Devious, Dashing, Disturbing: Fallen Men in Victorian Novels, 1860-1900

Stephanie King

Department of English

McGill University, Montreal

August 2007

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-50847-3
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-50847-3

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Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation is a solitary process, but I was not alone. I want to thank Professor Allan Hepburn for his encouragement, advice, and above all, for his teaching. Through his tireless editing and brilliant insight, Professor Hepburn has taught me to be a better writer, a deeper thinker, a sharper academic, and a viable competitor on the job market. I would also like to thank Professor McSweeney, Professor Sparks, Professor Morgan and Professor Halevi-Wise. The valuable feedback and suggestions that they have given me throughout the course of my doctoral studies have helped to shape this dissertation. I want to express gratitude to the FQRSC, to The Max Stern Foundation, and to the Department of English and the Department of Graduate Studies at McGill University for generous financial support. By providing me with funding, these institutions and awards gave me the gifts of time and validation; both were important factors in completing this dissertation.

Support came in many forms as I worked towards this Ph.D. From the first semester of doctoral studies, I was lucky enough to be inspired by the friendship and intelligence of my cohort, Erin Vollick, Robin Feenstra, Pauline Morel, Liisa Stephenson, and Jason Polley. I wish to thank my friends and fellow Victorianists, Jennifer Beauvais, Anna Lepine, and the rest of the Victorian Reading Group, for the inspiration that they have given me over the years. I owe deep gratitude to my parents and sisters, who have encouraged my passion for literature since I was a child. I would like to thank my husband Saul for believing in me and for standing by me as I worked through the mounds of papers and layers of thoughts to reach this moment.

Abstract

This dissertation questions conventions of Victorian narrative and gender by examining the character of the fallen man as an identifiable literary persona. Fallen men are characterized by their sexuality and conscienceless actions. Their fallenness is contingent on their perceived social standing and genteel expectations. Two popular assumptions about Victorian novels—the gendered specificity of the fallen woman and the propriety of narrative closure—are threatened by the presence of fallen men. While a fallen woman and her miserable fate warn women of the irrevocability of sexual mishaps, fallen men caution readers that the everyday vices to which they may succumb—opium, gambling, scientific experimentation, and, later in the century, dandyism—could lead to dire consequences, such as social alienation and unnatural death. Each of these vices represents a threat to Victorian social norms: opium addicts cannot distinguish between innocence and guilt; gamblers highlight the instability of capital and the desperate state of some aristocrats; mad scientists destabilize conceptions of truth; dandies question both rigid notions of masculinity and heterosexuality. Both appealing and evil, fallen men challenge paradigms of hero and villain. Sexually virile, these men also inadvertently save compromised women by suffering untimely deaths.

Assumptions about both masculinity and formulaic novelistic structure are undermined when fallen men cannot be redeemed. Using narratology as my methodological framework, I address fallen men in novels published between 1860 and 1900. These fictional figures are prone to the same weaknesses and are tempted by the same vices that befell real Victorian men. Fallen men in *Uncle Silas, Man and Wife,*

Daniel Deronda, *Heart and Science*, *The Woodlanders*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* represent distinct and overlapping forms of male deviance. The fallen man demonstrates the insufficiency of pre-scripted gender roles when he embodies and surpasses the traits of gentlemen, dandies, rakes, Byronic heroes, cads, and villains. By inserting fallen men in their novels, Victorian writers question pre-existing gender divides; by killing off their dashing disturbers, these novelists also facilitate the erosion of structural norms.

Résumé

Cette dissertation remet en question les conventions victoriennes concernant du genre et de la narration en examinant l'homme déchu comme type identifiable de personnage littéraire. Les hommes déchus se caractérisent par leur sexualité et le manque de scrupules dans leurs actions. Leur déchéance est fonction de leur statut social et des attentes de la société raffinée.

Deux postulats largement répandus à propos des romans victoriens – la spécificité du genre (féminin) du personnage déchu et le caractère « approprié » du dénouement – sont menacés par la présence de l'homme déchu. Alors que la femme déchue et son misérable sort mettent en garde les lectrices contre l'irrévocabilité de l'inconduite sexuelle, l'homme déchu montre aux lecteurs que les vices ordinaires auxquels ils pourraient succomber – l'opium, le jeu, l'expérimentation scientifique et, plus tard, le dandysme – pourraient entraîner de très fâcheuses conséquences, comme l'aliénation sociale et une mort hâtive et non naturelle. Chacun de ces vices constitue incidemment une menace aux normes sociales victoriennes : les consommateurs d'opium ne peuvent plus distinguer l'innocence de la culpabilité; les joueurs compulsifs soulignent l'instabilité du capital et le désespoir de plusieurs aristocrates; les scientifiques déjantés déstabilisent les conceptions de la vérité et les dandys remettent en question à la fois les conceptions rigides de la masculinité et l'hétérosexualité. À la fois attirants et diaboliques, les hommes déchus défient les paradigmes du héros et du vilain. Sexuellement virils, ces hommes sauvent parfois, par inadvertance, des femmes compromises, en mourant prématurément.

Plutôt que de renforcer les stéréotypes du genre, les histoires d'hommes déchus exposent les valeurs rattachées à la masculinité britannique du dix-neuvième siècle. Les études sur la masculinité ont connu d'importants développements depuis deux décennies. Les idées reçues, à la fois sur la masculinité et sur les structures conventionnelles du roman, sont remises en question lorsque l'homme déchu ne peut se racheter ou être sauvé.

En utilisant la narratologie comme cadre théorique, on examinera les hommes déchus dans des romans publiés entre 1860 et 1900. Ces personnages de fiction sont affligés des mêmes faiblesses et sont tentés par les mêmes vices qui perdaient les hommes de l'époque victorienne. Les hommes déchus de *Uncle Silas*, *Man and Wife*, *Daniel Deronda*, *Heart and Science*, *The Woodlanders*, et *The Picture of Dorian Gray* représentent des formes distinctes, quoique se chevauchant parfois, de déviance masculine. Le personnage de l'homme déchu met en relief l'insuffisance des rôles de genre prédéterminés lorsqu'il incarne et surpasse les traits du gentleman, du dandy, du déviant, du héros byronien, du goujat, du vilain. En insérant des hommes déchus dans leurs romans, les écrivains victoriens mettaient en cause l'existence du fossé entre les genres; en mettant à mort leur protagoniste maudit, ils facilitaient l'érosion des normes structurelles littéraires.

Introduction

Ancestors and Avatars of the Fallen Man

In nineteenth-century novels, erotic feelings often complicate the lives of characters and the morally charged plots they find themselves in. Novelists of this period nevertheless attempt to contain sexuality in order to achieve categorical closure. This dissertation questions notions of Victorian conventions, narrative, and gender roles by formalizing the character of the fallen man as an identifiable literary persona. The literature of the last forty years of the nineteenth century repeatedly employs the figure of the fallen man to question ontological categories of gender. Representations of masculinity evolve over time; fallen men represent shifting anxieties about masculinity. In *Uncle Silas*, *Man and Wife, Daniel Deronda*, *Heart and Science*, *The Woodlanders*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, fallen men are drug addicts, gamblers, mad scientists, and dandies. They represent distinct and overlapping forms of male deviance. In Victorian fiction, masculine identities depend upon sets of expectations in the form of stock characters such as dandies, gentlemen, muscular Christians, rakes, and Byronic heroes. Fallen men transcend Victorian categories of masculinity when they resemble, but do not mirror, any single role. Fallen men mediate the limitations of gender roles when they disrupt predictable plotlines, and unveil possibilities for both masculinity and femininity within Victorian narratives. These narratives punish fallen men for going too far with the vices that would otherwise be socially acceptable.

My definition of the fallen man repositions cultural analyses of fallenness. Fallen men are cruel, but they are not evil. They do not fall in a biblical sense. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Lucifer, the fallen angel, drops from heaven—a place of moral

perfection—to hell, because he no longer wants to accept divine authority. Fallen men do not begin from points of ideal morality; they are remnants of an aristocracy that is increasingly corrupt and weakened throughout the nineteenth century. Fallen men have bad intentions and good genes. In his essay, "Evil in the English Novel," Angus Wilson argues that the contrast between good and evil informs the moral universe of British fiction, including eighteenth- and nineteenth-century canonical texts. Fallen man narratives acknowledge concepts of good and evil without fully embracing them. According to Wilson, villains are often associated with devil imagery. Richardson's Lovelace, for instance, poses a threat to the virtue of good characters, yet "the guardians are still letting the invader in" (9). Wilson insists that there is a "traditional English citadel" (12), which writers such as Jane Austen, George Eliot, Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackery, and Anthony Trollope defend. This ideological fortress, when upheld, ensures that "anything that is not rooted is lost. Evil and Good cannot transcend any kind of place or rootedness in society" (12). Novels that support such binaries are implicitly steeped in Christian values. Fallen man novels attach cruelty to everyday vices. The fallen man is not the evil "other." He thus posits a threat to Christian values in an absolute sense.

Fallen men betray their roots when they behave as outsiders in Victorian novels, even though they belong to the gentry. They disregard popular opinion to further their own selfish goals. In Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas*, Silas murders, threatens, and steals. Silas also plots to kill his niece, but his addiction to opium might render him blameless for the crime. We cannot attribute pure evil to this character; his form of escape indicates that he may have a conscience. In George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* and Wilkie Collins'

Man and Wife Mallinger Grandcourt and Geoffrey Delamayn seduce and abuse women. Geoffrey confines Ann and plots her murder, but he does so in desperation. He is thoughtless and cruel, but not utterly evil. In *Heart and Science*, Benjulia tortures and dissects animals to prove his flawed esoteric theories; he also regrets his cruelties. In *The Woodlanders*, Edred Fitzpiers disregards consequences when he practises black arts and indulges his sexual desires without restraint. He is driven by impulse; he does not have cruel intentions. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the title character ruins men and women and murders his greatest admirer. All of these fallen men display traits of the devil, yet they also share habits with average Victorian men; they play the roles of both insider and menace. Fallen men disrupt assumptions about a clearly demarcated "citadel" of British values when they do not subscribe to absolute configurations of good and evil. Rather, fallen men display the uncertainty that lies at the core of British social structures.

When devious, dashing men are cruel but not evil, they resist partaking in a value system that is rooted in Christian doctrine. Le Fanu, Collins, Eliot, Hardy, and Wilde all address the issue of evil on a grand scale. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde takes the discourse on evil to new heights when he has Dorian weigh the pros and cons of sin. Rather than assume a Victorian stance on morality, Dorian Gray admits that there "were moments when he looked on evil simply as a mode through which he could realize his conception of the beautiful" (120). Dorian acknowledges evil, but refutes its definition. In *Decadence and Catholicism*, Ellis Hanson articulates the intricate relationship that Wilde had with religion: "He was well read in theology and yet suspicious of dogma, enamored of Christ, yet despairing of Christians, seduced by the beauties of Catholic ritual and art but appalled by the philistinism of the pious" (229). Wilde can enjoy

Christian ritual without subscribing to its belief system. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* paves the way for twentieth-century novels, wherein sexuality is openly discussed and men who indulge in vice are not characterized as sinners in absolute terms. When Dorian ponders his instinct to "sin," he points to the faultiness of moral dichotomies, commonly attributed to Victorians:

> There are moments, psychologists tell us, when the passion for sin, or for what the world calls sin, so dominates a nature that every fibre of the body, as every cell of the brain, seems to be instinct with fearful impulses. Men and women at such moments lose the freedom of their will. They move to their terrible end as automatons move. Choice is taken from them, and conscience is either killed, or, if it lives at all, lives but to give rebellion its fascination and disobedience its charm. For all sins, as theologians weary not of reminding us, are sins of disobedience. When that high spirit, that morning star of evil, fell from heaven, it was as a rebel that he fell. (156)

Dorian removes the question of blame from deviant behaviour. Le Fanu, Collins, Eliot, and Hardy all pose questions of blame, while Oscar Wilde claims that man has no choice but to sin. Rebelliousness is both thrilling and inevitable. In nineteenth-century narrative representations, evil figures often possess seeds of Judeo-Christian sinfulness. They contravene the dictates of institutional religion by indulging in selfishness, whether by taking laudanum, playing with their fortunes, or menacing women. Sinners hold the possibility for redemption, while fallen men do not subscribe to such a clear belief system. Fallen men, like fallen women, are doomed literary constructs who serve a

monitory purpose. However, since fallen men reconfigure gender and structural paradigms, they emphasize the area of possibility between good and evil.

Elaine Showalter claims that the 1880s and 1890s "were decades of 'sexual anarchy,' when all the laws that governed sexual identity seemed to be breaking down" (*Sexual Anarchy* 3). By identifying the fallen man as a recurring figure throughout the nineteenth century, I intend to prove that sexual instability and erotic open-endedness far predate their fin-de-siècle heyday, as they often render implausible the very notion of strictly governed sexuality. In her study of eighteenth- and nineteenth- century seducers, Deborah Lutz analyzes longing in novels that precede the fin-de-siècle by up to a hundred years. She theorizes why heroines consistently desire the demon lover: "Standing always under the sign of longing is the dangerous lover—the one whose eroticism lies in his dark past, his restless inquietude, his remorseful and rebellious exile from comfortable everyday living" (ix). Fallen men are rebels, but they are rarely remorseful. My project examines the impact of fallen men who rouse desire and therefore disturb plots; such figures implore readers to re-examine conceptions of responsibility, morality, and gender.

Literary and cultural theorists, such as James Eli Adams, Herbert Sussman, John Kucich, James Kincaid, Elaine Showalter, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Richard Dellamora, recognize the unease with which Victorians approached questions of masculinity. Critics in this field have had to negotiate a space for their male-centered research within Victorian culture and fiction. James Eli Adams has noted that "masculine identities are multiple, complex, and unstable constructions within the framework of a particular culture" (3). Adams points to the gender-driven malaise that affected male Victorian authors distinctively. In the introduction to *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles*

of Victorian Manhood, he sets out to "explore a contradiction within Victorian patriarchy, by which the same gender system that underwrote male dominance also called into question the 'manliness' of intellectual labor" (1). As Adams notes, literary and cultural studies have resisted paying too much heed to the complexities of Victorian masculinity, lest they "might serve to obscure, and thereby to reinforce, the domination against which feminist analyses were and are in the first place directed" (3). While *Dandies and Desert Saints* mostly looks at Victorian poets and non-fiction writers, it points to the same unstable paradigm that is showcased through the fictional fallen man.

In the introduction to *Victorian Masculinities*, Herbert Sussman relays the problem of masculine studies in lived terms. At a bookstore in Harvard Square, in the early 1990s, he attempted to locate critical work on masculine issues, only to be directed to find the book, *The Hearts of Men*, in the "Women's Studies" section. Several years later, Sussman returned to the same store and was pleased to find that the bookstore had added "three shelves devoted to what was now called 'Men's Issues'" (7). He positions his theoretical work in the field between women's studies and queer studies, much like the section in the bookstore where he eventually finds "Men's Issues," a relatively new and somewhat tenuous field. In his consideration of men's roles, Sussman focuses on the figure of the monk as a representational starting point, a masculine ideal on a "continuum of degrees of self-regulation" (3) within Victorian novels. Because fallen men embrace their sexuality, they appear to be foils for Sussman's monks. However, Delamayn, Grandcourt, Benjulia, Fitzpiers, Gray, Hallward, and Lord Henry are reckless to different degrees. Fallen men do not fit categorically into a definition of masculinity; instead they express a continuum of self-control. Like Sussman, Rachel Adams and David Savran

confront some of the challenges of male-focused research in their 2002 anthology, *The Masculinity Studies Reader*. They claim that male-centered research is "dedicated to analyzing what has often seemed to be an implicit fact, that the vast majority of societies are patriarchal and that men have historically enjoyed more than their share of power, resources, and cultural authority" (2). This important anthology paves the way for a discussion of fallen men; Adams and Savran help to indentify masculinity studies as a fertile and varied field of inquiry.

In *A Literature of Their Own*, Elaine Showalter finds that female authors *specifically* separate men into distinct categories of gentleman and rake. She claims that "by the 1850's, the 'woman's man', impossibly pious and desexed or impossibly idle and oversexed, had become as familiar a figure in the feminine novel as the governess" (136). Heroes in fallen men narratives such as Lord Ilbury in *Uncle Silas*, Arnold Brinkworth in *Man and Wife*, Daniel Deronda in Eliot's novel, and Ovid Vere in *Heart and Science* are well-intentioned men who uphold moral values. In novels authored by both men and women, heroes display gallantry *and* sexuality. Daniel Deronda attracts Gwendolen despite her husband's disapproval. Arnold Brinkworth is sexualized by Collins who details the hero's ruggedly handsome physical appearance. Arnold and Deronda share some traits with both versions of Showalter's model hero: pious and undersexed, or idle and oversexed. The fallen man, however, does not actually qualify as a hero, since he is usually beyond reform and does not have a happy narrative dénouement. The uncertain boundary between villain and hero makes room for radical conceptions of gender and national identity. Showalter's two constructions of masculinity do not consider the moral ambiguity characteristic of fallen men. When male and female authors refuse to fit their

fallen men into patterned identities, such as model heroes, they expand upon possibilities for manliness in Victorian texts.

In *Man and Wife*, Collins invigorates possibilities for men when his upright and deviant characters do not work as clear-cut foils for one another. Arnold Brinkworth uses his physical strength to rise in the world when he joins the merchant marine. Nonetheless, he has to work hard to redeem his shaky financial legacy and he almost commits bigamy in his quest to marry the heroine, Blanche. As a counterpart to Geoffrey, Brinkworth embodies British patriotism. In his imperfections, he posits the viewpoint that love for church and country may be tainted. According to historian Paul Ward, most countries, including Britain are "personified as female. In order to love one's country, one must assign to that country features worth defending: the least problematic way is to define the embodiment of the nation as its women and children whom men can defend" (Ward 38). Fallen men opt out of chivalry when they imperil the lives and virtue of women and children and, implicitly, England. In *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness, and Criminal Justice in Victorian England*, Martin J. Wiener claims that during Victoria's reign, men were encouraged to channel their violent urges into military careers, since the British army was involved in some war or another throughout the Victorian era. Wiener argues that Victorian laws reflected the need to suppress historically consistent, violent, masculine urges. With those men who were prone to violence off at war, the remaining members of the gentry and other classes were discouraged from carrying weapons, and both legal and cultural tools propelled a movement towards redefining ideal manliness. By the mid-Victorian period, the British ideal of "the man of dignity"—who demonstrated prudence and self-command, replaced the earlier ideal of the "man of

honour"—ready to avenge slights by violent means (Wiener 1-39). Fallen men show neither dignity nor restraint when they stop at nothing to satisfy their own needs. Their sexuality and luck, rather than heroism, brings them closer to their marital and capital goals.

In the Victorian sense, masculinity reinforced the duties to nation and empire; the fallen man, by desisting from that model, makes a political point. When the fallen man disappoints gendered expectations, he complicates distinctions between good and evil, rise and fall. Inherent in definitions of fallenness are issues of class. Martin Danahay argues that a strong work ethic—doing one's duty for God and country— is essential to the formulation of masculine ideals. He finds that "gender segregation was articulated and reinforced by images and texts that either implicitly or explicitly argued that work was 'manly' and therefore inappropriate for women" (2). Danahay focuses on representations of work in novels by authors such as Dickens, whose "problems with male sexuality and with work lead him to idealize women and to see them as separated from both work and sex" (67). Although he was progressive as a social thinker, Dickens' formula for identity is embedded in traditional male and female binaries. For this reason, fallen men do not appear very often in novels by Charles Dickens. Fallen men straddle the line between and within genders when they move through classes, even though they are well-born.

In *Imperial Masochism*, John Kucich also analyzes masculinity along class lines. He argues that in Victorian times, "middle-class fiction, for example, drew on a theme placed at the heart of the British novel by Samuel Richardson: the notion that individuals are redeemed by suffering" (11). Fallen men embarrass the aristocratic class when they

abuse and misuse their privileges; they suffer but are not redeemed. In *Masculine Desire*, Richard Dellamora finds a convergence between the categories of "dandy" and "gentleman." In the late nineteenth century, "dandyism was associated with middle-class uppityism" (Dellamora 196). The rank of the gentleman before the nineteenth-century was based definitively on "the values of the landed gentry [. . .] [to] live without manual labour" (Dellamora 197). Dellamora outlines the nineteenth-century conflict between the middle-class husband's need to work and the idleness required of gentlemen. Indeed, this category of gentleman was becoming so non-exclusive that "by the last quarter of the nineteenth-century, it was almost universally accepted that a traditional liberal education at a reputable public school should qualify a man as a gentleman" (Dellamora 198). Dellamora explores the effects of these destabilized categories on male-male desire, as the term "effeminacy" came to be used to critique literary characters and authors,[1] "as a term of personal abuse [it] often connotes male-male desire, a threat of deviance that seems to haunt gentlemen should they become too gentle, refined or glamorous" (Dellamora 199). Dellamora speaks to the same problem of masculine "self-fashioning" that Adams encounters with regards to Victorian intellectual men: the insufficiency of existing categories leaves men in the conundrum of conforming where they do not exactly fit, or deviating and facing scandal or ridicule.

The figure of the fallen man reflects some of the same anxieties as does his literary sister, the fallen woman. He takes on the narrative role of the fallen woman by being the morally questionable figure against whom the upright characters can determine their individual and social identities. The fallen woman, a Victorian monitory figure, has

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[1] Dellamora cites the example of Bulwer-Lytton, a dandy of the 1830's, attacking Tennyson's poems for their "effeminacies," for "a want of all manliness in strain" (qtd. in Dellamora 199).

received considerable critical attention. This character, defined by her actual or perceived illicit sexual relations, marks the divide between adherence to and deviation from contemporary codes of morality. Her strange allure and sexuality are punished with "attenuated autonomy and fractured identity" (Anderson 2). A shunned woman is unable to influence action, be it her own or those of other characters. Feminist criticism condemns Victorian novelists for their consistent employment of fallen female characters, whose possible fates of "universal censure, lifelong shame or death" (Flanders 109) result in the swift resolution of potential textual disorder. Yet Victorian gender criticism has neglected to document the importance of the fallen man, whose narrative presence and treatment usually free the fallen woman from her pre-ordained fate. Anderson finds that "if feminine virtue could symbolize normative models of inherent, autonomous, or self-regulating identity, then fallenness represents a challenge to those models that did not bespeak simply a form of agressivity or sexuality" (15). Just as Anderson finds similarities between virtuous and ruined women in Victorian novels, so can we find inconsistent moral codes in fallen men narratives. As fictional characters, fallen men might seem to perpetuate nineteenth-century misogynist notions of femininity because they often treat women as saints or prostitutes. Yet novels about fallen men reverse this effect. If the fallen man and the fallen woman are both subject to limited power and dismal fates, then the fallen man's scorning of his female counterpart becomes ironic. Dichotomous notions of femininity are therefore put into question, if not invalidated.

Victorian taboos about masculinity, as cast specifically through fallen men narratives, can be read through the methodology of feminist literary criticism. Amanda

Anderson, Nina Auerbach, Nancy Armstrong, Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, Jane Flanders, Jill Matus, and Elaine Showalter examine representations of female characters in Victorian literature in order to determine gendered categories and their limitations. Stock characters such as rakes, dandies, fallen women, madwomen, and angels in the house, perpetuate myths about gender. For example, Gilbert and Gubar assess the significance of recurring "madwomen" in Victorian novels. They claim that

> Even the most apparently conservative [. . .] women writers obsessively create fiercely independent characters who seek to destroy all the patriarchal structures which both they and their authors' submissive heroines seem to accept as inevitable. Of course, by projecting their rebellious impulses not into their heroines but into mad or monstrous women (who are suitably punished [. . .]), female authors dramatize their own self-division, their desire both to accept the strictures of patriarchal society and to reject them. (Gilbert and Gubar 78)

Fallen men, too, destroy and uphold patriarchal structures, as they (not the fallen women) must leave narrative worlds in order to restore order. Yet the "order" that they restore is not the same order with which these novels begin, but rather a daring, futuristic order that allows for female sexual mishaps and punished male seducers. The fallen man challenges the patriarchal order more effectively than the madwoman does, since he is born into that order, expected to be a valiant upholder of that order, only to be excluded from it permanently at the hands of a weakened woman. The patriarchal order depends on adherence to precedents; those who stray destabilize that order. When men gamble with their respectability and their bodies, they also gamble with their mastery and power.

Fallen men invert Victorian gender roles when their self-driven speculations lead them to be overpowered by the "weaker sex."

Fallen men narratives are not the only Victorian texts to undercut gendered expectations. In her groundbreaking work on gender and Victorian novels, Nancy Armstrong finds that domestic novels, centered on the domain of female characters, empower women. Fiction by authors such as Samuel Richardson, Jane Austen, and the Brontës

> seized the authority to say what was female, and that they did so in order to contest the reigning notion of kinship relations that attached most power and privilege to certain family lines. This struggle to represent sexuality took the form of a struggle to individuate wherever there was a collective body, to attach psychological motives to what had been the openly political behaviour of contending groups, and to evaluate these according to a set of moral norms that exalted the domestic woman over and above her aristocratic counterpart. I am saying the female was the figure, above all else, on whom depended the outcome of the struggle among competing ideologies. (Armstrong 5)

Linking sexuality, representation, politics, and morality, Armstrong demonstrates that patriarchal and textual structures are always vulnerable to inquiry; categories can and *should* be reconfigured. Fallen men exist outside of domestic fiction yet they still perform a nuanced political role when they imperil their noble status and disrupt narrative closure.

In Victorian times, novels were categorized to reflect both content and audience. Domestic novels might appeal to all but they are geared towards women. Realist novels

mirror family values while sensation fiction pushes the boundaries of taste and appeals to the masses. These popular forms of fiction were widely enjoyed, regardless of intended audience. The role between author, narrative, and gender is dealt with distinctly in each of the respective genres. George Levine claims that realism in England can be understood along class lines. He argues that realism does not focus on "the dregs of society, not on the degradations and degenerations of humans in bondage to a social and cosmic determinism. It belongs, almost provincially, to a 'middling' condition and defines itself against the excesses, both stylistic and narrative, of various kinds of romantic, exotic, or sensational literature" (5). Harry E. Shaw characterizes realist writing as paradoxical: "[n]aive where it should be subtle, confident because unreflective, realism has become the form which, far from showing the way past illusion, itself perpetuates the illusion on which our blind, ideology-ridden life in society depends" (3). George Eliot's chosen format, realism replicates the world, flawed though it may be. According to J. Jeffrey Franklin, in the realist novel, individual choice is juxtaposed with circumstance to reflect realistic conflict (42). Realist universes, according to Franklin, "make sense" (45). These novels initiate social progress by perpetuating an ideology that values manual labour. They also limit growth on issues of gender when they uphold dichotomies by reflecting them.

