention in the shape of Robert Monteith, suicide actually offers the hope of romantic closure. Both novels, however, revolve less around narrative exemplars of Allen's scientific rationalism than on the censorious, hypocritical irrationalism of a barbaric and unenlightened conventionalism.

The Woman Who Did, then, is considerably more radical in critique than in prescription. By inverting ideological assumptions of class, race and sex in both his hill-top novels, Allen challenges many ideological positions that hierarchize subaltern others such as women, colonial subjects and the working class. The imperial ideologies of Britishness are clearly attacked, as are the socio-economic basis of Christian

marriage and more broadly the hypocrisy of Christian morality. At the kernel of Allen's attack in his hill-top novels is a strident critique of social purity reform and its censorial practices which thwart not only literature – "strong meat for men" as Allen describes it – but also subvert the development of a rational morality based on the principles of evolutionary biology in which Allen fervently believed.

However, in many respects, Allen's critique colludes with the Victorian sexual ideology it ostensibly impugns. Although Allen's hill-top novels invert reductive binaries such as purity and vice, they do not dismantle them. In many respects Herminia Barton's oppression by Christian morality is reinscribed by an acceptance of the tenets of an evolutionary biology which replaces adherence to sexual purity and social convention to a new subservience to the reproductive duty of the race mother. Herminia Barton is a good woman, as Ann Ardis illustrates, "not because she is chaste but because she knows that mothering is 'the best privilege of her sex'."[65] What is deemed a privilege for Allen circumscribes Herminia Barton's potential advancement by biological limitation. If childbearing is, "the full realization of woman's faculties, the natural outlet for woman's wealth of emotion" (WWD 146), then any woman who is not a mother must become as suspect in Allen's eyes as Herminia Barton becomes under the gaze of social purity. Similarly, if Frida Monteith finally rebels against her oppressive husband Robert, it is in the hope of meeting Bertram Ingledew in another life, where with the expectation of Bertram's twenty-fifth century gallantry she will remain his lady and he her "natural protector" (BB 81). In Allen's bright eugenic future, as with Christianity, the position of women remains subservient to men and their ultimate function remains to bear children for the benefit of the race.

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[65] Ardis 93.

Chapter Six: Tommyrotics: George Egerton and the Eternal Feminine

> Your novels are not readable, because they are written with an eye to a bookstall-monopolist's censorship [...] a faithful picture of the life of our time will be better gleaned from the files of divorce and police reports and the maunderings of the ladies' papers than from the pages of contemporary fiction.[1]

If significantly different in style and perspective to The Woman Who Did, George Egerton's (Mary Chavelita Dunne) earlier collections of short stories, Keynotes (1893) and Discords (1894), provoked a similar furore to Allen's novel. According to Ann Ardis, "critics vilified Egerton for bringing women's literature into disrepute by 'cast[ing] aside all reticence in the mad desire to make others eat as freely as themselves of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge.' "[2] One commentator viewed Discords as a "deliberate outrage, nothing more than sexual hysterics writ large."[3] The Athenaeum criticised Keynotes, for the "hysterical frankness of its amatory abandonment".[4] How pernicious such "amatory abandonment" was viewed is evident from T. P. Gill's fears of the effect reading Keynotes could have on the young. "Take the effect on a young fellow in his student period ... of a particularly warm description of rounded limbs and the rest. It puts him in a state that he either goes off and has a woman or it is bad for his health (and possibly worse for his morals) if he doesn't."[5]

Whereas Allen's hill-top novels are fictionalised polemics, which is also true, to some extent, of other New Woman novels such as Mona Caird's Daughters of Danaus (1894) and Sarah Grand's Heavenly Twins, (1893), Egerton's short stories largely disdain didacticism in favour of the psychological exploration of its female characters.

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[1] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 161.
[2] Ardis 98.
[3] Sally Ledger, introduction, Keynotes and Discords (London: Continuum 2006): ix –xxvi, at xiii. To distinguish those stories that appeared in Keynotes from Discords, I will henceforth abbreviate stories K and D.
[4] Rev. of Keynotes, by George Egerton, Athenaeum. (February 3, 1894): 146.

Of all New Women fiction, Egerton's stories have been most frequently designated proto-modernist. Lyn Pykett comments: "Her narratives have all the characteristics we now think of as distinctly modern: they are impressionistic, compressed, concentrated, elliptical, episodic, and make much use of dream, reverie and other forms of interiority."[6] Sally Ledger locates Egerton's modernism in her stories' "recurrent focus on the inner consciousness of their female subjects."[7] However, whatever literary innovations can be accredited to Egerton's precursory modernist aesthetics, her stories clearly explore the same feminist terrain as other New Woman writers. Contemporary critics depicted Egerton as the New Woman *par excellence*. Richardson notes that of "all late nineteenth-century feminists, Egerton bore the brunt of press attention."[8] This can be illustrated by Punch's portrayal of Egerton as Donna Quixote: the cartoon depicts a seated New Woman figure, bearing a striking resemblance to George Egerton, intensely reading a book, while placed at her feet are Ibsen's plays and Mona Caird's novel. The Egerton figure holds aloft a huge key that clearly alludes to the notoriety of Keynotes.[9] The poem that accompanies the cartoon concludes by asserting that women will not achieve emancipation through "Egerton's phantasies."[10] "A Cross Line", the opening and the most infamous story of Keynotes, had earlier received the dubious

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[5] Pykett, The 'Improper' Feminine 8.
[6] Lyn Pykett, Engendering Fictions: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century (London: Arnold, 1995) 62.
[7] Ledger xvii.
[8] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 158.
[9] "Donna Quixote," Punch 28 (1894) 194.
[10] "But Donna dear, not by the masher's way / or MILL'S or the sham Amazons, or CAIRD / Or HEDDA GABLER'S; not through cranks ill-paired / Or franchise, or the female volunteers, / Or EGERTON'S phantasies or DODO'S jeers / Shall come the true emancipation. No!" Punch 28 (1894): 194.

DONNA QUIXOTE.

["A world of disorderly notions *picked out of books*, crowded into his (her) imagination."—*Don Quixote.*

Figure 1

accolade of a Punch parody published as "She-Notes."[11] Aside from Punch's satirizing of Egerton as the essential New Woman, other commentators also saw Egerton as emblematic of a contemporary malady of female neurosis and hysterics. W. T. Stead

complained that Egerton's stories only "present one side, and that an unpleasant one, of the modern woman,"[12] Hugh Stutfield also lambasted Egerton as representative of the emancipated new women who writes obsessively about sex.[13] As the Athenaeum reviewer claimed, she was the *femme incompromise* who dares to assert "her claim to the full enjoyment of the literary franchise."[14] However proto-modernist Egerton might appear, her fiction should be clearly situated within the feminist politics of the *fin-de-siècle.*

If Egerton was singled out by the conservative press for her New Woman sympathies, she was not alone among New Woman writers in utilising the increasing popularity of the short story to explore feminist themes.[15] One of the reasons for the popularity of the short story among feminist writers is that it could bypass those problems that many New Woman writers faced in terms of traditional expectations of novelistic plots and narrative closure. As Elaine Showalter remarks of the period, "For late-nineteenth-century women writers in particular, the short story offered flexibility and freedom from the traditional plots of the three-decker Victorian novel, plots which invariably ended in the heroine's marriage or her death."[16] Egerton is clearly part of this evolving tradition of the New Woman short story, a tradition which challenged the stabilities of Victorian character and morality through the relatively new medium of the short story, and which included such writers as Ada Radford, Victoria Cross, Ada Leverson, and Netta Syrett. Sally Ledger claims: "The modern short story – with its

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[11] Borgia Smudgiton (Own Seaman), "She-notes," Punch 129 (1894) 109.
[12] Ledger, xiii.
[13] As Stutfield claimed, "The physiological excursions or our writers of neuropathic fiction are usually confined to one field – that of sex [...]. The emancipated woman in particular loves to show her independence by dealing freely with the relations of the sexes." Stutfield 835.
[14] Rev. of Keynotes, by George Egerton, Athenaeum (February 3, 1894): 146.
[15] As Eldridge Miller argues: "Concise and concentrated, the short story was the antithesis of the Victorian novel, so it was appealing to those in search of the new and the modern; a large social milieu, or the far-reaching implications of a moment – of passion, of anger, or of realisation." Eldridge Miller 25.

focus on the psychological moment, its exploration of interior landscapes of human experience, and its only sporadic commitment to a realist aesthetic – became a favoured literary form in The Yellow Book."[17] Ledger's comment regarding The Yellow Book could also be extended to other periodicals such as The Strand and The Savoy.

Whatever the genre in which Egerton was writing, her fiction, as the critical reception of Keynotes and Discords demonstrates, was severely censured. The nature of Egerton's transgression seems to be twofold. First, she presents women as sexually interested and frequently sexually thwarted by the constrictions of patriarchal morality; second, Egerton portrays women as not only essentially different but also superior to men; such a portrayal challenges patriarchal perceptions of women as intellectually inferior. Egerton juxtaposes the eternal feminine with the socially constructed culture of men that seeks to tame such a wild and dangerous nature. The radical nature of Egerton's offence lies not in placing a civilised male culture in opposition to a primitive uncivilised female nature, a tendency that could reinforce associations between women as atavistic and men as progressive, but in privileging the latter over the former and, in the process, revealing the limitations of male constructions of female identity.

The Essentialised Woman in George Egerton

By initiating debate about female nature, New Woman writers, along with other first-wave feminists, contested dominant sexual ideologies that essentialised women's nature. Angelique Richardson has argued that the Woman Question caused a "new and

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[16] Elaine Showalter, introduction, Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the *Fin-de-Siècle* (New Brunswick, Rutgers UP, 1993): vii-xx, at viii-ix.
[17] Ledger xv.

radical uncertainty to emerge. Questions of the nature of woman, her role, questions of gender relations, of labour and education were all fiercely debated."[18] This sense of radical uncertainty was reflected in the broader literary debates that tended to gender literature between a serious masculine literature and a more sensationalist romantic fiction. As with the pronouncements of George Moore and Grant Allen on censorship, Arthur Waugh's comments in the first edition of The Yellow Book are not untypical of this gendering of literature:

> The man lives by ideas; the woman by sensations; and while the man remains an artist so long as he holds true to his own view of life, the woman becomes one as soon as she throws off the habit of her sex, and learns to rely upon her judgment, and not upon her senses. It is only when we regard life with the untrammelled view of the impartial spectator, when we pierce below the substance for its animating idea, that we approximate to the artistic temperament. It is unmanly, it is effeminate, it is inartistic to gloat over pleasure, to revel in immoderation, to become passion's slave; and literature demands as much calmness of judgment, as much reticence, as life itself.[19]

While eschewing the "cant" of nationalistic characteristics earlier in the essay, Waugh delineates essential gender characteristics, which in turn demarcate a fixed and gendered boundary of literary practice: a woman dominated by sensations cannot "approximate the artistic temperament" unless she "throws off the habit of her sex," otherwise, she remains "passion's slave." A man can be an artist if he remains true to "his own view of life" presumably as a man, but a woman must deny her own life of sensations to become an artist.[20]

Arguments that positioned women as intellectually inferior could also find support from the increasingly valorised discourses of science. In 1892, the criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso could write in the Fortnightly Review about "The

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[18] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 34.
[19] Arthur Waugh, "Reticence in Literature," The Yellow Book 1 (1894): 201-222, at 210.
[20] Eldridge Miller also cites Edmund Gosse, D. F. Hannigan and Hubert Crackanthorpe as examples of male writers who "were anxious to define a male literary enclave that could not be annexed by woman." Eldridge Miller 17. Needless to say, such an enclave was based on the necessity of establishing, as Waugh does, essential sex differences, and viewing women as artistically inferior.

Physical Insensibility of Woman" in which he claimed "the capacity of woman's brain is, relatively, very little."[21] Lombroso argued that "morally as well as physically, woman's sensibility would seem different from, if not inferior to, man's" as "affection is the be-all and end-all of woman's life."[22] Moreover, "the female brain is known to have less control than the male brain over reflex and semi-reflex actions", and, according to Dr. Tait, "even the sexual sensibility of women is not on par with that of men".[23] As regards the acceptance of monogamy or polygamy, "a certain physical obtuseness or indifference is at the root of her readiness to put up, according to circumstances, with either system."[24] Lombroso's views cannot be dismissed as exceptional in the late nineteenth century. They carried scientific weight in an era when, according to Ledger and Luckhurst, the authority given to science is "one of the most marked features of the *fin de siècle*."[25] Certainly Max Nordau extended Lombroso's research into criminals to the artistic temperament, concluding that many artists demonstrated the same symptoms of degeneracy as criminals.[26] In the wake of Darwin's views on sexual selection expressed in The Descent of Man (1871), Lucy Bland concludes: "Unsurprisingly, evolutionists made pronouncements on the nature of femininity and masculinity. Thus by the late nineteenth century, belief in innate 'natural' differences between the sexes was being compounded by belief in *evolved* sex differences."[27] Figures such as psychologist George Romanes propagated such views

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[21] Cesare Lombroso, "The Physical Insensibility of Women," The Fortnightly Review 51 (1892): 354-357 at 354.
[22] Lombroso 355.
[23] Lombroso 356.
[24] Lombroso 357.
[25] Ledger and Luckhurst 221.
[26] Nordau 17.
[27] Bland, Banishing the Beast 71. In fact, Richardson plots three competing narratives of sexual difference: an essentialist narrative that posits innate differences between men and women and which was critical of any attempt at female emancipation as it would go against natural order. A second opposing narrative emphasized social differences rather than biological fixity, and a third believed that although sex and society were biologically determined, change could occur through biology. Richardson, Love and Eugenics 36-7.

of essential sex differences. The Darwinist Romanes, according to Bland, emphasized that, "Taken as a whole, the mental characteristics of women were 'those which were born out of weakness', while those of men were 'born out of strength.' "[28] In evolutionary discourses, women were frequently located in an earlier stage of evolutionary development as this ensured "the maximum efficiency of her reproductive function."[29] As Lyn Pykett argues, "Many nineteenth-century commentators took the view that any attempt to ignore the 'truth' of woman's indissoluble link with nature would result in 'a monstrosity – something which having ceased to be woman is not yet man."[30] Joanne De Groot succinctly summarises how central gender differences were in scientific discourses. "Basic biology, whether in the form of reproductive functions, intelligence, physical attributes, or genetic heritage, was made central to definitions of gender [...] using the powerful language and 'evidence' of science."[31]

George Egerton also essentialises woman's nature, but, in Egerton's narratives, sexual differentiation is weighted in favour of women and, thus, is in direct opposition to patriarchal perceptions of women. Egerton's narratives frequently reveal the falsity of social constructions of female identity, clearly inverting Lombroso's assumptions of male superiority. Egerton's women are superior to men in their experience, complexity, sensitivity and frequently in their intelligence, but significantly not, as many patriarchal constructions of female identity contended, in their morality. Moreover, although Egerton's essentialist view reductively assumes that women's priority is childbearing, Egerton contests the idea that biological reproduction should only occur within the

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[28] Bland, Banishing the Beast 77.
[29] Pykett, 'Improper' Feminine 13.
[30] Pykett, 'Improper' Feminine 20.
[31] Joanna De Groot, "Sex and Race: The Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth Century," Sexuality and Subordination Interdisciplinary Studies of Gender in the Nineteenth Century, eds. Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (London: Routledge, 1989): 89-129, at 95.

confines of matrimony.[32] Egerton's stories consistently offer a damning critique of marriage, indeed, to the extent that the only successful relationships between men and women occur beyond its ideological parameters.

In "A Cross Line", female primitivism is juxtaposed with social constructions of female identity. Ann Ardis argues persuasively that Egerton's fiction sets a precedent "for other New Woman novelists through [...] the acknowledgment that 'nature' is something defined by culture as the place where culture's most cherished ideas and ideals can be kept safe from history."[33] This cultural construction of female nature figures women as passive, modest and pliant in stark opposition to the wildness of the eternal feminine as Egerton identifies it. Such wildness needs to be tamed, and Egerton argues that women are placed in a position where to be socially accepted they themselves must temper their own essentialist nature: "[...] for the woman who tells the truth and is not a liar about these things is untrue to her sex and abhorrent to man, for he has fashioned a model on imaginary lines and he has said 'so I would have you' and every woman is an unconscious liar, for so man loves her" (K 10). The figuration of woman as a patriarchal construction, a model "fashioned on imaginary lines" forces women to reject their intrinsic nature. Women's essential nature relies neither on constructed laws and systems, nor on reason but on impulse and instinct: "All your elaborately reasoned codes for controlling morals or man do not weigh a jot with us

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[32] Richardson is correct to claim that, "While Egerton speaks out in her fiction against the social and sexual repression of women, her writing as a whole foregrounds the maternal function, equating women with primary impulses and instincts." Richardson Love and Eugenics 157. In fact, Richardson presents a consistently strong case that is consonant with my thesis in that Egerton reinscribes normative sexual ideologies in new paradigms of scientific rationality, or as Richardson writes with specific reference to the reverie scene of "A Cross Line", "Throughout Egerton's fiction, such emancipatory moments coexist with, or at times express, a more repressive ideology." Richardson, Love and Eugenics 157. Egerton's belief in the primary importance of childbearing to women is consonant with Karl Pearson's belief that, "the race must degenerate if greater and greater stress be brought to force women during the years of childbearing into active and unlimited competition with men." Richardson, Love and Eugenics 157.