Fallen men are not often found in purely realist novels since they confront norms that are tricky to represent. Fallen men are often too melodramatic to suit the pace of realism. Eliot's Mallinger Grandcourt is the exception rather than the rule. Written late in Eliot's career, *Daniel Deronda* reflects her own liberal notions of gender and sexuality. While this well-researched novel is certainly realist, it also incorporates elements of the

supernatural. As Jill Matus has found, Gwendolen experiences moments of psychic clairvoyance which influence action. Inexplicable factors seep into this progressive realist novel, creating a fertile space for the fallen man. Harry Shaw reflects upon the problem of expecting to see life reflected realistically in novels. He takes issue with the pro-realist stance of Georg Lukács who "proclaimed that all worthy art was realist, and that all realist art strove to capture the totality of life," only to "defend the possibility that historical process can be understood and artistically represented" (Shaw 11). Sensation fiction exposed a hole in realist ideology by dramatizing the abuse of real vices. Most popular in the 1860s, sensation fiction produced a wave of bestsellers on subjects such as murder, incest, bigamy, and other crimes. This relatively shocking style endured until the end of the Victorian era as a strong influence for Hardy, Wilde, and others. Realism produces class-conscious snippets of real life while sensation novels reflect the underside of the Victorian social milieu.

Writers who claim to tell the truth in narrative, assume that there is a consensus with regards to British norms. Fallen man narratives demonstrate a divergent perspective whereby traditions evolve and habits fluctuate. In *Writing Men*, Berthold Schoene-Harwood demonstrates that *Frankenstein, Heart of Darkness,* and *Turn of the Screw* "are informed by a struggle for narrative supremacy between antagonistic male and female voices, the three individual readings introduce readers to literature's capacity for both—and sometimes simultaneously—consolidating and unsettling traditional conceptions of femininity and masculinity" (xi). In nineteenth-century narratives, gendered categories presume distinct differences although novelistic plotlines often depend upon the threat of disintegration of borders. In *The Novel and The Police*, D. A. Miller argues that the

"novel's critical relation to society, much advertised in the novel and its literary criticism, masks the extent to which modern social organization has made even scandal a systematic function of its routine self-maintenance" (xii). He finds evidence of his claim in "the Victorian social order whose totalizing power circulates all the more easily for being pulverized" (xiii). Miller argues that "the possibility of radical *entanglement* between the nature of the novel and the practice of the police" (1-2) is such that both structures act as truants and transgressors of social norms.

Fallen men are necessary wrongdoers in tenuous social orders. As Miller notes in *Narrative and its Discontents*, the traditional Victorian novelistic structure is dependant upon narrative punishment to overshadow strands of unruly desire which have seeped through the pages, though never quite dominated them. In George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, for instance, "the *Finale* sweeps deviance under the rug, as the narrative sends its rebellious characters away from Middlemarch, ritual sacrifices to the recovery of social routine" (193). When Lydgate, Bulstrode, Dorothea, and Ladislaw leave town at the end of Middlemarch, "the community levels their differences by subjecting them to the same fate of social exclusion [. . .] Murder, meliorism, and misalliance are made to look like equivalent threats to social well-being" (Miller 121). Bulstrode, a fallen Evangelical banker, Lydgate, a misdirected doctor, and Ladislaw, an advocate for the working-class must all leave town in order for stability to ensue. Bulstrode admits to his guilt in a number of crimes and acts of dishonesty. He differs from fallen men because he wants to atone for his sins. He wants to revert to Christian values, but he is nonetheless shamed and discarded. Deviance is an integral part of the social scheme; misbehaviour also works as a defining feature of fallen men.

The fallen man resembles but does not fully reproduce gender roles that have already been determined. Masculine types have precursors in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature. From the Gothic villain in *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Monk,* through the rakes in *Clarissa* and *Pride and Prejudice*, and the brooding heroes of later fiction inspired by Byron's example, masculinity in the nineteenth century has specific articulations. These articulations precede and enable the fallen man; nevertheless, the fallen man differs from these antecedents because of his familiarity and lack of conscience. Fallen men refute dichotomous notions of character while earlier villains reinforce them. In Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*, Ambrosio is an insatiable rapist and cold-hearted killer, though he feigns celibacy. He gains entry to homes as a protector and as a confessor. He is attractive and criminal; he is also appropriately punished. When Ambrosio falls to his death, cursed to eternal damnation, he is clearly condemned as an evil villain. Further distinguished from the fallen man, the rakish monk commits his heinous crimes in Madrid, safely distanced from the English social scene. Fallen men are English in their habits and appearance. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Gothic novels had "been concerned [. . .] to make manifest a fear of the foreign other" (Wolfreys xiii). In a Victorian Gothic novel such as *Uncle Silas*, fallen men reside in England and threaten the establishments and customs of their contemporary world. Le Fanu was Irish and he was able thus to give an outsider's perspective on British customs and ideals. Fallen men start from positions of title and esteem, just like Ambrosio, but they "bring home the fear" (Wolfreys xiii) in Victorian novels. Rakes are vilified foreigners who raise indefinable fears; fallen men are British aristocrats who are unnaturally cruel. Rakes use seduction as a tool in social climbing. In contrast, fallen men

try to *preserve* their titles by attracting the right sort of women and by accumulating wealth.

The fallen man's wavering social position distinguishes him from earlier-established masculine types; specifically it distinguishes him from the rake and the Byronic hero. Deborah Lutz has recently added to the debates over eighteenth and nineteenth century masculine types in *The Dangerous Lover*. According to Lutz, Gothic villains in *The Italian*, and *The Monk* "contain the erotic complexities and fascination of a manifold and fearful enemy, while the lover in contrast seems easily read" (Lutz 31). Lutz suggests that mysterious men are more attractive because of the danger they embody. Both rakes and fallen men exude sex appeal. These figures are distinguished from one another more by how they repel than how they attract. Lutz finds that "Byronism lies in the man who, although failed and deeply wounded, can be redeemed by love" (Lutz 21). Fallen men fall in lust, though they never fall in love. Closed to emotion, these monitory figures cannot be redeemed. According to Penelope Biggs, "The eighteenth-century rake was a special type of predator: a destroyer of lives who enjoyed full social acceptance" (Biggs 52). In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Wickham initially attracts savvy Elizabeth Bennet. He eventually suffers shame when his debts are brought to light. Although he must endure the silly chatterbox Lydia Bennet as his wife, Wickham's fate is rendered in a comical manner. His punishment is of little consequence, particularly when compared to the untimely and often suspicious deaths of fallen men. The rake does not threaten gender norms since he has a place in society. In Austen's later novel, *Persuasion*, William Elliot is a debt-ridden rake who marries the crass Mrs. Clay. William Elliot, like Wickham, is not utterly cruel. Sir Elliot is arguably a transitional

character from the rake to the fallen man, as Austen has him marry up economically, but down socially. He salvages his precarious finances, but diminishes his links to nobility.

Byronic heroes are swarthier and more overtly sexualized than rakes, although these two categories often merge in the writing of the Regency and early-Victorian periods. The Byronic hero is another precursor to the fallen man in terms of his sexual ambiguity and deviant behaviour. Byronic heroes present an image of erotic energy that will be reproduced—though more discreetly implied—in fallen man narratives. Victorian values were more prudish than those of the Romantics in terms of sexuality. Fiction of the Victorian period often centers on the conflict between official codes of morality and the relentless pursuit of change. Novelists who critiqued the imperfections of society helped to inspire reform. When Byron creates, but does not judge, promiscuous heroes and heroines, he promotes progressive ideas of gender and morality. By virtue of their irresistible sex appeal and irreverence, Byronic heroes set the stage for fallen man narratives. As Ian Jobling argues,

> Byron's two most famous heroes, Childe Harold and Don Juan, are highly promiscuous. Furthermore, sexual relations in Byron's work almost always violate the norm of monogamous marriage [. . .] However, if the Byronic hero is a self-portrait, it is one that is profoundly affected by the cultural milieu in which it was produced and which, as we have seen, shaped Byron's view of his own sexuality. In this environment, it was impossible for Byron to portray his cad qualities in an unequivocally positive light. In order to reconcile his own nature with the cultural norms of his period, Byron engages in a complex strategy that both vaunts and condemns cad

traits. (296)

Harold and Juan share traits with cads, though they are treated with more sympathy. Fallen men, resembling Byronic heroes and rakes, evolve throughout the Victorian era. The fallen man holds a more tenuous social position than does the rake; neither he nor his vice is wholly accepted by authors or characters.

In the 1840s, both Emily and Charlotte Brontë draw from Byronic heroes and rakes when they create appealing men who are dark and dangerous. In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff loves Catherine with a vehemence that turns to rage when she chooses gentle Linton over her passionate stepbrother. Heathcliff is not a fallen man because, as an adopted orphan, he has no social position from which to fall. Edward Rochester in *Jane Eyre* does come from an aristocratic line; he is modelled on the rake who enjoys popularity despite his penchant for promiscuity. Both of the Brontës' Victorian rakes pave the way for the fallen man, as they show deviant, brooding men to be attractive. Showalter defines both Rochester and Heathcliff as "idle and oversexed," even though Rochester remains celibate in order to abide by Jane's Christian ideals and Heathcliff turns to violence rather than act on his sexual urges. Neither character is over-sexed. These Byronic heroes originate in Byron's masculine typology; thus they are not, as Showalter argues, distinctly the product of female authors and based on fantasy.

In contrast to definitions of Byronic heroes and rakes, the variance in representations of fallen men implies certain differences between the sexes. The concept of reality, therefore, is hashed out in fiction by means of scientific discourse and inference. Scientists aim to prove truths, yet they are often associated with Gothicism. Science, for instance, provokes a certain sort of fear when it implies that man is

descended from primates. Darwin posits differences between men and women as deriving from empirical truths. Gillian Beer rightly asserts that Darwin has wide-reaching implications for British culture, because he divides his discussion of sexual selection along gender lines, reinforcing Victorian notions of dichotomy. When fallen men become scientists, they do not follow the theoretical model of Darwin, but rather examine bodies and dissect corpses. In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin claims that man's superior intelligence and sense of morality both interfere with the evolutionary process (176). Fallen men maintain no moral scruples, so they might be considered reproductive heroes in a Darwinian sense. These monitory figures, however, are punished rather than rewarded for their promiscuity. Darwin's evolutionary theory, according to Beer, "emphasized extinction and annihilation equally with transformation—and this was one of its most disturbing elements, one to which gradually accrued a heavier and heavier weight in consciousness" (12). Beer demonstrates how Darwin's ideas and language infuse George Eliot's novels to the point that she is criticized for being overly scientific and not literary enough. The fallen man, embodying popular vice and fear represents a concept of masculinity that can only exist outside the parameters of scientific absolutes.

Fallen men point to the Victorians' simultaneous fascination with and fear of taking risks. Drugs, sex, gambling, science, and crime make for interesting plot twists and expose complex moral issues. These vices fascinate readers and reflect current trends. In the 1860s, as sensation fiction flooded the literary markets, novels such as *Uncle Silas* explored alternatives to the burden of truth implicit in realism. For instance, opium decentralizes blame by producing uncertainty when Silas's death cannot be categorized as accident or suicide. In novels of the 1870s, Victorians with inherited titles became

even more overtly desperate than the secluded Silas as they scrambled to improve their status and maintain good reputations. Fallen men try to rise by pursuing women and money. In *Man and Wife*, characters gamble on the fallen man's victory or his loss when he competes in a footrace. The strong athlete appears as though he will win, but his dismal fate defies expectations. Collins takes a risk by rewarding the fallen woman and punishing her seducer. Similarly, Eliot's Mallinger Grandcourt gambles with his status by having an affair with a married woman and fathering illegitimate children. His cruelty is reminiscent of Silas', although Grandcourt presents a greater threat since he operates from within society and thus contaminates economic and social circles.

In the last twenty years of the Victorian age, the recurring figures of both the seductive doctor and the mad scientist culminate in a new breed of fallen men. They are neither inebriated nor under the influence of gambling fever. Doctors Benjulia and Fitzpiers are presumably well-educated and clear-headed, since they subscribe to scientific methodology and thought. Fallen doctors, however, present a serious threat to notions of masculinity, propriety, and class structure when they use their knowledge to further devious goals. Officially, Victorians shunned medical healers who got their hands dirty. In the literature, these anxieties are expressed through mad scientists who are doomed to suffer for Faustus-like dismissals of ethical qualms in the pursuit of scientific truths. While the drug-addicted fallen men hold a questionable sense of social responsibility, excessive experimenters dabble willingly in areas of knowledge that disrupt normalcy. Hardy mixes sensation and realist styles to suggest a moral code whereby virility is an asset. Hardy's daring examples of both masculinity and narrative in *The Woodlanders, Jude the Obscure, The Mayor of Casterbridge,* and *Tess of the*

D'Urbervilles open the discussion about the value of art over morality that will dominate the literary scene in the 1890s. At the fin-de-siècle, high culture melds with sexual liberty and vice in aesthetic representations. Pleasure-seeking comes to play a central role in the popular cultural phenomena of aestheticism and dandyism. At the fin-de-siècle, narratives rely increasingly on indeterminacy as Victorian attempts at constraining deviance are challenged by popular indulgence in risqué behaviour.

Varying vices attributed to fallen men throughout the century affect and modify the figure's important narrative task of opening up unpredictable possibilities and challenging gender codes. Fallen men rarely redeem themselves, but they do redeem others. They raise the possibility of independence and social freedom for female characters. Cultural anxieties are addressed and perpetuated by the fallen man when he acts as a disturbing force within narrative. When the fallen man both visits and transcends gendered Victorian categories, he troubles structural norms and threatens paradigms of masculinity.

Chapter One

Deviant Cravings: Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas*

When Victorian writers treat opium addicts as fallen men, they warn readers against succumbing to the vice that most certainly lurks in their own medicine cabinets. Opium addiction provides a murky moral space wherein memory and responsibility are indefinite. Victorian definitions of class, race, gender, and religion are threatened by the prevalence of opium. Patriarchal traditionalism implies responsibility between men and their ancestors. When noblemen take drugs, they choose ambivalence over structure, indulgence over control. In Le Fanu's 1864 sensation novel, leering Uncle Silas is depicted as a violent, sexual predator. Silas is an accused murderer and an opium addict who has married below his social status, thereby jeopardizing his place in British class hierarchy. Despite their deviance and isolation, Silas and his son Dudley remain the last male heirs to the aristocratic Ruthyn line. Both father and son are fallen men—characters who threaten their gentlemanly status by engaging in nefarious activities. Just as fallen women traditionally inherit moral blemishes from their mothers, so too does Dudley Ruthyn inherit proclivity towards vice from his father. In Le Fanu's novel, the fallen men suffer miserable fates; the young female victim survives and narrates the tale. Gendered expectations are undercut when the seemingly powerless, naïve girl emerges triumphant and the threatening men succumb to fallen destinies.

Silas reflects the Victorians' affinity for vice, albeit with a sinister tinge. Silas sips laudanum at home quietly, a common enough pastime for a nineteenth-century gentleman. Silas, however, does not measure his laudanum, and he sometimes takes his

opium in lozenges—a less seemly and more potent form. Furthermore, Silas partakes in the gambling fever of his times, but he gambles with more than just money when he murders Mr. Charke to avoid paying gambling debts. Throughout the novel, Silas sees his son Dudley as his last "hope—my manly though untutored son—the last male scion of the Ruthyns" (Le Fanu 331). Dudley, in fact, represents little hope, since he has already followed in his father's footsteps by marrying and abandoning a lower-class girl, and he can therefore not redeem his family through marriage. When Le Fanu's fallen man leaves a patrimony of deviance and doom for his son, he destabilizes, and even mocks the hierarchical system on which patriarchal lineages and masculine identities are built. Silas is but one of many mid-century father characters who seek an advantageous match for his son, yet Silas plots to murder Maud when his plan to marry her to Dudley fails. Maud tells us early on, that Silas is

> that mysterious relative whom I had never seen—who was, it had in old times been very darkly hinted at me, unspeakably unfortunate or unspeakably vicious [. . .] Only once he [father] had said anything from which I could gather my father's opinion of him, and then it was so slight and enigmatical that I may have filled in the character very neatly as I pleased. (9)

In this novel, as in the novels to be discussed later in other chapters, the fallen man is both "unfortunate" and "vicious." The danger of the fallen man lies in his combined familiarity and recklessness; he warns readers that their controlled behaviour and good fortune are their only protection from succumbing to their own potential viciousness.

In keeping with his contemporaries, Le Fanu associates opium with criminality,

murder, and threatening sexuality. If opium ingestion is so commonplace in Victorian England, why then is it attached to fallen men as a threat to social stability and propriety? At the turn of the nineteenth century, wealthy British men in truth and fiction, such as Thomas De Quincey and the character Falkland in Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, get away with their respective indulgences because of their position and power. Falkland eventually confesses to his crime, and De Quincey exposes his weakness for all to see. These apologetic rakes are self-conscious and full of regret; the fallen man, by contrast, is irreverent. When fallen men use opium to erase moral boundaries, they escape blame and eliminate the need for conscience. The fallen man is ahead of his time as a monitory figure against *male* vice; he cautions readers against the ordinary indulgences which will become definitively deviant and illegal as the century progresses.

In *Uncle Silas*, Le Fanu highlights the Victorians' confused relationship with opium. Once perceived as a miracle drug, opium came to be seen as a source of addiction in the 1860s; abuse of this drug provides a break from morality for its users, who often forget their crimes when under the influence of opiates. Silas Ruthyn may not appear to be an explicit monitory figure against opium ingestion. Uncle Silas is depicted as a possible sexual predator, though his sexual misdeeds are never dramatized. Instead, his laudanum addiction adds to the Gothic atmosphere of the novel, as Silas' sexuality is implicitly rendered through his drug abuse. This chapter will elaborate on the threat posed to Victorian masculinity by a character such as Le Fanu's Silas. Ezra Jennings from Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* and Jasper from Dickens' *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* also fall into addiction. Jennings is a well-meaning scientist, yet opium propels the motiveless crime in the novel. Disastrous results ensue. Dickens has been criticized for

his melodramatic portrayal of Jasper's visits to the filthy opium dens in the East End of London, when, in fact, opium was readily available from West End chemists. Later in the century, Wilde's Dorian Gray escapes his murderous memories in opium dens that resemble Dickens'. Le Fanu's threatening laudanum addict is a precursor to later, more overtly degraded scenes of opium use. Opium is inherently linked to the East, and so adds, in a Victorian context, to the sense of foreboding darkness of its users. In *Uncle Silas*, Maud's dying father entrusts his brother Silas with Maud's care in order to reinstate his sinister brother's shaky reputation. When Silas shocks us with his complete abuse of this opportunity of social advancement, he acknowledges the contemporary fear of seepage between categories of masculinity, race, and class.

Opium and Instability

In Victorian times, opium could be perceived as either medicine or addictive drug depending upon how—and by whom—it is labelled. This drug and its representations reveal many truths about British society. Aristocratic drug-abusers undermine the stability of their own structures when they share a vice with criminals and degenerates; opium addiction infects all classes. In Le Fanu's time, the relationship between opium and gentility is a contradictory one. By the mid-Victorian period, opium was the household cure for ailments ranging from sleeplessness to cancer. Gout, sciatica, neuralgia, ulceration, malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia, bronchitis, haemorrhage, diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, and diabetes were all treated with opium during the nineteenth-century (Berridge and Edwards 66). Still, De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* had been around for decades, warning the middle-to-upper-class

readership that, effective as opium might be in relieving pain, it also deprives its users of control over their cravings and behaviour. Although the title of De Quincey's book implies apology and blame, De Quincey does not always regret his addiction. At times, he celebrates opium:

> Whereas wine disorders the mental faculties, opium, on the contrary (if taken in a proper manner), introduces amongst them the most exquisite order, legislation, and harmony. Wine robs a man of his self-possession; opium greatly invigorates it. Wine unsettles and clouds the judgement, and gives a preternatural brightness and a vivid exaltation to the contempts and the admirations, the loves and the hatreds of the drinker; opium, on the contrary, communicates serenity and equipoise to all the faculties [. . .] the expansion of the benigner feelings incident to opium is no febrile access, but a healthy restoration to that state which the mind would naturally recover upon the removal of any deep-seated irritation of pain that had disturbed and quarrelled with the impulses of a heart originally just and good. (47)

De Quincey claims that opium brings out the best in man. He also emphasizes how widespread the use of opium is among the upper classes. Opium actually creates a class. In his address to the readers, De Quincey exposes "the whole class of opium-eaters [. . .] a very numerous class indeed" (5). At various points in his narrative, the addicted gentleman laments his dependency on the drug, but elsewhere he proclaims it to be his religion (42). When De Quincey exposed the gentlemanly vice in 1821, he sparked a debate about the line between medicine and addiction. Nineteenth-century literary

figures, such as Lord Byron, Samual Taylor Coleridge, Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, Thomas De Quincey, and Edgar Allan Poe, who were, each in his own way, more popular than Le Fanu, produced great literature under the influence of opium. In 1858, Wilkie Collins famously said, "Who is the man who invented laudanum? I thank him from the bottom of my heart" (Berridge and Edwards 58).

Julian Wolfreys finds that De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* demonstrates the writer's "Gothic fears." These fears are internalized "through the issue of narrative repetition and through the consumption of narcotics" (Wolfreys xii). While De Quincey writes about his drug addiction and his many failed attempts to give up or decrease his habit, Uncle Silas never even measures his opium. Doctor Jolks is astonished by Silas' recklessness with the drug:

> I've known people take it moderately. I've known people take it to excess, *but* they were all particular as to *measure* and *that* is exactly the point I've tried to impress on him. The habit, of course, you understand is formed, there's no uprooting that; but he won't measure—he goes by the eye and by sensation, which I need not tell you, Miss Ruthyn, is going by *chance*. (Le Fanu 282)

When Silas measures opium by "sensation," he privileges the sensual and the intangible over the scientific. Upper-class Victorians defend their own opium use by claiming that it is medicinal. Silas poses a cultural conundrum then, since he is born an aristocrat, and has been restored financially, yet he takes opium carelessly like an addict. Unlike De Quincey, Uncle Silas does not come across as a sympathetic character who has stumbled down the wrong path. In his will, Maud's father gives Silas an explicit opportunity for

social advancement, by putting his daughter's life and fortune in the hands of a man who was once charged with murder. Moreover, Silas does not extract sympathy easily from readers since he has wilfully gambled away his fortune, and now plots to kill Maud in his spooky Gothic home.

Maud alternates between being a scientific compiler of facts and an emotional recorder of incomplete experience. In so doing, she alludes to the difficulty with categorizing opium and its users. Silas has a strange face, one whose "countenance was like that of an epileptic arrested in one of his contortions" (222). On an emotional level, Maud is frightened by her uncle. On a scientific level, she wants to excuse his sinister appearance and gestures with medical explanations: "To this hour I cannot say what was the nature of those periodical seizures. I have often spoken to medical men about them, since, but could never learn that excessive use of opium could altogether account for them. It was, I believe, certain, however, that he did use that drug in startling quantities" (223). Maud turns to medical men to explain Silas' behaviour, yet she is never quite satisfied with their advice. Dr. Bryerly, who is evidently one of "the medical men" whom Maud has interviewed, offers literary and spiritual explanations as to why Silas takes too much opium:

> It's made on water: the spirit interferes with the use of it beyond a certain limit. You have no idea what those fellows can swallow. Read the "Opium eater." I knew two cases in which the quantity exceeded De Quincey's. Aha! It's new to you? and he laughed quietly at my simplicity. (234)

The doctor's cryptic answer confuses the young girl, although he assumes that opium is so common that Maud would be familiar with it and with De Quincey's narrative. The

doctor, who is purportedly Maud's source of scientific explanation, is also a Swedenborgian who judges humanity and its vices in pseudo-scientific terms. He flippantly groups together Silas and De Quincey, even though the Gothic uncle abuses laudanum, power, and people while the Romantic writer abuses only his drug. Furthermore, neither man leads a life of hedonist indulgence, yet the doctor tells Maud that these "men of pleasure, who have no other pursuit, use themselves up mostly, and pay a smart price for their sins" (235). Not only does the supposed scientist fail to distinguish between the guilt-ridden De Quincey who measures his drug obsessively, and the sinister, predatory Silas who takes laudanum with abandon, but he also condemns them both to Swedenborg's vision of hell, a mysterious place of isolation and gloom. Swedenborg was a religious leader who supposedly gained scientific insight from angels. His followers value science derived from divinity, rather than positing Christianity and scientific inquiry as opposing values. His religioun condemned to hell those who did not demonstrate love towards God and fellow man. Swedenborg claimed to have visited both heaven and hell. His religious sect is strict and unforgiving, yet it is also inclusive, since it values scientific principles and allows a place for Jews and heathens in heaven. The Swedenborgian influence in Le Fanu's novel raises questions about the intersection between spirit and body, faith and science.

Besides its place in literature, opium was also surfacing as a relevant topic in scientific discourse. Medical and literary texts exposed both the consequences and the appeal of opiates for the average Victorian. In 1853, Dr. Jonathan Pereira claimed that "Opium is undoubtedly the most important and valuable remedy of the whole Materia Medica" (Pereira 2.2122). Pereira also pointed out that the drug, an aphrodisiac, produces

erections. For this reason, opium is linked to deviant sexuality. At the same time, some of the most prolific writers of the nineteenth century use opium for medicinal, recreational, and imaginative purposes. Fallen men warn Victorian readers about a problem that is not always perceived as one. Sickly gentlewomen commonly took the drug for pain, just as the hyperbolic Madame de la Rougierre does in *Uncle Silas*. Madame is French, but "has fallen into the English way of liking people with titles," and cries out for "the laudanum, dear cheaile" (39), demonstrating the Englishness of her habits and character. Her character is a compound of titles, responsibility, ghoulishness, and laudanum. Withdrawal symptoms were often confused with ongoing illness (Milligan "Appendix" 248), so Victorians would continue to take the drug that was indeed the source of their sickness. Madame de la Rougierre claims to be ill and in need of the drug constantly. Jonathan Pereira warns that the moral implications of opium ingestion differ greatly, depending on the mode of ingestion, and the reason for taking the drug: "We should be [. . .] careful not to assume that because opium in large doses, when taken by the mouth, is a powerful poison, and when smoked to excess is injurious to health, that, therefore, the moderate employment of it is necessarily detrimental" (qtd. in Berridge and Edwards 86). In their extensive study of nineteenth-century opium use and its implications, Berridge and Edwards claim that Pereira's stance sums up the medical position on opium at the time—it is morally and medically sanctioned so long as the opium user suffers a real complaint and shows restraint in the quantity and frequency with which he consumes the drug. However, Dr. Pereira's comments inspire boundary blurring, as he states neither how frequent nor how much opium use is unacceptable. Moreover, not every English person had the luxury of complaining about medical ailments to a doctor and having their opium

use thereby sanctioned. According to Martin Booth, penny tracts warned poor English folk against excessive opium ingestion (Booth 64). The nineteenth century take on opium draws a moral division based loosely on medical terms, but really along class lines. When both Madame and Silas complain of their ailments, they receive doctors' attention and much opium, even though they are probably just sick from addiction.