[33] Ardis 100.

against an impulse, an instinct. We learn those things from you, you tamed amenable animals; they are not natural to us" (K 11). Women's instinctual nature is, thus, socialised into accepting patriarchal norms. The weakness of women, rather than the strength of men, brings about such a situation. For Gypsy in "A Cross Line" affection might not be "the be-all and end-all of woman's life" as Lombroso argued, but it is "that crowning disability of my sex [...] this untameableness of ours is corrected by our affections" (K 11). In "Now Spring Has Come", there is war between "instinctive truths and cultivated lies" precisely "because men manufactured an artificial morality" (K 16).

That women, particularly those more open to their essential nature, are frequently portrayed as intellectually superior is evident in "The Spell of the White Elf" in which a female character declares that "the average man is weaker than we are" (K 28) and talks "down to the level of the men present (of course they did not see that it might be possible for a woman to do that), and made it a very pleasant meal" (K 27). In fact, with the exception of the romantic bohemian poet of "The Regeneration of Two", female characters are invariably more complex than men, so complex in fact that men cannot understand them, even those male characters more sympathetically drawn. Gypsy's husband in "A Cross Line" wishes he could understand his wife (K 8). Her lover asks her: "Do not I understand you a little" to which the enigmatic Gypsy can only reply: "You do not misunderstand me" (K 10); Gypsy, "laughs softly to herself because the denseness of man, his chivalrous conservative devotion to the female idea he has created blinds him, perhaps happily, to the problems of her complex nature" (K 9). Few men, Gypsy argues, "have had the insight to find out the key to our seeming contradictions" (K 9). The contradictions are seeming, it could be argued, precisely because men have happily blinded themselves by their own ideological misreading of

female nature. The limits of male understanding, moreover, are often related to scientific objectivity. The lover in "A Cross Line" examines women in a scientifically detached way, never letting "an opportunity slip to get new data" (K 4). The male narrator in "A Little Grey Glove" "has pursued the Eternal Feminine in a spirit of purely scientific investigation" (K 34). Such scientific detachment is perceived as registering only one kind of way of seeing, or way of gazing, that cannot ultimately grasp female nature, and is often negatively juxtaposed with the more profound understanding of themselves that Egerton's female characters demonstrate.[34] Egerton attacks the limitations of scientific detachment for not understanding the essential nature of women, the same scientific view that essentialises woman as inferior and ties them to a reductively biological nature. Detached male observation can also prove ineffective not only to women's deeper understanding of their natures but unsatisfactory to the male observer. The male narrator of "A Little Grey Glove" compares women to fish: "But as a conscientious stickler for truth, I must say that both in trout as in women, I have found myself faced with most puzzling varieties, that were a tantalising blending of several qualities" (K 34). This representation of female superiority in New Woman fiction clearly vexed Hugh Stutfield. Although speaking generally of New Woman writers, his comments readily apply to Egerton's fiction: "As far as the husband is concerned, he is "seldom deserving of much sympathy. In morbid novels and problem plays he is usually an imbecile, a bully or a libertine."[35]

Male knowledge helps neither men to understand women's nature nor women to understand themselves. The unnamed female protagonist of "A Psychological

[34] Such criticisms of scientific male detachment echo the problems women members of the "Men and Women's Club" had with the clear separation expected of them from the male members of the group between objective detachment and subjective experience. Walkowitz writes: "Women were expected to work within a scientific ideology that denied the validity of female subjective experience, and over which the largely 'untrained' female members had only an uncertain command." Walkowitz 146. This

Moment" tells her childhood friend: "I can't help you. You must find yourself. All the systems of philosophy or treatises of moral science, all the religious codes devised by the imagination of men will not save you – *always you must come back to yourself*' (K 93). Ultimately, women can only know themselves not through the male preserves of scientific, religious or philosophical knowledge but through the comprehension of their own instinctive nature.

If Egerton's eternal feminine proves unfathomable to the majority of men, and if in many ways such a representation shows women to be intellectually superior, it also figures women as challengingly amoral. Morality was one of the few areas in which women were perceived to be superior to men. "Women's supposed lack of carnality," Bland argues, "was the cornerstone of the argument for women's moral superiority."[36] Richardson argues such ideas were increasingly based on a perception of women's biological instinct: "As ideological discourses on the biomedical determinants of social relations grew, morality was *biologized* as the basis of morality was altered from 'duty' to 'instinct'."[37] Such a biological view of women invariably reinforced sexual double standards. In Egerton's short stories, morality is also gendered, but perceived as a male construction, whereas the biological eternal feminine, like Nietzsche, an arch influence in her writing, is beyond good and evil. In "A Cross Line" Gypsy argues: "Bah! The qualities that go to make a Napoleon – superstition, want of honour, disregard of opinion and the eternal I – are oftener to be found in a woman than in a man" (K 11). The narrator of "Under Northern Sky" claims, "For man in all his passions has a little of the inconsequent child, it is only the woman who sins with clear seeing" (K 46). Egerton often figures such amorality by representing her strongest female characters as

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valorisation of objective male detachment at the expense of female subjective experience is overturned in Egerton's stories.

[35] Stutfield 835.

[36] Bland, Banishing the Beast 52.

witches. The adulteress in "A Little Grey Glove" is described as a "grey-clad witch" (K 36). In "A Shadow's Slant", the second section of "Under Northern Sky", the bullying patriarch declaims, "Did any mortal man ever see such a hand? You witch! With eyes that probe into a fellow's soul and shame him and fear nothing" (K 51). Perhaps the most quoted passage of all of Egerton's fiction in "A Cross Line" affirms: "Deep in through ages of convention this primeval trait burns, an untameable quality that may be concealed but is never eradicated by culture – the keynote of woman's strength" (K 9). There is a clear association between the primeval, witchcraft and female strength. Such traits as women's witchcraft and women's strength are beyond the imposition of socially constructed morality.

Angelique Richardson is correct to argue that Egerton's insistence on the overriding importance of maternity to Egerton's eternal feminine reinforces a repressive eugenic ideology. In fact, for Egerton it is maternity that ultimately makes women superior to men. In a letter to Ernst Foerster in 1900, Egerton wrote:

> Woman is, if only she could realise it, man's superior by reason of her maternity – the negation of that is her greatest cowardice. They have gone on the wrong lines in trying to force themselves into man's place as an industrial worker. The varying cycle of their physical being unfits them for steady labour.[38]

Not only does Egerton claim that women who deny the central importance of matrimony are cowardly, but also that advanced women "trying to force themselves into man's place" are denying their essential maternal nature. Egerton's position is not dissimilar to that of Grant Allen who believed that advanced women were "becoming real 'traitors to their sex' [...] even going the length of talking as though the world could get along permanently without wives and mothers."[39] Egerton's belief in biological essentialism also makes her sceptical of ideas of social advancement not only

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[37] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 45.
[38] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 156.
[39] Allen, "Plain Words" 452.

for women but for other underprivileged groups including as she eugenically puts it, "a quiver full of congenital semi-idiots."[40] For Egerton, essential sexual differences mean that women should not ape masculine qualities but instead dedicate themselves to a "cultivation to the utmost of the best in herself – as woman – with the object of producing the finest type of womanhood."[41] At the centre of the finest type of womanhood lies motherhood. As it is maternity which makes women superior to men, maternity should be celebrated whether it be inside or outside matrimony. The bohemian poet of "The Regeneration of Two" declaims: "salvation lies with the woman and the new race they are to mother" (D 146). As in the fiction of George Moore, Grant Allen and H. G. Wells, George Egerton asserts that women's prime duty is as a race mother.

However repressive Egerton's eugenic beliefs, Egerton remains, like Allen, extremely critical of marriage. Indeed, like Allen, and unlike feminists such as Millicent Fawcett, Egerton favours free union to marriage. If "Virgin Soil", "Wedlock" and "Under Northern Sky" depict women trapped in marriages, then "An Empty Frame" and "The Regeneration of Two" exalt free union while disparaging marriage. In "An Empty Frame" the female character's refusal to embark on a free union with a vastly more interesting, and morally superior man brings about her tragedy. The rejected lover had asked her to join him: "I worship you, but you know my views. I cannot, I will not bind myself to you by any legal or religious tie. I must be free and unfettered to follow that which I believe right for me" (K 42). Having denied her lover, "and in her loneliness of spirit married him who seemed to need her most out of those who admired her..." (K 42) she suffers the consequence of knowing that she "should

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[40] The passage from Rosa Amorosa continues: "The man and woman who give one or two beautiful sound-limbed healthy-souled children to the world are surely more praiseworthy." Richardson, Love and Eugenics 173.

[41] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 165.

have done better for someone else" (K 43). Having sacrificed herself in marriage instead of following her eternally feminine instincts, she is trapped inside a loveless marriage. In "An Empty Frame" the female protagonist has disappointed herself and, by implication, her race through an act of cowardice, by not allowing herself a free union with the eugenically superior man described as: "A rare head amongst the rarest heads of men, with its crest of hair tossed back from the great brow, its proud poise and the impress of compelling genius that reveals itself one scarce knows how" (K 42). Her husband obeys the social and moral conventions of society, but he is, by contrast, "an unlovely object in a sleeping suit" (K 42). The implication is that such a conventional marriage will not only provide a trap for the wife, but also produce inferior offspring.

In "The Regeneration of Two", both lovers give of themselves willingly and happily in free union. The title seems significant in that it demonstrates that even if Egerton's fiction prioritises women's biological duty to bear children, and that the essential nature of women is constantly repressed by society, there is at least the possibility of successful relationships between men and women outside marriage. The position of women in society can be improved even if this largely comes about through correct eugenic practice. The positive regeneration of two can be contrasted to the degeneration of two in "An Empty Frame." This contrast is further emphasized by the epigram from the Scottish evolutionist Henry James Drummond (1851-97): "Love is the supreme factor in the evolution of the world" (D 135). Love is connected with regeneration whereas a lack of love, usually portrayed through Egerton's depiction of marriage, causes women to despair and produces less eugenic offspring or no offspring at all.[42] A similar contrast can be found in the painful depiction of matrimony in

[42] The idea that love is the best form of natural selection is echoed in Grant Allen's essay, "Falling In Love": "falling in love [...] is nothing more than the latest, highest, and most involved exemplification, in the human race, of that almost universal selective process which Mr Darwin has enabled us to recognise

"Virgin Soil" in which the returning daughter of a failed marriage complains of her mother having sold her into legalised prostitution rather than letting her make her own love match where she could have found a man, "of whom I would think with gladness as the father of a little child to come" (D 132). Her own marriage is childless, and having a child with the man she doesn't love, as she tells her mother "would have been the last straw" (D 133). Free choice and/or free union based on love rather than accepting the male conventions of matrimony affords both men and women the opportunity of happy, fruitful relations and eugenically sound children.

If Richardson's physiological rather than psychological reading of Egerton shows the extent to which Egerton's ideas were rooted in contemporary eugenic morality, Iveta Jusová's postcolonial reading, although recognising Egerton's failed attempt to locate woman's imaginary outside the existing patriarchal culture, recognises that Egerton's greatest achievement is "her challenge to the bourgeois feminine ideal of women's ascetic self-restraint and imperial duty."[43] Central to this challenge is clearly Egerton's representation of female sexual desire, which more than other aspects of her writing clearly ruptures bourgeois demarcations of feminine identity. It is to Egerton's portrayal of women as sexual beings that I now wish to turn.

Women's Sexuality in George Egerton's Short Stories

Although women in Egerton's short stories like "Gone Under", "Wedlock" and "A Psychological Moment" are frequently victims of male heterosexual desire, women,

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throughout the whole long series of the animal kingdom." Grant Allen, "Falling in Love," Fortnightly Review 46 (1886): 452-462 at 452.

[43] Iveta Jusová, "George Egerton and the Project of British Colonialism," Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature 19 (2000): 27-55, at 52.

too, are invariably represented as sexually desiring. Much of the notoriety Egerton achieved for her sexual representations of women focused upon "A Cross Line", the first story in Keynotes. It includes the exhibitionist sexual fantasy of Gypsy, the story's main protagonist. Sally Ledger has suggested that the fantasy is an "aestheticised rendering of female masturbation" and "the woman's 'inseeing eye' suggestive of the aftermath of sexual orgasm."[44] Gypsy "can see herself with parted lips and panting, rounded breasts, and a dancing devil in each glowering eye, sway voluptuously to the wild music that rises, now slow, now fast, now deliriously wild, seductive, intoxicating, with a human note of passion in its strain" (K 9). What is most striking, here, is that the body ceases to signify base animal instincts, but is foregrounded as a site of passionate sexual celebration. Although this fantasy of exhibitionist dancing is staged for the gaze of a male audience, sexual pleasure is situated within the dancer as much as it is granted to the imagined watching men. It is she who is "tremulous with excitement" (K 9). Moreover, Gypsy's dancer actively controls the reaction of men rather than being the passive instrument of male sexual gratification. Interestingly, Punch's parody of "A Cross Line" stays relatively clear of the sexual implications of the fantasy, comically deflating the eroticism of the dance by referring only to how "her lissom limbs scintillate" and remarking on the dance's climax as producing "a lovely cat-call from the gallery."[45] The fantasy gains further force by being staged immediately after Gypsy's husband has crushed "her soft little body to him" and carried "her off to her room" (K 8), a scene that concerned T. P. Gill who asked, "Is this not inviting the public a little too far inside one's premises?"[46] Not only does the strong inference of sex further eroticise the subsequent fantasy, but the power relations between actively

[44] Ledger, xxiii.
[45] Smudgiton 129.
[46] Ledger x.

transporting husband and passively transported wife are reversed into those in which the fantasized female dancer controls the sexual desires of numerous men. Gypsy "gives to the soul of each man what he craves, be it good or evil" (K 9), and, by doing so, celebrates assertive female sexual power. The staging of sensual dancing also appears in the last story of Keynotes, "Under Northern Sky". Here, the dance is no fantasy but takes place under the gaze of a drunken patriarch:

> Wild the music, wilder the dancer [...] only a ribald jest as their petticoats rise, or their bosoms quiver in the fling of the dance ... and she with a crimson shawl drawn round her spare shoulders, and a splash of colour in her thin cheeks holds one hand tightly pressed over her breast – to still what? What does the music rouse inside that frail frame, what parts her lips and causes her eyes to glisten and the thin nostrils to quiver? (K 52).

The dance is figured erotically from the male viewpoint by reference to petticoats rising and bosoms quivering, but the male observer's ribald jest is indicative of his failure to understand the woman's own sexuality as expressed in her dancing. He remains ignorant of what the wild music rouses within her: the mysterious sexual passion signified by parted lips, quivering nostrils and gleaming eyes.

The figure most commonly representative of female sexual interest in Egerton's fiction is the gypsy. In "A Cross Line", the female protagonist is called Gypsy by her husband and her lover remarks that she has a "free gypsy nature". In "Under Northern Sky", women are frequently associated with gypsies: gypsy women dance erotically; a husband believes his wife is a gypsy who looks as if she were "off in other lands". The gypsy motif also occurs in "A Little Grey Glove", in which the self-confessed adulteress asks her male narrator if he knows what the gypsies say about never judging a "woman or a ribbon by candlelight" (K 36). In "A Psychological Moment", the female protagonist thinks of a gypsy legend: "A queer legend with a deep meaning. Ay she has been able to look each man and woman in God's world in the face; heart and soul have been free and untrammelled as a gypsy's child's [...]" (D 77). If the gypsy

motif reflects a general sense of freedom for women, it also relates specifically to sexual liberty. It signifies the essentially wild in woman, the impulsive which men tame to make amenable animals (K 11). It is part of women's sexual nature which men's artificial morality suppresses. The gypsy figure represents the "eternal wildness, the untamed primitive savage temperament that lurks in the mildest, best woman" that "may be concealed but is never eradicated by culture" (K 9). The idea of the sexually untrammelled gypsy is also underscored in "Under Northern Sky". The main female protagonist dreams of fleeing from the control of her husband with the gypsies. As the gypsy caravan departs: "The Romany lass is humming a song, a song about love, and dance, and song; and the soul of the sleeping girl floats along at her side in a dream of freedom" (K 54). Dance expresses freedom, but as both stories figure dancing as highly eroticised, the allusion is that gypsy freedom is sexual freedom.