Unlike Charles Dickens, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Oscar Wilde, Le Fanu does not warn his readers against vice by displacing opium abuse onto the lower classes. This trend of displacement reflects the attempts at legislative reform with regards to opium ingestion and prescription. An example of the misdirection of reform efforts is seen with regards to the question of administering opium to children. By mid-century, Thomas Bull's *Maternal Management of Children in Health and Disease* was the standard medical text on children. Bull warns that opium is too often kept in the nursery and given freely to restless children by unqualified caregivers (Berridge and Edwards 104). Dr. Bull's warning specifically addresses those who have nurseries in their homes, presumably a middle-to-upper-class readership. Advocates often geared their campaigns towards the working class. As Berridge and Edwards note, "The campaign against child drugging had misjudged the issue. It showed a distinct bias in ignoring the use of opiates to dose children outside the working class. Adult working-class use of opium was treated much in the same way" (105). Anti-drug crusaders were often from the upper classes and thus wanted to see the opium problem as something distinct from themselves and their peers. By mid-century, advocates and authors alike had realized the dangers of opium, yet they posit their claims and demands at a hierarchical vantage point: they are the benevolent helpers of a troubled working class, distinct from victims or perpetrators of

opium misuse. Reformers did not ignore that opium was used beyond the working classes, but rather they tried to distinguish between their own "acceptable" relationship with the drug and the recreational use among poorer people. *Uncle Silas* confirms Berridge and Edwards' statement that "the distinction between 'medical' and 'non-medical' use was impossible to draw, and it was easy enough for users to substitute moral judgements (the 'bad use' of opium) for cultural sensibility" (109). Since medicine was still a very inexact science in Victorian England, moralists could manipulate medical facts to add weight to their moral judgements. Julian North, in "Opium Eater as Criminal," notes another arbitrary distinction made by Victorian commentators: the racial composition of "bad" versus "good" opium eaters. He quotes an anonymous, representative writer from 1853, who differentiates between British use of opium as medicinal, and Eastern use of opium as self-destructive and pleasure seeking. According to North, the English middle-class likes to see itself as being in control of opium intake and of Eastern and British working classes (North 124). As I examine opium's social, economical, and literary roles in Victorian England, I will demonstrate that control, indeed, is at the heart of the matter. Fallen men who are addicted to opium have vivid imaginations and even hallucinations which confuse the boundary between guilt and innocence, truth and dream.

Maud's fate rests the hands of her opium-addicted uncle. Monica fears the power that Silas wields over Maud, yet Silas is a less powerful force than the drug that controls him. Fallen women, subject to pre-fabricated moral constructs, are stripped of power and destined to deteriorate. By comparison, the fallen man, a fearsome, aggressive character, is also rendered powerless. Opium controls Silas; it is the underlying, confusing source of

both fright and hope for Maud. With Maud as narrator, the novel assures us that the fallen man does not write either his own character or destiny. She tries to describe her uncle's character, but is always unsure what to make of his behaviour: "I try to recall my then impressions of my uncle's character. Grizzly and chaotic the image rises—silver head, feet of clay. I as yet knew little of him" (260). Silas issues warnings, in part because Maud writes him that way. She advises that the predator may not always be in control of his own actions, and that she, as storyteller will be less powerful than the drug that dictates her uncle's moods and actions. At times, Silas appears benign because of his debilitating trances. Maud notes, for instance, that "Uncle Silas had been 'silly-ish' all yesterday and could not be woken" (279). Immobile and overdosed, Silas is harmless. Nevertheless, Maud feels unsettled by her uncle's strange state. When Dr. Jolks is called in to determine and explain Silas' condition, he speaks to Maud as though she would be familiar with the drug that controls her uncle. After telling her that Silas has overdosed, Jolks says, "opium, as no doubt you are aware, is strictly a poison; a poison no doubt, which habit will enable you to partake of, I must say, in considerable quantities without fatal consequences, but still a poison; and to exhibit a poison so is, I need scarcely tell you, to trifle with death" (282). The doctor's comments point to opium's duplicitous effect in the novel. Laudanum is a poison, yet the doctor tells the young girl that taking it in small doses is harmless. He does not quite encourage her to take up a drug habit, but he implies that she might do so without consequence. At the same time, the doctor, a man of science and knowledge, assumes that a naïve girl will know the harmful properties of opium, and that she will be able to distinguish between harmless and harmful amounts of poison. Jolks, by virtue of his assumptions, and opium, by virtue of its hold over sinister

Silas, both empower Maud. By endangering his own life, Silas increases Maud's chances of survival.

Charles Dickens never finished writing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, but he treats opium as an element in criminal behaviour. John Jasper is a mysterious figure who is not dissimilar to Silas. Just before his nephew Edwin disappears, "Jasper stands looking down upon him, his unlighted pipe in his hand for some time, with a fixed and deep attention. Then, hushing his footsteps, he passes to his own room, lights his pipe, and delivers himself to the Spectres it invokes at midnight" (51). While looking at his calm, sleeping nephew, Jasper is inclined to light up. We do not know whether Jasper's smoking is a means to absolve him of guilt for a crime he is about to commit, or whether he is just getting an opium rush as a nightly habit. Jasper takes opium at home, but not as openly as Silas and Madame take their laudanum. He smokes while the household is sleeping, recognizing, perhaps, that his drug use is not an acceptable vice. Later in the story, as Edwin's murder is discovered, and the mystery begins to unfold, Jasper moves on to the opium den.

In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Dickens demonstrates the social implications of drug abuse. By using opium, Jasper distances himself from the social world, because he chooses to abuse the drug in the removed, orientalized scene of the opium den. Barry Milligan has noted that Dickens sends Jasper to the den to create a sense of distance between Englishness and opium. Milligan claims that

> this impression of opium smoking as at once infectious epidemic and hostile invasion informed a new literary genre that grew and thrived late in the century: narratives about mysterious and evil opium dens in the East

> End of London—a region itself repeatedly figured as an Orient in miniature within the capitol of the empire. These narratives portray Orientalism as a transmittable disease. (162)

Milligan goes on to note the gender implications of Jasper's visits to the filthy dens, where he is served his pipe by an Orientalized Englishwoman. In the unfinished Dickens novel, claims Milligan, "we see for the first time, an English *man* in the den, and he is in turn being infected by the Orientalized woman [. . .] She presides over her den as a middle-class woman would presumably preside over her household" (164). Jasper, a white English male choirmaster, dispels the myth that opium is only the problem of marginalized groups (Milligan 165-7). Moreover, Jasper's Orientalism renders him a fallen man by virtue of his simultaneous immersion in, and defiance of, English social norms. Dickens was taking opium for pain while writing this novel (Berridge and Edwards 57). Like all fallen men, Jasper threatens English society and disrupts gender norms. Jasper seems to be accepted as gentility, though he is a loner; at the same time, he is feminized and Orientalized by his visits to "cure the all-overs" (258), as his den mistress states. He sinks down to the floor, removes his shoes, and loosens his cravat to ingest opium—an overt degradation of his refined appearance.

Just as writers create the impression that opium use is mostly a lower-class phenomenon, so too do they attach it to Orientalism. Paradoxically, while the English portray opium use as an invasion from the East, the British themselves breached laws to traffic opium in China. Opium was the most profitable commodity exported from India. William Jardine, a leading British merchant whose opportunism is mocked in Disraeli's *Sybil*, claimed in 1832 that the opium trade was "the safest and most gentleman-like

speculation I am aware of" (qtd. in Booth 114). Financial speculation was indeed a gentlemanly pursuit in Victorian England, and these risky ventures appealed to members of the members of the gentry who were desperate to mend precarious finances through gambling and speculation. From 1799 onwards, opium trading was illegal in China, but the British government continued to enrage the Chinese for 78 years with their tacit approval of, and substantial profits from the English merchants' expansive engagement in this illicit trade (Booth 115). Chinese officials repeatedly decried their people's increasing addiction to opium smoking. They regarded opium as an agent of foreign aggression which undermined Confucian ethics by encouraging selfish idleness (Booth 127- 8). In the late 1830s, right before the first Opium War, Emperor Tao Kwong refused to submit to pressure from Chinese and British officials to legalise opium. He recognized the inevitability of opium as commodity, but refused to facilitate the spread of a vice that had killed three of his sons: "It is true, I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison; gain-seeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes; but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people" (qtd. in Booth 128). The categorization of opium and its users is thus a challenge. When Victorians determined social norms, the socio-political standpoint of the ruling class would have decided how opium was perceived.

Wealthy Victorians import opium to the detriment of the Chinese people whom they exploit. They also induce addiction amongst British men, women, and children who use this "miracle drug" for endless medical ailments. They attempt to establish a moral high ground, whereby opium taken as a medicine is sanctioned, while recreational use is not. The distinction between these two reasons for ingestion is arbitrary and prejudiced

by the vantage point of those who make the distinction. Silas, like his drug of choice, defies classification. He is "martyr—angel—demon" (147). Silas has genteel status, yet he abuses opium and threatens those around him. In their literature, the British frequently portray opium as other, deriving from the East (or at least the East End), and posing the threat of cultural mingling through its mysterious effects. Victorians treat their fictional opium addicts as fallen characters with Eastern leanings, who must be sent off or killed before the narrative order can be restored.

Bodies, Sex, Violence, and the Dissolution of Romance

Addiction leads to heinous crimes, including sexual violation. Uncle Silas plots his niece's murder while under the influence of laudanum. He enlists the help of both the drunk French governess, and his uncouth, though potentially well-intentioned son, Dudley. The fallen man takes on a cautionary role as he exploits and destroys others under the guise of an opiate. Opium propels confusion and instability in the narrative, particularly with regard to Silas' and Dudley's bodies. A fallen man's physique is his stock in trade; he attracts women before he can manipulate them. Le Fanu's female narrator is curious about her uncle's body. Her fascination is mediated through the medium of art. Before Maud meets her uncle, she is captivated by a portrait of Silas as a young man "a singularly handsome young man, dark, slender, elegant" (10). While the portrait artist's representation of Silas may be singular, the character and appearance of this fallen man are contradictory and baffling. As Maud inquires about the portrait, she receives mixed messages from her father and the servants, so that her "curiosity was piqued; and round the slender portrait in the leather pantaloons and top-boots gathered

many coloured circles of mystery, and the handsome features seemed to smile down upon my baffled curiosity with a provoking significance" (11). Just after we read about Maud's strange attraction to Silas, Le Fanu's narrator, the older and wiser Maud, relates her "piqued" curiosity to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, asking why "this form of ambition—curiosity—which entered into the temptation of our first parent, is so specially hard to resist?" She answers her own question, but opens up a host of narrative possibilities by claiming that "Knowledge is power—and power of one sort or another is the secret lust of human souls [. . .], the indefinable interest of a story, and above all something forbidden to stimulate the contumacious appetite" (11). Maud, the child, is provoked, piqued, and stimulated by Silas' portrait, even as she narrates in retrospect. She explains her interest, punctuated by words of sexual intonation, as the "secret lust" common to all humankind in this fallen world, and so offers indirectly a moral escape hatch to Silas.

Le Fanu invokes and restructures gender roles in *Uncle Silas* by representing seemingly dichotomous characterizations as interchangeable, all the while drawing attention to the very act of representation. The first glimpse we get of Silas is not in the flesh, but rather through a twice-removed representation—Maud imagines Silas, the man, by looking at a decades-old artist's rendition of Silas. Maud's impression of her uncle is steeped in mystery and mediated by her simplistic views on masculinity. She draws on the familiar literary figure of the rake. To her dismay, she discovers that Silas was "not a reformed rake, but only a ruined one then [. . .] Silas went most unjustifiably into all manner of speculations [. . .] ruined so many country gentlemen" (148). This distinction, courtesy of Lady Knollys, is followed by her admission that her own nephew Captain

Oakley is also a gambling man. Maud had previously described Oakley as a "knight" (41). The fallen man, by taking on habits common to upright and deviant Victorians alike, serves as the most frightening type of monitory figure, one who is sometimes indistinguishable from his heroic literary foil. In this same telling conversation between Maud and Lady Knollys, Silas' marriage to a "coarse, vulgar woman," is explained simultaneously as a source of his ruin, a means to have sex, and a common way for gentlemen to behave:

> I think I could count half a dozen men of fashion who, to my knowledge, have ruined themselves in similar ways. [. . .]. I believe, to do him justice, he only intended to ruin her; but she was cunning enough to insist on marriage. Men who have never in all their lives denied themselves the indulgence of a single fancy, cost what it may, will not be baulked even by that condition if the *penchant* be only violent enough. (149)

If marriage and ruin can be so closely intertwined, then the distinctions between respectable and ruined characters—that Maud tries so desperately to cling to—is undermined by these blatant contradictions and overlaps. Fallen men often self-destruct due to negligence and excessive boldness; they are not ruined by others. Fallen men perform their deviance outside of the representational parameters of the novels and are only ruined by self-revelation. Silas is enigmatic, alluring, deviant, and frightening; he is simultaneously the product of patriarchal Victorians and a threat to all they hold sacred.

Silas remains a mystery to Maud and, though his appearance fascinates her. Maud insists that her "uncle, whatever he might have been, was now a good man—a religious man—perhaps a little severe" (141). Maud often slips into the language of acknowledged

genres and stock characters, especially when speaking of men. Just as she categorized Silas as a reformed rake, when she first sees Captain Oakley, Maud marvels at the Captain's handsome features, and remarks that he was, "altogether such a knight as I never beheld, or even fancied, at Knowl—a hero of another species, and from the region of the demigods" (41). This description is followed immediately by Maud's eerie retrospective comment, "I did not perceive that coldness of the eye, and cruel curl of the voluptuous lip—only a suspicion, yet enough to indicate the profligate man, and savouring death unto death" (41-2). While Maud describes Captain Oakley in grandiose clichés of masculinity, she allows neither herself nor her reader to linger long in this pre-fabricated vision of ideal manliness. Instead, she attaches a sense of foreboding to his character which is linked directly to the visceral image of his lips. The potential for fallenness is revealed in bodily details as we focus our attention on the captain's face as a series of parts. Maud expresses attraction to the idea of the hero, and repulsion, after the fact, to details that were hidden by her attraction.

In keeping with traditional romance storylines, Dudley is posited against Captain Oakley. They fight for Maud's attention. However, these figures do not constitute an absolute dichotomy, as Oakley is somewhat fallen himself. He has a gambling past, but has partially redeemed himself through hard work, a central value in the mid nineteenth century, often coupled with doing one's duty. Oakley, though he acts like a gentleman, is still not heroic. He loses a fist fight with Dudley, and, more significantly, he loses his chance to win Maud's hand. When Maud is caught reading some poetry that Oakley composed for her, Cousin Monica warns Maud that she can only marry Oakley if she can afford to support him and pay off his gambling debts (264). The captain may appear to

woo Maud delicately with genteel gestures, yet he is wooing for his life and livelihood. Dudley, who is high born, acts without gentility, and cannot marry Maud since he is already married to the lowborn Sarah Matilda (née Mangles). Indeed, Dudley, like Silas before him, "mangles" the class hierarchy by marrying, then abandoning a lower-class woman. When Silas describes Dudley to Maud as "the material of a perfect English gentleman" (253), he alludes to the instability of exact categories.

Silas is a fallen man because he participates in the ceremonies of gentility, even as he plots to destroy innocent victims. He is neither lowborn nor truly destitute, yet he degrades himself and diminishes his status by exhibiting his violent fantasies. This play between the roles of gentlemen and villain extends from Silas to his son. Dudley cannot fake refinement, and he does not share his father's ability to manipulate language. In order for the fallen man to serve as a monitory figure, he must be set up in contrast—though not in complete opposition—to more upright characters.

Maud does not allow herself to remain too long in any one gendered role, as she vows not to describe her scramble through Silas' maze-like Gothic home: "I shall not recount with the particularity of the conscientious heroine of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe" (358). Early on in *Uncle Silas*, then, Maud narrates a distinction between literary or mythological conceptions of masculinity, and the individual traits that surpass and reconstrue these definitions. Of course, because Maud is narrating, she becomes part of this literary tradition, whereby men are defined in dichotomous terms. The narrative destabilizes absolute definitions of masculinity when Maud shifts so blatantly between one extreme and the other. While Uncle Silas will prove to be quite villainous, he is also pitiable and not wholly dissimilar to a Victorian gentleman in his title, financial

misfortunes, and fondness for laudanum. Just as Maud alternates between helpless victim and astute commentator, so too do the men of the novel shift between idealized visions and earthly, fallible creatures.

Lady Monica Knollys, a voice of reason and warning in the novel, recognizes Maud's tendency to categorize men into pre-assigned roles, and draws Maud's attention to this tendency by cutting Maud's fanciful notions of Silas short:

> He has made more people than you dream and wonder, my dear Maud. I don't know what to make of him. He is a sort of idol, you know, of your father's, and yet I don't think he helps him much. His abilities were singular; so has been his misfortune; for the rest my dear, he is neither a hero nor a wonder. So far as I know, there are very few sublime men going around the world. (56)

Monica responds to Maud's dreamy vision of the handsome uncle she sees in a portrait by drawing her niece's attention to the real man. In so doing, Lady Knollys also raises the popular Victorian critique against Romanticism, whereby the real is expressed as superior to sublime experience. With these two factors in mind, we are detached from Maud's view of men as Romantic absolutes, and are left to contemplate a more complex definition of men, whereby pre-fabricated gender roles are discarded in place of individual characters. Privy to the wisdom of her cousin, Maud adjusts her vision of Silas to extend beyond gendered stereotypes to include the visceral appearance and bodies of these men. Still engrossed by Silas' portrait several pages later, Maud no longer looks at the image as encompassing the whole man, but she holds onto her limited definitions of masculinity; "Truth had passed by with her torch, and a sad light shone for a moment on

that enigmatic face. There stood the *roué*—the duelist—and with all his faults, the hero too!" (60) Maud, the child, must give up her false image of Silas yet she retrospectively uses the language of romance to depict this moment of illumination. Thus fallen man narratives must acknowledge traditional gender roles in order to play with them, and finally to undermine their absolute parameters.

Her views of Silas, at this point, are made prior to meeting the man who was to be her guardian. When Silas writes to send for his niece, he tells her that she is forbidden to discuss his reputation with Lady Knollys. When Maud reads this, her "cheek tingled as if I had received a box on the ear. Uncle Silas was as yet a stranger. The menace of authority was new and sudden, and I felt with a pang of mortification the full force of the position in which my dear father's will had placed me" (145). Maud's impression of Silas shifts almost immediately once Silas, the man, becomes a real, sinister, fleshed-out character, and ceases to be an image derived from familiar iconography. Maud alternates between wanting to share her dead father's belief in the man, and sense of dread that is encouraged by Monica, who admits, "I *am* afraid of more than neglect" (142). Lady Monica Knollys suggests that her relative is a sexual predator, but she also leaves room for his innocence. As she tells the curious Maud, "I can't define him, because I can't understand him. Perhaps other souls than human are sometimes born into this world, and clothed in flesh" (159). Not only can Monica not define Silas in any concrete terms, but she goes so far as to suggest that he is supernatural. This suggestion is a feeble attempt at defining the drug-addicted and sinister fallen man who retains his genteel status, in addition to the respect and trust of his dying brother.

In Victorian novels, penniless aristocrats scramble to maintain their prestige as

they live in debt, gamble with fervour, and try to woo wealthy women. They maintain social status by grasping at the appearance of wealth. Rather than trying to fit into polite society, Silas isolates himself and his family, indicating that he has more to hide than fleeting genteel status. Lady Monica warns Maud that Silas' "utter seclusion from society removes the only check, except personal fear—and he never had much of that—upon a very bad man. And you must know, my dear Maud, what a prize you are, and what an immense trust it is [. . .] But you know, Silas may be very good *now,* although he was wild and selfish in his young days" (248). Though Monica's words are vague, her emphasis falls on Silas' deviance; she seems to indicate that he is a sexual predator. Since a fallen man both mirrors and repels genteel readers, he retains the possibility of redemption. Monica worries that moral behaviour would deteriorate when Silas is removed from public scrutiny. The sinister flip side of Monica's comment implies that gentlemanly behaviour is an unstable construct that depends upon the opinions of others. At the same time, Monica holds out the possibility that Silas may be redeemed, and accepts reluctantly that Maud must go back to live with him. Soon after this conversation, Monica receives a letter from Silas. Trying to clear suspicions against himself, Silas plays up his refined sensibilities, and he quotes Chaulieu, who describes a pursuit of his favorite nymphs through a labyrinth: "although concealed by a sylvan wall, of leaves impenetrable—[. . .]—yet, your songs, your prattle, and your laughter, faint and far away, inspire my fancy; and through my ears, I see your unseen smiles, your blushes, your floating tresses, and your ivory feet" (qtd. in Le Fanu 274). Silas encourages us to suspect that he experiences lust for young girls; his leering way is no coincidence, and Monica's hardly veiled fears are not outrageous. Not even the trappings of gentility, as

demonstrated through his knowledge of high literature, can shield Silas' deviant cravings.

Monica's suggestion invokes an aspect of sexual deviance in Silas' character, but her words are not the only glimpse of Silas as a sexual being. Even as Maud contemplates the suggestive concern of her aunt, she is strangely attracted to the image of Silas:

> with his lithe and gorgeous beauty, the shadow of which hung on that canvas—what might he not have accomplished? Whom might he not have captivated? And yet where and what was he? A poor and shunned old man, occupying a lonely house and place that did not belong to him, married to degradation, with a few years of suspected and solitary life before him, and then swift oblivion his best portion. (178)

Like a fallen woman, the once handsome Silas is deemed not long for this world, since his deviance has caused him shame and isolation. A naïve girl, Maud gets her ideas about men from fiction; she therefore sees her uncle's death as imminent. Maud comes to this realization on the eve of her departure to go live with Silas. She wants to romanticize both her uncle and her own role as saviour of the Ruthyn name, as she sets off to fulfill the family quest. Upon arriving at Silas' creepy home, Maud meets her uncle in person, and finds him to be "exhibited with the forcible and strange relief of a finely painted Dutch painting" (192). Just lines later, Silas' face is "like marble, with a fearful monumental look, and, for an old man, singularly vivid strange eyes, the singularity of which rather grew upon me as I looked" (192). Since a fallen man fulfills the conflicting duties of warning the readers and reflecting their most popular vices, he is described in confused, disembodied terms. He is at once a work of art, made of marble, and one whose countenance is "venerable, bloodless, fiery-eyed" (192). To Maud, Silas can be neither

wholly disembodied nor absolutely human: he provokes very real fear in Maud, even though she cannot quite ascertain that he is of this world.

In *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness, and Criminal Justice in Victorian England*, Martin J. Wiener finds that violence lies in the hearts of British men. Nonetheless, Wiener finds difficulty in interpreting and applying Victorian laws, which often used loosely defined terms of *violation* and *violence* to denote criminal responsibility. Debates in Victorian courtrooms raged on as to whether excessive drinking, for instance, was a criminal defence. Lawyers and judges contemplated seriously whether a man might respond to a woman's angry words with physical assault, and be exempt from blame (Wiener 1-39). Sensation fiction exposes this same ambiguous moral space that is evident most pronouncedly in Victorian legal conventions. In *Uncle Silas,* Le Fanu uses opium as a narrative tool to blur the boundary between criminal and gentleman, blame and forgiveness. Silas demonstrates a proclivity towards anger and violence, which he consistently tries to repress. When Monica tries to gain custody of Maud, Lady Knollys loses her temper at Silas' villainy and stubbornness, as do we, the readers. Silas responds to her with characteristic fury, violence, and feigned religious sentiment: "So my badinage excites your temper, Monnie. Think how you would feel then if I had found you by the highway side, mangled by robbers, and set my foot upon your throat, and spat in your face. But—stop this. Why have I said this? Simply to emphasize my forgiveness" (245). Silas cannot hide his violent urges. Using the conventional "good Samaritan" story, he tries to disguise his villainy as religious forgiveness. Silas wants to hurt women; he also wants to impress upon them a false image of himself as a gentleman with noble intentions.

Silas' body is a source of intrigue and repulsion for Maud. She "hated the idea of being left alone with the patient," whose "body looked like a corpse 'laid out' in the bed" (283). Death imagery frequently accompanies Maud's characterization of Silas, particularly when he is pointedly under the influence of opium. Silas comes across as both doomed and haunting. Since the image that Maud recalls is of her uncle who had just overdosed, it does not reflect the whole of Silas' threat; the Silas of this memory is subdued by drugs. While awaking from his stupor, Silas emerges as a Gothic sexual predator: "he rose up, and dressed in a long white morning gown, slid over the end of the bed, and with two or three swift noiseless steps, stood behind me, with a death-like scowl and a simper. Preternaturally tall and thin, he stood for a moment almost touching me [. . .] and whispered over my head—'The serpent beguiled her and she did eat'" (284). Silas comes threateningly close to Maud and alludes to Eve's primal sin. He frightens Maud, speaking to her as a woman, rather than as the girl that she is. Silas "almost touches" Maud and suggests that she might indulge in her desires, if she were to follow the example of Eve. Silas refers to the "serpent" in metaphorical terms: he may refer to himself or he may refer to opium as the forbidden fruit. Although Silas is almost supernatural in his effect, he is also a real physical threat.