Although, taken as a whole, there is little more overt sexual daydreaming or autoerotic dancing in Keynotes and Discords, other female characters in Egerton's fiction are still clearly depicted as sexually interested. For example, in "Gone Under", Edith Grey is seduced when she is only sixteen, "petted and spoiled" and "dressed like a doll" (D 107). When her lover discovers she is pregnant, he strikes her and sends her away to the country. The child dies in dubious circumstances. Her suffering and the cruel demands of her lover eventually lead her to prostitution. Such a narrative would not be out of place in social purity propaganda or Victorian melodrama, Edith Grey figured as the victim of an unscrupulous man, who, having seduced her, refuses to accept the consequences of his immoral actions. The traumatic loss of her baby leads Edith Grey to drunkenness and prostitution which adds poignancy to her moral decline. However, the moral complexion of such a seduction narrative is counterpointed by Edith's own sexual desire and behaviour, as she permits herself to get "carried away"

with her husband's cousin. She comments: "I had no control over myself, something used to possess me; it is always like that, one stifles the memory of the first with the excitement of the second" (D 109-110). Thus Egerton unsettles traditional Victorian morality by showing Edith as both sexually abused and sexually interested.

Sexual desire as staged in Egerton's fiction is often powerfully evoked when contextualised by the social and sexual limitations imposed by society, especially through the obligation of marriage. Flo, the disillusioned married woman of "Virgin Soil" blames her mother for marrying her when she "was ignorant of everything" she "ought to have known" (D 132). Her sexual instincts have been thwarted by such an early and unsatisfactory marriage: "Would I have not shuddered at the thought of *him* in such a relationship – and waited, waited until I found a man who would satisfy me, body and soul – to whom I would have gone without any false shame [...]" (D 132). In "An Empty Frame", the unnamed protagonist declines a man of "compelling genius" whose "smile of eyes [...] never failed to make her weak as a child under their gaze, and tame as a hungry bird" (K 42) to marry a lesser man. The final striking image of the narrative evokes the claustrophobia of marriage and its consequent effect on the bride who lacked the courage to follow her sexual instincts: "That her head is wedged in a huge frame, the top of her head touches its top, the side its sides, and it keeps growing larger and larger and her head with it, until she seems to be sitting inside her own head, and inside is one vast hollow" (K 43). More broadly it represents the restrictive frame of gender expectation in a patriarchal society. A similar sense of being trapped occurs to Rachel Vinrace in Virginia Woolf's A Voyage Out (1915). She experiences the limitations imposed by her controlling environment when she discovers how sexual knowledge has been hidden from her. The revelation comes after she has been kissed by Richard Dalloway: "By this new light she saw her life for the first time a

creeping hedged-in thing, driven cautiously between high walls, here turned aside, there plunged in darkness, made dull and crippled for ever."[47] Even if the circumstances are considerably different, the heroine of "An Empty Frame" is as restrictively 'framed' by male society as Rachel is in A Voyage Out.

Egerton's short stories, then, present women as sexually interested, and, as such, her fiction disrupts ideas, still current at the end of the nineteenth century, that divide women's sexual behaviour on the basis of innocence and guilt. Sexual interest, in Egerton, is clearly related to the eternal feminine, the gypsy spirit that lies beyond the conventions of male society and, to a large extent, the understanding of men. Specifically Egerton stages Gypsy in "A Cross Line" and the female protagonist of "Under Northern Sky" as untrammelled dancing, erotic bodies conscious of their own sexual desires whose sense of freedom is juxtaposed with those male cultural strategies that seek to tame women's wild nature.

Given the explicitness of Egerton's depiction of female sexual desire as well as the challenge her eternal feminine poses to patriarchal ideologies of male superiority, it is not surprising that Egerton's fiction should have received such severe moral criticism. In the last section of this chapter, I wish to show that Egerton, as with previous writers examined, incorporates the thematic of censorship into her fiction, but unlike other male writers who figure both literature as being in danger of feminisation and censorship as a vehicle of literary emasculation, Egerton challenges what she sees as censorship based upon the prohibitive limitation of a specifically male-constructed morality.

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[47] Virginia Woolf, The Voyage Out (1915; London: Penguin, 1992) 72.

George Egerton and Censorship

Egerton's opposition to censorship was as resolute as George Moore's or Grant Allen's. In Rosa Amorosa published in 1901, Egerton could write of England:

> Neither literature nor Art is a component part of the life of the people here. The great bulk of the moneyed middle class do not look upon them as in any measure necessary to finer living; and if they have any books in their houses, they will either be well-bound editions of such authors as have become classics by the suffrage of time, and which they have never read or probably forgotten; or such books as are in vogue in Mudie's, or are having a boom in the papers. Of one thing you can be sure in such a house – no book will be judged on its merit as a work of art.[48]

The charge against the middle class is of philistinism. The Philistine was a common trope of late-Victorian society, most famously used as Arnold's description of the middle classes in Culture and Anarchy (1869). Egerton's attack on the middle class for the paucity of its aesthetic imagination and for its misconception of artistic purpose is similar to Arnold's attack on those who honour a false ideal "not of intelligence and virtue, but of wealth and station, power and ease." Such philistinism kills the desire "which by nature for ever carries all men towards that which is lovely; and to leave instead of it only a blind deteriorating pursuit [...] of the false ideal."[49] George Moore specifically relates philistinism to Mudie's censorship, complaining that "the old literary tradition [...] is being gradually obliterated to suit the commercial views of a narrow-minded tradesman" (LAN 18). The charge of immorality is Philistine (LAN 17). Egerton also relates philistinism to Mudie's censorship. The artistic judgement of the "moneyed middle class" is blinded by the censorious mentality of private library censorship, and prefers "such books as are in vogue in Mudie's" to contemporary fiction's franker explorations of *fin de siècle* social and sexual realities.

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[48] Richardson, Love and Eugenics 161.
[49] Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 163.

Egerton's assault on censorship, also like the attacks of Moore, Hardy and Allen, is extended to her fiction. A similar attack is made on middle-class purity and philistinism in "A Cross Line" in which Gypsy's husband reads a novel that "makes one think", but concludes: "It would be a greater book if he were not an Englishman. He's afraid of shocking the big middle class. You wouldn't care about it" (K 6). The passage occurs in the opening story, which also includes the notorious sexual fantasy known as "Clouds" in which Gypsy imagines herself exhibitionistically dancing in front of a crowd of men. Thus the fear of censorship – of shocking the philistine moneyed middle classes – is defiantly juxtaposed with Egerton's most sexually explicit narrative seemingly designed to be shocking. The clear implication is that a sympathetic reader, like the sympathetically portrayed character Gypsy, "would care" about books that shock the middle class, as they would care about what Egerton writes. The narrative aligns itself with precisely that kind of writing that Mudie's censors for fear of shocking the middle classes. It is as much the kind of fictional appeal to like-minded readers against English censorship as Herminia Barton's novel in The Woman Who Did. It was, undoubtedly, the provocative nature of "A Cross Line" that led John Lane to adapt the title of Egerton's first story collection to publicise his new series.[50]

The narrative of "Now Spring Has Come", the second story in Keynotes, is also framed by Egerton's challenge to literary censorship. A Norwegian writer who sparks the narrator's interest has written a book "of the modern realist school", "a very bad book", (K 16) the bookseller informs the female narrator before advising her not to read it. However, the narrator views the book not as decadent but as containing "[...] all the struggle of a man's soul-strife with evil and destiny, sorrow and sin [...]" (K 16). She

[50] As Ardis comments: "Taking the title of George Egerton's Keynotes for his series, John Lane capitalized on the immediate notoriety of Egerton's collection of stories. It was almost as if the most notorious passage in Keynotes, Egerton's revelation of female nature, served as advertising copy for the whole series." Ardis 40.

is so impressed that she is "consumed with a desire to see and know the author" (K 16). The narrator not only defies the bookseller's advice but also declaims the kind of society that produces such censorious attitudes:

> Isn't it dreadful to think what slaves we are to custom? I wonder shall we ever be able to tell the truth, ever be able to live fearlessly according to our light, to believe that what is right for us might be right? It seems as if all the religions, all the advancement, all the culture of the past, has only been a forging of chains to cripple posterity, a laborious building up of moral and legal prisons based on false conceptions of sin and shame, to cramp men's minds and hearts and souls, not to speak of women's [...]. Why it came about? Because men manufactured an artificial morality, made sins of things which were as clean in themselves as the pairing of birds on the wing, crushed nature, robbed it of its beauty and meaning and established a system that means war, and always war, because it is a struggle between instinctive truths and cultivated lies (K 16).

This lengthy quotation illustrates the narrator's contempt for the social conventions that advocate custom over natural instinct. Human nature is trapped in a carceral society of morality and legality. Traditional morality crushes nature, cramps minds, hearts and souls, and "makes sins of things" "clean in themselves". As with Moore, Hardy and Allen, natural "instinctive truths" are thwarted by moral convention and like them, Egerton opposes censorship with a Darwinian perception of sexual instinct that valorises nature over culture.

However, unlike the polemics of the previous writers examined which feminise the censorious society, Egerton's fiction blames a manufactured artificial morality not on literature's wet nurse but on men. Neither does Egerton's gendering of censorship separate literature between a serious, muscular literature for men and the type of enfeebled, romantic fiction for women in Mudie's or the neurotic imbalanced fiction of New Woman. In Egerton, the literature that fears to shock the English middle classes is that which fails to dispel the cultivated lies of male culture. In contrast, Egerton's own writing, by mapping the psychological *terra incognita* of women, exposes the societal and sexual limitations such a male culture imposes. The censorious society is not

symbolised by a fictional figure like Mrs Grundy but identified as pervasive male cultural authority. The essential feminine of nature is at war with the cultivated lies of male culture where "the untrue feminine is of man's making, whilst the strong the natural, the true womanly is of God's making" (K 16). Such an awareness of the gendered nature of censorship was also demonstrated by modernists like Virginia Woolf. As Marshik argues, "the gendered operations of censorship [...] positioned women writers in opposition to a regulatory apparatus overseen and wielded almost exclusively by man."[51] In Egerton, however, it is not so much the specific apparatus of censorship that is identified as male, but the broader constructions of female identities that imprison women and restrict their free expression. It is precisely this restricting morality that Egerton writes against.

"Now Spring Has Come" demonstrates how such a restricting male morality censors the truth of female sexual identity. The narrator comments, "We have one short life, and it is spoiled by chains of our own forging, in deference to narrow custom" (K 20). The narrator condemns the effect of such narrow custom on both men and women, but it is especially women who are not permitted the frank expression of sexual desire. Women's sexual nature is impeded, causing psychological repression and emotional imbalance:

> You see there is no time of sowing wild oats for women; we repress, and then some day we stumble on the man who just satisfies our sexual and emotional nature, and then there is a shipwreck of some sorts. When we shall live larger and freer lives, we shall be better balanced than we are now (K 21).

Like Grant Allen's The Woman Who Did, hope is expressed of larger, freer lives in a brighter eugenic future in which female sexual instinct can be liberated from the artifice of moral constriction.

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[51] Marshik 11.

Sally Ledger identifies "The Regeneration of Two" as a companion piece to "A Cross Line"[52] but in terms of its challenge to a male culture of censorship the story also has strong affinities with "Now Spring Has Come". Both narratives challenge traditional religion and specifically social purity for imposing their censorship on the expression of natural sexual instincts. Both stories concern relationships between female protagonists and marginalised literary men. In "Now Spring Has Come" the realist writer rejects the female narrator who has patiently waited for him; however, in "The Regeneration of the Two", the main protagonist's wait for her bohemian poet is rewarded by his return. Both the thwarted love of "Now Spring Has Come" and the requited love of "The Regeneration of Two" are framed by strong critiques of society. In "The Regeneration of Two" it is not the narrator but the poet who attacks the artificial construction of morality:

> Take all these men, male and female, fashion them into one colossal man, study him and what will you find in him? Tainted blood; a brain with parasites of a thousand systems sucking at its base and warping it; a heart robbed of all healthy feelings by false conceptions, bad conscience, and a futile code of morality – a code that makes the natural workings of sex a vile thing to be ashamed of [...] (D 145).

Again morality impedes the "natural workings of sex." Although the poet is addressing the broader morality of society, it is the same code that seeks to prevent the truth of sex being told in either society or fiction. The monologue, inflected with Nietzschean contempt, attacks traditional religion, targeting both religious leaders and followers. In church "preachers shrieking from the pulpits [...] is lost in the chink of the money-changers' coins" (D 145), while the servile crowd gullibly follow: "What a motley crowd of followers each one can claim, and how they applaud with satisfaction as the gilded balls are tossed before them!" (D 145).

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[52] Ledger xxii.

Similar to Grant Allen's hill-top fiction, the poet's diatribe focuses on the false ideologies of social purity reform. Social purity reformers are particularly chastised for their vanity and hypocrisy:

> And she who flaunted the white banner of purity calculated the cut of her evening frock, and enticed men to walk under her banner by the whiteness of her breast. And underneath it all I saw vanity, the old insatiable love of power that is the breath of most women's nostrils [...] (D 146).

Thus the free-speaking and thinking poet denounces the society that would seek to censor his voice.

Egerton also attacks the culture of censorship by representing the kind of sexually transgressive women in direct opposition to the sexual ideology of the circulating libraries. The *terra incognita* of the female psyche explored by Egerton yields many women who are clearly in opposition to patriarchal ideologies of acceptable female behaviour. Such ideologies, as the narrator in "A Psychological Moment" claims, delimit "one straight, clean road" for women, where "every byroad is shame" (D 79). If women are invariably seen as victims of censorious society, they are, at least when focused on their eternally feminine natures, often more likely than men to dangerously defy social restrictions.

An examination of the content of Keynotes and Discords indicates the challenge Egerton's provocative women posed to Victorian moral values, and partly accounts for why her fiction provoked such a strong – one is almost tempted to say hysterical – critical reaction. It is not merely the inclusion of such narrative content, however, but Egerton's invariably sympathetic depiction of morally aberrant women that challenges ideological assumptions about female behaviour. Egerton's fiction both produces sexually defiant women and inscribes a critique of society that demarcates such rigid boundaries of gendered behaviour.

As with the later fiction of Thomas Hardy, which Egerton strongly admired, it is less remarkable that George Egerton's writing should fail to transcend its contemporary ideological limitations, than that so many stories in Keynotes and Discords should consistently and forcefully challenge dominant ideologies of female sexuality. Her stories invert patriarchal hierarchisations that position women as a second sex. Egerton's fractured, psychological narratives should be viewed less as formalist anticipations of modernist innovation than as explorations of female experience in innovative forms of language and narrative that traverse the limitations of the fictional representation of female sexual identity of both the fiction found in Mudie's Select Library and of the naturalist writing of male realists. Viewing Egerton with the hindsight of later modernist developments can skewer those specific historical, cultural and gender conditions in which her work was forged. Egerton, moreover, intervenes as self-reflexively as other writers examined, in the same culture of censorship, posing a provocative challenge to traditional sexual ideologies, her arguments as aligned with emerging scientific discourses as those of other realist or New Woman writers. What perhaps is most striking about Egerton's intervention in the censorship dialectic is the challenge she poses to male writers' perception of power, by defining censorship as a specifically male construction. Egerton challenges the feminisation of both censorship and literature which reinforces dominant cultural notions that separate weak intellectually vulnerable women from strong, intellectually superior men. Egerton's inversion of such a male ideological hierarchisation, although itself maintaining a paradigmatic hierarchisation and a limiting essentialism, opens a critical space for not only an attack on patriarchal institutions like marriage but also an exploration of the lived experience of women under a patriarchal regime. This is to say, Egerton explores,

and explores more vividly than her New Women contemporaries, what became known in second-wave feminism as sexual politics.[53]

[53] The term was most famously used in Kate Millet's study of male writers in Sexual Politics (New York: Doubleday, 1969). Millet defined politics in this context as "power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another." Millet 24. Although Millet criticised the sexual politics of writers such as D. H. Lawrence and Norman Mailer, Egerton's stories can still be considered an exploration of sexual politics in the sense that they are concerned with the dynamics of power between men and women and those ideologies that structure power.

Chapter Seven: Saving England; Censorship and the Edwardian Sex Novel[1]

David Trotter argues that a second wave of sex novels began around 1905.[2] Even though there are continuities between this second wave and the fiction of writers such as Thomas Hardy, George Egerton and Grant Allen, the sexual politics of Edwardian fiction also reflects the broader social changes that occurred in the intervening years. Concern about the efficacy of marriage for national regeneration and especially the role of women inside marriage was evident in the Edwardian vogue for "marriage problem" novels in which marriage was utilised less as a plot device to bring about narrative closure, and more as the thematic focus of fictional exploration. Such a change can be detected earlier in New Woman fiction, as Jil Larson notes, "[...] marriage is no longer the goal toward which everything inevitably tends; it is, instead, an object of the text's ethical scrutiny."[3] However, debates about the marriage problem in the Edwardian period were much more widespread than a decade earlier. As Eldridge Miller comments, "only the most conventional writers could still treat marriage as unproblematic."[4] Concomitantly, the Edwardian period also witnesses an increasing clamour for divorce law reform, culminating in the establishment of a Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes in 1909 under the presidency of Arthur Conan Doyle whose brief was to investigate equal rights in divorce cases. Movements such as the Divorce Law Reform Union, formed in 1906, bear witness to a forceful attempt to overturn one of the remaining legal bastions of the sexual double standard challenged by first-wave feminists. Feminists also began to call for greater economic independence for married women. The Fabian Women's Group, established in

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[1] The title "Saving England" comes from The Westminster Review, which on the death of Queen Victoria pondered "What should England do to be Saved?" and complained that the country "has grown old, her national vitality is exhausted. She has arrived at the stage of senile decay, while the United States is just entering upon that of vigorous puberty." Soloway 2.

[2] Trotter 198.

[3] Larson 44.

1908, argued that, "socialists must recognise that women's economic revolt is not merely against the enslaving economic control of the capitalist, but against the enslaving economic control of the husband."[5] Women's role, within marriage, as Lucy Bland observes, was being reconceptionalised.[6]

A significant part of such a reconceptualisation was an increasing acknowledgement of women's sexual pleasure. Both Bland and Eldridge Miller identify the importance of The Freewoman as an important outlet for discussing issues of female sexual pleasure both inside and outside marriage. Eldridge Miller contends that women began to discuss their sexuality with "astonishing freedom and honesty" and Bland claims that The Freewoman witnessed an "explicit engagement with questions of sexual pleasure."[7] However, even though Eldridge Miller is correct in her claim that, "It was expected that fiction would be sexually candid, would engage with social problems, and would treat the concerns of women with depth and seriousness," the NVA remained steadfast in attempting to stamp out what it perceived as pernicious literature as the prosecutions of Hubert Wales's The Yoke (1907) and Hermann Sudermann's The Song of Songs (1909) testify.[8]

The degree of scandal caused by H. G. Wells's Ann Veronica (1909) also demonstrates that fictional representations of female sexuality remained centre stage in

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[4] Eldridge Miller 45.
[5] Bland, Banishing the Beast 183.
[6] Bland, Banishing the Beast 185.
[7] Eldridge Miller 42. Bland, Banishing the Beast 251.
[8] Eldridge Miller 44. The Song of Songs was forced to be withdrawn by Scotland Yard. As Alec Craig comments, "In 1910 a Scotland Yard detective called on John Lane, the publisher of an English translation of Hermann Sudermann's Das Hohe Lied, who agreed to withdraw the book from publication." Alec Craig, A History of the Conception of Literary Obscenity (Cleveland: World, 1963). 73. Hermann Sudermann, Song of Songs [Das Hohe Lied] (New York: Modern Library, 1909). Henceforth abbreviated to SOS in the text. The Yoke was prosecuted at the instigation of the NVA. An account of the prosecution can be found in William A. Coote, A Romance of Philanthropy (London: National Vigilance Association, 1916). Hubert Wales, The Yoke (New York: Stuyvesant, 1909) is henceforth abbreviated to Y in the text.

the theatre of censorship.[9] All three texts transgress social purity morality by focusing on sexual relationships outside heterosexual monogamy and sexual desires beyond the ideological parameters of female sexual modesty.[10]

One reason these novels caused controversy was that they sparked specific fears of the damage aberrant female sexual behaviour could cause to national and imperial strength.[11] Fears of national degeneration reflect a perceptible Edwardian shift away from the control of working-class sexualities to an increasing preoccupation with the self-regulation of middle-class sexualities. Such a new emphasis is clearly visible in the eugenics movements where a "negative eugenics" which "aims at checking the deterioration to which the human stock is exposed" needs supplementing with a positive eugenics "which sets itself to inquire by what means the human race may be rendered intrinsically better, higher, stronger, healthier, more capable."[12] In The New Age, eugenist C. W. Saleeby wishes that Mrs Grundy be buried, alive if need be. He argues that, "In general, we may say that so far as what one may call positive eugenics is concerned, education must be our inchoate method."[13]

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[9] Ann Veronica was banned from the major lending libraries. H. G. Wells, Ann Veronica (1909, London: Penguin, 2005). Henceforth abbreviated to AV in the text.

[10] Changes in attitudes towards women's role within marriage were concomitant with changing attitudes towards advanced women. The 1890s's media figure of the New Woman was reinvented in a variety of guises including the typewriter girl, the college girl, the Freewoman, and perhaps most significantly the suffragette. While the last figure, the suffragette, loomed largest as most likely to destabilize society, it was, perhaps, more difficult to identify one univocal feminist movement as the media had tried to do, if with incredible contradictions, in the 1890s. However, it was most frequently the extremer versions of suffragette feminism that were figured as representative of the broader feminist movement. Alan Hunt argues that "the heightened political radicalism of the suffrage movement [...] resulted in purity feminism appearing dated and conservative." Hunt 106.

[11] Although The Song of Songs is an English translation of a German novel, in its English context the novel raises vital questions about moral conduct regarding sexual behaviour believed to be of intrinsic importance to the national and racial well-being of the English.

[12] Schiller qtd in Childs 3. However, it should also be noted that eugenics often came in for severe criticism. M. D. Eder writing in 1908 could wittily cast aspersions on the specific notion of middle-class superiority that eugenics implied: "The scientific gentlemen who have been carrying on these valuable researches belong to the English middle class. Naturally they think this is the class we should try to increase by encouraging its fertility. As one academical gentleman puts it: 'The upper-middle class is the backbone of a nation; it depends upon it for its thinkers, leaders, and organisers.' As this class is only the backbone of a nation, and as I do not belong to it, I naturally look elsewhere for the head of the nation." M. D. Eder, "Good Breeding or Eugenics," The New Age 7 (1908) 27.

[13] C. W. Saleeby, "Race-Culture and Socialism," The New Age 7 (1908) 28.

The importance of positive eugenics within the broader scientification of sexuality is succinctly summarised by Frank Mort:

> It was undoubtedly true that the idea of scientific breeding, to increase the quality and quantity of imperial, British stock, was an influential strand of the new collectivist policies for national efficiency in the years before the First World War. Such ventures coupled the demands of post-Darwinist evolutionary biology with the new social pathologies of degeneration, which had been generated by the inquiries into the condition of the urban poor after 1880.[14]

Framed morally, as eugenic discourses invariably were, England might still be in danger from moral and physical pollution from working-class bodies, but it increasingly expects middle-class women to fulfil their procreative duties to the nation. The popularity of eugenics was related to a general perception of a declining birth rate. As Soloway argues,

> the fall in the birth rate was the catalyst that transformed eugenics from a relatively obscure, neo-Darwinist, statistically based science into an organized propagandist movement and, more important, into a credible biological way of explaining social, economic, political, and cultural change readily comprehensible to the educated public.[15]

More significantly, this perception highlighted a differential birth rate between the middle and working classes; it appeared that the 'superior' stock of the middle classes was not being reproduced at the rate of the lower classes. Soloway again:

> To contemporaries, a reading of the demographic map of society often led to the discovery that the poorest and least educated, healthy, intelligent, and skilled portion of the population were continuing to reproduce themselves in large numbers, while more and more people in the wealthiest, best-educated, and highly skilled classes were rapidly reducing the size of their families.[16]

What "saving England" implies is not only saving the national moral character from the sexual corruption of external and internal forces and influences, but also saving, as in preserving for the future, the racial stock of the nation through the practices of eugenic

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[14] Mort xxi.
[15] Soloway 18.
[16] Soloway xv.

breeding. Wales's polemical novel and Wells's expository novel clearly intervene in national debates centred specifically upon such eugenic issues.[17]

The Edwardian novels of Wales, Wells and Sudermann reflect, then, both changes from and disruptions within late-Victorian discourses of sexuality but also clear amplifications and continuities. Close reading of these texts demonstrates that, as with realist and New Woman writers, new scientific ideologies reinscribe power relations existent in the traditional discourses they ostensibly challenge. Women are still invariably reduced to the biological function of childbirth and, as such, perceived as serving and often suffering for the national good. Angelica Jenour's primary responsibility in The Yoke is to raise her stepson syphilis-free and sexually healthy, and if she enjoys the sex more to the good, while Ann Veronica's ultimate responsibility is to bring into the world eugenically healthy children with her biologically superior if morally tarnished mate. In many respects, and as will be discussed below, Sudermann's German heroine Lilly Czepanik is more subversive than her English counterparts. She lives a degenerate and sexually interested life that ultimately goes unpunished, avoids having children and marries out of self-interest. Moreover Sudermann's novel is worthy of consideration not only as it attacks the same targets of romantic fiction as Naturalism, and critically inscribes a thematic of censorship in similar ways to those of writers previously examined, but also because it satirises the decline plot which was the narrative trademark of naturalist and much British realist fiction.

[17] Greenslade has also argued that ideas of degeneration became so prominent in this period because of an increasing disparity between the rhetoric of progress and the hard realities of life for the vast majority.

Hubert Wales's The Yoke: "A Glut of Dirtiness Masquerading as Literature"

While Sudermann's novel might be considered the most transgressive of the three, attacking social and sexual mores and failing to punish sexual aberration, it does not contest sexual hypocrisy with such a firm sense of sexual salubrity as does Hubert Wales's The Yoke. In this respect, Wales's novel, among others of its type, can be seen as a bridging text between Hardy's critique of marriage and D. H. Lawrence's championing of the importance of sexual fulfilment to social and psychological health. The Yoke polemically juxtaposes positive representations of sexual fulfilment with the detrimental physiological and psychological damage caused by a repressive and inflexible moral code. Although Jude the Obscure also attacks an inflexible moral code, Hardy does not celebrate 'healthy' sexuality with such concerted effort as Wales. Thus, it is not surprising that the banning of The Yoke was at the instigation of the NVA, especially as the novel specifically treats the controversial subject of venereal disease, a subject very close to the concerns of both social purity reformers and the social hygiene movement. Alan Hunt claims: "Concern [...] with VD reinforced the perception of the dangers of sex; it reinforced the emphasis on female sexuality, and relegated voices raising the possibility of sexual liberation to the outer darkness as dangerous radical ideas."[18] As the narrative of The Yoke includes a widowed woman who decides to have sex with her stepson precisely to prevent him contracting VD, Wales's novel can be viewed as being dangerously radical. The novel also reflects a rather literal shift away from fears of sexual contamination through the agency of the working class to the importance of the sexual self-regulation of bourgeois women to the nation state and empire as it is by having sex with her stepson that the decidedly

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Childs 1.
[18] A. Hunt 107-8.

middle-class Angelica Jenour prevents Maurice Heelas from having sex with potentially contaminating working-class prostitutes.

The crusading tone of Wales's "profound conviction of truth" to his claim to "endeavour to set forth a new and less rigorous view [...] of some phases of life" (Y 3) in the prefatory comments to the novel's American edition might be offset by Wales's substantial commercial success as an author of racy novels.[19] Nevertheless, the text remains polemical and provocative whether authorial motivation was primarily financial gain, self-justification, truth elucidation, or some combination of the three. The NVA certainly considered The Yoke a serious threat to society. It contains "divers gross and obscene material."[20] It is "[...] harmful to the community, and especially damaging to young people of both sexes."[21] The Evening Standard called the decision to censor the book "well advised" and lambasted publishers who:

> [...] have permitted the tone of their trade to be sensibly lowered, and have in some cases, only distinguished themselves from the small shopkeeper exposing for sale, in calculated defiance of the law, his frankly pornographic prints and publications by the sumptuous and handsome appearance which their great resources enable them to give to what is a decrepit mockery of literature.[22]

The clear inference was that certain respectable publishing houses were lowering their standards for financial gain. Interestingly, the Evening Standard's condemnation of Wales's novel as substandard literature, "a decrepit mockery", appears to align the novel's poor literary qualities with its moral offensiveness in contrast to the moral opprobrium Oliphant heaped on the masterly Thomas Hardy. The Yoke is also criticised for evincing a "modern attitude" set on destroying traditional standards and values and contaminating literature and society with its sexual filth. The Evening Standard again: "But most emphatically, we wish to disassociate ourselves from that

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[19] Trotter 208.
[20] Coote, Romance 116.
[21] Coote, Romance 117.
[22] Coote, Romance 118-119.

modern attitude which is killing the new dramas, and which is partly responsible for a glut of dirtiness masquerading as literature."[23] Certainly, Wales posits a modern sexual attitude – "a larger and more liberal view" (Y 3) – to the hypocrisies, as he sees them, of the social purity reformers who so zestfully attacked the novel. There is, surely, a critique of purity reform in Wales's assault on the Nonconformist Conscience. Grieving over the corpse of his friend Chris Grahame, who has just committed suicide after discovering he has contracted syphilis, Maurice Heelas comments:

> This is the price which the Nonconformist Conscience demands for what you did, and you've honestly settled up. Nothing else would appease them – quiet streets, well governed cities – no – the pound of flesh, the pound of flesh. And so you paid it them – you and thousands of others (Y 212).

The doctor who attends at the death of Grahame speaks even more specifically of "the moralist" who "[...] doesn't take into account the physical composition of a man and his physical necessities" (Y 216). The novel ends with a condemnation of "the charitable ones" who wouldn't understand and who don't "see life steadily and see it whole" (Y 314). In Wales's novel, there is a critical inscription of precisely those elements of society whose morality and obsession with sexual behaviour can lead to sexual ignorance and even death. Quite plausibly it is the Nonconformist Conscience that Wales has in mind when he criticises those who have launched "the attacks which have been so unsparingly directed upon" The Yoke (Y 1).

Although Wales's polemic is specifically directed against social purity reformers, it is also condemnatory of societal attitudes to sexuality as a whole. Grahame, for example, expresses, "the resentment which is felt, some time or other, by every healthy and sound-minded young man against a social order so incompatible with natural impulse as to compel him to do things he feels to be beneath him" (Y 23). Grahame, the greatest victim of intolerance to natural sexual instincts, places sexuality

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[23] Coote, Romance 119.

at the heart of the functioning of such a social order. In response to Maurice Heelas who asks him why venereal disease is always perceived as the worst thing that can happen by those "who set up for judges of conduct", Grahame responds: "It has to be, I suppose [...]. If it became the fashion to wink at it, the social system would have to be fixed up on a different basis" (Y 186). This critique of social morality is echoed by Grahame's sensible and sympathetically portrayed sister Cecil who attacks society for imposing an absurdly restrictive code of gender expectation on her: "We are not expected to think or act for ourselves. It is all laid down in the great social ordinance. You mustn't blame me for the absurdities of a code which I don't believe in but have to obey" (Y 108). Such codes are arbitrary: "Who had a right to graft upon the world arbitrary social forms, which involved the callous discarding of the overplus of women?" (Y 61). The arbitrariness and constructed nature of sexual morality, as noted above, is a constant societal criticism of George Moore in Esther Waters, of Thomas Hardy in Jude the Obscure, of Grant Allen in The Woman Who Did and The British Barbarians and of George Egerton in Keynotes and Discords.

Wales's polemic also targets the very backbone of England, the masses, represented by the figure of Tom Cunningham:

> It is not the bigot who bars the advance of enlightened ideas in what are called moral questions. He is transparently what he is – narrow, noisy and negligible. It is the tremendous mass behind him of ordered orthodox thought. It says little, does little; it simply *is*. It won't argue, won't be convinced, won't change, *can't* change. We hate it; we know its wrong-headedness, its infinite stupidity. It stands in our way and makes us rage. Be we admire it, we are almost proud of it, for its transparent sincerity and its magnificent stolidity (Y 54-55).

Similar to earlier novelists such as Hardy and Allen and later modernists such as D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf, Wales separates the intellectual from the masses of "orthodox thought", thus positioning himself, as Marshik claims many modernists did,

"as forward-thinking, ahead of their time, and cutting edge" and in opposition to the "wrong-headedness" of conventional ideology.[24] Wales further figures this wrong-headedness as decidedly Christian in its intolerance of sexual desire and expression and in its belief in the necessity of chastity outside of marriage. As he states: "One did not give a child cake to watch its poor efforts to keep it from its mouth" (Y 62). In this respect, Wales's comments concur with Hardy's criticism of the Christian idea of sexual abstinence. Considering the impossibility of his going to visit Sue, Jude knew that only saints "would have shunned such encounters if they doubted their own strength" (J 217).

If The Yoke opposes a national ideology of sexual repression bulwarked by the church, campaigned for by "charitable ones" and passively supported by the stolid masses represented by Tom Cunningham, it also champions the liberation of the "sex instinct" from the societal imposition of a too restrictive and ultimately destructive morality. As in previous fiction examined, natural instincts are thwarted by unsympathetic civil laws and social convention. In The Yoke, arbitrary social codes pervert human nature, as in the following authorial interjection:

> There are only two instincts implanted in humanity; one is to sustain life, the other is to perpetuate it. All others, so called, may be brought under on of those heads. There is nothing immoral in either of them. Particularly they include the appetites. I fearlessly assert that there is no vice in the temperate gratification of *any* appetite (Y 121-2).

Wales trumpets the psychological and physical benefits involved in fulfilling 'healthy' sexual desires. Once the yoke of sexual repression is lifted from Angelica, she is "wonderfully improved":

> Her sound constitution, in spite of so many years of unnatural conditions, responded vigorously, now that the check on normal development was withdrawn, and gave her not only glowing health but rejuvenation. Beyond that, she was conscious of a lively mental exaltation. Her life was no longer

[24] Marshik 5.

> meaningless, the reproach of enduring maidenhood was removed, she had fulfilled her destiny, she was a woman (Y 142).