As a youth, Silas may have been attractive, but in his later years, he provokes fear more than lust. Dudley, a young man, still might have the ability to attract, if only Maud would focus on his body and ignore his uncouth behaviour. Like the once-handsome Silas, Dudley is, according to Maud, not wholly unappealing. Although she detests her unwelcome suitor, Maud admits: "His features were good, and his figure not amiss, though a little fattish. He had light whiskers, light hair, and a pink complexion, and very

good blue eyes. So far my uncle was right; and if he had been perfectly gentlemanlike, he really might have passed for a handsome man in the judgment of some critics" (257). Attraction is the product of subjective experience. Maud does not want to marry her cousin, but she can admire his features. As a female dependant, Maud risks being violated by both her cousin and her uncle, yet she continues to describe their bodies as attractive. As a fallen man, Dudley exemplifies a man who "might have been" attractive. Indeterminacy prevails in descriptions of both father and son. As a retrospective narrator, Maud inserts moralizing statements to temper her moments of desire. Immediately after the description of his body, Maud reminds us that she no longer can see any good in her predatorial cousin, since

> there was that odious mixture of *mauvaise honte* and impudence, a clumsiness, a slyness, and a consciousness in his bearing and countenance, not distinctly boorish, but *low*, which turned his good looks into an ugliness more intolerable than that of feature; and a corresponding vulgarity pervading his dress, his demeanour, and his very walk, marred whatever good points his figure possessed. (257)

Although Maud insists that moral concerns obliterate attraction, she details and analyzes the bodies of Silas and Dudley throughout her narration.

As he falls in love with the idea of Maud's fortune, Dudley tries to flatter and woo Maud as a gentleman might. He almost seems appealing when he pleads with her earnestly to consider him as a suitor, "I like ye awful, I do—there's not a handsomer lass in Liverpool nor Lunnon itself—*no* where" (293). While Dudley seems sincere in his approach, he still has a poor command of the English language. Moments later he

demonstrates uncouth manners when he tries to grab Maud. Dudley's threatening sexuality becomes overt as the novel progresses. Rejected by Maud again, Dudley resists assaulting her. Resisting him, she risks being sexually victimized: "Another fellah'd fly out a' maybe kiss ye for spite!" (295). Dudley, as a sexual threat, duplicates the misconduct of his father. He has ruined a country girl, and will not accept Maud's refusal of his marriage proposals and sexual advances. As Dudley becomes more desperate, he sprinkles violent imagery into his verbal advances on Maud: "I'm just a child in your hands, I am, ye know. I can lick a big fellah to pot as limp as a rag, by George!" (315). He simultaneously plays the role of would-be gentleman and callous seducer. As a murderer, Dudley keeps his father's sinister values alive.

Not only does Le Fanu imply sexuality in this novel through Maud's interactions with deviant men, but he further complicates notions of sexual identity when he engages in gender bending. In *Uncle Silas*, opium is a tool used to confuse the boundaries between masculine and feminine roles. The first that we hear of this vice is from the frightening governess, Mme. de la Rougierre. The unladylike schemestress takes Maud on a cryptic, sinister mission to the cemetery, where she "gobbles sandwiches" (39), and ignores the frightened child whom she is meant to protect. Madame goes so far as to leave Maud unattended with a strange man, the first of many instances in the book where sexual danger is threatens Maud's character. This "ungovernable governess" (Magnum 214) seems to be in direct contrast to the ideal English woman: she is French, sinister, caricatural. Later in the novel, when Maud is about to be murdered by Dudley, Mme. stumbles drunkenly into Maud's room and becomes the accidental murder victim.

On the night of the murder, Mme. de la Rougierre lashes out at Maud before

leaving her to be murdered in her sleep. Just as the French governess exposes Maud to sexual danger in the cemetery, so too does she leave her to be violated by the Ruthyn men. She calls Maud her enemy before callously declaring, 'It is your turn to suffer. Lie down on your bed there, and suffer quaitely [sic]" (418). The governess then leaves to drink herself into oblivion. Le Fanu punishes Madame along with the male instigators, although he distinctly casts her as a female victim and subject to violation. As terrified Maud watches, Dudley swoops into the dark room and directs his attention to the sleeping female body strewn on the bed. Madame literally takes Maud's place as murder victim when she absorbs Dudley's blows. The murder tool, "a hammer, one end of which had been beaten out into a longish tapering spike, with a handle something longer than usual" (426), has phallic implications. Moreover, the description of the horrific scene is latent with conflated images of sexuality and violence. Dudley "stole, in a groping way, which seemed strange to me, who could distinguish objects in this light, to the side of my bed, the exact position of which he evidently knew; he stooped over it" (426). Dudley "gropes," in a suggestive manner and Maud makes special mention of his familiarity with her bed. Although Dudley murders rather than rapes the governess, he behaves like a callous seducer when he approaches the bed and

> suddenly but softly he laid, as it seemed to me, his left hand over her face, and nearly at the same instant there came a scrunching blow; an unnatural shriek, beginning small and swelling for two or three seconds into a yell such as are imagined in haunted houses, accompanied by a convulsive sound, as of the motion of running, and the arms drumming on the bed; and then another blow—and with a horrid gasp he recoiled a step or two,

> and stood perfectly still [. . .] Then once more he steps to the side of the bed, and I heard another of those horrid blows—and silence—and another—and more silence—and the diabolical surgery was ended. (426-7)

Dudley's initial touch is gentle and reminiscent of the earnest scene when he tries to flatter Maud before turning to threats and then murder. When Dudley delivers the first blow, Mme. de la Rougierre's shriek "swells" and her body "convulses." Graphic and violent; the description also suggests orgasm. When Maud labels Dudley's attack as a "surgery," she associates him with insatiable curiosity and deviant sexuality; she also explores the question of crime and responsibility. Doctors must work within the confines of limited scientific resources and Dudley can only delelop within the limits of his father's schemes. Surgeons are not wholly to blame for botched jobs, just as Dudley may not be in control of his actions. In *The Woodlanders* and *Heart and Science*, fallen doctors are sexual predators whose knowledge of female bodies renders them both suspect and appealing. Surgeries ostensibly further the surgeon's knowledge or cure the patients illness, even though they may result in unfortunate errors and untimely deaths. Dudley is trapped by his father and by his marriage. Instead of exploring sexuality openly, Dudley channels his energy into violent outbreaks.

Detection and Escape: The Ends of Patriarchy

Dudley does not answer for his crime in a court of law. Instead, he flees England to escape responsibility: "Dudley had disappeared" (434). Through second-hand information, Maude finds out that Dudley was seen in Australia. His whereabouts,

however, are never ascertained. Similarly vague, Uncle Silas dies on the same night that Rougierre is murdered, though it is unclear whether his death is caused by suicide or accident: "'there was nout much strange about him,' Old Wyat said, 'but that his scent bottle was spilt on its side over on the table, and he dead'" (433). Doctor Jolks corroborates that Silas "died of too much 'loddlum'" (433). If Silas died by accident, then he died as a man void of compassion and regret. If he took his own life on the night when he planned to murder Maud, then his end might signify a last-minute bout of conscience. Rather than condemn his fallen men to absolute fates, Le Fanu maintains a degree of uncertainty as to their ends. In a novel where aristocratic lineage is a main focus, Le Fanu breaks with patriarchal traditionalism by punishing fallen men. Nevertheless, the narrative focuses attention on the Ruthyn family line; it thereby suggests a sense of nostalgia for a time when class ensured respectability.

In *Uncle Silas*, the social order is shown to be unstable when the narrator offers a cynical view of authority and power. Silas Ruthyn retains his ancestral name and title, even when he falls into debt and disrepute. Before the first mention of the sinister Ruthyn brother, we hear about Maud's eccentric father,

> Mr Ruthyn. Of Knowl [. . .] of a very ancient lineage, who had refused a baronetage often, and it was said even a viscounty, being of a proud and defiant spirit, and thinking themselves higher in station and purer of blood than two-thirds of the nobility into whose ranks, it was said, they had been invited to enter. Of all this family lore I knew but little and vaguely; only what is to be gathered from the fireside talk. (Le Fanu 1)

These introductory lines emphasize an aristocratic patriarchal history that undergirds British masculinity. As much as this passage presents traditional signs of masculine identity, Ruthyn Knowl, an upright, though somewhat mysterious character, rebels against the structures into which he is born, and Maud, who narrates the entire novel, admits to her limited knowledge. Maud's legitimate father, the figure who could have guaranteed both love and order, dies early. Although Ruthyn upholds patriarchal values in his will, he inadvertently compromises those very same ideals by putting the future of his family's name and reputation into the hands of degraded relatives.

Fallen man narratives both repeat and reinvent literary and cultural patterns when they allude to representational categories in order to undermine them. This novel emphasizes generational repetition, and Dudley is heir to his father's doomed status. Like a fallen woman, Dudley must leave England once scandal breaks, and he sets off for Australia soon after his marriage to Sarah Matilda Mangles is revealed. When Maud rejects him for the last time, he walks off "with the countenance of a man who has lost a game, and a ruinous wager too. That is black and desperate" (352). As in *Daniel Deronda* and *Man and* Wife, gambling imagery infuses the language of marriage. Ruin may easily be the result of a gamble gone wrong. Unlike the fallen woman, Dudley and Silas do not re-embody old gender roles, but serve a self-conscious narrative function. Silas, and by extension, Dudley are utterly fallen. Silas proclaims "Less than twenty thousand pounds will not extricate me from the quag of ruin in which I am entangled—lost!" (344). These ruined men are descendants of aristocrats; they therefore threaten to shake up the very system of which they are an historical part.

With the early focus on reputation and ruin, Le Fanu sets up the notion of

bloodlines marking the rank and stature of the Ruthyn clan. By having his male characters' deviance also become a matter of lineage, Le Fanu emphasizes the contradictory nature of fallen men. Though Silas, and to a certain extent, Dudley are born into the right sort of family, the son is marked for moral ruin because of his father's criminalities. While inherited titles mark status and denote responsibility well into the nineteenth century, they do not guarantee gentlemanly status or aristocratic behaviour. Indeed, just as fallen woman narratives allow for destitute mothers to produce doomed daughters, so too do fallen men narratives place a negative value on inherited deviance. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy alludes to this pattern of unlucky inheritance, when he draws distinct attention to the importance of name and title in determining one's fate. Tess, a fallen woman, has a long lineage of "Norman Blood," yet "Pedigree, ancestral skeletons, monumental record, the D'Urberville lineaments did not help Tess in her life's battle as yet" (Hardy 17). Though Tess has important ancestors, she cannot control her own destiny, and her family lives in poverty. Her mother is scarred from doing chores, and her father abuses alcohol. Aristocratic lineage is mocked in Hardy's novel. A parson recognizes a shabby haggler by his "D'Urberville nose and chin—a little debased" (8). He goes on to tell the common man that he descends from the "ancient and knightly family of the D'Urbervilles" (8). When Tess is drugged and raped by Alec, she breaks from her family's lineage, and brings them from barely being respectable to utter ruin. While Silas indulges in vice and so chooses to disrupt his patriarchal positioning, fallen women are powerless pawns in the course of history.

Uncle Silas fails to react appropriately to his inheritance of title. Le Fanu demonstrates the more powerful patrimony of deviance and doom. Silas determines his

son's deplorable behaviour by example, though he tries to proclaim Dudley a gentleman in speech. As a fallen man, Silas is weakened and devoid of power by the end of the book. This possible fate, though acknowledged by Monica, Maud, and Bryerly at different points, does not occur to Silas. In fact, he ignores the fact that his dead brother saved him from a downward spiral. He pays little attention to Maud's potential for improving the family's reputation when she educates Milly and improves her conduct. Instead, he behaves as though he were powerful by intimidating his family members and employees. Even as he plots to kidnap and then murder Maud, Silas tries to appeal to her social graces; he suggests that her status as heiress enables her to marry for love and assures her that she could have a real gentleman in the rough with Dudley. The fallen man claims that his son has "the Ruthyn blood—the purest blood, I maintain in England" (318). The very idea of noble blood is mocked when the villain claims to retain a hold on his stature: "This old hectic—this old epileptic—this old spectre of wrongs, calamities, and follies, had still one hope—my manly though untutored son—the last male scion of the Ruthyns" (331). When the despicable Dudley represents hope for aristocratic continuance, he invites the question of whether education and circumstance are all that separate fallen men from gentlemen.

Writing and narrating puts Maud in control as she decides what to reveal and what to conceal. Maud escapes the stigma of victimhood when she directs the narrative. Like many characters in Victorian fiction, Maud is a ward; the parentless child must suffer whatever treatment her guardian doles out. Austin Ruthyn's will leaves his only daughter to a debt-ridden accused murderer, who stands to inherit Maud's fortune if she should die before her twenty-first birthday. He does so in loyalty to his lineage; he must "make some

sacrifice to clear that name" (103) of his criminal brother. Austin "sacrifices" his daughter who, in turn, must "sacrifice" her safety, her life, or yet something else to clear her uncle's reputation. The recurring trope of vulnerable wards in Victorian novels points to the implications of extended responsibility when unlikely family members come to inherit parentless children. In Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Pip gets regular beatings at the hands of his sister. As he grows up, he tries unsuccessfully to make a name for himself to escape the shame of his rootlesnsess. In Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Jane endures abuse as a child: first in her aunt's household, then at the draconian boarding school. As a lone female, Jane must struggle to maintain her virtue; although she loves Rochester, she refuses to remain with him when she finds out that he is already married to mad Bertha. When she runs away, Jane narrowly escapes ruin when she must convince strangers that though she is alone and penniless, she is not fallen. In *Middlemarch*, George Eliot's Dorothea and Celia Brooke are raised by their affluent uncle, but they still must marry in order to solidify their position in society. Marriage provides escape from uncertainty, though it does not prove satisfying for the elder Brooke sister. The tenuous moral ground on which *Uncle Silas* begins is such that clearing the family name is more important than sparing an innocent girl's life or virtue. As in *Great Expectations* and *Jane Eyre*, traditional family values are presented in an ironic manner when the story is told from the vantage point of the orphan. Maud has no legal rights, yet she manages to redirect her fate. Her character suggests an alternative method of upholding lineage, when the female ward becomes "Lady Ilbury" despite—not because of—the gestures of her male relatives.

Le Fanu exposes the faultiness of patriarchal values by undermining the significance of lineage and by refiguring the family unit. *Uncle Silas* also analyzes patriarchal systems by example; Sergeant Grinders, a well-intentioned but ineffective detective, is a synecdoche of the flawed system of patriarchal law. Although Silas becomes the object of police inquiry, he is never found guilty of any of his crimes. As in Collins's *The Moonstone*, the detective in Le Fanu's novel is bumbling and insignificant. Law and order are derived from ensuring that rules are followed. However, within Victorian fiction, as D.A. Miller finds, "when the law falls short in the novel, the [narrative] world is never reduced to anarchy as a result" (3). While police are present in novels, they are not always important. When the arm of the law reflects the values of patriarchy on a small scale, police and detectives, in novels such as *Uncle Silas*, reveal the imperfections of the British legal system.

In *The Moonstone*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood,* and *Uncle Silas*, detectives seek answers that are linked to opium. Laudanum helps to save Maud, whereas this same drug most certainly kills Silas. Opium, as a textual device, is more than a vice which the fallen man warns the readers against; the drug is also a narratological suggestion that contrasts sharply with the data-centered dénouement of detective stories. The novel ends with detectives searching for answers and trying to indict Silas and his cohort of deviants for their crimes. Le Fanu infuses his opium-laced text with bits of detective work, although the detectives' conclusions are not the catalyst for narrative closure. Early in the novel, Maud tells us that detectives have been unable to solve the murder of Mr. Charke, which occurred at Bartram-Haugh years before Maud moves in (58). Later the young girl listens as Silas defends himself against accusation that he has intentionally destroyed property

which, in effect, belongs to Maud. Although Bryerly believes that Silas is guilty of illegal sale of timber and burning of coal, he avoids offering his opinion to Silas. Instead, he defers responsibility to inept detectives: "'The case is before Mr. Sergeant Grinders. These bigwigs don't return their cases sometimes so quickly as we could wish" (307). Thus far, detectives fail to solve crimes. By the end of the tale, they have resolved the murders of both Charke and Rougierre. When detectives are finally on the right trail, they get there by accident by arresting Dickon Hawke, Silas' demonic groundskeeper for an unnamed old crime. Hawke presumably gives details of the murders at Bartram-Haugh, but the details are not revealed in the narrative. The detectives' work becomes irrelevant, since one criminal is dead, another is off in Australia, and the third is already in their custody. The uncertainty derived from opium competes with the conclusiveness of detective work to provide the "sense of an ending" (Kermode).

Opium is a source of both escape and evasion in detective novels. Effective police work depends upon clear definitions of criminal and victim. Opium addicts cannot always determine the difference between truth and dream, innocence and guilt. Opium provides escape for criminals as it prevents the assertion of patriarchal absolutes in the form of truth. In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, for example, opium may allow Jasper to escape his crimes temporarily. If Dickens' novel is in keeping with the opium centered plots of his contemporaries, then Jasper will only become more darkly tinged by his use of the drug. Jasper invokes fear in the innocent Rosebud, his lost nephew's intended, akin to the hold that Silas has over Maud. Fallen men appear to be in positions of control, but really they are controlled by their vices. Jasper, like other fallen men, invokes strange, bone-chilling fear in a young woman due to his appearance of control. Rosebud sees him

as a ghost who

> has made a slave of me with his looks [. . .] I avoid his eyes, but he forces me to see them without looking at them. Even when a glaze comes over them (which is sometimes the case), and he seems to wander away into a frightful sort of dream in which he threatens most, he obliges me to know it, and to know that he is sitting close at my side, more terrible to me than ever. (70-1)

She has "never dared" to think what the threat is though it is implicitly sexual, and explicitly linked to his opium trances. Jasper does indeed lust after the pure, virginal Rosebud, and he hopes that Edwin's death will allow him a chance to woo the young girl. The mystery of Jasper's desires provides an added layer of intrigue and complexity. Jasper, unlike Silas, means to keep up gentlemanly appearances in a socially penetrable London existence. However, just before Jasper enters the dark, mysterious opium den, he is described as reticent: "impassive, moody, solitary, resolute, concentrated on one idea [. . .] he lived apart from human life" (257). Since *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* is a detective story with no detective, and the obvious suspect is an opium addict, the novel, in its unfinished state, does not allow for easy conclusions. Generally, the reader would not guess the correct murder suspect in the first half of a mystery novel. It is therefore highly likely that Jasper is not a criminal, and that assumptions about his deviant ways are misleading and blurred by opium. Like *Uncle Silas*, Dickens' novel allows for narrative and moral ambiguity when his fallen man succumbs to vice, thereby destabilizing the boundary between right and wrong, fallen and upright.

Writers of detective fiction use opium to avoid finite answers. In Collins' *The*

Moonstone (1865), a detective story with no criminal, the entire plot hinges on accidental opium consumption. In *The Moonstone*, the well-meaning physician Jennings is an opium addict who accidentally instigates a motiveless crime by dosing a fellow dinner guest with the drug. The strange but respected doctor takes an alarming amount of opium daily—ten times the amount that caused the drugged dinner guest to steal the jewel. Despite his drug addiction, Jennings keeps meticulous notebooks and orchestrates a re-enactment of the crime that leads to the uncovering of the truth. Opium both causes and solves crimes. Alethea Hayter describes *The Moonstone* as tightly plotted, controlled, and written under the influence of heavy opiates (259). Opium, accidentally ingested by the innocent and earnest Franklin, causes strife between him and Rachel Verinder. Both Rachel and her maid witness Franklin stealing the moonstone, and the former distances herself from her lover while the latter, overburdened with the awful secret, commits suicide. Opium is given to Franklin by the ailing Dr. Candy, who is trying to settle a dispute about modern medicine. If the dispute is settled, then the harmful effects of opium have been revealed; the drug makes a criminal of the most naïve, well-intentioned of men. So long as Collins does not consider himself a criminal, he sanctions the use of opium to the same extent. The end of *The Moonstone* is anything but absolute. While the crime is solved, Collins' take on opium, crime, and responsibility is left unresolved.

Opium diffuses or eliminates a sense of guilt in both Dickens' and Collins' novels, making the crimes seem less real or non-existent to the criminals, even though the hard facts remain that the crimes were indeed committed. If opium disrupts the rational analysis of data, then it, like the fallen man figure, prevents narrative closure. If the writers both distance themselves from *and* abuse the drug, then they seem to suggest

either that they, too, are fallen men, or that their fallen men are absolved, at least partially, of blame. Dickens' novel, as well as Conan Doyle's story "The Man with the Twisted Lip" and Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, remove opium from polite society. Addicts in these narratives slink off to dirty East End dens. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle weaves a mystery that brings both Watson and Holmes to a vile opium den, described as "the forecastle of an emigrant ship" (115). Watson holds his breath to "keep out the vile, stupefying fumes of the drug, (116), to separate himself from the addicts. The addict, however, is not wholly distinct from the gentleman detectives. Holmes is there to investigate a strange sighting of Mr. Neville St. Clair, by his wife, in the window of the East End opium den. Although St. Clair degrades himself in the den, he returns to his respectable home to play the part of gentleman. St. Clair, however, is not an addict, but rather uses the den as a hideaway, where he changes out of his beggar clothes every day, and puts on his suit and cravat, so that his wife will not suspect that he is no longer employed. Good breeding does not ensure financial security and St. Clair must resort to begging. In this Holmes tale, like in Collins and Le Fanu, the mystery on the level of plot is resolved in intricate detail, yet the story of class, race, and masculinity remains open to interpretation.

Narrative Holes: Uncertainty and Empowerment

Uncle Silas is not a tale of absolutes. Fallen man narratives open up possibilities for a helpless, acquiescent female such as Maud, as she goes from being the wide-eyed scapegoat, a mere sponge for information and insight, to the writer of everyone's story. The very structure of Le Fanu's novel is founded on unstable ground, since Maud, the

sole narrator, admits at several different points to embellishing or inventing parts of the narrative. As Maud satiates her natural lust for knowledge, she writes a tale that is empowering because it relies on her memory, judgement and imagination.

As a sensation novelist, Le Fanu has the forum in which to explore the underside of Victorian culture. Novels by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu and others were labeled sensational largely because of their risqué content and colloquial style. Sensation fiction brings home Victorian fears of invasion and attack when it deals with sexuality, crime, and often murder in upscale domestic settings. In her critical look at violence in sensation fiction, Marlene Tromp finds that novels in this genre became "the site of a discourse that offered an alternative way of perceiving gendered relationships and the violence that may lie at their core" (10). In *Uncle Silas*, the fallen Ruthyn men try to seduce and frighten Maud, only to end up stripped of gentility, pride, virility, and power. Silas and Dudley are a threat because they represent the violent side of masculinity.

Austin Ruthyn, Maud's father, demonstrates the decay of traditional Victorian social values; he holds the title and the ancestry, but his social order is not one with which many Victorians would identify. Despite his peculiarities, Austin is the upright figure between the two brothers. Silas' character begs the question; what does it mean to be an aristocrat if one is a social recluse, with a host of vices and no money of his own? Silas is reckless not only with his money and health, but also with his title, legal standing, and moral reputation. The novel begins with a tenuous moral climate wherein aristocrats are Swedenborgian social hermits. Swedenborgians believe that individual man is inherently good. They incorporate seventeenth-century scientific divinations into a

revised version of Christianity. The religion is obscure though its Christian roots are familiar. Silas is hateful, yet he, like Maud's father, believes in Swedenborgian studies. This religious aspect leads Maud to trust in the goodness of man.

Maud wants to believe in ideals even though her experience teaches her otherwise. For example, when Doctor Jolks quotes from that a passage about hell in an occult religious text, he frightens young Maud. When the doctor reads to Maud from "this awful portion of the book which assumes to describe the condition of the condemned," he abandons his scientific post and takes on the role of unforgiving preacher. He also aligns himself with Maud's late father by sharing in his religious beliefs. Maud claims that the book, as read to her by the doctor, "said that, independently of the physical causes in that state operating to enforce community of habitation, and an isolation from superior spirits, there exists sympathies, aptitudes, and necessities which would, of themselves, induce that depraved gregariousness, and isolation too" (235). Swedenborgian texts offer absolute answers but Le Fanu's novel does not. Maud mimics the unscientific doctor when she relays the gist of the "awful portion" but does not transcribe directly what was in the book. When Maud chooses to summarize without clarifying, she leaves her readers unconvinced and uncertain about what ends the doctor's explanation serves. Le Fanu, through Maud, draws our attention to narrative instability; she could seek out Swedenborg's book and find the "awful" passage that she, as a grown woman and author, would be able to explain with insight and clarity. Instead, she relies on her imperfect memory and incomplete comprehension as narrative modes. Maud is ultimately in control of the story and she chooses not to commit to absolutes.

Maud offers contradictory, simultaneous explanations and descriptions of her

uncle and his behaviour. Her self-conscious narration is sprinkled with admissions of forgetfulness and uncertainty: "so many details have, by distance of time, escaped my recollection" (199). The woman narrator relives her adolescent confusion and fear by mimicking, at times, the haziness of her uncle's behaviour in her own narration. As an adult, Maud knows that her uncle was under the influence of laudanum during her entire stay with him. Yet she does not always employ the wisdom of her adulthood when recording the tale, but instead opts for relaying the direct speech of her crass and unsophisticated cousin Millie, who notices that Silas "does grow very queer sometimes—you'd think he was dead a'most, maybe two or three days and nights together. He sits all the time like an old woman in a swound. Well, well, it is awful" (217). Milly's analysis of Silas is direct and condemning. She touches on the same themes of character analysis that Maud does with her allusions to art. Yet Milly does so with more accuracy, because she brings us closer to the source of his "queerish" persona—laudanum. Le Fanu expects his readers to be familiar with opium and its effects, when he leads us to piece together the title character's addiction by means of a child's disjointed observations. According to Milly, her father is alive and dead, an old woman and a fearful master of the house. Silas is also, according to his daughter, "like a child a'most when he's in one o' them dazes" (218). Milly, like Maud, diminishes Silas' potency by calling him a child. Maud narrates Milly's observations, but does not allow us to read Silas' addiction as benign. She cowers under the "cold, strange gaze of my guardian" (219). Maud takes an open-ended approach to analyzing her uncle's behaviour, once she realizes that none of the categories—child, corpse, old woman—effectively capture both the horrific and the pitiful in Silas.