Wales's description here of Angelica's post-coital state smacks, perhaps rather comically, of later sexual hygiene rhetoric, lauding as it does the advantages of healthy, if temperate sexual activity.[25] The benefits are not only physical and mental but seemingly philosophical, giving meaning to Angelica Jenour's life and fulfilling her destiny as a woman. Her health veritably glows and her mind 'exalts' now the check of a psychologically, physically and spiritually damaging repression has been lifted. Life meaning is derived from sexual fulfilment. Such an affirmation of healthy sexual practice resonates with novels like The Rainbow (1915) and Women in Love (1920), even if Lawrence's novels are invariably more discriminatory regarding the type of sexual relations which can produce healthy individuals.

Angelica Jenour's fulfilment of her female destiny also aligns Wales's rhetoric to eugenicist concerns about national and imperial health. If Angelica has not exactly given birth to a eugenically sound male, she has at least educated one in healthy sexual practice and, by doing so, protected him from the temptation of unhealthy sex and the dangers of venereal disease, which the judgemental and prudish Mrs Grahame clearly has not. Angelica Jenour has guided her charge, "[...] safely through the perilous zone between manhood and marriage which had cost poor Chris his life" (Y 294). Although, the frisson of psychological incest might take the notion of mothers imparting healthy sexual practice to sons rather literally, Angelica's sexual intervention has saved a healthy son for England. In the sexual protection of the young Maurice Heelas, and in

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[25] Maria Stopes's Married Love (1918) is an example of the type of social hygiene rhetoric to which I refer as the following quotation demonstrates: "From the body of the loved one's simple, sweetly coloured flesh, which our animal instincts urge us to desire, there springs not only the wonder of a new bodily life, but also the enlargement of the horizon of human sympathy and the glow of spiritual understanding which one could never have attained alone." Maria Stopes, Married Love (London: Oxford UP, 2004) 23.

the spiritual, physical and psychological rejuvenation of Angelica Jenour, The Yoke is an exemplar of sound eugenic and sexually hygienic practice.

The novel also demonstrates the centrality of sexuality to character motivation and behaviour in a much more pronounced way than Jude the Obscure. Sex fulfils Angelica, gives meaning to her life, makes her physically and mentally healthy as before it had caused her "needless breakdowns" (Y 13). Sex had been a barrier "which had held her silent for so many years" (Y 37). The melodramatic importance attached to Maurice Heelas's desire to go out at night being equated with his intractable sexual desire is also an indication of the centrality of sex to the novel's characters. The effect of listening to the Cunninghams above leads to Angelica "trembling with uncontrollable excitement and agitation" (Y 58). The 'before' of sexual repression and the 'after' of sexual fulfilment form the narrative core of the novel. After sacrificing Maurice to Cecil, Angelica is not sad. On the contrary: "She had eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge and it had not turned to ashes in her mouth. She was equal with her fellows; her life had not been a senseless thing, an inversion of instincts; she knew herself" (Y 313). The last comment reveals just how central sex has become to self-knowledge in Wales's novel. In Foucault's words the "demand that sex speak the truth" is clearly met in The Yoke.

Ann Veronica: Making a Eugenicist Out of Mrs. Grundy[26]

Concerned about the erotic content of his novel The Trespasser (1912), D. H. Lawrence told Edward Garnet that he did not want to be "talked about in an Ann Veronica fashion."[27] It is some gauge of the scandal Ann Veronica caused that Lawrence should worry about achieving the same kind of notoriety that Ann Veronica brought Wells. To a modern reader, this might appear strange as Ann Veronica does not seem "steeped in sex" as was claimed of Jude the Obscure or could be claimed of The Yoke. As one of the novel's detractors commented, "Ann Veronica has not a coarse word in it, nor are the 'suggestive' passages open to any very severe criticism."[28] Why then was Ann Veronica so controversial? Similarly to how Hubert Wales was attacked for representing a "modern attitude", Wells is accused of supplanting an old morality based on female sexual restraint and the sanctity of matrimony with a new morality of sexual libertinage and self-indulgent individualism. Writing in the Daily News, Rolfe Arnold Scott-James argues: "In effect he is content to negate the old morality as something out of date, effete, harmful, tiresome; he puts in its place a negative which masquerades as the supreme assertion of individuality" (WCH 157). Wilfred Whitten refers to Ann Veronica as "a modern British daughter defying the old morality, and saying it is glorious to do so" (WCH 162). In perhaps the most famous attack on the novel, an unsigned review in the Spectator, John St Loe Strachey, a supporter of the National Social Purity Crusade, states: "We do not wish to make appeal solely to the principles of Christian morality or to the sanctions of religion, though to our mind that appeal is

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[26] The quote comes from the eugenicist Caleb Saleeby's text, Woman and Womanhood A Search for Principles (London: Mitchell Kennerley, 1912) 139. Saleeby argues: "As I have said before, we might make a eugenist of Mrs. Grundy, so that she might be as much affronted by a criminal marriage as she is now by the spectacle of a healthy and well-developed baby appearing unduly soon after its parents' marriage."

[27] R.P. Draper ed., D. H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage (London: Tayler and Francis, 1997) 4.

the strongest and greatest of all" (WCH 170). Wells was clearly upsetting 'old' Christian morality.

In fact, much of the rhetoric of the critical reception of Ann Veronica is couched in the familiar terms of the author's foregrounding of the *bête humaine* at the expense of the *beau ideal.* Ann Veronica's love for Capes is described by Wilfred Whitten, as "a savage and devouring selfishness originating in an untutored greed of life, intellectual in character, but essentially hard, cheap, and unspiritual" (WCH 163). Strachey argues:

> When the temptation is strong enough, not only is the tempted person justified in yielding, but such yielding becomes not merely inevitable but something to be welcomed and glorified. If an animal yearning or lust is only sufficiently absorbing, it is to be obeyed. Self-sacrifice is a dream and self-restraint a delusion. Such things have no place in the muddy world of Mr. Wells's imaginings. His is a community of scuffling stoats and ferrets, unenlightened by a ray of duty or abnegation (WCH 170).

Here again the connection between animality and sexuality is made explicit, although Strachey has imaginatively leapt from the usual tropes of porcine and canine animality to the more idiosyncratic one of stoat and ferret. As with Zola, giving in to animal yearnings, and even representing characters who yield to them, leads to national perdition. Ann Veronica was a danger to young English women and thus England itself. In a review in T. P. Weekly in 1909, Wilfred Whitten hopes that "[...] the British daughter will keep her head [...]" (WCH 161) as the novel invites her "[...] to run amuck through life in the name of self-fulfilment" (WCH 164). He continues: "To condemn her at all will seem to many a young reader like depreciating love, courage, and emancipation. This is why Ann Veronica seems to me to be a dangerous novel" (WCH 162).

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[28] Patrick Parrinder, ed., H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge 1997) 170. Henceforth abbreviated to WCH.

As Whitten's comments imply, Ann Veronica clearly offends because it complicates the same binaries of accepted female behaviour already examined, if now figured through the generational conflict between the new morality of young middle-class rebellion and the older morality of Victorian expectation. Ann Veronica's father believes, "Women are made like the potter's vessels – either for worship or contumely, and are withal fragile vessels" (AV 13). This Victorian dividing practice is amplified by Ann Veronica's suitors in the novel. While Manning clearly wishes to worship women, Rammage is a man who perceives them as "a sex of swindlers" who "have all the instinctive dexterity of parasites" (AV 168). Manning's traditional view of women is articulated by Miss Garvice who believed "women were not made for the struggle and turmoil of life –their place was the little world, the home" (AV 175) as Rammage's sexual cynicism regarding women is mirrored by Miss Miniver's Tolstoyan sexual cynicism regarding men who "are blinded to all fine and subtle things; they look at life with bloodshot eyes and dilated nostrils. They are arbitrary and unjust and dogmatic and brutish and lustful" (AV 145). Ann Veronica rejects these largely Victorian classifications of both sexes. As she tells Manning: "Men ought not to idealize any woman. We aren't worth it. We've done nothing to deserve it. And it hampers us. You don't know the thoughts we have; the things we can do or say" (AV 236). Similarly, Ann Veronica denies Miss Miniver's belief that men are "silly coarse brutes" and ought to be loved only platonically: "Bodies! Bodies! Horrible things! We are souls. Love lives on a higher plane. We are not animals" (AV 144). The aesthetic sense Ann Veronica develops through her scientific training leads her to question the elevation of spirit at the expense of flesh: "Don't we all rather humbug about the coarseness? [...] We pretend bodies are ugly. Really they are the most beautiful things in the world. We pretend we never think of everything that makes us what we are" (AV

144). Ann Veronica rejects both Manning's adoration of women and Miss Miniver's feminist glorification of woman as both intellectually dishonest and restrictive of any real sense of female emancipation.

However, and perhaps most shocking for the reading public, was Ann Veronica's sexual behaviour which challenged the same prevalent notions that Hubert Wales had done in The Yoke that women have no interest in sex and that sex should only occur within marriage. At one stage, after asking Capes to kiss her, Ann Veronica states: "I want you. I want you to be my lover. I want to give myself to you" (AV 250). Moreover, as Trotter argues, Ann Veronica's discovery of "a fine golden down" on Capes's cheeks (AV 147) represents, "Not so much a feature as a space between features, the golden down becomes the evidence and emblem of Ann Veronica's desire. Her apprehension of it eroticises Capes."[29] Wells provides a clear description of a young woman's sexual awakening when in normative discourses of sexuality young women were supposed to remain sexually dormant. The same claim could be made of Wales's description of a sexually awakened Angelica Jenour as regards older woman. Moreover, once sexually awakened, Ann Veronica, like Angelica Jenour, refuses to be the passive object of male desire but actively pursues an inappropriate sex partner, in Angelica Jenour's case, her stepson, in Ann Veronica's, a divorced adulterer. The objection to Ann Veronica's choice of partner is made explicit by Whitten who refers to Capes as a man "[...] already married, and [...] an adulterer of the worst type" (WCH 161).

It has been argued, by Wells's son amongst others, that the degree of scandal Ann Veronica caused must be understood within the context of Wells's own sin against

[29] Trotter 201.

the old morality: his affair with Amber Reeves.[30] Margaret Drabble argues that what offended Wells about Strachey's attack was "not his moralizing phrases about 'scuffling stoats and ferrets' but the quotation from Dr Johnson applied to Ann Veronica and hence to Amber Reeves: "the woman's a _____, and there's an end on't."[31] However, Wells himself acquitted Strachey "of anything but an entirely honest and intolerant difference of opinion" (WCH 172). This is not to deny the effect the knowledge of Wells's private life might have had on the reception of the novel in some quarters, but rather to stress that Ann Veronica was criticised foremost as an attack on Christian morality, and a Christian morality which specifically demanded unmarried middle-class women, the archetypal British daughter of Whitten's article, remained sexually inactive and uninterested. This class element is, moreover, clearly significant to the sexual binaries that the novel challenges. Whereas Zola's Nana depicts the dangers of working class sexuality, Wells's sexually aberrant protagonist is a middle-class girl from the suburbs. Wells's novel could be read in light of Foucault's assertion that sexual governance was as concerned with the self-regulation of the middle class as it was with the policing of the working class. As Foucault comments, "The bourgeoisie began by considering that its own sex was something important, a fragile treasure [...]" (HS 120-121). Ann Veronica and The Yoke are concerned precisely with the fragile treasure of bourgeois female sexuality. Referring to the bourgeois "idle woman", a construct that can be historically located before Wells's novel but certainly resonates with the position of many women in the first decade of the twentieth century, Foucault states: "She inhabited the outer edge of the world in which she always had to appear as a value, and of the family, where she was assigned a new destiny charged with conjugal

[30] Anthony West wrote: "My father's novel was attacked because it could be read in the light of the scandal as a self-serving justification of his own scandalous behaviour." Margaret Drabble, introduction, Ann Veronica (London: Penguin, 2005): xiii-xxxiii, at xxiv.
[31] Drabble xxv.

and parental obligations" (HS 121). While Wells apparently attacks the peripheral role of the "idle women" in Ann Veronica, he reinscribes her on the "outer edge of the world" by insisting that her chief public duty is still procreation, if she is now allowed greater choice with whom she procreates. Ann Veronica is neither the fallen woman that Lily Czepanik is in Sudermann's novel nor the working-class bait for middle-class temptation that Nana is in Zola's novel. Ann Veronica, like Angelica Jenour in The Yoke, is solidly and stolidly figured as middle-class by the novel's narrator and as a middle-class aberration by the novel's detractors.

The idea of the novel ostensibly supplanting an old morality with a new morality needs to be contextualised by contemporary Edwardian debates about national regeneration, which were especially concerned with class differentials in the birth rate. Whitten and Strachey's rhetoric might privilege a timeless old against a faddish new morality, but their objections to Wells are also predicated on the defence of middle-class hegemony against sexual threat, even if such a threat now comes from within its own ranks. Even as Strachey writes in defence of Christian values, this old morality is realigned to the nation's health. Sexual continence is not merely about individual virtue but is a matter of national well-being and linked to the "life of the State." What Strachey refers to as the "duty of self-control and continence in the interests of the family", is not exclusive to women but placed on them in "a special degree" as "the duty of giving his life for the State is imposed in a special degree upon the man" (WCH 170). Utilizing the first person plural, he states: "We do not wish to boycott or denounce any and every book which does not accept the ethical standard of Christianity," but to protest, "the effect it is likely to have in undermining that sense of continence and self-control in the individual which is essential to a sound and healthy

State" (WCH 170). Ann Veronica transgresses, so Strachey claims, because it privileges individual fulfilment over national necessity and, specifically, female desire over female duty to the nation. It also attacks marriage and particularly, as Whitten comments, the family: "The legal husband, wife, and child are still the units of society. The best woman is still the good woman, who maintains her culture by imparting it to her children" (WCH 164). Strachey is equally indignant: "Mr. Wells has depicted the faithlessness of a man to his marriage vows. Such faithlessness is treated as something to be just as easily and as lightly disregarded as a woman's loss of virtue" (WCH 171). Although Strachey's argument appears similar to Margaret Oliphant's assault on the anti-marriage league, Strachey has shifted the emphasis of his attack from a defence of Christian morality *per se* to a defence of Christianity as the best means of making women, particularly middle-class women like Ann Veronica, conform to their duty to the state by producing healthy offspring for the nation. Strachey's Christian morality, thus, bolsters an argument primarily concerned with national efficiency.[32] Christian morality, particularly as it focuses on the institution of the family, functions most effectively as a bulwark to the state. According to Strachey:

> Unless the citizens of a State put before themselves the principles of duty, self-sacrifice, self-control, and continence, not merely in the matter of national defence, national preservation, and national well-being, but also of the sex relationship, the life of the State must be short and precarious. Unless the institution of the family is firmly founded and assured, the State will not continue (WCH 170).

Wells's attack on the family is so harmful to nation and race precisely because the institution of the family is the foundation of the state.[33]

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[32] The importance of ideas of national efficiency not only to areas of economics but also to eugenics and even literature has been commented upon by several critics, most recently by Susan Raitt in "The Rhetoric of National Efficiency in Early Modernism," Modernism/Modernity 13 (2006): 835-851.

[33] The idea that Wells's socialist ideals attacked family values was contested by Wells in his pamphlet, "Will Socialism Destroy the Family?" (1907) in which Wells argues that, "Socialism regards parentage under proper safeguards and good auspices, as 'not only a duty but a service' to the state; that is to say, it proposes to pay for good parentage - in other words, to *endow the home*. Socialism comes not to destroy

If the old morality of Strachey seems more aligned with discourses of national efficiency than it might first appear, then Wells's new morality, by implication opposed to Christian morality, challenges less Strachey's Christian morality than that his view overlooks "that in practice the arrangement you (he) manifestly approve is not giving the modern State enough children, or fine enough children, for its needs" (WCH 173). Wells does not dispute that the "chief public duty" of women is to bear children but only the efficacy of the "Christian ideal of marriage and woman's purity" (WCH 173) to bear them in sufficient numbers. Wells's novel champions less the politics of the New Woman than the logic of positive eugenics, which, like Strachey's moralism, asserts the importance of middle-class women's role as procreators to national regeneration. By giving "the natural instincts of womanhood freer play" the race will be improved, population decline reversed and "race suicide" averted.[34] Both Strachey and Wells are primarily concerned about the effect the differential birth rate might have on the state of the nation. In his trumpeting of the race mother, Wells is similar to George Moore, Grant Allen and George Egerton in their privileging of motherhood over all other female responsibilities.

Certainly like Grant Allen and George Egerton, giving womanhood freer play does not imply giving women greater political, economic or legal power in Wells's controversial novel. Not only does Ann Veronica find the suffrage movement "defective and unsatisfying" (AV 203), a position mirrored by Wells's satirizing of the 1908 October raid on the House of Commons as "wild burlesque" (AV 188), but also, in Ann Veronica's revelatory stay in prison, she realises:

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but to save." H. G. Wells, "Will Socialism Destroy the Family?" New Worlds For Old (New York: MacMillan, 1908): 114-136, at 124.