At intervals throughout the narrative, Bryerly, Jolks, and Silas treat Maud instinctively as a grown woman even though the plot is woven around Maud's status as a minor, susceptible to the will of her male relatives. "I am not young now" (289), Maud mentions as her narrative moves towards resolution. Though Maud tells her tale from a mature perspective, she is still unable to tie together the loose ends of events that she experienced as a teenager. Maud leaps interchangeably between portraying herself as a child and as a woman. The novel retains loose threads that have been woven consistently into the plot. J. Hillis Miller is one of many critics who try to understand Victorian notions of closure by emphasizing the complexity and inconclusiveness of narrative endings, rather than just accepting surface aspects that lay claim to closure and irreproachable morality. He claims that the endings of novels are contradictory, in that a finale must "simultaneously be thought of as a tying up, a neat knotting, leaving no loose threads hanging out, no characters unaccounted for, and at the same time as an untying, as the combing out of the tangled narrative threads so that they may be clearly seen, shining side by side, all mystery or complexity revealed" (Miller 5). Narrative instability, in the case of Uncle Silas, is maintained both in form and in content as Maud narrates a tale with many holes, all the while drawing our attention to her uncertainty about details, and to her limited powers of analysis.

Opium is one of the "threads" that persists throughout the plot of *Uncle Silas* as a powerful, unstoppable force. Silas' excessive drug use is but a shadow darker than that of any given aristocrat with a fondness for opium. The drug prevents Silas from killing Maud, and so acts as a curative within the plot. At the same time, opium addiction is attached to both Mme. de la Rougierre and Silas; drug use implies villainy. Silas is

murderous and greedy, though it remains uncertain whether his drug addiction is meant to be seen as a disease or as a moral index. In the last quarter of the novel, we are presented with intricate plot twists and subsequent resolutions, though the thematic strands of possibility are left clearly seen, "shining side by side, all mystery or complexity revealed" (J. Hillis Miller 5).

To the end, Silas is never wholly human, nor really ghoulish. When Maud reiterates her refusal to marry Dudley, she describes her uncle's face "like a livid mask with chalky eyes" (324). He is never quite alive, never quite real. He "was a very statue of forsaken dejection and decay" (331). Maud goes on to claim that, "In that dreadful interview with my uncle, I had felt, in the whirl and horror of my mind, on the very point of submitting, just as nervous people are said to throw themselves over precipices through sheer dread of falling" (333). This introspection shows Maud to be fallible too. One can fall in a moment of sheer weakness. Blame is not absolute: a fallen man is always, in some subtle way, a weakened man and a victim. Even after receiving frightened letters from Maud, Monica still pities Silas (381). Silas is responsible for his fallen state. The question remains as to whether opium, his son, and his gambling share the blame. Ultimately, Silas accepts his fallenness; "You may say I have no longer an interest in even vindicating my name. My son has wrecked himself by marriage" (348). If this fallen man novel is modelled in part on the idea of a fallen woman narrative, then Dudley's escape to Australia, home to criminals in the Victorian period, is an appropriate fate for his depraved character. Even once Maud recognizes the fraud of her uncle and cousin, she cannot accept Silas as deviant because of his blood—"It is not possible that my uncle, a gentleman and a kinsman, can be privy to so disreputable a manoeuvre"

(411).

As a storyteller, Maud sets Silas up as a mysterious villain, leering and frightening, but when she describes her own impression of him she claims to have suspected nothing so sinister in her guardian's behaviour. The instability of Maud's situation becomes amplified in the final pages, when she is trapped and awaiting her murder. "Am I mad? [. . .] is this all a dream or is it real" (422), Maud asks, emphasizing the incomprehensible position in which she finds herself. Indeed, the very telling of the tale threatens to drive Maud to madness, as medical advice compels Cousin Monica to hurry Maud—once she is rescued from Bartram-Haugh—to the Continent, "where she would never allow me to allude to the terrific scenes which remain branded so awfully on my brain" (432). Silence is supposed to bring tranquility, yet Maud needs to tell the tale to understand her uncle's character and his motives. To the end, she is unable to condemn Silas fully. She asks whether there was "a vein of sincerity" in Silas' religion, and she admits that she believes that Silas thought of himself as a "righteous man" (433). The novel ends with Maud's summaries of the comings and goings of all the characters, including her own transformation into Lady Ilbury, happy wife and mother. Content and fulfilled, Maud tries to convey unity at the end by claiming that the writing of this tale has been the Lord's will: "through my sorrows, I have heard a voice from heaven say, 'Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead that die in the Lord" (435). Maud finishes her narrative wishing to recognise angels on earth with a sort of prayer.

The ending of *Uncle Silas* signifies a reversal between the powerful and the powerless characters, when Silas' intricate plan is foiled. Maud is saved when she hears the voice of Tom Brice, Meg's low-born suitor. Maud states, "It was an uncouth speech.

To me it was the voice of an angel" (430). Meg has been victim to her groundskeeper father's abuse and command, but in the end she manufactures a plan to save Maud. Brice, the hero, is not a gentleman, yet he is the closest figure to an errant knight that Maud has been longing for, and she gives him the title of angel, a word that resonates with her concluding prayer. The question as to what constitutes gentlemanly behaviour and status is left wide open, when the hero is not the man to whom the heroine is married. Maud has been in the dark both literally and figuratively throughout the final scenes, but emerges as a conveyor of knowledge and complier of facts. The fallen man has taken his own life, since he has been warned by Doctors Bryerly and Jolks about the dangers of unmeasured opium consumption. Silas falls prey to his vice, and Dudley cannot remain in the country, for fear of detection. The fallen man's demise is unsettling, precisely because it is precipitated by a drug whose effects are varied, and whose implications remain uncertain.

Opium has the final word in *Uncle Silas*, as it seals the fate of Silas, which allows Maud to flourish. The mystery surrounding Silas' death—mishap or suicide—prevents Maud from tying together all strands of possibility in her narrative. This indeterminacy extends beyond form to content, as Le Fanu's novel mirrors the unclear status of opium in late Victorian England. Extension, of influence or by inheritance, is at the core of the threat posed by fallen men. Silas breaks his long-standing aristocratic lineage when he passes on his proclivity for vice rather than a fortune and title to his son. By having Silas leave a patrimony of deviance and doom, Le Fanu breaks from traditional traits of fallenness, whereby unfortunate traits are passed mainly down to powerless women. Fallen women are often betrayed and controlled by men, while fallen men betray their

ancestors by succumbing to vice and breaking their genteel familial standing. Opium blurs the boundaries between reality and dream, responsibility and accident. Gambling also reflects popular vice and breeds indeterminacy. When fallen men gamble, they undercut the continuance that their lineage is "supposed to" represent. Silas' gambling debts lead him to murder, but opium is the catalyst for his death.

Chapter Two

Financial Promiscuity: Speculation, Gambling and Fallen Men in *Daniel Deronda* and *Man and Wife*

> If we know anything by experience, we know that women cast themselves away impulsively on unworthy men, and that men ruin themselves headlong for unworthy women [. . .] Look into your own experience, and say frankly, Could you justify your own excellent choice, at the time you irrevocably made it? Could you have put your reasons on paper, when you first owned to yourself that you loved him? And would the reasons have borne critical inspection, if you had? (Collins, *Man and Wife* 384-5)

When Wilkie Collins asks his readers to see themselves in his fallen characters, he illuminates the flawed reasoning of a social world that claims to insist on neat moral character designations. Collins was "bolder and more explicit than most of his contemporaries" (Page xvii) in exploring issues of sexuality. He puts his readers' sexual conduct, and, consequently, their morality, into question by asking whether they have fallen in love with unworthy men or women. This boldness, rampant throughout *Man and Wife,* allows for a reversal of fates between the fallen man and woman within this narrative. Fallen man narratives discourage such readings when authors free fallen women and punish their seducers. Le Fanu exposes the link between lecherous criminality and the

gentlemanly vice of laudanum, and thus resists attributing all vice to the lower classes. By comparison, in *Man and Wife* and *Daniel Deronda*, the fallen men travel in polite social circles even though they are promiscuous with both their bodies and their wealth. Both Delamayn and Grandcourt intrigue and attract women, only to wreak havoc later by using legal loopholes and other such tools of patriarchy. When Collins and Eliot treat these scheming male characters as fallen, they destabilize gendered categories.

Mallinger Grandcourt—the fallen man in *Daniel Deronda*—seduces and abandons Lydia Glasher, then marries Gwendolyn Harleth. Although charming in company, he tyrannizes Lydia and Gwendolyn in private. By contrast, Geoffrey Delamayn in Wilkie Collins' *Man and Wife* is overtly villainous, earning the narrator's disdain from the start of the novel. He impregnates and humiliates Anne Silvester, and then uses his muscular physique to attract the widowed Mrs. Glenarm. Both Grandcourt and Delamayn are guilty of sexual misconduct and they are robbed of agency when their fallenness is fully exposed.

Like fallen men, sexualized women inherit bad luck. In *Man and Wife*, Collins' fallen woman, Anne Silvester, is the illegitimate daughter of an erstwhile socialite. Anne's mother, also named Anne, dies a mysterious death in her beloved Blanche's arms. The betrayal of women repeats at intervals across time and generations. The younger Anne has an affair with Geoffrey Delamayn, a gambler, an athlete, and a fallen man. Although Geoffrey abandons her and Anne runs away, by the close of the novel she is married to the honourable Sir Patrick and full of possibility. Still, Anne does inherit a weakness for devious, dashing

men through her matriarchal line. Fallen women are often betrayed and controlled by men, while fallen men betray their ancestors by succumbing to vice and breaking their genteel family standing. Opium blurs the boundaries between reality and dream, responsibility and accident. Gambling also reflects popular vice and breeds indeterminacy. When fallen men gamble, they undercut the continuance that their lineage is "supposed" to represent. As literary representations of opium shift to East End dens, gambling emerges as a chronic, gentlemanly vice.

Financially promiscuous men of the 1870s are disconcerting to readers because they do not warn others of their proclivity for vice by having a history of crime and the appearance of a Gothic villain, as in *Uncle Silas*. Both *Man and Wife* and *Daniel Deronda* go so far as to discard dichotomous notions of masculinity and femininity when they present us with fallen men who are attractive. Le Fanu questions scapegoats and stereotypes, but he also adheres to cultural gender conventions. Uncle Silas' victim, Maud, develops as a character to the point where she is empowered enough to write her own tale, yet she is not utterly distinct from a typically helpless female victim of an Ann Radcliffe novel. With the decay of the British aristocracy and the rise of the middle class in the nineteenth century, came a belief in social mobility and a national absorption in gambling. Financially and sexually promiscuous men such as Delamayn and Grandcourt are not allowed to get away with their misdeeds because, by the 1870s, no social class was immune to law and punishment any longer. Written late in Eliot's and Collins' respective careers, *Daniel Deronda* and *Man and Wife*

employ the trope of gambling as both a motif and as a metaphor for courtship and marriage. For Victorian men, financial speculation, irresponsibility, or inadvertent loss is commensurate with a fallen woman's actual or perceived promiscuity. Bourgeois men who are loose with their finances face ridicule and limit their marriage prospects.

A fallen man imperils his social status when a sexual misadventure accompanies his financial reversals. The fallen man, an agent of discord, troubles Victorian gender roles and threatens paradigms of masculinity. Both *Daniel Deronda* and *Man and Wife* are centered on the authority of a figure whose approval or disdain marks the divide between morally upright and deviant characters. The interaction between an upright and a fallen character may seem to mimic the oppositional definitions of manliness of the period—Angel Clare and Alec D'Urberville in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or Walter Hartright and Count Fosco in *The Woman in White*—yet the hierarchy implicit in their interaction is undermined by the fallen man's kinetic positioning within Victorian masculine roles. Gender criticism of nineteenth-century novels suggests a distinct overlap between categories of good and bad, male and female. At the same time, the most representative Victorian novelists often revert to tidy conclusiveness, whereby the "good" and "bad" characters get their respective dues. Fallen men disturbs clear-cut destinies. They rarely redeem themselves, but they do redeem others.

Financially promiscuous men cause messy narrative conclusions in *Man and Wife* and *Daniel Deronda*. D. A. Miller's narratological theories explain the open-endedness implicit in the fallen man's narrative presence amidst seemingly

pat and moral endings. When Eliot's "elaborately set-up plots fall flat, get bungled, or even abandoned in a constantly re-enacted moment of release from the tyranny of narrative control" (Miller, *Narrative* xv), they show that messy narrative structure is a surprisingly common Victorian phenomenon. When Miller suggests that "erotic celebration" is a possible outcome of broken-down narrative (*Police* xi), he allocates narratological value to the fallen man's sexuality. Unlike the fallen woman, the fallen man does not function solely as a straightforward warning. Rather, the fallen man forces Victorian readers to question their notions of moral and narrative structures when his behaviour and treatment disrupt expected plotlines.

Diversions: Alternate Plotlines, Gambling, and Gossip

Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* opens with a scene of gambling. "Was she beautiful or not beautiful?" (7) asks *Daniel Deronda*'s narrator of Gwendolen Harleth, thereby setting up stakes in a matter that has no decisive answer. Seemingly, the opening scene condemns gambling, yet there is something attractive about Gwendolen's participation in it. In her biography of George Eliot, Rosemary Ashton writes that, when observing a gambling scene at a spa in Bad Homburg, Eliot was struck by "the great-niece of Byron playing obsessively, her fresh young face incongruous among the hags and brutally stupid men around her" (336). Similarly, Daniel Deronda positions himself above the gamblers. Deronda's "eyes fell on this scene of dull gas-poisoned absorption," until he notices Gwendolen's "graceful figure, with a face which might possibly be looked

at without admiration, but could hardly be passed with indifference" (Eliot 9). Daniel, Eliot, and the narrator align in their stupefaction before attractiveness. Could a haughty socialite, who is described by onlookers as both "striking" and resembling a "serpent" (12), be beautiful? When the "spoiled child," now in a position of "poverty and humiliating dependence" (16), gambles, she risks losing both her money and her appeal.

In his two-volume study of gaming published in 1870, Andrew Steinmetz recognizes the frightening overlap in genders and classes that the gaming table affords.[1] Steinmetz quotes (and agrees with) an anonymous contemporary writer who laments the gender bending that gambling gives way to:

> The pernicious consequences to the nation at large [. . .] would have been intolerable enough had they been confined to the stronger sex; but unfortunately, the women of the day were equally carried away by this criminal infatuation. The disgusting influence of this sordid vice was so disastrous to female minds, that they lost their fairest distinction, together with the blushing honours of modesty. (Steinmetz 1: 263)

Steinmetz notes that, while a male gambler who has gone too far can pawn his estate to pay his debts, a woman who gambles beyond her means must "find something else to mortgage when her pin-money is gone. The husband has his

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[1] Andrew Steinmetz, barrister-at-law, published *The Gaming Table* in 1870 in an attempt to "take cognizance of the social pursuits and practices that sap the vitality of a nation" (Steinmetz 1: vii), since history often fails to do so. His strict views on gambling represent the Victorian anxieties surrounding gambling practices and consequences.

lands to dispose of; the wife her person" (1: 264). Steinmetz conjures up images of debased women prostituting themselves to pay off debts. In George Eliot's hands, the female gambler sells herself in the more "normal" way, and so exposes the proximity between gambling and marriage. Gwendolen runs out of money at the gaming table and pawns her necklace. When she loses this last trinket, Gwendolen draws attention to her fleeting social status; she is travelling with relatives to maintain the appearance of wealth despite her real state of financial destitution. When Deronda humiliates her by retrieving the necklace from the pawn shop and returning it to her, he reminds her of the fine line she treads between respectability and debasement.

Soon after the gambling scene, Gwendolen's mother determines that Gwendolen's marriage to Grandcourt will save their family from its financial woes. George Eliot embeds her narrative with uncertainty and speculation when she opens her novel with a scene of simultaneous degradation and glamour. Mr. Gascoigne heightens the sense of indeterminacy when he recollects but does not reveal the gossip of his male acquaintances. If gambling imagery sets up conditions of probability and chance, then gossip creates another strand of uncertainty when it illuminates the different ways in which the novel might progress. Gascoigne reflects silently on Grandcourt's calculated deviance:

> He held it futile, even if it had been becoming, to show any curiosity at the past of a young man whose birth, wealth, and consequent leisure made many habits venial which under other circumstances would have been inexcusable. Whatever Grandcourt

> had done, he had not ruined himself; and it is well known that in gambling, for example, whether of the business or holiday sort, a man who has the strength of mind to leave off when he has only ruined others, is a reformed man. (Eliot 93)

Men of high birth are novelistically and actually allowed to ruin women and get away with it, so long as they know when to stop gambling with their sexuality. In *Serious Play*, J. Jeffrey Franklin analyzes the implications of gambling in George Eliot's (and other Victorian) novels. Gamblers, Franklin claims, are often perceived as "duplicitous, superficial, illusory, selfish, violent or carnal" (8). Gamblers, however, are not simply deviant foils to more sensible characters. Play ties the demonized issue of gambling to the socially pivotal institution of the stock market (Franklin 4). Furthermore, "gambling infiltrated two central Victorian registers of value—work and marriage—functioning as the problematizing link between these two areas and money" (Franklin 35). Franklin reflects Gascoigne's sentiment that gambling, "whether of the business or holiday sort" (Eliot 93), only threatens the respectability of those who lose. Gascoigne flippantly groups together the more legitimate forms of gambling, such as speculation or investing in the stock market, to the less seemly betting at a casino. At the same time, he employs gambling as a euphemism for Grandcourt's sexual promiscuity.

In both novels, fallen and upright men rely on their bodies when they participate in sports, which are, in effect, a form of gambling. Daniel Deronda rows along the Thames with his "long, flexible, firmly-grasping hands, such as Titian has painted in a picture where he wanted to show the combination of

refinement and force" (186). He is both manly and disembodied: his visceral features call to mind a painted image. Grandcourt hunts and tortures animals when exerting his physical strength, as his appearance suggests a "suppressed vivacity, and [he] may be suspected of letting go with some violence when he is released from the parade" (111). Daniel's "penetrating eyes" (186) and spiritual loftiness complement his physical vitality. His character is thus "thoroughly terrestrial and manly; but still a kind to raise belief in a human dignity which can afford to acknowledge poor relations" (186). We can admire Daniel's appearance because his character is upstanding. We fear Grandcourt's complexion, with its "faded fairness resembling that of an actress" (111), because of the evil that lurks beneath; he plays the gentleman but tortures women and animals when nobody is looking. As Gwendolen notes, Grandcourt "delights in making the dogs and horses quail" (427). While George Eliot, as a female author, limits the description of her men to their hands and countenance, Wilkie Collins accentuates masculine bodies. Arnold Brinkworth spends years in the merchant-service before the novel begins, and his face is "burnt gipsy-brown by the sun; with something in his look and manner suggestive of a roving life" (Collins 62). Arnold supports himself by means of his physical strength instead of taking on a more gentlemanly lifestyle because his "father's losses ruined him" (66). The elder Brinkworth's gambling compels his son to resort to his physicality for income. Arnold plays croquet, but his other physical exertions occur mostly outside of the representational parameters of the novel. Geoffrey attends only to his body, and he races, lifts

weights, rows, and boxes to unleash his surplus of adrenaline and ignore his dearth of scruples.

Collins describes Geoffrey in all his brute, muscular allure, only to remind us of what the athlete has risked by exerting his physical strength:

> The essential principle of his rowing and racing (a harmless principle enough, if you can be sure of applying it to rowing and racing, only) has taught him to take every advantage of another man that his superior strength and superior cunning can suggest. There has been nothing in his training to soften the barbarous hardness in his heart, and to enlighten the barbarous darkness in his mind. (213-4)

Daniel rows down the Thames to save Mirah from suicide; Arnold redeems himself from his father's negligent gambling by joining the merchant-marine. Fallen men do not put their bodies to such uplifting use. Grandcourt exercises by killing animals, and Geoffrey intimidates Crouch, a retired prize fighter to join him in a boxing match, wherein "the two gave, and took, blows which would have stunned—possibly have killed—any civilized member of the community" (Collins 174). Grandcourt and Delamayn first fall when they have unsanctioned sex, and so gamble with codes of bodily conduct. In both instances, the fallen man's body, when later put to non-sexual use, exposes his evil streak; these characters become unredeemable when they use their bodies to further their conscienceless goals. Since the fallen men in *Daniel Deronda* and *Man and Wife*

gamble with both their finances and their bodies, they perpetuate the open-endedness that the literal motif of gambling sets up.

George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* is different than her other novels in its overt resistance to formal conclusiveness. U. C. Knoepflmacher claims that "George Eliot eventually abandoned the analytical manner of *Middlemarch* in order to turn to a more elevated form of telling these truths in *Daniel Deronda*" (109). While Knoepflmacher is writing about George Eliot's version of Religious Humanism,[2] he also speaks to the divergence in method that comes out in *Daniel Deronda*, a novel that "examines the present, but ardently longs for the future" (Knoepflmacher 116). In a novel that "longs for the future," the inferred alternate plotline is abandoned for the open-ended, and somewhat shocking alternative. While many critics have read the "two stories" of *Daniel Deronda* as being the Jewish dimension[3] and the marriage plot concerning Gwendolen and Grandcourt, my reading is not that. In my opinion, George Eliot plays on her reader's expectations, especially when she shows how the fallen woman and young socialite could each get their traditional dues and drive the plot along, only to discard this option and put a more ambiguous, and certainly rebellious one, in its stead. Besides her continuous return to the gambling motif, George Eliot uses the

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[2] Knoepflmacher claims, that, particularly in *Middlemarch*, "through her reconciling and combining of the incomplete 'opposites' of materialism and idealism, science and mortality, thought and feeling, and abstraction and experience, George Eliot hoped to make the adjustments necessary for a creed based on imperishable truths" (106).

[3] Writing novels for the masses is also a gamble, for the effect of the final product is always up in the air. George Eliot spent years researching Judaism and Zionism to write this novel, yet many dismissed the Jewish parts as distracting from the "real" story. While her gamble brought her financial rewards, in this instance, it did not give her the critical recognition she sought.

central trope of gossip and unfounded speculation to expose the limitations of pre-conceived notions of closure. If Gascoigne's gossipy prediction is flawed, then surely the reader's expectations might stand the same risk of inaccuracy. Gossip is but one of the ways in which Eliot establishes ambiguity in *Daniel Deronda.* The fallen man, too, effectively disrupts elaborate storylines. Mallinger Grandcourt, a seducer, a husband, an heir, and a sadist, maintains aristocratic stature and gentlemanly appearance even as villainy guides his behaviour. When Grandcourt takes chances with his body and his wealth, he helps Eliot to disavow restrictive gender categories and to undermine expectations of closure.

The first mention of Lydia Glasher, Grandcourt's "forsaken sin" (434), alludes to the expected fate of a fallen woman. We hear of her through Grandcourt's man-servant Lush, who had seen the "impressive woman, whom many would turn to look at again in passing [. . .] an uneasy-looking woman: her glance seemed to presuppose that people and things were going to be unfavourable to her" (144). Socially censured, Lydia Glasher lives quietly yet shamefully on the outskirts of town with her two illegitimate children. Lydia recognizes her "attenuated autonomy and fractured identity" (Anderson 2) when her attempts to stop Gwendolen's marriage to Grandcourt prove futile; she fails in her pleas to attain financial security for her children. When Lydia tries reasoning with Grandcourt not to marry Gwendolen (even after she has tried threatening Gwendolen), he answers with callous resistance. She stops pleading, since "she knew her helplessness, and shrank from testing it by any appeal—shrank from crying in a dead ear and clinging to dead knees, only to see the immovable face

and feel the rigid limbs" (346). Gascoigne speaks earlier of Grandcourt's gamble. Gascoigne's comment is our first clue that Lydia's end might not be as dismal as it is set up to be in this apparently hopeless scene. While Lydia's lack of agency initially prevents her from implementing change, Grandcourt's eventual death and his will redeem her and their children. The references to Grandcourt's dead ears, knees, face, and limbs emphasize the cruelty of his reaction to Lydia's heartache and desperation. The repetition of "dead" as an adjective to describe Grandcourt's body also foreshadows the fallen man's untimely death that will empower his forsaken lover and disrupt the gendered boundaries set up by Lydia's sad state of affairs.

When writing her last novel, George Eliot became disillusioned with gender and moral limitations. Consequently she diverts her plotlines to reflect the open-endedness that she subscribed to in her own life. She spent most of her adult life in a romantic relationship with George Lewes, a married man whose wife bore the child of another man. Marian Evans was no stranger to scandal, and she seemed to seek non-judgmental responses from those around her. Her friends Combe and Bray gossiped about her affair with Lewes in the most unfavourable terms. In one letter to Bray, Combe wrote that he and his wife were "deeply mortified and distressed," and he asked whether there were any "insanity in Miss Evans's family; for her conduct, with *her* brain, seems to me like a moral aberration" (qtd. in Ashton 121). Ashton goes on to summarize that "Bray and Combe proved themselves capable of holding illogical views of what was acceptable in sexual relations. Men with extra-marital relations might retain their

respectability; women certainly could not" (Ashton 121). In my estimation, George Eliot explodes double standards in *Daniel Deronda* in response to the unjust reactions to herown domestic affairs. If we agree with Knoepflmacher's claim, that *Daniel Deronda* "ardently longs for the future" (Knoepflmacher 116), then we see this future as one where gendered fates and roles are blurred as Eliot replaces fine-tuned plotting with textual diversions and possibilities.

Though Marian Evans was plagued by her friends' singular reactions to her love affair with Lewes, she was able to live out a respectable life in intellectual circles. Eliot, in turn, allows Lydia Glasher uncommon freedom at the end of *Daniel Deronda.* Similarly, Wilkie Collins was fascinated by and sympathetic to fallen women. Patricia Frick attributes Collins' progressive outlook to "his unconventional relationships with two women" (Frick 344). She goes on to say that "he faced the difficult task of reconciling his own more liberal notions of female sexual behaviour with the conservative expectations of much of his audience" (Frick 345). Wilkie Collins put fiction into his life, and life into his fiction, with regards to romantic relations. His first long-term mistress, Caroline, lived with him in Harley Street, where Collins filled out a census return as "a married lodger, a barrister and as an author" (Clarke 94). Caroline was registered as his wife, and her daughter, Harriet, was marked down as his house servant. Later, Collins took on another, younger mistress, from an even poorer background than Caroline. Martha, Caroline, and Wilkie defied convention when they came to live as a threesome in Collins' later years.

In these later years, while Collins was writing *Man and Wife*, he

reconsiders the gender and structural norms that he adheres to in his other novels. In *The Woman in White*, Marian Halcombe, an androgynous figure, drives the plot along with her extraordinary insight. This strong and intelligent character remains a spinster while her lovely and fragile sister gets married, which suggests that Collins upholds Victorian norms: delicate women marry; shrewd women fall ill and wither away. While the very notion of androgyny does problematize strict gender distinctions, it does not eradicate them. In *Man and Wife,* Collins resists endings to which he reverts in earlier works. In this novel, Collins focuses on instability and open-endedness when he uses diversions such as archery and croquet—much as Eliot uses gambling—to show the unpredictability of interpersonal relations. Collins destabilizes narrative and gender roles through his full development of a dual plotline. Geoffrey Delamayn perfects his physique to compete in a footrace that everyone else is betting on. When characters put their money either on the fallen man's victory or his loss, they gamble, analogically, on the outcome of the novel. Popular opinion leans towards the fallen man emerging victorious while the fallen woman dwindles away. Collins himself takes a gamble by redeeming the fallen woman and punishing her seducer. Since Geoffrey swoons and falls in the footrace, thereby foreshadowing his eventual enfeeblement and death, he dispels any preconceptions that misogyny will dictate the gender politics of this novel. Collins leads the reader to believe that Anne Silvester, the fallen woman of the piece, will face a life of shame and strife, while the fallen man, Geoffrey Delamayn, will get away with sexual misconduct, inherit a large fortune, and marry the lovely though not-too-intelligent Mrs. Glenarm. He

builds on the trope of familial doubling from his previous novels, most notably *Armadale*, where the parents' scandals and fates are re-enacted through their sons.

In the opening chapters of *Man and Wife*, Collins sets up an elaborate plot whereby two best friends Anne and Blanche (who are the mothers of the central characters, Anne and Blanche) are lifelong friends. Anne, who was once an actress, believes herself to be married to Vanborough. Her scheming husband tires of his lust for the strangely beautiful, former actress. With the help of his barrister, Mr. Delamayn (father of Geoffrey Delamayn), he discovers a flaw in their marriage, and leaves her to marry a socialite. This first Anne "had got her death-blow on the day when her husband deserted her [. . .]. In spite of science (which meant little), in spite of her own courage (which meant much), the woman dropped at her post, and died" (Collins 41). Not only does Anne die a mysterious death in her beloved Blanche's arms, but she also repeatedly asks the dramatic question that will haunt the narrative: "She is Anne Silvester as I was. *Will she end like Me*?" (42). The betrayal of women repeats at intervals across time and generations. When the next generation of Anne, Delamayn, and Blanche become the focal point of Collins' narrative, Anne treads along her late mother's path. She is rejected and abandoned by the muscular scoundrel, Geoffrey Delamayn. The text of *Man and Wife* not only supports the idea that the second generation will relive their parents' scandals, but insists on it. When Anne finds out that Geoffrey has tricked Arnold Brinkworth (her best friend Blanche's fiancé) into marrying

her,[4] "without a cry to warn him, without an effort to save herself, she dropped senseless at his feet: as her mother had dropped at her father's feet in the bygone time" (Collins 252). In case readers had not made the connection between Anne's state and her mother's, the narrator draws attention to it. When Anne leaves a note to Blanche that begins, "I have left you forever, Blanche" (295), and then disappears, it seems as if she is living out the tragic fate of a fallen woman, for whom there is no place, save as an outcast, in the bourgeois social world. Right up until the final chapters, Anne seems to be re-enacting her mother's destiny, when she has been established as Geoffrey's wife, and is held captive by him while he plots her murder:

> The parallel between her mother's position and her own position was now complete. Both married to husbands who hated them; husbands whose interests pointed to mercenary alliances with other women; to husbands whose one want and purpose was to be free from their wives. Strange, what different ways had led mother and daughter to the same fate! Would the parallel hold to the end? "Shall I die," she wondered, thinking of her mother's last moments, "in Blanche's arms?" (Collins 551)

When Anne wonders whether "the parallel [will] hold to the end," she acts as a

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[4] The nineteenth-century Scottish marriage law states that a man and woman who declare themselves married in a public place, and then spend the night in that same place, are legally married. Anne is aware of this law, and convinces Geoffrey to meet her at the Scottish inn so that they can be married. She wants her baby to be legitimate. Geoffrey sends the unsuspecting Arnold Brinkworth in his place, and tells him to introduce himself to the innkeeper as Anne's husband. When bad weather keeps Arnold at the inn overnight, it seems as though he and Anne are man and wife.

mouthpiece for Collins' concerns; he can keep with his tradition of familial doubling, and end his novel as such, or diverge from tradition, and show his "sympathy for fallen women" (Frick 345) by disrupting Anne's destiny and punishing the fallen man in her stead.

When Wilkie Collins keeps his readers guessing with a double plotline, he plays with our belief in narrative fate. He privileges indeterminacy. D. A. Miller claims that

> the story of the Novel is essentially the story of an active regulation. Such a story requires a double plot: regulation is secured in a minor way along the lines of an official police force, and in a major way by the working through of an amateur supplement [. . .] [T]he Novel will illustrate both the generality and the continuity of the double regulatory enterprise. (Miller, *Police* 10-11)

In his study of the role of police in the Victorian novel, Miller recognizes that "the discretion of social discipline in the novel seems to rely on a strategy of *disavowing the police*: acknowledging its affinity with police practices by way of insisting on the fantasy of its moral otherness. [. . .] [T]he mechanisms of discipline seem to entail a relative *relaxation* of policing power" (16). While *Man and Wife* is an anomalous Collins novel in the conspicuous absence of the police, this text can nonetheless be used as a case study for Miller's theory. The "mechanisms of discipline" in this novel are directly linked to its double plot. On the one hand, Anne's seemingly dismal fate would regulate social norms, by

treating the fallen woman as such. Yet the novel ends with Geoffrey enfeebled, self-quarantined, feminized, and then killed, whereas Anne marries Sir Patrick, a lawyer of unquestionable gravity. If we can look at Sir Patrick's role as legal advisor and moral guide as a substitute for a police force, then we can see that he at once polices the values and chastity of Collins' characters and overturns the values that do not coincide with his own.

Sir Patrick Lundie is driven by a sense of justice, akin to Daniel Deronda in his unflinching sense of right and wrong; he both develops and scrambles Collins' double plotline in *Man and Wife*. Miller sees the police and their position in Victorian texts as a means of helping to uphold and defy morality. He sees omniscient narration as a "normalizing function which automatically divides characters into good and bad, normal and deviant" (*Police* 25). He builds on Bakhtin's concept of "monologism,"[5] which insists that "every struggle of two voices for possession and dominance in the world in which they appear is decided in advance—it is a sham struggle" (Bakhtin 168). This sham, according to Miller, is enacted by the master-voice of monologism, which never "simply soliloquizes"; rather, "it continually needs to confirm its authority by qualifying, cancelling, endorsing, subsuming all the other voices it lets speak" (*Police* 25). In *Man and Wife*, where gambling and indeterminacy are constantly invoked and the other voices (besides Sir Patrick's), are never fully cancelled, readers are steered away from believing in narratological absolutes. At the same time, Sir Patrick is

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[5] According to Miller, monologism is "the working of an implied master-voice whose accents have already unified the world in a single interpretative center" (*Police* 25).

mostly aligned with the narrator of *Man and Wife*, and their shared values overtake other elements of narrative construction. Nevertheless, I argue that their collaged voice creates a bolder, more open-ended version of right and wrong. Sir Patrick determines that Anne is legally married to Geoffrey, not Arnold.[6] He helps Anne to be married to a man who despises and wishes to kill her—hastening the fallen woman's dismal destiny. Yet when Geoffrey's plot to kill Anne gets bungled by the mute servant Hetty, Sir Patrick redeems Anne by marrying her and transforms her from a jilted woman into Lady Lundie.

Promiscuous Men

Fallen men propel plotlines of both *Daniel Deronda* and *Man and Wife.* Their presence frees the fallen woman from her bleak prospects. Elaine Showalter outlines the distinction between male-authored and female-authored upright and deviant characters in her work *A Literature of Their Own.* Since women writers were not supposed to know too much about the inner workings of the male psyche, they would create a "model hero" who was largely "the projection of women's fantasies of how they would act and feel if they were men, and, more

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[6] Sir Patrick's sleuthing uncovers the real Scotch marriage law, which gives precedence to a written communication establishing two people as *Man and Wife*. In an effort to convince Anne of his intention to marry her, Geoffrey sends a letter to her signed "Your Loving Husband Geoffrey Delamayn" (Collins 482). Though he sends this letter with Arnold, who announces himself as Anne's wife, Geoffrey's attempt to "say something spooney to quiet her" (Collins 106), renders him married to the wo man he's disgraced.

didactically, of their views on how men *should* act and feel" (Showalter 136). Model heroes, claims Showalter, "are more devious than male versions of the manly ideal" (138). She goes on to explain the need for these (female-authored) model heroes: "since conventions of the novel and of womanhood made it all but impossible for heroines to exhibit sexuality and power, feminine novelists projected these aspects of themselves onto their heroes" (Showalter 143). Charlotte Brontë's Rochester in *Jane Eyre* exemplifies the idle, oversexed, yet irresistible hero who pops up in female fiction in the mid-nineteenth century. These heroes "are not conventionally handsome, and are often downright ugly; they are brusque and cynical in speech, impetuous in action. Thrilling the heroine with their rebellion and power, they simultaneously appeal to her reforming energies" (Showalter 140). Unlike Showalter's "model hero," the fallen man is a character who is produced by both male and female authors. Wilkie Collins positions Geoffrey Delamayn as a fallen man to show his own crisis of self-fashioning within the confines of gender. While cultural anxieties would certainly differ across the gender divide, these anxieties were enacted by both men and women through their fallen characters.

This task of finding a place for the financially and sexually fallen man amidst the vast spectrum of Victorian masculinities is at once complicated and encouraged by Richard Dellamora in *Masculine Desire*. He claims that the scandals of the 1890's "provide a point at which gender roles are publicly, even spectacularly encoded and enforced" (194). These roles were not new, but at the fin-de-siècle, flamboyant defiance of them was. Daniel Deronda, for example,

attains a mediocre education, yet he comports himself as a gentleman of leisure. Dellamora speaks to the same problem of masculine "self-fashioning" that Adams encounters with regards to Victorian intellectual men: the insufficiency of existing categories leaves men in the conundrum of conforming where they do not exactly fit, or deviating and facing scandal or ridicule. While the Byronic hero that Dellamora alludes to is often given feminine traits and so threatens traditional notions of masculinity, the fallen man is usually quite manly. The fallen man takes on the fallen woman's narrative function, while maintaining his own pronounced masculine characteristics. He is too sleazy to be a gentleman, too manly to be a dandy, too socially accepted to be a rake, and too devious to be a muscular Christian. He demonstrates the insufficiency of pre-scripted gender roles when he dabbles in, but does not fit absolutely into, any single role.

Feminist critics deal with this problem of insufficient, gendered categories to show the limitations of female representations and representations of femininity in the nineteenth century. When the fallen man emerges, he shows that men faced similar constraints both within and outside of Victorian texts. Both Adams and Dellamora presuppose that financial success or failure was a major determinant in a Victorian man's status. The positioning of fallen men can be explained by a number of factors, such as the author's gender and views on morality, and a resistance to misogynist images of femininity represented by the oft punished fallen woman. Jane Flanders has observed that "men more than women have chosen the 'fallen' women theme partly because the intensification of the mystique of gentility strictly limited the subjects a woman was permitted to write

about [. . .] It is often noted that no woman in George Eliot's novels defies convention to the extent that the author did in real life" (Flanders 98). When Eliot treats Grandcourt as a fallen man, she shows indirect sympathy for fallen women.

Mallinger Grandcourt in *Daniel Deronda* is a fallen man both by virtue of his devious ways and his narrative treatment. Grandcourt has fallen sexually because of his ongoing love affair with Mrs. Glasher. Initially, it seems as though Grandcourt might be spared punishment as Daniel Deronda humanely tries to understand Gwendolen's decision to marry this man: "according to precedent, Gwendolen's view of her position might easily have been no other than that her husband's marriage with her was his entrance on the path of virtue, while Mrs. Glasher represented his forsaken sin" (Eliot 434). However, Grandcourt's marriage to Gwendolen does not change those qualities which make him a fallen man, and he is not redeemed through marriage. Badri Raina observes that "the critical comment on Grandcourt falls short of the extraordinary and unusual power of his creation" (Raina 371). Raina argues that to count Grandcourt as one of many egoists in George Eliot would be an over-simplification, since Klesmer and possibly Deronda qualify as egoists. Similarly, reading Grandcourt's significance in terms of his place historically, "as the extreme expression of a decaying aristocracy" does not encompass his whole purpose as a character (Raina 372). Raina's assertion that Grandcourt cannot be categorically placed in the rhetoric surrounding Victorian gender roles rings true in light of the seductive allure, absolute power, gentlemanly appearance, shrewd behaviour, and convenient death that meld together to indicate an intricate textual purpose.

Grandcourt has the power over Gwendolen and Mrs. Glasher that is commonly attributed to a fallen woman—a power that at once attracts members of the opposite sex and is detrimental to their characters. Immediately after marrying the man who won her by charm and "neatly-turned compliments" (Eliot 418), Gwendolen begins to fear him: "That white hand of his which was touching his whisker was capable, she fancied, of clinging round her neck and throttling her" (427). He is later described as having "satisfaction at the mastery" of his wife's resistance to him (557). We are told that "Any romantic illusions she had had in marrying this man had turned on her power of using him as she liked. He was using her as he liked" (598). Mrs. Glasher's initial attraction to Grandcourt was so strong, that she left her husband and her reputation behind to pursue an affair with this "young, handsome, amorous" man (Eliot 341). When she discovers that he intends to marry Gwendolen, thereby leaving her and her illegitimate children in financial uncertainty, she becomes hysterical, and so temporarily fits the mould of both prototypes of Victorian outcast women: the madwoman *and* the fallen woman. Grandcourt coolly responds to her outburst and threat of suicide: "'Of course, if you like, you can play the mad woman,' said Grandcourt with *sotto voce* scorn" (350). When one literary character tells another that she can "play the madwoman," he alludes to the strained and limiting nature of these roles; Lydia can be mad or fallen, but she cannot be either the desired lover or the esteemed wife. As a role that she plays, the madwoman, at least to Grandcourt, is only theatrical. He cannot take madness seriously. Here we see the threatening nature of Grandcourt's attractiveness towards women; he uses his "imperfect

mastery" (352) both to lure them in and to deplete them of agency.

In *Daniel Deronda*, Grandcourt is at first strangely alluring to women, and later ensures their loyalty by more threatening means. He is a dangerously attractive force who must be stopped in order for the narrative world to be peacefully restored. When Grandcourt dies in a boating accident, an offhand remark made by Hans Meyrick addresses Grandcourt's narrative fate: "Nothing can be neater than his getting drowned. The Duchess is at liberty to marry a man with a fine head of hair, and glances that will melt instead of freezing her" (Eliot 727). In this line, Eliot seems to be commenting on the fate generally inflicted upon fallen women at the end of Victorian novels—convenient deaths or disappearances that allow for definitive narrative closure. Yet the narrative is unsure as to whether the temporarily hysterical Gwendolen is actually responsible for Grandcourt's death or not. If murder, or the refusal to save a drowning man, is the catalyst for narrative closure, then the novel ends in ambivalence. Eliot acknowledges the limitations of "fallen character" narratives, when she has Hans refer to Grandcourt's very ambiguous death as "neat" (727).

Moreover, Grandcourt's financial fall and his interaction with the morally impeccable Deronda add to the sense that Grandcourt's characterization undercuts gendered stereotypes. Lush, Grandcourt's scheming right-hand man, writes a letter to Sir Hugo (Grandcourt's uncle), in which he reveals that "Grandcourt, I know, is feeling the want of cash; and unless some other plan is resorted to, he will be raising money in a foolish way" (Eliot 320). This allusion to Grandcourt's propensity for underhanded financial dealings destabilizes his role as a gentleman.

His financial prodigality can be averted, suggests Lush, if Sir Hugo would only send Deronda to buy Diplow—a means of giving Grandcourt cash in a way, "so as not to imply that you suspect any particular want of money on his part" (Eliot 321). While the patrimony that Grandcourt leaves for Lydia's children in his will proves that he is not destitute, the fallen man's finances are nonetheless in flux because of his sexual and financial promiscuity. He is obliged to his mistress and to her children—he has to give them at least enough of a stipend to keep Lydia from playing the madwoman and destroying his marriage. He has also married the financially destitute Gwendolen Harleth, and must support both her and her mother.

In *Daniel Deronda*, the title character is positioned in contrast to Grandcourt as an angelic, even prophetic figure. An 1876 review of Eliot's novel summarizes what is consistently good in Deronda's character: "no one can deny the power of personal influence which passes from his [Deronda's] into Gwendolen's life is very finely portrayed, and that the mode in which his evident nobility of nature becomes to her, as it were, a sort of moral inspiration, and a living standard of inward obligation, is very finely conceived" (Hutton 190). Indeed, Daniel Deronda is conceived as a moral exemplar in this novel. Yet Deronda empowers Gwendolen and allows her to recover some agency by overpowering her. Although Gwendolen gets attention from male onlookers, she still questions "of what use in the world was their admiration while she had an uneasy sense that there was something standard in Deronda's mind which had measured her into littleness?" (Eliot 418). Gwendolen's "feelings had turned this

man [Deronda], only a few years older than herself, into a priest; a sort of trust less rare than the fidelity that guides it" (430). Gwendolen does not lust after Deronda, but rather sets him up as an asexual religious guide. Since Deronda is Jewish, he cannot be a priest, so Gwendolen's reverence of him is misplaced. By seeing Daniel in a Christian, spiritual vein, Gwendolen disembodies him, and so sanctions their friendship and intimacy. At the same time, she renders an eventual marital union between her and Daniel impossible by miscasting him as priest. When Gwendolen and Grandcourt are on the yacht from which Grandcourt falls and drowns, Gwendolen fights her murderous wishes, which "were taking shape [. . .] like a cloud of demon-face" (682) by clinging "to the thought of Deronda [. . .] The sense that he was there would save her from acting out the evil within" (681). After Gwendolen hysterically tells Deronda that she feels responsible (though glad) for Grandcourt's death, and wonders how her life will go on, Deronda empowers her with his calming words: "New promptings will come as the days pass. When you are among your friends again, you will discern new duties" (701). While Gwendolen's marriage to Grandcourt depletes her of power, her reverence for Deronda infuses her with the hope of self-renewal. In this novel, the interaction between the fallen man and the upright one is mediated through their respective holds on Gwendolen. When the fallen man comes to his final ruin, both Deronda and the narrative itself suggest female empowerment.

George Eliot, a female author, writing her last novel under a male pseudonym while living with a married man, exposes the incompleteness of moral and gender expectations in *Daniel Deronda*. Collins' treatment of his more

overtly sexualized and distinctly punished fallen man both coincides with *and* diverges from Eliot's treatment of Grandcourt. Through the character of Geoffrey Delamayn in *Man and Wife*, Wilkie Collins avoids perpetuating the limiting gender ideology of his time, all the while presenting his audience with a character whom they can easily recognize. While unmarried, Geoffrey has sexual relations with Anne Silvester. Although their sexual encounter renders both characters equally fallen in the technical sense, Geoffrey possesses more traits of fallenness than does Anne. His untimely death seems to be modeled on that of fictional portrayals of the sexually deviant woman, while Anne's status is redeemed through her marriage to Sir Patrick. Furthermore, Geoffrey's financial ruin is directly linked to his sexual fall. He is already in dire financial straits when the novel begins. Being the profligate scoundrel son, and second born to boot, Geoffrey stands to inherit nothing. His only chance at financial redemption is to marry a woman of his parents' choosing. When Anne impels him to marry her, he explains bluntly that "if I marry you now, I am a ruined man" (79). The narrator confirms the scoundrel's exclamation:

> Discovery [of their affair], which meant moral ruin to the woman, meant money-ruin to the man. Geoffrey had not exaggerated his position with his father. Lord Holchester had twice paid his debts—and had declined to see him. One more outrage on his father's rigid sense of propriety—and he would be left out of the will as well as kept out of the house. (83)

By highlighting Geoffrey's financial and sexual promiscuity, Collins sets him up

in opposition to Sir Patrick. By gambling with his sexuality, Geoffrey impregnates Anne, and so worsens his already tenuous finances. Before he knows anything about Geoffrey's scandalous liaisons, Sir Patrick berates Arnold for choosing such a scoundrel for a friend:

> Your friend is the model young Briton of the present time. I don't like the model young Briton. I don't see the sense of crowing over him as a superb national production, because he is big and strong and drinks beer with impunity, and takes a cold shower bath all the year round. There is far too much glorification in England, just now, of the mere physical qualities which an Englishman shares with the savage and the brute. And the ill results are beginning to show themselves already! We are readier than we ever were to practice all that is rough in our national customs, and to excuse all that is violent and brutish in our national acts. (68-9)

Not only does Sir Patrick criticize Arnold for his taste in friends, but he also criticizes all of Britain for placing their bets on a man like Geoffrey. The elder lawyer is passionate in his outrage at the national veneration of Geoffrey, '"It's the cant of the day,' cried Sir Patrick, relapsing again, 'to take these physically-wholesome men for granted, as being morally-wholesome men into the bargain. Time will show whether the cant of the day is right" (69). Geoffrey's strength does not indicate his moral wholesomeness. Even sweet, trusting Blanche, sees that his athletic prowess does not annul his flaws of comportment. She taunts him when he refuses to play the civilized sport of croquet, "Must you always be

pulling in a boat-race, or flying over a high-jump? If you had a mind, you would want to relax it. You have got muscles instead. Why not relax *them*?" (62). Just as Britain, according to Sir Patrick, places undeserved value on Geoffrey's strength, so does Arnold repay Geoffrey's physical feats with an endless sense of moral obligation. Arnold did not exactly choose to have Geoffrey for a lifelong friend. He is indebted to the muscular scoundrel for saving his life, years before. Since Geoffrey has lost most hope of inheriting his father's money, his only source of income is his body, and this income includes an eternal sense of indebtedness from Arnold. Geoffrey saves Arnold with his brute strength, and then expects Arnold to put his own reputation and love life at risk by going to meet Anne at the inn. "One good turn deserves another," (102), is all Geoffrey needs to say to get Arnold to agree to his absurd request. If Geoffrey cannot fool others into thinking he is strong in spirit as well as body, then he will manipulate them to further his social-climbing goals.

Geoffrey's physical feats do not fool anyone for long, as he is blamed for both his and Anne's falls. When Arnold exhibits frustration at his "marriage" to Anne and wishes that he "had never set eyes on her," Sir Patrick redirects the blame to the fallen man; "Lay the saddle on the right horse', returned Sir Patrick, 'Wish you had never set eyes on Geoffrey Delamayn'" (469). Sir Patrick maintains "unfeigned respect" (384) for Anne even after he knows that she has deviated from the sexual norms of her day, and the fallen woman is consistently treated with understanding and compassion by both Sir Patrick and Collins. Sir Patrick despises Geoffrey and admires Anne from the start. He alternates between

confoundment at Anne's attraction towards Geoffrey and an understanding that Geoffrey's body is a very powerful currency that victimizes all those who encounter it:

> His features were as perfectly unintelligent as human features can be. His expression preserved an immovable composure wonderful to behold. The muscles of his brawny arms showed through the sleeves of his light summer coat. He was deep in the chest, thin in the flanks, firm on the legs—in two words, a magnificent human animal, wrought up to the highest pitch of human development, from head to foot. (60-1)

Daniel Deronda mostly absorbs Gwendolen's hatred towards Grandcourt, and even tries to diffuse it; Sir Patrick encourages both characters and readers to join him in despising Delamayn and respecting Anne. The narrator asks us to understand Anne's fall as a reflection of the misplaced national veneration of bodily feats:

> Was she without excuse? No: not utterly without excuse [. . .] She had seen him, the hero of the river-race, the first and foremost man in a trial of strength and skill which had roused the enthusiasm of all of England [. . .] *His* were the arms whose muscle was celebrated in the newspapers [. . .] A woman, in an atmosphere of red-hot enthusiasm, witnesses the apotheosis of Physical Strength. Is it reasonable—is it just—to expect her to ask herself in cold blood, what (morally and intellectually) is all this worth?—and

> that, when the man who is the object of the apotheosis, notices her, is presented to her, finds her to his taste and singles her out from the rest? No. While humanity is humanity the woman is not utterly without excuse. (77)

The narrator generalizes and almost excuses Anne's sexual fling with Geoffrey. At other points in the narrative, Geoffrey's sex appeal is described, and we see that he has the same debilitating effect on Mrs. Glenarm as he does on Anne. When she laid her hand on "the athlete's mighty arm," Mrs. Glenarm exclaims, "What a man you are!" (336). The narrator tells us that "the whole secret of the power Geoffrey had acquired over her was in those words" (336). When Geoffrey's brute sexuality is emphasized in *Man and Wife*, Collins draws our attention to the human fallibility inherent in Anne's situation; she could not resist her natural pull towards Geoffrey. Geoffrey, on the other hand, is scheming and manipulative, and his sexual transgressions are a form of conscious gambling. Geoffrey backslides in his family when he refuses to follow the example of his brother, Julius, who "had just muscle enough to lift a Dictionary from the shelf" (184). The first-born Delamayn marries and stays in good family standing by cultivating his mind and paying little heed to his body. While Julius attracts a wholesome wife with his sensitivity and inheritance, Geoffrey destroys women by tempting them with his body.

Both Mallinger Grandcourt and Geoffey Delamayn use their appearance of power to seduce fallen women and to marry upright ones. While Grandcourt does marry Gwendolen, his life ultimately rests precariously in her hands, as he

cries in vain for help while drowning. Delamayn has the whole country hedging bets on him as he prepares for the footrace, but then he disappoints them by fainting. Soon after, he dies in a state of degradation and shame. When Eliot and Collins include fallen men in their narratives, they undercut some fundamental assumptions about Victorian morality, masculinity, and femininity, as they leave contemporary gender and structural norms in a state of promising turmoil.