[34] I do not wish to expand on the considerable amount of work that has already been done in general on the relationship between eugenics and literature nor on the specific readings of Wells's own views on eugenics. I am rather more interested in presenting the morality of Wells's argument about eugenic efficiency in Ann Veronica in relation to those critics that morally objected to the novel.

> A woman wants a proper alliance with a man, a man who is better stuff than herself. She wants that and needs that more than anything else in the world. It may not be just, it may not be fair, but things are so. It isn't law, nor custom, nor masculine violence settled that. It is just how things happen to be. She wants to be free – she wants to be legally and economically free, so as not to be subject to the wrong man; but only God who made the world, can alter things to prevent her being slave to the right one (AV 204).

Suffragists like Elizabeth Robins clearly objected to Ann Veronica and Wells's rather patronising comment that the portrait of the suffragettes was meant as "only a gentle kindly criticism" (AV introd. xxiv).[35] There is little in Ann Veronica's ruminations in prison that Strachey might have found morally offensive. A woman needs more than anything else a man "who is better stuff than herself" which is "just how things happen to be." There can be no real equality as women are inferior to men, as Ann Veronica acknowledges, and it is nature that dictates it is so and that women, unless changed by an act of God, must remain subservient to men. Wells, in fact, is arguing for female choice to avoid "the wrong man" to make patriarchal society, now scientifically essentialised as natural, more effective. This demonstrates how, as Anne B. Simpson has noted:

> Wells's fiction is often marked by tensions between a passionately articulated liberalism and a deeply conservative vision – between the wishful fantasy that select individuals might attain more than contemporary culture had to offer and a pronounced fear of how the new might disrupt the foundations of that culture.[36]

In Ann Veronica, such a tension can be witnessed in the collision between the liberational narrative of the heroine's escape from the gendered limitations of suburban society and Wells's affirmation of the central importance of motherhood to national

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[35] Elsewhere Wells's comments on the suffrage movement were decidedly less gentle. In Experiments in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (Since 1866) (1934), Wells stated that the idea "That feminism had anything to do with sexual health and happiness was reputed by these ladies with flushed indignation ... They were good pure women rightly struggling for a Vote, and that was all they wanted." H. G. Wells, Experiments in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (Since 1866) (New York: MacMillan, 1934) 407.

[36] Anne B. Simpson, "Architects of the Erotic: H. G. Wells's 'New Woman'," Seeing Double: Revisioning Edwardian and Modernist Literature, ed. Carole M. Kaplan and Anne. B. Simpson (New York: St Martin's, 1996): 39-58, at 41.

regeneration. Ann Veronica's prison thoughts must not be taken as exceptional, or as the protagonist's immature stage in a *bildungsroman*. They are key to the trajectory of the novel. Although Ann Veronica makes an initial mistake in her choice of partner by getting engaged to Manning, her eventual selection of the alpha male Capes, might go against traditional morality, but mating with a man of "better stuff" is thoroughly good eugenic practice. After the consummation of their marriage in the Nietzschean setting of mountainous slopes away from the common herd below, the novel concludes with Ann Veronica as a middle-class housewife entrusted to the rearing of her future eugenically superior children. The novel's eugenic argument of the importance of female selection over the dictates of Christian morality might be juxtaposed with Ann Veronica's fear of losing the uniqueness of herself, her experience, her love for Capes and concern that her life is now "hedged about with discretions" and with "all this furniture" (AV 291), but this does not alter, contest or complicate the notion that Ann Veronica is where she should be and doing what she should be doing which is fulfilling her "chief public duty."

In the sense that H. G. Wells demonstrates both sympathy for women's rights, if in a limited fashion, and a belief in their chief public role as race mothers, his ideas are not radically different from other Fabian eugenicists such as Karl Pearson, who, as Soloway acknowledges, was "strongly sympathetic to feminist goals" but believed that the needs of the race must come first which was why the "penalty to be paid for race predominance [would be] the subjection of women."[37] H. G. Wells does not make the same claim but the narrative trajectory of Ann Veronica significantly privileges the needs of the race over the rights of women.

[37] Soloway 119.

Wells promotes the right of women to select their sexual partners, but once chosen Ann Veronica concludes the novel as a dutiful, largely subservient wife on the verge of complying with her duty to the state. Is there much difference by the end of the novel between dutiful Ann Veronica and Whitten's good woman? "The best woman is still the good woman, who maintains her culture by imparting it to her children, who interpolates her mother wit in a world of pioneering and argument, and who, as far as may be, makes her own home a microcosm of Utopia" (WCH 164). This is certainly not true of the last novel to be examined. Lilly Czepanik in The Song of Songs is clearly not, in Whitten's terms, a good woman; she is childless and itinerant and, possibly as Whitten complained of the adulterer Capes, an adulteress of the worst type.

Hermann Sudermann: The Sentimentalization of the Unpleasant

The last novel to be examined in this thesis, Hermann Sudermann's The Song of Songs (Das hohe Lied) (1909), offers an interesting comparison to the first novel analysed, Zola's Nana. Most obviously, both novels were written by foreigners and censored in England, showing that the threat of pernicious literature from abroad remained: Zola's novel was banned as a result of Vizetelly's trial; Sudermann's novel was withdrawn from publication by John Lane after police advice.[38] In terms of narrative content, both novels chart the sexual life and social decline of their female protagonists, and both ostensibly refuse to pass moral judgement on sexual behaviour considered aberrant by

[38] According to Arnold Bennett writing as Jacob Tonson in his "Books and Person" column for The New Age, Sudermann's novel was first banned by the private libraries although one circulating library refused to give a customer the book "in view of the action of legal authorities in respect to books of a questionable nature." Arnold Bennet (Jacob Tonson), "Books and Persons," The New Age (1910) 207.

traditional moralists. However, there are significant differences between the novels, especially in this area of the moral treatment of female sexuality. If in Zola's Nana, the moral framework from which to judge the prostitute as victim or victimizer is removed, in Hermann Sudermann's The Song of Songs it is largely satirized. Even more significantly, Sudermann's novel, although sharing some similarities with earlier naturalist novels, can also be read in some respects as an attack on the kind of naturalist fiction of writers such as Zola. I will demonstrate below how Sudermann's novel attacks both traditional morality as well as the pessimistic ideology of naturalism.[39]

This double attack can be seen in the novel's treatment of Lilly Czepanek's reading habits. Lilly is "a poor thing who had been crushed and exploited" (SOS 640) but it is her own romanticised notion of victimhood – largely acquired through reading books at Mrs. Amussen's circulating library – which is shown to provide a wholly inadequate interpretation of her life, as her reflections on the letter she writes, but never sends, to her prospective fiancé Konrad Rennschmidt demonstrate:

> Phrases like "dull night in which my spirit was enveloped" and "tried desperately to struggle" belonged in sentimental novels. They were inapplicable to her life. She had suffered not so much from despair as from boredom and during that "dull night" she had enjoyed herself greatly on many an occasion (SOS 578).

In similar mode to a naturalist text such as George Moore A Mummer's Wife, Sudermann inscribes the thematic of censorship in his text by showing, in his anti-romantic novel, the falsity of Lilly's romantic illusions caused by reading circulating library novels when juxtaposed with the events of her life. However, in Sudermann, the seduction of reading proves to have a less drastic effect on Lilly Czepanek than on Kate Ede, as the former, unlike the latter, ultimately rejects romantic fiction for the greater

[39] David Baguley's perceives Naturalist plots as dysphoric. The Naturalist novel "submits man (or, more frequently, woman) to an ironic, humiliating destiny, exposing the fundamental corruptibility and emptiness of human existence as they manifest themselves in daily life and in the baseness of bourgeois

naturalistic truths of existence. Her bovaryism does not inevitably lead to suicide or an alcohol-induced death. Lilly, unlike Emma Bovary, can distinguish between reality and the romance of sentimental novels, and it is this discernment which prevents her from the suicide to which Emma Bovary's romantic outlook drives her.[40] The novel, thus, transgresses the naturalist narrative code that invariably punishes romantically inclined protagonists – if perhaps ironically given the antagonistic stance of most naturalist novelists to the more 'moral' mid-Victorian novel. Kate Ede's elopement ends in her alcoholic demise; Nana's life as a prostitute ends in her miserable death from small pox. However, Lilly Czepanik is saved, her rescue daringly left until the last page of the novel. This volte-face was objected to by the American critic William Lyon Phelps. Writing in 1910, he states:

> But this ending leaves us completely bewildered and depressed. It seems to imply that, after all, these successive steps in moral decline do not make much difference, one way or the other [...]. The reader not only feels cheated; he feels that the moral element in the story, which through all the scenes of vice has been made clear, is now laughed at by the author. [...]. A novel may take us through woe and sin, and yet not produce any impression of cynicism; but one that makes a careful, serious study of subtle moral decay through over six hundred pages, and then implies at the end that the distinction between vice and virtue is, after all, a matter of no consequence, leaves an impression for which the proverbial "bad taste in the mouth" is utterly inadequate to describe.[41]

Phelps is clearly offended by Lilly's novelistic survival. Phelps's reading of the text is predicated on the notion that fiction should reward virtue and castigate vice. For Phelps, only if Lilly succumbs to suicide or the poverty of a working-class prostitute could her previous actions be fatalistically read as determined by moral weakness as such actions invariably were in mid-Victorian fiction or by heredity or environment as

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manners." David Baguley, "The Nature of Naturalism," Naturalism in the European Novel, ed. Brian Nelson (New York: St. Martin's, 1992): 13-26, at 19.

[40] Emma Bovary's decision to commit suicide is described thus: "Now her situation, like an abyss, came back to her. She was panting, her chest almost bursting. And in a rapture of heroism which was almost joyful, she ran down the hill, crossed the plank-bridge, along the footpath, down the alley, over the market square, and arrived in front of the pharmacist's shop." Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary, trans. Geoffrey Wall (1857; London: Penguin, 2003) 293.

[41] William Lyon Phelps, Essays on Modern Novelists (New York: Macmillan, 1910) 154-5.

they were in naturalist fiction. By refusing to kill Lilly, Sudermann liberates his protagonist from such fatalism, which is precisely what leaves a "proverbial" bad taste in Phelps's mouth. Phelps locates Sudermann's novel within a tradition of fictional moralizing, the novel of Victorian character, based on an aesthetic that insists on the sexual apathy of women and equates sexual interest with lower-class vulgarity. Sudermann's novel complicates both the aesthetic and the morality: Lilly is sexually interested and her fall into vice does not lead to her destruction, but to relative middle-class respectability and the achievement of her lifelong ambition to travel to Italy.

Phelps's reading of the text as providing a "careful serious study of moral decay" also fails to recognise that, long before its end, the narrative clearly signals that Lilly refuses to be situated within the bounds of conventional sexual morality. Limiting Lilly's behaviour to simple moral judgement does not accommodate the complexity of her reality. Lilly is not, for example, unlike romantic or even other naturalist heroines such as Nana, the dangerously contagious working-class prostitute. The last sentence of the novel, "She had always been a dangerous woman, they said" (SOS 640), is ironic. As the narrative makes clear, Lilly has been taken advantage of by a series of men, sexually objectified and, to a certain extent, commodified from the first "high school students" who "followed her all afire" (SOS 19) to the "slim young men of fashion" (SOS 107) who swarm Mrs Amussen's library. Her colonel husband describes himself as a "connoisseur in women" (SOS 125) and parades Lilly in front of others: "The value of his property seemed to be enhanced in the degree in which people smiled, and envied him the possession of it" (SOS 158). Richard Dehnicke is also proud of his possession of Lilly as his mistress: "So far from hesitating to be seen at Lilly's side on the streets and promenades, he could not display himself to the eyes of the crowd often enough" (SOS 368). As Lilly is objectified as property by Colonel von Mertzbach and Richard

Dehnicke, she is also objectified as ideal pure woman by her artist lover, Konrad Rennschmidt. Lilly is, in fact, neither dangerous nor destructive, but passive and reactive, invariably falling under the control of the various men in her life. Referring to the colonel: "She knew she would not offer the least resistance, so completely was she in his power" (SOS 126). Riding with Von Prell, "[...] she felt too much under Von Prell's control" (SOS 223). With Richard Dehnicke: "She was what he had determined she should be: his courtesan, his creature" (SOS 359). With Dr. Salmoni she feels, "entirely in his power" and thinks she "will be whatever he wants you to be" (SOS 419).

In fact, Lilly is neither demon whore nor sexless victim. The novel's heavy concentration on the "spell of an erotic world" clearly locates The Song of Songs in the later Edwardian wave of sex novels where, more so than in the sex novels of the first wave, female sexual desire is foregrounded as in The Yoke and Ann Veronica. For however passive Lilly appears to be, she is not sexually indifferent. Not only does Lilly initially enjoy sex with her husband – remembering what had happened the morning after "she gave herself up to him", "She leaned over and wanted to kiss him" (SOS 149) – but she also desires other men. This is clear from her eventual response to the promiscuous Mrs Jula, who frequently picks up men on the street believing that "the only way to enjoy them is in the plural" (SOS 379) and who believes that, "[...] the more men you possess the more life you possess [...]" (SOS 381). At first Lilly does not take Jula seriously, "though hot and cold waves shivered through her body" (SOS 381) but later after she has "descended into the mire" by giving herself to the artist Kellerman, she feels herself, "[...] completely under the spell of an erotic world that every excitement of her mood was immediately transmuted into a desirous love game. And the longing, that eternal toothache, of which Mrs Jula had spoken, had begun to

drill her nerves" (SOS 406). Seen in the context of Edwardian prostitution, the dangers of sexuality, and the privileging of sexual activity within matrimony at the expense of all other sexual relations, Lilly's sexual desire for men outside of marriage is clearly transgressive, more so because Lilly's sexual behaviour ultimately goes unpunished. The novel's privileging of Lilly's sexual instincts over the limited strictures of conventional morality, align the novel with emerging scientific discourses of sexuality that challenge the restrictions of sexual acts to heterosexual monogamy and attribute sexual desire beyond matrimony largely to the foibles of morally weak men and the temptations of morally bankrupt women.

What is also striking about Sudermann's novel is that such simplistic delineations of sexual morality in The Song of Songs are frequently deflated by laughter. Whereas comedy is largely remiss from the narratives of Naturalist and New Woman writers and laughter largely absent from lives of Kate Ede, Esther Waters and Herminia Barton, Sudermann's novel uses comedy and Lilly Czepanik utilises laughter to ridicule both Lilly's sense of victimhood and her "lofty" intentions to improve others. When she contemplates rescuing her lover, Von Prell – defined as "a man utterly devoid of moral fibre" (SOS 109) – "from his own frivolity, from that fatal condition of his soul which threatened to entangle and choke him in a net of vulgar escapades" (SOS 220), Lilly ends up being seduced by his frivolity and feeling reduced to the level of one of Von Prell's previous conquests. Such comic deflation is evident in Lilly's attempt to help Von Prell maintain his position after seducing a housemaid:

> Lilly was helping him, but not with that beautiful dignified air of superiority with which she had wanted to hold out her rescuing hand. She felt she was like a playmate of his, and every few moments a half-suppressed giggle interrupted her speech (SOS 209).

Von Prell may be, as Lilly eventually realizes, "a little good-for-nothing lieutenant" (SOS 574) but at least his laughter and sexual honesty debunk the romantic conceit of

Lilly's 'noble' intentions. Indeed, much of the novel's humour derives from the juxtaposition of Lilly's romantic self-idealisation with the reality of her life. In this sense Lilly is ultimately more similar in outlook to a naturalist writer than a naturalist character like Nana or Kate Ede. Humour, and specifically irony, is situated less in a narrative conspiracy between narrator and reader in relation to a character's lack of self-awareness as it is in, say, Flaubert, but within the character's self-realisation of the limitations of her previous emotions and aspirations drawn from sentimental novels. In Sudermann's novel, Lilly is allowed to deflate her own romantic pretensions in ways that Emma Bovary and Kate Ede are not. At the climax of the novel, as Lilly receives the forgiveness of Konrad Rennschmidt, she feels: "With her sins washed away, redeemed, reborn, she stepped back into virtuous society at the side of the beloved man [...]" (SOS 589-90). However such hopes of re-entering virtuous society are dashed when she gets drunk in the presence of Rennschmidt and his uncle, dances lasciviously and thus destroys her lover's idealised view of her as rendered in his poem: "With hours stolen I entwine/ A crown of flame that heavenly aspires/ In tongues of fire up round your head divine" (SOS 485). Lilly is not only the object of Rennschmidt's idealised love, a saint all the better idealised because of her suffering (583), she is also "the famous impersonator, who when the spirit moved her, needed but to open her mouth to evoke a storm of applause" (SOS 616). Laughter again deflates Lilly's romantic self-image when she is most concerned about "her fallow soul" (SOS 459) as when: "Suddenly she shook with a fit of laughter. It was all nonsense, her regrets and her yearnings, Richard's snobbish ambitions, his mother's eternal marriage schemes. Even the respectability she desired was utterly vapid" (459-460). Such a discrepancy between romantic idealisation and hard reality is also highlighted by the regular recurrence at key junctures of the narrative of Lilly's precious manuscript of her

father's composition "Song of Songs", which although symbolic of both her virtuous past and the noble aspirations for her future, was created by a lothario father who abandons her, fought over with an insane mother who stabs her, and finally tossed away by Lilly herself as she abandons any hope of moral or aesthetic amelioration. In The Song of Songs, the simplistic polarity between the *bête humaine* and the *beau ideal* is comically deflated by the greater complexity of lived experience.

Lilly's romantic idealisation is echoed by the thoughts and actions of other characters. Although in Lilly's case, her idealistic pretensions are often punctured by her ability to laugh at their absurdities, other characters are less self-aware. This allows the narrative to employ irony as social critique of the hypocrisy central to a society that would romanticise Lilly as a victim of a world that has "treated me badly" (SOS 576), or criticise her as her colonel husband does as "an immoral whore who anybody could tell at a glance was no lady" (SOS 168). Mrs Amussen, for example, vies between beating and insulting her daughters and venerating them as "glorious creatures" (SOS 92). She is a tyrant and a drunk, and the novel's ironic inscription of hypocritical protest against pernicious literature in which, "Everything written these days vitiates the soul and lures it to its destruction" (SOS 50). She censoriously forbids Lilly to read. Her daughters had been "crammed full of impudence and corruption" (SOS 50) by doing so. Such a disparity between moral correctness and individual action can also be seen in Mrs Amussen's daughters whose vigorous mores about appropriate sexual behaviour are undermined by "[...] permitting themselves to be accosted" becoming "their chief and sole occupation" (SOS 96). Sudermann's novel prefigures the kind of hypocritical society that will, in England, censor The Song of Songs. Censorship is thus as firmly inscribed into the narrative as it is with those writers previously examined.

If the novel critiques romantic fiction it also attacks some of the romantic elitist pretensions of aesthetic idealism, perhaps most effectively by satirising Dr. Salmoni. Salmoni lends Lilly pseudo-Nietzschean books which speak of the "will to power" in which, "[...] each pure beauty was extolled as the goal of human endeavours; in each the word individuality recurred numberless times in numberless connections" (SOS 413). Salmoni's sole intention, however couched in *ubermensch* rhetoric, is to seduce Lilly. This is not to wholly equate Salmoni's pseudo-philosophy with Mrs. Amussen's social hypocrisy – in one sense Salmoni's books are Mrs Amussen's pernicious literature in that they leave Lilly open to seduction – but to illustrate that the novel critiques both self-idealisation as moral ideology and self-idealisation as romantic aesthetic. If Mrs Amussen's strictures about the evils of reading aim to safeguard Lilly from moral degradation, Dr. Salmoni's inducements to read aim to nurture Lilly's "individual style" and "the will to personality" (SOS 410) and lead her away from mediocrity and sameness. In fact, both Amussen's moral conformity and Salmoni's individual style (SOS 409) can be figured in a binary that juxtaposes a desirable, be it moral or aesthetic, 'high' with a sexually interested and debased 'low'. Humour arises in Salmoni's case in that a disinterested idealistic aesthetic is employed purely in an attempt to seduce Lilly. This ironic disjunction can be witnessed as Lilly waits for him to come and thinks: "You promised to lead me up to the heights out of these depths of distress, out of this insipid existence, out of this void! Be true to your word. Do not desert me. I will do whatever you wish. I will be your thing, your creature. But don't desert me" (SOS 423). While contemplating the "heights", Lilly is on the verge of being seduced. She is prepared to do what Salmoni wishes, believing that the real object of sexual relations with Salmoni is to be raised from her insipid existence to a higher aesthetic plane. Her sense of individuality figured as soul or individual style is

further demolished by Mrs. Jula who informs Lilly that Salmoni's pitch about uniqueness is applied indiscriminately to all women in Lilly's social group.

The Song of Songs does the opposite of what Phelps claims: it does not sentimentalise the unpleasant. Rather it satirises both sentimental fiction locatable in the circulating libraries and Naturalist fiction associated with unpleasantness. Moreover, and more so than any other novel examined here, Sudermann demonstrates the transgressive power of comedy to mock romantic and aesthetic idealisations invariably ideologically grounded in social and sexual hierarchies.

These three Edwardian novels, then, reveal striking continuities with Naturalist and New Woman novels as regards censorship. Hubert Wales and Hermann Sudermann inscribe the thematic of censorship in the narratives of their respective novels, The Yoke through an attack on the Nonconformist Conscience, The Song of Songs through satirizing Mrs Amussen's hypocritical beliefs and practices concerning her circulating library. All three novels challenge, and in many cases mock, the sexual ideologies that underpin both censorship and the moral censure of sexuality outside the confines of heterosexual monogamy. Hubert Wales criticises the impositions of social codes that impede natural sexual instincts in ways that are comparable with George Egerton's attack on man-made morality. H. G. Wells champions greater sexual freedom for women against the limiting constraints of bourgeois morality. Wells satirises Christians and suffragists alike for denying sexual instinct and thwarting 'natural' sexual desire as Thomas Hardy and George Moore, in significantly different ways, had also done. Like H. G. Wells, Herman Sudermann challenges constraining ideologies that limit women to the moral binary of angel/whore. Mrs Amussen's Christian morality, which denies Lilly Czepanik social and sexual knowledge, is as limiting as Konrad Rennschmidt's

idealisation that denies both Czepanik's complexity and an understanding of the social circumstances that have, in part, determined her actions. All three novelists clearly recognise the existence of female sexuality even more frankly than the previous novels examined do. Angelica Jenour, Ann Veronica and Lily Czepanik are presented as women not only with sexual desires, but sexual desires for men who are not their husbands. The novels are inherently critical of traditional marriage as those of Hardy, Allen and Egerton. Moreover, as with Zola's Nana, the moral frame of mid-Victorian fiction from which to view transgressive sexual acts is withdrawn; however, unlike Nana, these three protagonists ultimately go unpunished: Angelica Jenour's sexual experience releases her from the yoke of sexual repression; Ann Veronica happily marries a divorced adulterer, and Lily Czepanik avoids suicide by marrying her lover to whom she has been a long-term mistress. Clearly there are also differences between these texts and those previously examined as regards the politics of sexual representation. The challenge to traditional sexual ideologies presented by the Edwardian sex novel is made within the specific environment of positive eugenics and social hygiene. While Wells's novel posits the middle-class obligation to propagate for the benefit of England against the strictures of Christian morality that are eugenically failing the nation, Wales's novel champions sexual hygiene practice, if in a rather sensational way, against the sexual ignorance and moral hypocrisy of traditional England. Still the novels of Wales, Wells and Sudermann clearly put social purity under scrutiny and the culture of censorship on trial before, as Marshik and Parkes argue, Modernist writers did.

Conclusion: Pre-Modernism, Modernism and Post-Modern Censorship

In her contribution to "Candour In English Fiction", the New Review symposium on censorship, Elizabeth Lynn Linton wrote:

> The British Matron is the true censor of the Press, and exerts over fiction the repressive power she has tried to exert over art. Things as they are – human nature as it is – the conflict always going on between law and passion, the individual and society – she will not have spoken of.[1]

I begin with this quotation because this study has been largely concerned with exploring and challenging various perceptions of literary censorship in *fin-de-siècle* and Edwardian Britian. For example, what, perhaps, might immediately draw the attention of a feminist reader to the passage is that Linton, a woman, genders censorship as female. Indeed, Linton's comments are indicative of the significant gendering not only of censorship, but of literature itself. Male novelists were often perceived as exploring sexual relations with seriousness, intelligence and realism while women novelists were invariably viewed as intellectually inferior authors of second-rate romantic novels written for the mass reading public. A feminist reader might also notice the limiting essentialism of Linton's comments in which, human nature is "as it is". The popularisation of evolutionary biology led to intense debates about what constituted human nature and gender difference. Such debates often reinforced essentialist gender categories and stressed the duty of women to bear children for the benefit of the nation. In terms of recent postmodern ontological reevaluations of censorship, however, Linton's notion of censorship would be perceived as conventional and largely erroneous. Linton sees censorship as a purely negative external imposition which reduces writers to silence. The prudish and philistine British Matron inflicts her ignorant will on the refined artistic creations of the novelist. Postmodern critics have

sought to destabilise this view arguing for a more radical if, at times, overarching perception of censorial practices. On the other hand, commentators who still tend to view censorship as a conflict between progress and reaction might detect that central to Linton's rhetoric is a contest between passion and law and the individual and society. It is indubitably true that many writers who fell foul of library censorship decidedly favoured passion and the individual over law and society, but it would be mistaken to view Linton's attack on censorship as indicative of a broader progressive politics. Linton was virulently anti-feminist as her numerous polemics against feminism demonstrate.[2] It might also be noted that recent scholars of Modernism might locate Linton's comments as proto-modernist, and argue that the emerging struggle between censor and writer that Linton identifies would be more effectively resolved by the challenge modernism posed to literary censorship. Such critics would also challenge a simplistic notion of political struggle to analyse how a censorship dialectic evolved in which censorship affected, altered and even abetted literary production as much as literary production challenged censorship.

Even this brief preamble demonstrates the numerous, complex and, at times contradictory perspectives from which late-Victorian and Edwardian censorship can be viewed. A central objective of this study has been to give a more complete account of the dynamics of late-Victorian and Edwardian literary censorship than many of these approaches to censorship have often allowed. In this conclusion, the three predominant approaches defined in the introduction as the deconstructive, the polemic and the aesthetic will be reconsidered to demonstrate how my thesis addresses the specific

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[1] Elizabeth Linton, "Candour in English Fiction," The *Fin De Siècle*: A Reader in Cultural History C.1880-1900, ed. Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000): 114-116, at 114.
[2] Below is a selection of essay titles in which Linton attacked the feminist cause: "The Threatened Abdication of Man," National Review 13 (July 1889): 577-592; "The Wild Woman: As Politicians," Nineteenth Century 30 (July 1891): 79-88; "The Wild Woman: As Social Insurgents," Nineteenth

limitations of each approach. Furthermore, I wish to suggest the significance of this thesis for potential future directions in the study of literary censorship.

While Frederick Schauer reductively redefines censorship as ascriptive, claiming that it "does not describe a category of conduct, but rather attaches an operative conclusion (ascribes) to a category created on other grounds," Judith Butler challenges the conventional notion of censorship by arguing that censorship is both productive and constitutive of speech acts.[3] Butler writes: "On the assumption that no speech is permissable without some other speech becoming impermissable, censorship is what permits speech by enforcing the very distinction between permissible and impermissible speech."[4] Schauer and Butler offer two examples of what I have labelled the deconstructive approach to censorship, which, as Robert C. Post has argued, tends to view censorship as establishing "the practices that define us as social subjects. Hence censorship transmutes from an external, repressive force to a positive exercise of power that constitutes practices as it defines their boundaries."[5] Such sweeping reconceptualisations leave, as Post notes, little consideration for the idea of censorship as repressive force. However constitutive of the subject these broader conceptualisations of censorship might be, this study has maintained that constraints placed upon literature could still be direct and overt. Although censorship may produce various effects be they constitutive or, indeed, productive, as writers such as Butler suggest, legal and library censorship clearly did censor – in the conventional sense of

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Century 30 (October 1891): 596-605; and "The Woman of Chivalry," Fortnightly Review 48 (October 1887): 559-579.

[3] Frederick Schauer, "The Ontology of Censorship," Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1998): 147-168, at 160.

[4] Butler, "Ruled" 255.

[5] Post 2.

the word – fictional representations deemed transgressive. This was specifically true of texts which sought to realistically explore emerging ideas and perceptions of sexual practices, female sexuality and ideas of gender identity and behaviour As the banning of Zola's novels, for example, demonstrates, censorship did operate as an external, repressive force.

Significantly, rather than identifying censorship as being constitutive of all speech acts, this thesis has argued that specific repressive acts of the censorship of sexual representations defended broader ideological positions. Although the censorship of Mudie's Select Library was not state censorship, and the impetus to censor was predominantly cultural and economic, its effect was clearly political. Mudie's Select Library policed, to appropriate Judith Butler's phrase, "the boundaries of the body" and, by doing so, guarded the social hegemonic. This is to say that fictional representations were often censored precisely because issues of sex and gender were central to dominant ideologies of class, nation and race. Such a relation is also apparent in the critical attacks of those who advocated the censorship of sexual representations. In the wake of fears of national contamination from abroad and political insurrection from the lower orders at home, the rhetoric of Samuel Smith, Arnold White and, later, James Douglas constituted an implicit defence of existing social hegemony.

Moreover, novelists were keenly aware of such external impositions on literary production, especially of the disproportionate and negative power lending libraries had over their art. There seems little reason to doubt the validity of Elizabeth Linton's appraisal of the effect of censorship on much British fiction:

> Of all the writers of fiction in Europe or America the English are the most restricted in their choice of subjects. The result is shown in the pitiable poverty of the ordinary novel, the wearisome repetition of the same things, and the consequent popularity of romances, which, not pretending to deal with life as it

> is, at least leave no sense of disappointment in their portrayal or of superficiality in their handling.[6]

The non-fictional polemics of writers from George Moore to George Egerton testify to such an awareness of the culture of censorship in which and of which they wrote. George Moore might have been Mudie's most vociferous critic but even the highly respected George Eliot, writing to her publisher of Mudie's pernicious influence on the novel, hoped that there would "be some authors and publishers strong enough to resist his tyranny, which threatens to thrust books down the throats of the public, and to strangle good ones."[7] George Eliot's perception of the tyranny of Mudie's resonates with Thomas Hardy's fear that circulating libraries and the magazines in which fiction was serialised did not "foster the growth of the novel which reflects and reveals life. They directly tend to exterminate it by monopolising all literary space" (CIF 117).

When critics argue that censorship is productive, pervasive and intrinsic to all power relationships, it is timely to note that, however otherwise conceptualised, overt repressive acts, whether denominated as censorship or not, existed and still clearly exist.[8] Henry Vizetelly was, after all, sent to prison for publishing Zola. Indeed, Robert C. Post is correct to claim that: "The new censorship [...] tends to veer between the concrete mechanisms of silencing and the abstraction of struggle. The result seems to flatten distinctions among kinds of power," and "variations among kinds of struggles, de-emphasizing the difference between, say, the agonism of poets and that of legal aid clients."[9] While recognising the complexities of power mechanisms and relationships, a central aim of this thesis has been to demonstrate that, however else the texts

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[6] Linton 114.
[7] Griest 65.

[8] The "Writers in Prison Committee" of International PEN claimed that approximately 1000 writers had received some judicial sanction for their writing. International PEN Writers in Prison Committee, Half Yearly Case List To 31 December (London: Internaltional PEN, 2008) 81.
[9] Post 4.

examined here can be considered, they should be viewed as forming resistance through polemical attacks, both fictional and non-fictional, to overt practices of censorship. How these overt repressive acts are situated within the broader economy of complex power relations that Foucault outlines in The History of Sexuality Volume One – and new scholarship aligns with a range of censorial practices – clearly calls for further invesitgation. Foucauldian scholars of censorship have challenged traditional dominant notions of censorship as mere repressive acts, but they have not yet sufficiently examined the function and significance of such repressive acts in relation to other articulations of power. If critics are to work within the paradigm of a Foucauldian analytics of power then, as Post implies, those distinctions of operations and effects of power need preciser identification.

If this thesis has challenged the tendency of many modern scholars of censorship to flatten distinctions of power, and argued for a reconsideration of the significance of a culture of repression, which such scholars often dismiss, it has also asserted that censorial practices also exist beyond the parameters of repressive control, and, indeed, that censorship can have productive effects. Within a dominant culture of repression, the issue of censorship could provide pretexts for debates about issues of sex, sexuality and gender. Not only was censorship productive in the sense that it could provoke heated debate and acerbic attacks on conventional moral stances, but it also undeniably led to the rhetorical inscription of the thematic of censorship within the very fiction that was often most at risk of being censored. Figures of social purity reform and assaults on Mrs Grundy abound in the literature of the period. There is a constant attack on both social hypocrisy and the artificial constraints of morality by censured writers from

Moore to Wells, and censored writers from Zola to Sudermann. The values of bourgeois morality are consistently foregrounded, the inefficacy of Christian morality to account for personal and national development severely assailed, and the unjust forces of social condemnation for aberrant sexual beliefs and practices forcefully identified. That such polemical literature was provoked by the very restrictions imposed by the law and lending libraries demonstrates that the censorship of the period, was, in this sense, productive.