"Spectrums of Possibilities"

Strands of unruly desire drive plots in many Victorian narratives, only to be discounted by conclusions that reward upright characters and punish all deviants. In her last novel, George Eliot strives to invigorate rather than negate the strands of suggestive possibility that the rest of her narrative develops. Throughout *Daniel Deronda*, hints are dropped strategically to lead readers to believe that the novel will take a characteristically Victorian stance on both identity and closure. Of course, as my hypothesis on the fallen man's role as narrative disturber suggests, to label any narrative as characteristically Victorian is to over-simplify the surprisingly complex era and its fictional norms. Critics such as D. A. Miller, Marianna Torgovnick, Alexander Welsh, J. Hillis Miller, and Frank Kermode have noted or implied in their narratological examinations of Victorian endings that readers always come to Victorian (and other) novels with certain expectations about closure and resolution. The basic premise of Frank Kermode's oft-quoted *The Sense of an Ending* is that endings, in trying to pronounce final meaning on a text, often contradict the themes of uncertainty and

possibilities that the rest of the novel has been setting up. He uses the sound that a clock makes as the example of the basic rhythm readers expect from novels. Kermode indicts readers for the disappointment that is derived from thrown-together, hardly believable endings:

> we use fictions to enable the end to confer organization and form on the temporal structure. The interval between the two sounds, between *tick* (our word for a fictional beginning) and *tock* (our word for an end) is now charged with significant duration. The clock's *tick-tock* I take to be a model of what we call plot, an organization that humanizes time by giving it form. (Kermode 45)

As the title of Kermode's work suggests, readers "hunger for ends and for crises" (55); we want the *sense* of an ending, even if it will undermine the more anarchic strands privileged elsewhere in the work. George Eliot seems aware of readers' tendencies to "behave as young children do when they think of all the past as 'yesterday'[. . .] the past is brief, organized by our desire for satisfaction and simply related to our future" (Kermode 50). In most of her novels preceding *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot gives us a strong *sense of an ending* by telling us what happens to each character.

It is difficult to argue that *Daniel Deronda*, a Victorian novel that ends in both marriage and death, resists closure. While death and marriage are two of the age-old signifiers of an ending, the details and effects of these events at the end of Eliot's novel allow for indeterminacy rather than didactic conclusiveness. We recall that *Daniel Deronda* begins with a scene of gambling, wherein the young

socialite rolls her dice of chance alongside more visibly degraded foreign types. The strands of possibility that are implicit in the gambling motif seem to drop out of sight as Gwendolen finds herself married to the throttling and imperious Grandcourt. When Grandcourt takes on the unwelcome fate of a fallen Victorian character, he leaves both Lydia and Gwendolen in the winner's circle of their seemingly forfeited roulette games. While alive, Grandcourt refuses to validate his long-time mistress and their children. Only with Grandcourt's death does Lydia's son become heir to Grandcourt's estate and to his name; Lydia is finally freed of her fallen woman status by proxy. This final act, however, is not a sudden burst of conscience on Grandcourt's part. Rather, his will satisfies his more current and challenging goal of manipulating and tormenting Gwendolen. As the fallen woman and her son come to own Diplow, the socially unblemished Gwendolen, in Sir Hugo's words, is left "to put up with a poor two thousand a-year and the house at Gadsmere—a nice kind of banishment for her if she chose to shut herself up there" (Eliot 716). Sir Hugo notes that Grandcourt's posthumous behaviour is typical of contemporary men: "if a fellow has any spite or tyranny in him, he's likely to bottle off a good deal for keeping in that sort of document" (Eliot 717). Gwendolen and Lydia do not exactly exchange roles when they switch abodes. Both women are empowered by Grandcourt's death, so neither can be seen as a fallen woman with limited autonomy. Grandcourt does not reserve his tyranny for his will; he desires to deplete Gwendolen of her status and power throughout the novel. He is therefore further belittled after his death when his attempt at posthumous revenge backfires: Gwendolen feels free and

open to possibility rather than paralyzed by her husband's meagre bequest.

Grandcourt plans to rob Gwendolen of her individual validity even before he proposes to her:

> At that moment his strongest wish was to be completely master of this creature—this piquant combination of maidenliness and mischief: that she knew things which made her start away from him, spurred him to triumph over that repugnance; and he was believing that he should triumph. (Eliot 301)

As their marriage progresses, as Gwendolen is increasingly dominated and suffocated by Grandcourt's imposing nature, she alternates between fantasizing about his death as her sole hope of salvation, and foreseeing, with dread, the probability of Grandcourt "always living, and her own life dominated by him; the 'always' of her young experience not stretching beyond the few immediate years that seemed immeasurably wrong with her passionate weariness" (Eliot 606). Although Gwendolen, at the end of *Daniel Deronda*, has little money, no husband, no suitors, and no definite home, she has the "always of her young experience." For Lydia, financial compensation is her key to agency and recognition, for she has lacked these since embarking on an affair with the once-alluring Grandcourt. Gwendolen, the gambler, has seen her family's fortune fall, and been compensated by Grandcourt's offerings. She comes to care so little for riches that she tries to refuse even the two thousand a year that Grandcourt has left her. Deronda convinces her to keep the money, and to see her spiritual gains from Grandcourt's death as irrelevant to whether she chooses to take the money

or not;

> In my opinion, you ought simply to abide by the provisions of your husband's will, and let your remorse tell only on the use you will make of your monetary independence [. . .] See! You have been saved from the worst evils that might have come from your marriage, which you feel was wrong [. . .] I think that a severe angel, seeing you along the road of error, grasped you by the wrist and showed you the horror of the life you must avoid. And it has come to you in your springtime. Think of it as a preparation. You can, you will be among the best of women, such as make others glad that they were born. (Eliot 768-69)

In writing a happy ending, wherein the gentlemanly Daniel Deronda is married to Mirah, the virtuous, low-born Jewess, instead of being married to Gwendolen (as both she and Daniel's uncle, Sir Hugo, would have liked), George Eliot asks us to reconsider our conception of happy endings altogether. We recognize that Gwendolen is better off as a single woman with a shabby cottage and two thousand a year than she was as Grandcourt's wife at Diplow. Spiritual fulfillment is not tangible, and cannot be summed up in a list of achievements and milestones. Fulfillment remains vague, open-ended, and hopeful, though never absolute.

Whereas Eliot's *Middlemarch* delivers a *Finale* that summarizes the fates of all characters, *Daniel Deronda* gives its readers a milder sense of an ending. J. Hillis Miller is one of many critics who try to understand Victorian notions of

closure by emphasizing the complexity and inconclusiveness of narrative endings, rather than just accepting surface aspects that lay claim to closure and irreproachable morality:

> Solve, dissolve, resolve—why this blank contradiction in our images of closure in narrative? Why cannot we describe unambiguously the moment of coming full circle in a final revelation at the end point toward which the whole story has been moving, fixing the characters in a new relation to their final destiny? This tying/untying would provide the sense of an ending, casting a retrospective unity over the whole. It is most commonly marriage or death. This ending must, however, it seems, simultaneously be thought of as a tying up, a neat knotting, leaving no loose threads hanging out, no characters unaccounted for, and at the same time as an untying, as the combing out of the tangled narrative threads so that they may be clearly seen, shining side by side, all mystery or complexity revealed. (Miller 5)

Daniel's marriage to Mirah does not "cast a retrospective unity over the whole," but Grandcourt's death does. When critics read the two stories of *Daniel Deronda* as the Gwendolen saga and the Jewish storyline, they acknowledge that the novel does not profess to unify its two stories into a coherent one. Rather, this novel allows for separate, though related, stories to co-exist, with Gwendolen's and Deronda's stories overlapping, finally, on a purely spiritual plane, as she attempts to put his teachings into practice. Grandcourt's death, on the other hand, though

the details surrounding it are equivocal, nonetheless casts unity over the whole of the novel by removing the one character who believes in absolute domination and control. In Grandcourt's absence, the rest of the characters are left to run free and to find closure in a lack of absolutes. No absolute proclamations tell us what happens to Daniel and Mirah; no absolute summations tell us that the widowed Mrs. Grandcourt finds true love and a nice home; no absolute investigation determines whether Grandcourt's death was murder or accident.

J. Hillis Miller is not the only critic to find nineteenth-century narrative endings to be rather paradoxical. Frank Kermode muses on why we might resist seeing the inconclusive side of this paradox in closure. Kermode contends that "because the form [of the novel] requires that the realism of the ego and the desires of the lower mind, be simultaneously satisfied, the novel has to modify the paradigms—organize extensive middles in concordance with remote origins and predictable ends—in such a way as to preserve its difference from dreaming or other fantasy gratification" (56). Ambiguity and uncertainty come to be conclusions in and of themselves. When Eliot leaves her characters' fates ambiguous instead of rewarding our diligent following of their tales with a solid, definitive ending, she is perhaps recognizing what twentieth-century critics have come to know:

> Beginnings and endings of narrative have much in common since both are arbitrary disjunctions in a sequence of events that is presumed continuous, extending before and after the events that are narrated. We also have to imagine a surrounding space for each

> narrative, so that one narrative is arbitrarily separated from another, these beginnings and endings from those. (Welsh 10)

In *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot recognizes the benefit of choosing ambiguity over plot summary in her final pages—she expects her intelligent readers to walk away satisfied, knowing they have not been insulted by an arbitrarily tacked-on summary of what will "happen" to the characters whom she now ceases to bring to life. She embraces the continuity of her novel by leaving its narrative strands exposed, though never quite resolved. Rather than pretending to end this story, Eliot admits that no story ever ends.

In the last chapters of *Daniel Deronda,* we have moral lessons and typical ending signifiers, such as marriage and death, but we also have the fallen man as an example of endless possibilities. In her other novels, Eliot uses endings to propagate an absolute morality to which her narratives inherently refuse to subscribe. Alexander Welsh notes that in *The Mill on the Floss*, the author "assumes a developmental perspective in order to explore family, social, and economic history, together with her heroine's growth in consciousness—with many analogies to natural and sexual selection thrown in—only to overturn her entire complex history by means of the prophesized flood in the end" (Welsh 18). Welsh explains why Eliot and other authors revert consistently to overarching endings: "the contradiction of desire in nineteenth-century endings may be frankly presented as marriage for one hero and death for another, or it may be veiled in allegory" (Welsh 21). Indeed, Welsh's comments shed light on my attempt to understand the significance of the loose ending of *Daniel Deronda*. The marriage

between Deronda and Mirah negates the charged desire that circulates between Gwendolen and Deronda throughout the novel. Grandcourt elicits desire from women, but he never seems to fulfill them, as both Lydia and Gwendolen are continually enraged with this man. Marriage and death force us, in this case, to open our minds to new prospects for Victorian characters and narratives, as our hope for a union between Deronda and Gwendolen is dashed, and we learn instead to be contented with her newfound independence. As Gwendolen reacts to Grandcourt's death, we see the danger in attaching major significance to a chain of events that weights the final event as a decisive link in the whole chain. Gwendolen confesses to Deronda:

> I have felt wicked. And everything has been a punishment to me [. . .] I ought not to have married. I wronged someone else. I broke my promise. I wanted to make my gain out of another's loss—you remember?—it was like roulette—and the money burnt into me. And I could not complain. It was as if I had prayed that another should lose and I should win. And I had won. (Eliot 692)

Within Gwendolen's sequential musings on guilt and punishment, she compares the links in the chain of events to a game of roulette. She implies that one's end can be simultaneously the result of chance *and* of a morally ordered sequence. Gwendolen ends her speech to Deronda with a sob and a question: "You will not change—you will not want to punish me now?" (692). Although Deronda does not want to punish her, he also does not want to marry her. According to Gwendolen's logic, bad deeds should be met with bad marriages, as hers had

been. These musings point to her belief that good deeds, such as her efforts at self-redemption, should be met with a good marriage to Deronda. Furthermore, Deronda already *has* changed, since he has just discovered his Jewish identity. What Gwendolen only realizes on the unconscious level, though we readers might take it to be the more valuable lesson of the novel, is that any life decision is like dropping the roulette ball. Predictable chains of events do not reflect what really does and should happen. Sir Hugo takes part in encouraging the readerly perception that events, fortunes, and misfortunes can be traced through a sensible and linked chain, when he speaks about his hopes for Daniel's future, the man he has raised as his son, to be the epitome on an English gentleman. Sir Hugo suspects Gwendolen's "passionate attachment" to Daniel, and believes it should be rewarded with marriage: "To him it was as pretty a story as need be that this fine creature and his favourite Dan should have turned out to be formed for each other, and that the unsuitable husband should have made his exit in such excellent time" (764).

Sir Hugo sees a match between Deronda and Gwendolen in the same way that Eliot's reader might—inevitable and welcome. However, Sir Hugo's ideas of what might entail satisfactory conclusiveness are in direct opposition to what actually happens. Gwendolen and Sir Hugo are both flawed in hoping that Deronda will not stray from the path that has been laid out for him. When Gwendolen reacts to Deronda's revelation that he is a Jew, the sensitive reader comes to understand why a marriage between Daniel and Gwendolen will not be the catalyst for a happy ending. After declaring her romantic intentions to Daniel,

Gwendolen "said feelingly, 'I hope there is nothing to make you mind. *You* are just the same as if you were not a Jew'" (Eliot 802). Though Gwendolen invites Daniel to retain his English identity despite the pesky detail of his Jewish roots, Deronda sets out to do the precise opposite. He tells Gwendolen: "'The idea that I am possessed with is that of restoring a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre such as the English have, though they too are scattered over the globe'" (803). Deronda distinguishes himself from the English, thereby stirring uneasiness in Gwendolen. Upon hearing of Daniel's lofty goal, Gwendolen "sank before the bewildering vision of these wide-stretching purposes in which she felt herself reduced to a mere speck" (803). Now that there is no doubt that the morally upright English gentleman is no longer English and does not plan to live as a gentleman, the novel mocks the very notion of strictly categorized identity. If the novel ends with a moral hierarchy in place, then the East and Deronda's Zionist goals far supersede the characteristically Victorian goals of Gwendolen; in her own words, she becomes a "speck" in Deronda's far-reaching purpose.

When Gwendolen initially takes Deronda's rejection of her as deserved, she seems to be the scapegoat in a didactic *Finale*; the spoiled child learns that she cannot escape her past mistake of marrying a fallen man. In her usual dramatic fashion, after accepting her status as a speck, Gwendolen trembles and cries "out with a smothered voice—'I said I should be forsaken. I have been a cruel woman. And I am forsaken'" (Eliot 805). Even in the very last pages of her novel, Eliot plays with her readers' expectations, as we expect to see Gwendolen

alone and resigned to a life of dutiful, spinsterly regret. Yet this is not the end, as Gwendolen paints a hopeful, though uncertain view of her own future in a letter to Daniel on his wedding day:

> *Do not think of me sorrowfully on your wedding-day. I have remembered your words—that I may be one of the best of women, who make others glad they were born. I do not yet see how that can be, but you know better than I. If it ever comes true, it will be because you helped me.* (Eliot 810)

In just a few short pages, Gwendolen has shifted from dismal resignation to hopeful possibilities. Gwendolen's letter to Deronda is not followed by a *Finale*. Mordecai, re-named Ezra, dies on the way to Palestine. His death conforms to the Victorian technique of offering "pronounced endings" that "conceal a deepening contradiction between the belief that history is endless and the desire to make an end: that is, the endings are emphatic because they are proclaimed against the narrative's own assumption of continuing development and change" (Welsh 18). Ezra's death, however, does not provide an emphatic ending. He dies during a journey to a holy place. His death enables the spiritual evolution of Mirah and Daniel. Unlike the predicted deaths in *The Mill on the Floss*, deaths in *Daniel Deronda* rearrange the outcomes for surviving characters. During his lifetime, Grandcourt humiliates Lydia, yet redeems her with his death. His ultimate goal of breaking Gwendolen's spirit and reducing her to a life of poverty and social exclusion proves unsuccessful. The notion of deeper spiritual goals does not enter into Grandcourt's consciousness. The spiritual, however, is the aspect that George

Eliot emphasizes most. The Jewish characters get to live out their desired fates because they have earned this right through their spiritual steadfastness, while even Sir Hugo, a likeable English character, has his aspirations crushed when he loses Daniel, the heir to his fortune and title, to the Zionist cause.

If inheritance marks the future, then the end of *Daniel Deronda* suggests that the coming years will embrace uncertainty and change; fate is as knowable as the outcome of a dice roll. Alexander Welsh asks us to "consider then the usefulness of novels in foreclosing the future in the nineteenth-century, a period in which the future was popularly advertised as far more important to mankind and to individuals than was the present" (Welsh 12). When the power-hungry fallen man is killed off, other characters, particularly Gwendolen and Lydia, have their values and hopes alternately fulfilled and undercut. By the end of *Daniel Deronda* the characters' futures resound with possibility. Clichés are rejected in favour of open-endedness when we can predict more easily what *kind* of people Eliot's characters will turn out to be than we can guess what will happen to them.

Thus far, I have posited the *Finale* of *Middlemarch* as a sort of structured foil to the ending of *Daniel Deronda*. In his narratological studies of nineteenth-century writings, D. A. Miller does not deal with *Daniel Deronda*. He does, however, encourage my reading of ambiguity as possibility, when he finds that the *Finale* of *Middlemarch* is wrought with ambiguities of its own. Miller claims that "*Middlemarch* is largely a world of processes that can only be suspended by acts of 'make-believe.' Closure thus becomes an impossibility in principle, even as it urgently takes place [. . .] Eliot's difficulties come in justifying a fully

narrated state of affairs" (Miller, *Narrative* xiv). Miller goes on to examine exactly what is told and what is left out of the final chapter of *Middlemarch*:

> If the *Finale* obviously wants to conclude, it also wants, in part, to dissolve its conclusiveness into something more problematic. It is an uneven tissue of discretionary ellipses and truncations, woven into conspicuously unintegrated series of separate times. Characters are followed up to vastly different extents. (Miller, *Narrative* 193)

Miller finds loose strands of narrative in one of Eliot's most seemingly conclusive novels, thereby opening up a space for discussing all of Eliot's novels as open-ended. Like Miller, John Kucich implies that conclusiveness is in the mind of the reader. He claims that both the *Finale* of *Middlemarch* and the end of Jane Austen's *Emma* are inconclusive and he problematizes the closure implicit in a marriage-driven ending:

> Emma's marriage is neither a complete surpassing of egotism nor a fall into trivial order—as an experience for the reader it is *both*. Dorothea Brooke's marriage to Will is both a break with Middlemarch's norm of stifled idealism and a lapse into conventional marriage. This is not to say that Emma's or Dorothea's marriage will not be affected by the double nature of the activity that produces it; expenditure and conservation have a mid-range in which they modify each other in concrete ways. Still, their contradictory nature forbids complete integration, and this

> inevitably leaves us with two separate attitudes towards the ending. (Kucich 95-6)

D. A. Miller focuses on Eliot in both *Narrative and its Discontents* and *The Novel and the Police*, to imply that she, more so than others of her time, develops her plots and characters in intricate ways to perform the contemporary anxieties towards the potentially dangerous and unkempt imaginative process. *Daniel Deronda* ends with the implicit possibility of sex between the newlyweds, Daniel and Mirah, and with both Gwendolen and Lydia free to find new mates who might satisfy rather than aggravate them. Grandcourt and Delamayn are both sexually virile before the narratives begin. Both fallen men attract and impregnate women, and while their sexuality is discussed, it is never dramatized within the narratives. Grandcourt's death allows us to imagine sexual fruition, even though it takes place in a novel that focuses on spirituality. This seeming contradiction is really a progressive stance on both narrative and sexuality, since Eliot relieves herself of the burden of the final word, and allows her readers' imaginations to take over. Eliot's last novel is unique in its resistance to closure. It also builds on the eroticism of her previous works, as Miller argues:

> The various attempts to end *Middlemarch*, then, issue in a compromise formation between a fully narrated closure and an unlimited narratability that can never be all told. [. . .] If [the novel] arrests desire, it also knows that desire stops nowhere; if it overcomes its ideological bind, it also shows that bind being reinstated in the same formation that resolves it; and if its signs

> ultimately attach to meaning, this meaning is recognized for another diffusive sign. [. . .] The exemplarity of *Middlemarch* is, precisely, its uneasiness, whereby the assumptions of traditional novelistic form are set off in ironic quotation marks—just enough to make us worry about them, and not just in *Middlemarch.* (Miller, *Narrative* 194)

As Miller implies, these assumptions are not really a cause for alarm, but rather their "ironic quotation marks" call for a celebration of Victorian insight.

The fallen man facilitates this erosion of structural norms as he takes on the fate of the fallen woman and leaves her future open when it "should" result in attenuated autonomy, fractured identity, censure, shame, and death. Although Lydia is the fallen woman of *Daniel Deronda,* Grandcourt tries to turn Gwendolen into one who lives out the fallen woman's fate in his will. Traditionally, a fallen woman is treated badly so long as she is perceived to be fallen. When Grandcourt tries to move the more-or-less upright Gwendolen into Lydia's dwelling, he could, in a different novel, succeed in turning her into a fallen woman—depleting her of agency simply by asserting his own. When the novel turns around and empowers Gwendolen by leaving her unmarried, spiritually improved, and hopeful for the future, we see the fallen man's intricate purpose. As he loses agency, so do the misogynist values for which he stands. Grandcourt the husband proves that marriage is not a guaranteed happy ending; in this case, the dissolution of the marriage is the only hope Gwendolen has for happiness. As well, marriage to Deronda would not provide Gwendolen with the

happy *Finale* she hopes for, as it would cause him to deny an important facet of his character. By treating Grandcourt as a fallen man, George Eliot defeats our expectations of morally loaded Victorian endings. If her ending propagates any moral values, they are related to Zionism and lofty spiritual purpose rather than marriage, gentility, and reproduction.

Not unlike *Daniel Deronda*, Wilkie Collins' *Man and Wife* ends with a marriage and death that collectively and respectively reject traditional notions of structure and morality and put rebellious suggestions of open-endedness in their stead. Marianna Torgovnick has claimed that although "the Victorian ending was often seen as affirming a stable epistemology," this is not an accurate reflection of Victorian endings. Rather, "the doubts implicit in the weakness or parodic quality or stylization of many Victorian endings somehow got and get overlooked in the model of open and closed endings [. . .] the not-so-sunny thoughts that preceded were often veiled in the endings Victorian novelists typically wrote" (Torgovnick 5). These not-so-sunny thoughts are brought forth throughout *Man and Wife* as both the narrator and the sage lawyer Sir Patrick Lundie sympathize with the fallen woman and blame her seducer. Despite their sympathy, the fallen woman, it seems, will fall hopelessly to a miserable fate while the bourgeois conformists will get the marriage and fortune that they have coming to them. Instead, after enduring censure and shame, Geoffrey dies suddenly when, "a feeble distortion seized on his face [. . .]. His arm fell helpless; his whole body, on the side under the arm gave way. He dropped to the floor like a man shot dead" (Collins 636). He cannot even fight off mute, decrepit Hester. He dies a fallen man literally (by

falling to the ground) and figuratively (weakened by his moral decay).The fallen man in Collins' novel perpetuates rather than rejects contemporary narrative trends to some extent, since the bad guy gets killed off, while good Arnold gets to marry his beloved and pure bride. In *Man and Wife*, Arnold Brinkworth is angelic, as he is characterized as "speaking with an unaffected modesty and simplicity," and he is judged by Sir Patrick as "a brave lad." Immediately after assessing Arnold positively, Sir Patrick condemns Geoffrey for the "qualities he shares with the savage and the brute" (Collins 66). The two sides of the spectrum of masculine identity are set up early in the novel as polar oppositions. Throughout the novel, Arnold proves to be a virtuous gentleman, as he rushes to the aid of Anne, is eternally loyal to his betrothed, Blanche, and only loses his temper when provoked by the incomprehensible evil ways of his nemesis, Geoffrey Delamayn: "There was a spirit in Arnold—not easily brought to the surface, through the overlying simplicity and good humour of his ordinary character—which once roused, was a spirit not easily quelled. Geoffrey had roused it at last" (274). Geoffrey pushes even-tempered Arnold to demonstrate a proclivity towards anger. That Arnold can embody any of the fallen man's traits points to a weakening of moral categories in the novel. The fallen man does not reside in a vacuum. He, like the fallen woman, is a monitory figure who is frightening because he is not absolutely distinct from more genteel characters. When Geoffrey is compared to Arnold, he seems fated to suffer, in a fair universe driven by a Victorian moral code, although Collins does not assure us that his narrative world will work out that way.

To the end, Collins alternates between prioritizing the respective themes of indeterminacy and fatality, both of which he develops throughout the narrative. The theme of gambling becomes pronounced, as Geoffrey's footrace gets everyone betting. Mr. Speedwell, the knowledgeable surgeon, paints the mighty Geoffrey as a weakened androgynous figure, when the athlete faints while training. The doctor proclaims, "He will probably live, but he will never recover [. . .] he is big enough and muscular enough to sit as a model for Sampson—and only last week, I saw him swoon away like a young girl, in his mother's arms" (219). The surgeon's words are met with outrage by Delamayn, who privileges his brute masculinity as a defining feature. Geoffrey is a gambling man, and he is described early on as being barbaric and unintelligent, though honourable, in part, because "nobody had ever known him to be backward in settling a bet" (61). The gambling athlete wants to restore his bodily vitality with his betting book, and so tells Speedwell,

> 'I lay you an even hundred, I'm in fit condition to row in the university match next spring.'
>
> 'I don't bet, Mr. Delamayn.'[. . .] Geoffrey turned defiantly, book in hand, to his college friends about him. The British blood was up; and the British resolution to bet, which successfully defies common decency and common law, from one end of the country to the other, was not to be trifled with.' (221)

Speedwell does, in fact, bet—he and Geoffrey's trainer Perry both realize that Geoffrey might not live to complete the footrace. They are "the only two men

who had 'hedged' their bets by privately backing his opponent" (498). Gambling is the common link for all Englishmen in *Man and Wife*, and the prominence of this pastime draws the reader's attention to the national faith in indeterminacy and uncertainty. When Geoffrey's body fails him in the race, he is left semi-conscious, yet still insists on paying his gambling debts to Arnold Brinkworth: "The awful moment when his life was trembling in the balance found him true to the last living faith left among the men of his tribe and time—the faith of the betting book" (499). Geoffrey is willing to give Arnold his due in betting, but will cheat him blind in his love life. For Geoffrey, an absolute faith in indeterminacy frees him from adhering to any other moral codes.