A recognition of the polemical nature of much of the literature discussed here, should not, however, reinforce the view that novelists such as Hardy and Wells simply endorsed a progressive liberational sexual politics in the Victorian context of sexual repression. Even if many novelists were placed, or placed themselves, in such a role, the censorship debate that took place in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain should not be simplified into a binary of progressive writers and conservative critics. The sexual politics of each writer examined has been revealed as being considerably complex. One need only recall Zola's portrayal of working-class sexuality as dangerously subversive to social order, Moore's gendering of censorship, or Hardy's reinscription of class and sexual polarities through a Victorian idealistic aesthetic to make the case. Allen's and Egerton's attacks on feminism and Wales's and Wells'a championing of eugenic practice are further examples of the difficulty of situating any of these writers on the right side of a moral battle between progressive sexual liberty and reactionary sexual constraint and reticence. As has been shown, transgressive sexual ideas and representations could coexist with essentialist ideas of sexual and gendered identity. Such ideas and representations, however, were often as reactionary in their assumptions about race, class, sex and gender, as those ideas of traditional Victorian morality they ostensibly attacked. To champion fiction writers as

uncomplicatedly progressive leads to misreading *fin-de-siècle* sexual politics through the prism of contemporary attitudes to sexuality. This is clearly not to underestimate the risks, intentions or integrity of many of the writers discussed here, but to recognise that the sexual politics of a hundred years ago forms no simple continuity with current preoccupations about sex, sexuality and gender.

Thus, if the notion of censorship conceptualised by the new post-Foucauldian scholars of censorship tends to flatten, blur or even erase distinct categories of censorial practice, and views power as ubiquitous, pervasive and constitutive, the polemic approach, on the contrary tends to reduce censorship to a moral binary. While recognising many of the Foucauldian perceptions of power and particularly censorship, I have tried to reclaim some of those category distinctions of more traditional notions of power, censorship and repression. At the same time as recognising, moreover, the very political nature of sexual morality and demonstrating the polemical nature of much of the fiction of the period, I have also challenged the reductiveness of those commentators who pit progressive writers against reactionary censors, as my exploration of the sexual politics of those writers examined here demonstrates.

The third argumentative thrust of this thesis has been in opposition to an aesthetic approach which perceives the censorship struggle to have been at its height during the period of high modernism. From this perspective, literary modernism puts censorship itself on trial and ultimately brings about its defeat. It is to a further consideration of this approach that I will now turn.

If in chapter one of this study, I examined the plausibility of a post-productive hypothesis that challenged certain aspects of Michel Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis, it should be clear from succeeding chapters the extent to which this study is indebted to Foucault's substantive notion of the scientification of sexuality.

It is under the influence of such discourses of science that I have situated the fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, discourses whose "persistent locus of attack was natural theology, the subordination of natural knowledge to a religious frame."[10] The period under discussion, then, is not an interregnum as Raymond Williams claimed, forming a transition from Victorian to modernist masters, but it is an interregnum in the sense that a variety of discourses, including residual moral discourses of "sin and salvation", emerging scientific discourses and medico-moral discourses of sexuality vie for hegemony. The fiction examined here reflects this interregnum, largely by endorsing science, and, in particular, the science of "bodies and life processes." Through deploying ideas of natural biological instinct validated by science, writers from Moore to Wells challenged the effectiveness and denoted the limitations of traditional Victorian morality. Whether such morality was gendered as a Mrs Grundy avidly censoring a virile male literature or as an artificial patriarchal imposition that socialises women into subservience, it was exposed as denying scientifically validated instinct and thus obfuscating the very truth of sex.

The emergence of such discourses and their deployment by pre-modernist writers establishes a frame in which the later modernist battle with censorship can be viewed. Specifically, the modernist response to censorship can be situated in already established literary motives and practices.[11] Adam Parkes claims that modernism's theatre of censorship indicates "a realm that is at once social and aesthetic, the theatre denotes the scenes of literary encounters with the moral and political discourses of

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[10] Ledger and Luckhurst 222.

[11] This is not to assume that the modernist attitude to science was the same as that of pre-modernist writers. In reference to Karl Pearson's claim that science does not "explain" the workings of the universe, Michael Bell has argued that "this recognition of epistemological limitation did not impede the progress of science, indeed it reinforced the creative need to think outside commonsense or inherited terms, but it brought home the recognition that science is a construction of the human mind before it is a reflection of the world. And where there were serious doubts about the hegemony of science thinking in the culture at large, this provided a philosophical argument for relativising its value." Bell 11-12.

public life."[12] If this is true of modernism it is truer of naturalism, New Woman writing and much of Edwardian fiction, especially given the wider distribution of these more popular texts. Thomas Hardy, Grant Allen, George Moore and George Egerton clearly engage in a theatre of censorship by challenging moral and political discourses of public life. Discussing the relationship between censorship and modernism, Celia Marshik comments: "The censorship dialectic, then, shaped modernism by encouraging or forcing writers to take up censorship as a theme in both their non-fiction prose and creative writings. The novels of Thomas Hardy, Grant Allan and George Moore are fictional extensions of very public polemics against censorship, both shaping debate about censorship and themselves being shaped by the culture of censorship in which they were written. Marshik specifically argues that writers turned to the figure of the prostitute "in particular because the figure codes deviant sexuality and thus implicitly opposes traditional values and behaviour; an individual prostitute embodies sex outside of normalising institutions such as the family or monogamous couple."[13] Pre-modernist writers as much as modernist writers waged their battle against censorship on the grounds of female sexuality. Zola's Nana clearly "codes deviant sexuality" and opposes "traditional values and behaviour" and embodies "sex outside of "normalising institutions." Grant Allen's The Woman Who Did inverts the morality of the "normalising institution" of marriage. George Egerton's short stories are full of desiring women who challenge "traditional values and behaviour." Lilly Czepanik, Angelica Jenour and Ann Veronica have satisfying sex outside of matrimony: Lilly Czepanik has several sexual partners, Angelica Jenour pleasures herself with her stepson and Ann Veronica elopes with a divorced man. What Parkes states of Lawrence, Joyce and Woolf anticipating and subverting "the moral, political and

[12] Parkes 17.
[13] Marshik 4.

aesthetic premises on which the culture of censorship was operating" is equally true of the writers examined above.[14] Such reflexivity is not unique to modernist writers. All pre-modernist writers examined have reflexively inscribed censorship into their texts, subverted ideas of normative sexual behaviour and challenged those sexual and social ideologies that underpin censorship.

This discussion of censorship has taken place within the parameters of modern fiction, but, the main contention that a censorship dialectic existed long before literary modernism could be extended to include other literary forms such as drama. Marshik concedes the significance of George Bernard Shaw in such a censorship dialectic but locates him as "a figure of transition between Rossetti and the novelists who would battle censorship in the 1920s and 1930s."[15] The plays of Oscar Wilde also clearly invert sexual and social mores. Perhaps, though, more than any other dramatist of the period, Henrik Ibsen provided the greatest challenge to Victorian reticence and censorship.[16] In similar ways to how pre-modernist fiction writers inscribe the thematic of censorship into fiction, Ibsen inscribes censorship into his plays. An Enemy of the People (1882), for example, is, to a large extent, a play about censorship, in which the truth-telling Dr. Stockman is at first censored from speaking and then castigated as an enemy of the people for wishing to reveal the truth about the town's public baths. Stockman declaims: "I have already told you that what I want to speak about is the greatest discovery I have made lately – the discovery that all the sources of our moral

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[14] Parkes viii.
[15] Marshik 85.
[16] One critic has recently claimed that A Doll's House "showed signs of becoming a lightning rod for the culture wars of late-nineteenth-century London. Ibsen critics allied him with attacks on British manhood and womanhood, the integrity of the British family, and cultural provincialism, while Ibsen supporters saw in his work a promise for renewing British theatre, for capturing the "dissonances of modern life," and for satirizing habitual beliefs to make way for modern doubt." Katherine E Kelly, "Pandemic and Performance: Ibsen and the Outbreak of Modernism," South Central Review 25 (2008): 12-35, at 18. Ibsen's plays had an enormous influence on first-wave feminists. Sally Ledger states: "It would be an exaggeration – but only a small one – to claim that Ibsen invented the 'New Woman' in England." Sally

life are poisoned and that the whole fabric of our civil community is foundered on the pestiferous soil of falsehood."[17] Such a strident attack on the moral falsehood of the majority resembles those made by characters in George Egerton's short stories or the narrator in Hubert Wales's The Yoke. In Ghosts (1881), a play which thematises syphilis – as Sarah Grand's The Heavenly Twins (1893) would do more than a decade later – the censorial figure of Pastor Manders is ridiculed for his dismissal of both books and decadent artists, his attitudes exposed as hypocritical, his perception of social decorum as limiting and damaging. Mrs Aveling's books represent new advanced ideas which is why in Pastor Mander's opinion, they "shouldn't be talked about."[18] Toril Moi, moreover, has argued that Torvald Helmer's comments regarding Krogstad in A Doll's House (1879) include vocabulary such as "sickness, pollution, infection, pestilence" which she claims "are the motifs that regularly turned up in idealist attacks on Ibsen's later play."[19] Such speeches show a similar inscription of censorship to that which has been witnessed in fiction writers as diverse as Moore, Allen, and Wales. Social purity reform's critique of pernicious literature is voiced by the unsympathetic Helmer in A Doll's House, as in The Woman Who Did it is voiced by a Spectator critic, in The Yoke by a representative of the Nonconformist conscience and in The Song of Songs by Mrs Amusen, the owner of a circulating library. In the manner in which they thematically inscribe censorship as well as in the radical challenge they offer to the sexual and gender ideologies that promote it, Ibsen's plays invite the same kind of analysis that has been given to the texts of fiction examined here.

If the censorship dialectic can be extended to other literary forms like drama, it could also be extended beyond the representation of female heterosexuality to

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Ledger, "Ibsen, the New Woman and the Actress," The New Woman in Fiction and Fact *Fin-De-Siècle* Feminisms, ed. Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis. (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 79-93, at 79.

[17] Henrik Ibsen, An Enemy of the People, trans. anon. (Clayton: Dover, 1999) 56.

[18] Henrik Ibsen, Four Major Plays, introd. and trans. James Mc Farlane (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981) 102.

representations of same-sex desire.[20] The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891), the English decadent novel *par excellence*, is prefaced by Wilde's disavowal of moral art – "There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book.[...] Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for art."[21] – while the narrative portrait of Dorian Gray morally frames, in a sense, the protagonist's vices. Richard Ellmann has argued that "Wilde the preface-writer and Wilde the novelist deconstruct each other."[22] In The Picture of Dorian Gray, moreover, the debate about the moral worth and danger of art centres on the idea of dangerous reading. The book that influences Dorian Gray is tellingly a yellow book, bearing more than a family resemblance to Joris-Karl Huysman's A Rebours (1884). The novel is described as poisonous, a trope that frequently occurs in what I have delineated a rhetoric of disgust.[23] The yellow novel blurs vice and virtue until, "One hardly knew at times whether one was reading the spiritual ecstasies of some mediæval saint or the morbid confessions of a modern sinner."[24] However, later, Lord Henry states that Dorian Gray cannot have been corrupted by the novel he has read: "As for being poisoned by a book, there is no such thing as that. Art has no influence upon action. [...]. The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its own shame."[25] If in different ways than the frequently more polemical texts of realists such as George Moore, Wilde also incorporates the issue of the morally educative value of literature, a value that was at the heart of social purity's crusade against what it deemed pernicious literature. The Picture of Dorian Gray is, then, among other things,

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[19] Moi 231.
[20] Richard Ellmann claims that The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) is "one of the first attempts to bring homosexuality into the English novel." Richard Ellmann, Oscar Wilde (London: Penguin, 1988) 300. It should also be noted that MacMillan rejected the novel and W. H. Smith refused to stock it. Ellmann 304-305.
[21] Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray (London: Ward Lock, 1891) vii.
[22] Ellmann 297.
[23] Wilde, Picture 188. Wilde conceded that the book was Huysman's A Rebour at his 1895 trial. Ellmann 298.
[24] Wilde, Picture 188.
[25] Wilde, Picture 326.

a novel about dangerous reading and moral censure, and, as such, can be read as another intervention in fiction's dialectic with censorship.

If pre-modernist writers are viewed as central to the literary battle against censorship, this does not imply that modernist writers need necessarily be marginalised. In terms of the issue of censorship, it would be as reductive to view writers of the modernist era as post-New Woman or post-Edwardian sex novelists as I have argued it is to reduce New Woman or Edwardian novelists to the status of proto-modernist. However, the intricate and complex relations between New Woman fiction and Virginia Woolf's novels remain to be fully explored.[26] Considering the wealth and breadth of scholarship regarding Virginia Woolf in recent years, studies of the influence of New Woman writers such as realists like Sarah Grand or experimentalists like George Egerton on Woolf's writing generally, and specifically as regards her own negotiations with censorship, seem curiously scarce.[27]

As with Woolf, a writer such as D. H. Lawrence clearly shares affinities with both New Woman writing of the *fin de siècle* and Edwardian sex novelists such as Hubert Wales that still remain largely unexplored.[28] In his introduction to Sons and Lovers (1913), David Trotter demonstrates how the reception of Ann Veronica

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[26] A survey of Justine Dymond's "Virginia Woolf Scholarship from 1991 to 2003: a select bibliography" reveals only one study with "New Woman" in the title: Wendy Perkins, "Virginia Woolf's Dialogues with the 'New Woman,' " Family Matters in the British and American Novel, ed. Andrea O'Reilly (Bowling Green: Popular, 1997). 149-66. Justine Dymond, "Virginia Woolf scholarship from 1991 to 2003: a selected bibliography," Modern Fiction Studies 50 (2004): 241-79. Recent research has explored Woolf's complex relation to Victorian culture, denominating Woolf as a post-Victorian rather than a Modernist. Steve Ellis comments, "Woolf's Post-Victorianism is, as remarked, a much more complicated affair, comprising affiliation with and dissent from her Victorian past, which reciprocally and necessarily signifies affiliation with and dissent from her modern present. Steve Ellis, Virginia Woolf and the Victorians (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007) 2. Sally Ledger, argues not only for the significance of Egerton as a proto-modernist but also draws attention to Woolf's omission of the significance of George Egerton to the development of a modernist aesthetic. She argues, "Thirty years before Woolf, Egerton penetrated the emotional and psychological tragedies of apparently unexceptional women's lives and powerfully translated these lives into fiction." Ledger xviii. Surely such an omission itself should incite further study of connections between Woolf and Egerton.

[27] I have indicated some similarities between Woolf and the writers examined here regarding censorship in this thesis.

convinced Lawrence to revise the more sensational aspects of his presentation of sexuality in order to avoid the kind of sensationalism which had become a trademark of the sex novel.[29] It is ironic that two years after writing Sons and Lovers, Lawrence's The Rainbow (1915) was legally banned, and it was, ultimately, Lawrence's name, and not that of H. G. Wells, that became synonomous with sexually transgressive fiction in the twentieth century. Adam Parkes has convincingly noted the impact the Great War had on the revisions and subsequent censorship of The Rainbow.[30] However, The Rainbow also demonstrates clear resonances with both New Woman fiction and the Edwardian sex novel. The attacks, for example, on both patriarchal values and men's limited understanding of female sexuality that can be seen in Egerton's short stories are also evident in The Rainbow's depiction of Ursula Brangwen's 'sex-war' with Anton Skrebensky. However much Lawrence rejected the sensationalism of the sex novel, his own preoccupation with sexuality was firmly rooted in the same intellectual climate as writers and sexologists that have been discussed in this thesis. Bracketing Lawrence with Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter, Jonathan Rose argues that they "arrived at similar conclusions simply because they confronted similar problems – a combination of spiritual and sexual anxieties led all three of them to a surrogate religion of sexuality." In such novels as Ann Veronica, Tono Bungay (1909) and The New Machiavelli (1911), H. G. Wells, no less than D. H. Lawrence, championed what Rose calls the sacrament of sexuality.[31] Writing about possible future directions of academic study of Lawrence, Chris Baldick has argued more attention needs to be directed to the "true historical complexities of his engagement with the socio-economic and cultural

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[28] There are some notable exceptions to this, including Janice H. Harris's "Lawrence and the Edwardian Feminists" which views The Rainbow as an extension of the "Modern Girl" genre in The Challenge of D. H. Lawrence, eds. Michael Squires and Keith Cushman (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1990): 62-76.
[29] Trotter, introduction, Sons and Lovers, by D. H. Lawrence (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998): xvi – xvii.

transformations of his age."[32] Surely a very significant cultural transformation of Lawrence's age must include the challenge to the status of Victorian morality posed by the increasing valorisation of scientific rationality.[33] As part of such a focus, a fuller consideration of both the influence of New Woman writing and that of the Edwardian sex novel might reveal the extent to which Lawrence's battle with censorship was directly and indirectly formed by the experiences and practices of New Woman writers and Edwardian sex novelists.

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[30] "[...] the revisions implied that the energies devoted to waging the Great War should be directed toward what Lawrence called, in the contemporaneous Twilight In Italy (1916), 'the strange, terrible sex-war.' " Parkes 23.

[31] See Jonathan Rose, The Edwardian Temperament 1895-1919 (Athens: Ohio UP, 1986): 80-91.

[32] Chris Baldick, "Post-mortem: Lawrence's critical and cultural legacy," The Cambridge Companion to D. H. Lawrence, ed. A Fernihough (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001): 253-270, at 267.

[33] Although recently, it should be noted that Jeff Wallace has examined Lawrence's work within contemporary scientific contexts in D. H. Lawrence, Science and the Posthuman (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005).

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