Just because the scoundrel subscribes to such a belief system, does not mean that the narrative shares his values. Collins sets up a chain of fatality throughout the novel that leads us to believe that all the characters' fates have been predetermined. Since Sir Patrick is both a lawyer and a moral voice in the novel, he would seem to sanction the idea that the law works together with a moral code to determine characters' outcomes. When Sir Patrick determines that Anne is Geoffrey's legal wife, he comments on the incongruity of morality and justice:

> The persons here present are now about to see the moral merit of the Scotch law of marriage (as approved by England) practically in operation before their own eyes. They will judge for themselves of the morality (Scotch or English) which first forces a deserted woman back on the villain who has betrayed her, and then

virtuously leaves her to bear the consequences. (523)

While the law may be imperfect, it is nonetheless a code to be respected and adhered to. The predetermined legal code is outside of the characters' control, and it thus plays into the chain of fatality. The narrator laments of Anne, "the law sanctioned the sacrifice of her, as unanswerably as it had sanctioned the sacrifice of her mother before her. In the name of Morality, let him take her! In the interests of Virtue, let her get out of it if she can!" (526). Anne is a fallen woman, and it seems as though the narrative will treat her as one, by leaving her depleted of agency, in the hands of a hateful husband. Even as Geoffrey plans Anne's murder, the narrator belittles the reader's shock as he calmly takes us through the steps of reasoning by which we might have predicted Geoffrey's sordid plans:

> Could a man, in his position in life, reason in this brutal manner? Could he act in this merciless way? Surely the thought of what he was about to do must have troubled him at this time! Pause for a moment—and look back at him in the past. Did he feel any remorse, when he was plotting the betrayal of Arnold in the garden at Windygates? The sense which feels remorse, had not been put into him. What he is now is the legitimate consequence of what he was then. [. . .] The moral and mental neglect of himself, which the material tone of public feeling about him has tacitly encouraged, has left him at the mercy of the worst instincts in his nature—of all that is most vile and of all that is most dangerous in the composition of the natural man. [. . .] A temptation out of the

> common has passed his way. How does it find him prepared to meet it? It finds him, literally and exactly, what his training has left him, in the presence of any temptation small or great—a defenceless man. (578)

Geoffrey's intimidating strength makes him morally defenceless, and so, according to the narrator, he may be simply a spoke in the wheel of fortune that dominates the narrative.

Just as the novel points to a chain of predetermined events as a path which the plot might very well follow, so does *Man and Wife* seem to reinstate dichotomous notions of masculinity when Arnold marries his true love Blanche, and Geoffrey suffers a shameful and untimely death. However, the conclusions that this novel draws are anything but absolute. Geoffrey's weakness is debilitating. He tries several times to light a match, and fails. Hester, his unwilling accomplice, lights it for him on her first try (630). In this instance, we see the beginning of the end for this fallen man, when a mute female servant has more strength than he. Soon after, Geoffrey complains, "My head's queer [. . .] I can't unwind the string. I can't lift up the paper. Do it [Hester]" (634). In this command to Hester, he seems to be accepting the limitations of his weakened state. Finally, as he is about to suffocate Anne in her sleep, Hester can no longer be an accomplice to this crime, and pounces on Geoffrey to stop him from murdering Anne. However, this assault does not kill him. Rather, his inability to fight back, or even to lift his arm, causes him to succumb meekly to his death, while "a frightful distortion seized on his face [. . .] His arm fell helpless; his whole body,

on the side under the arm gave way. He dropped on the floor like a man shot dead" (Collins 636). Powerless to fight off even a "feeble old woman" (636), Geoffrey repeats his fall in the footrace, when "he rallied, and ran another step or two—swerved again—staggered—lifted his arm to his mouth with a hoarse cry of rage—fastened his own teeth in his flesh like a wild beast—and fell senseless to the ground" (495). Earlier in the novel, both Anne and her mother are described as having fallen senseless. If there is a predetermined order in this novel, it is one whereby the fallen woman is set free, while her seducer is depleted of agency and manhood. While Anne does fall at the beginning of the narrative, and is treated as fallen at various points in the narrative, she is forgiven for this indiscretion, while Geoffrey is not. In fact, this novel ends with Lady Holchester describing Anne's marriage to Sir Patrick as a union that "does honour to *him*, as well as to the lady who shares his position and name" (Collins 642). Anne is last spoken of as "a woman who has been tried by no common suffering and who has borne her hard lot nobly. A woman who deserves the calmer and happier life on which she is entering now" (642). This reversal of fortune for the seemingly doomed fallen woman undermines gendered boundaries. Anne is only treated as fallen by the hateful Geoffrey. Otherwise, she is revered, and needs only await his sudden death before taking her rightful role as wife to Sir Patrick. Geoffrey, on the other hand, is ridiculed and despised by Sir Patrick, Collins' narrator, and just about every other upright figure in the novel. Not only does Geoffrey live like a fallen character, but he also dies like one: shamed, destitute, and helpless.

The fallen men in *Daniel Deronda* and *Man and Wife* do not introduce the

concept of blurred gender boundaries, nor are they the only discordant aspects of Eliot's and Collins' novels. Rather, these fallen men reflect the often under-emphasized Victorian trend of breaking down the very categories that they seem to work so hard to set up. Jill Matus finds that androgynous figures in Victorian texts, such as Marian Halcombe in Collins' *Woman in White*, often thought to be a caricature of Marian Evans, reflect the contemporary recognition of gender as an unstable distinction. Matus argues that "the emphasis on sex as a spectrum of possibilities, and the difference between male and female sexuality as a matter of degree rather than kind, persists in biomedical texts of the nineteenth-century, despite growing cultural insistence on and deployment of sexual difference as an ontological category" (Matus 31). Authorial instinct and biomedical discourse both point to an overlap between male and female categories, yet cultural norms and the literature that supports them generally insist on binaries. When Collins and Eliot kill off their fallen men and free their fallen women to enjoy lives of agency, wealth, and respectability, they show that limiting gendered distinctions, such as the fallen woman, are arbitrary, since they can easily be reversed by a stretch of the literary imagination. In *Daniel Deronda,* the idea of a highly born gentleman is undone when Deronda abandons his high-ranking post. Similarly, Collins' Delamayn mocks the Victorian cult of athleticism, or muscular Christianity, to which many of Collins' contemporaries subscribed. As Donald E. Hall has noted, for Victorian intellectuals such as Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, "'manliness' was synonymous with strength, both physical and moral, and the term 'muscular Christianity' highlights these writers' consistent, and even

insistent, use of the ideologically charged and aggressively poised male body as a point of reference in and determiner of a masculinist economy of signification and degradation" (Hall 9). Geoffrey Delamayn clearly discards this gendered Victorian category, as his muscular physique indicates neither physical nor moral strength.

Geoffrey Delamayn and Mallinger Grandcourt debunk the Victorian fallacy that fallen women are to blame—or at least to pay—for their sexual indiscretions. These fallen men of 1870s literature do not corrupt their minds with opiates, and so they have little if any excuse for their devious behaviour. By being clear-headed as they succumb to the vice of gambling, they expose this national pastime as simultaneously common and threatening. In the following chapter, I will examine fallenness as a trait shared by scientists, physicians, and surgeons who are exceedingly curious. When fallen men emerge as doctors, they are presumably well-educated and clear-headed, since they subscribe to scientific methodology and thought. Still, they present a serious threat to notions of masculinity, propriety, and class structure when they use their science to further devious goals. The fallen man defies Victorian notions of gender identity because he appears to fit the mould of the fallen woman in most ways besides his gender. Neither Collins nor Eliot represents fallen women suffering their miserable lots while fallen men get away with sexual improprieties. These plotlines are replaced with Delamayn's and Grandcourt's respective financial falls and untimely deaths, which grant the fallen women agency, and keep gendered categories fluid.

Chapter Three

The Perils of Curiosity: Fallen Doctors in *Heart and Science* and *The Woodlanders*

From Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein to Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Wells's Dr. Moreau, scientists threaten stability by initiating progress in nineteenth-century fiction. The Victorians' response to science, however, is less absolute than these fear-inducing narratives would suggest. Not all scientists are deranged. In *Middlemarch*, George Eliot's Dr. Lydgate offers comfort and relief, and *Bleak House* presents Dr. Woodcourt as an authority, a gentleman, and a hero. Wilkie Collins' *Heart and Science* and Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders* address the uncertain positioning of Victorian doctors by treating surgeons as fallen men. The range of representations of doctors in Victorian literature reflects the unstable relationship between culture and medicine. When novelists address the question of doctors and status, they disagree as to whether scientific progress threatens or strengthens British lives.

In *Heart and Science* (1883), Wilkie Collins presents readers with two doctors: Ovid Vere is a handsome, caring physician who raises his economic status through diligence and dedication; Dr. Benjulia is an alluring, though ugly and reclusive, scientist who threatens the virtue and health of those around him. In the shadow of Dr. Vere, Dr. Benjulia emerges as a fallen man; he has the capacity to heal and to attract, but he chooses instead to destroy and repel. With his dual images of doctors, Collins alludes to the tenuous status of medical men in

Victorian England. The distinctions between physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, and quacks were at once terribly significant and difficult to define. Doctors were excluded from many respectable social circles, yet they served a necessary social function and they formed their own exclusive societies. Doctors help to bridge the gap between classes in the Victorian period. Nevertheless, these physicians also discriminate against underprivileged patients by practising surgeries on them while they are alive, and by dissecting the stolen corpses of paupers. Physicians tread a thin line between healing and hurting in Victorian England, and nowhere is this occluded boundary more thoroughly represented than in narrative fiction.

Collins' Benjulia repels readers by conducting heinous experiments on live animals. He goes so far as to experiment on an unsuspecting human patient, when he observes—without treating—the decline of sweet Carmina, so that he may study her degenerative brain disease. In *The Woodlanders*, Hardy's doctor, Edred Fitzpiers, poses a less obvious threat, as he uses his medical status as a guise to seduce women. Dr. Fitzpiers comes from London to Little Hintock with a lust for both women and science. While he is purportedly the town doctor, his curiosity stretches beyond the examining room as is evidenced by his offer to buy Grammer Oliver's brain. Fitzpiers shares character traits with both Doctors Vere and Benjulia. He is an attractive marriage prospect even though he seduces multiple women and fails in his feeble attempts at healing patients. Like the other dashing disturbers, Benjulia and Fitzpiers are kinetic figures. Both Collins and Hardy play with the fates of their curious medical men, as they offer possibilities for redemption and punishment. Benjulia places science above any moral

concerns, while Fitzpiers sacrifices science for love and lust. Benjulia is more of a monitory figure, while Fitzpiers is a man acting on natural urges. While Collins ultimately punishes his single-minded doctor, Hardy redeems the philandering Fitzpiers with a respectable marriage and a prosperous career. Collins demonstrates the moral and social divide regarding science in the class conscious world of London, whereas Hardy uses the country setting to play with social conventions that would be more tightly defined in the big city. Collins makes a clear-cut distinction between his upright and fallen doctor figures with Benjulia as a failed scientist and Ovid as a heroic healer. Hardy uses a single doctor to embody both the threat and the appeal of doctors as professionals and as social beings. Both novelists treat their overly ambitious doctors as fallen. However, while Collins feeds readers' expectations of morally loaded closure, Hardy forgives Fitzpiers for using his role as doctor to seduce multiple women, thereby suggesting a new breed of fallen men, for whom degeneracy is an asset rather than a liability.

While Collins does pit "heart" against "science" in his novel, he also establishes common ground between fallen and upright doctors. "Heart" and "science" are not diametrically opposed. Aside from its romantic and sentimental implications, the heart is also an object of scientific inquiry. Benjulia does not represent the evils of science, but rather he demonstrates the proclivity of man to fall from progress to disgrace by giving in to the darker side of his nature. Hardy complicates the role of the fallen doctor, when he paints Fitzpiers as handsome, prosperous, and sexually promiscuous. In *Masculinity in Hardy and Gissing,*

Annette Federico finds that Hardy is reluctant to assign defining features to his male characters. She attributes a discrepancy between Hardy's complex female characters and his "less interesting" men to "the novelist's ambivalent attitude towards male portraiture. He may know what kind of woman fascinates him [. . .] but he is less certain about his male saints and seducers, those characters who always seem slightly uncomfortable with their roles in the novel" (Federico 15). In my reading of *The Woodlanders*, Fitzpiers is not "less interesting" for being difficult to define, but rather, like many of Hardy's male characters, he signals the dawn of a new era of gendered possibilities. By trying out various masculine roles, Dr. Fitzpiers performs the function of a fallen man, even though his destiny would suggest otherwise. The character of Fitzpiers is a radical example of masculinity, since this figure is a self-made man, who works for a living, pursues excessive knowledge, and sleeps around, yet he still manages to escape punishment and live the life of a Victorian gentleman.

Fallen men complicate Victorian social norms and disrupt narrative closure when they both attract and repel readers. Benjulia is an heir, but he accepts social ruin and family alienation in order to prove himself as a scientific mastermind. Fitzpiers forgoes security in order to have affairs with several women. He goes so far as to ride a horse while asleep in order to conduct amorous liaisons. He belittles country medicine and provides ineffective cures for patients, but his virility as a lover allows him to survive and thrive. Both Fitzpiers and Benjulia pose a threat when they expose Victorian racial, moral and class hierarchies as tenuous, penetrable, and ultimately, in the context of these novels,

meaningless structures.

Shaking the Hand that Heals: Victorian Doctors and Popular Opinion

While Hardy may show Victorian notions of propriety and masculinity to be deeply flawed, he still reflects some of the same anxieties as does Collins. These sexual, social, and moral anxieties stem from the precarious role of the physician in both the Victorian home and social world. In her in-depth study of the sickroom in Victorian fiction, Miriam Bailin finds that illness breaks from certain expectations of clearly delineated character roles, when lovers, friends, family members, and servants take on the role of nurse. Bailin contends, however, that the physician does not quite fit into this intimate setting:

> The doctor was an intermittent visitor at the patient's bedside and his interest in his patients is most frequently shown to be determined by material considerations of profit, reputation, or the assertion of professional authority. He is, in any case, too firmly entrenched in the often divisive class and communal relations of his practice to serve as a socially cohesive force. Purportedly come to heal, the doctor brings to bear upon the most intimate and emotionally charged area of human experience the same contaminating aspects which are seen as infecting society as a whole. (Bailin 24-5)

While doctors may not act as "cohesive forces" in fictional sickrooms, these figures do seem to impose patriarchal structure on the female-run sickroom by

embodying masculine values, such as profit and reputation. Bailin's twentieth-century perspective is not a far cry from the Victorians' own wary attitude towards doctors. As I have argued in previous chapters, fallen men illuminate the flaws of their social worlds. In the nineteenth century, actual physicians in England—who formed hierarchical structures of their own—drew attention to the flimsiness of the class structure which the British held dear. Just as gambling aristocrats scramble to regain stature by risky speculation and other illegal means, so too do they try to hold onto their fleeting genteel status in a simpler way by denying the rising middle class a place in their social scene. Mostly middle class, Victorian doctors faced numerous challenges in the mid-to-late nineteenth century as they attempted to carry out their professional duties whilst claiming a place for themselves in the newly destabilized social hierarchy.

Oxbridge physicians were making their way into London's upper crust, but surgeons and their wives could not be received at court (Pool 251). Science advanced rapidly in the late Victorian era, and people came to depend on their doctors more than ever before. The social standing of medical men was still dubious: a doctor's status often was determined, in fact, on whether they had an assistant or not. A literary moment that exemplifies just such a social prejudice occurs in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Stark Munro Letters*, which concerns a medical man who started out poor and managed to make a good life for himself (Peterson 93-8). When the doctor's nine-year-old brother acts as his servant, he gets more patients and begins to see a profit from his practice. Since Benjulia chooses not to have a housecleaner, he falls in social standing. Victorian socialites

and their doctors had not reached a consensus as to where these medical men should fit into the hierarchical class structure. One thing was certain: as a group, physicians and surgeons were a force to be reckoned with.

Medical men challenged existing social structures by being educated, refined, and increasingly wealthy. However, for Victorians with genteel backgrounds, work was rarely an option. If a gentleman had to work, then he did so out of desperation. The work ethic of doctors was therefore not valued as a means of social ascension. Jeanne M. Peterson explains the Victorians' lack of reverence for doctors as social beings, despite the fact that medical men possessed knowledge and skill that could provide the most valuable service of all—the extension of life. Peterson finds that "the demonstrable efficacy of medical practice was not the source of the profession's prestige and authority, any more than the status of the Anglican clergy derived from the demonstrable effectiveness of prayer and ritual. Prestige and authority derive, rather, from the social evaluation placed on the work itself, regardless of the effectiveness of specific treatment" (4). Although medicine was becoming increasingly popular as the population veered towards secular values, most titled Victorians would still not socialize with doctors men who got their hands dirty.

Whatever prestige doctors did earn gradually was the result of their growth in sheer numbers. They eventually formed enough of a force that they could not be dismissed as marginal social figures. In the early nineteenth century, the medical profession was in a state of near chaos, as grocers dispensed drugs, and practitioners diverged to alarming degrees with regards to the length and

nature of their training. Before the Medical Act was passed in 1858, there were nineteen different licensing bodies in the United Kingdom: "Medical men practiced with university degrees, various forms of medical licenses, sometimes a combination of these, and sometimes none at all" (Peterson 5). When the Medical Act established three distinct governing bodies—the Royal College of Physicians, Royal College of Surgeons, and Society of Apothecaries—it divided medical practitioners into "three status groups or estates" (Peterson 6). The social stratification of doctors placed physicians, who had Oxbridge educations, at the top. These physicians could not perform surgery, nor could they dispense medications if they wished to be fellows of the Royal College. Socially inferior to physicians, surgeons practiced "skilled manual labour," which they learned through apprenticeship (Peterson 8). Apothecaries, the poor man's healer, mostly just dispensed drugs, and their work required neither apprenticeship nor education. Until the late eighteenth century, surgeons were part of the Barber-Surgeons' Company, and apothecaries were part of the Grocers' Company of the City of London. As physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries grew into defined bodies, they earned some distinction from less skilled professions, such as grocers and barbers. After the Medical Act of 1858, medical men were finding their place in the British social scene. Novelists who create mad scientists or destructive doctors, however, reflect a sense of danger caused by the erasure of class boundaries that medical education was provoking.

Collins and Stevenson both create fictionalized mad scientists whose experiments exceed boundaries of English decency. Dr. Benjulia and Dr. Jekyll

are both fallen men—characters who are respectable in theory, but whose thirst for knowledge compels them to reach beyond the capabilities of man as they threaten human life and decorum. Benjulia tortures animals with the hopes of finding cures for disease and this figure might be viewed as misguided, though well-intentioned, if his goal was, in fact, to heal. However, Benjulia, like all fallen men, is doomed from the start, since Collins authored this character as an unmistakeable monitory figure. In an 1882 letter to the Surgeon General, Collins wrote of his intentions to promote the anti-vivisectionist movement through literature: "I am endeavouring to add my small contribution in aid of the good cause, by such means as Fiction will permit" (qtd. in Farmer 371). Collins claims to use fiction as a direct tool in a controversial debate, yet, as Barbara T. Gates has noted, "Collins seemed to have liked Benjulia in the way that Dickens liked Fagin, not because he was a good man, but because he was intent on and knowledgeable in his profession and pitiable in his defeat. Benjulia is Faustian, will stop at nothing to ensure his longed-for medical breakthrough" (Gates 252). Collins creates in Benjulia a figure that is so consumed with science that he loses touch with humanity. Like Fagin, Benjulia's flawed idealism appeals to our sympathy, and as with Marlowe's Dr. Faustus[1], we admire his utter dedication to the pursuit of knowledge. In *Heart and* Science, the doctor figure is not a stock mad scientist figure, but rather a fallen man. Throughout the novel, we see

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[1] One of literature's most famous doomed doctors is Dr. Faustus from Christopher Marlowe's 1588 play of the same name. Faustus sells his soul to the devil in exchange for twenty-four years of limitless knowledge. In Marlowe's play, the doctor and his audience are made acutely aware of the consequences of the doctor's unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and nobody is surprised when the doctor is carried away by agents of the devil to burn in damnation.

constant flashes of the man that Benjulia was before the fall, and so we recognize him to be both unlucky and imprudent in his loss of social standing and scientific adulation.

Likewise in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Stevenson warns readers about the perils of curiosity by having his title character prove sympathetic and well-intentioned. Nevertheless, he produces an elixir that transforms him into the embodiment of a fallen man at his worst—the beastlike Hyde is ruled by his cravings for vice, violence, and power. In the opening chapter, Utterson, a trustworthy lawyer and friend to the respectable Dr. Henry Jekyll, recounts a story told to him by the gentleman, Mr. Enfield. The multi-layered narration in Stevenson's text blurs boundaries between truth and fiction, good and bad. Though Enfield is respectable, he watches as the monstrous figure of Hyde, "black, sneering [. . .] like Satan," tramples over a young girl without hesitation or remorse (Stevenson 10). When Enfield notices Hyde's doctor's case, he assumes that any London doctor would care about his reputation, and he recounts how he threatened the criminal scientist with words; "killing being out of the question, we did the next best. We told the man we could and would make such a scandal out of this, as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other" (10). Hyde sneers in response and offers to pay the girl's family one hundred pounds in exchange for his freedom. As a medical man, Jekyll, in the form of Hyde, uses his wealth to reclaim his reputation. As a doctor, he holds an uncertain position in London life. Scientific thought, like medicinal laudanum or moderate financial speculation, is not in and of itself a danger to Victorians. Only

when human scientists try to play a role that previously would have been left to divine will and power, they become fallen men who threaten the lives and virtue of those around them.

While George Eliot, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and even, to a certain extent, Thomas Hardy show a certain allegiance to science in their fiction, they were countered by a large group of intellectuals who saw science as an affront to their humanistic and literary sensibilities due mostly to class concerns. In his 1870 novel, *The Vicar of Bullhampton*, Anthony Trollope has his character Miss Marrable express the problem of medical status: "She would not absolutely say that a physician was not a gentleman, or even a surgeon; but she would not allow physic the same absolute privilege which, in her eyes, belonged to the law and the church" (qtd. in Peterson 194). The comment of a fictional socialite is reflected in language used by Victorian doctors to describe their own position. Dr. William Stokes, addressing the British Medical Association in 1869, pointed out that man's first concern was spiritual, his second was "worldly interests," and third, his health (Peterson 194). Similarly, Sir George Turner begins his memoir of Victorian Medical Life with proof of his gentlemanly status. His status had been repeatedly challenged throughout his career, because he was a third generation physician in a genteel family (Peterson 195). Dr. Turner uses the memoir to validate a gentleman's right to practice and to reinstate his social reputation. Doctors who wish to be considered gentlemen must describe themselves as gentlemen first and medical men last. Real doctors succumb to this mode of deprecating their own profession in order to uphold their reputations. In so doing,

they encourage the harsher critiques of medicine—found both in literature and social commentary—that leads men of science to be portrayed as mad, unscrupulous, and fallen.

Around the time of the 1858 Medical Act, just as doctors were forming their own elite societies, they were being forced out of their Oxbridge colleges and into the hospitals for practical training. According to Peterson, "medical students began to share the same basic educational experiences and to develop a sense of group membership that mitigated the effects of corporate separatism" (15). In class-conscious Victorian England, such an innovative concept as this one—putting improved education ahead of superficial boundaries—would prove threatening, thus leading science to emerge in literature as an ominous, contagious force.

The progress that was initiated by scientific advances was increasingly reliant upon dissection and analysis of human corpses. Although the law forbade it, body snatching was a common crime throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Officially, the gallows presented the only legal source of bodies for medical dissection in England (Richardson xv). While authorities did not exactly turn a blind eye to grave robbing, they did not consider these acts of desecration to be the fault of the physicians who were using stolen bodies, quite openly, to further their medical knowledge and to improve surgical techniques. In fact, until 1827, anatomists and other medical men had never been prosecuted for their involvement in body snatching, since they were not the ones who actually went to the cemeteries and dug out the corpses. In that year, the first criminal conviction

was made against an anatomist for his role in a case of body snatching. As the negative stigmas associated with hands-on medical practice came to compete in popularity with a public eagerness for scientific advancement, a dearth of available corpses presented a problem to an increasing number of doctors who wanted and needed practical experience.

The Victorian public and the lawmakers were divided over the subject as to whether doctors should be helped or hindered in their quest to better understand the human body. By 1831, bodies of paupers were allowed to be legally confiscated for medical research. According to Ruth Richardson, this new law caused moral uneasiness for British people, who upheld the belief that "the human corpse possessed both sentience and some form of spiritual power" (15). Scientific dissection of cadavers may interfere with the sanctity of the dead body and Victorians were thus caught between religious belief in the value of a corpse, and the rising belief in man's ability to heal through science—a more effective healing tool than prayer, perhaps. This discrepancy between Victorian belief and thought with regards to science emerges in high fiction, sensation novels, and periodicals, as the representation of medical figures comes to signify the emergence of science as an inescapable part of Victorian culture.

The Victorian novel was a vital force in relaying and influencing contemporary thought on controversial issues, and writers became advocates in the debate about science and its role in society. In *The "Scientific Movement" and Victorian Literature*, Tess Cosslett claims that Victorians, including Carlyle, Arnold, and Tennyson regarded poetry and science as binaries. This divisive line

of thinking contributed to a representation of medicine as a field unregulated by moral and sentimental values (1-3). At the same time, authors who were educated in scientific ideas sometimes used their fiction to suggest the usefulness of science. George Eliot, one of the most influential writers of her day, was well versed in contemporary scientific thought. Cosslett cites Eliot's relationships with Herbert Spencer and George Henry Lewes, along with her interest in the scientific writings of Darwin, Clifford and Huxley, and Tyndall as proof of her sympathy towards science (75). Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a doctor before he became a famous author. In his analysis of the medical practice within Sherlock Holmes stories, Dr. James E. Anthony Junior finds that Dr. Watson is ahead of his time in his medical procedures. According to Anthony, Dr. Conan Doyle models Holmes after his esteemed professor of surgery at Edinburgh University, Dr. Joseph Bell. Unlike the authors who use fiction to berate doctors for their fall from gentlemanly standards into the perilous world of scientific exploration, Conan Doyle uses his scientific background to show the efficacy of medical tools and techniques as explanatory structures. Indeed, the combination of scientific process and analytical skills enables Holmes and Watson to form a brilliant problem-solving team.

In his 1886 novella, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* Stevenson demonstrates the danger of allowing scientific curiosity to cloud reason. A decade later, H. G. Wells published *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, wherein he exhibits the horrors of science untempered by human compassion. Narratives about fallen men reflect authors' and readers' discomfort with changing norms and expanding boundaries.

These two works garnered much media attention, and they encouraged other outspoken members of the literary community to make their views known on the controversial issues surrounding scientific progress and its methods. In 1893, debates were flaring in the media as to just how "mad" science was becoming. In this year, novelist and anti-vivisectionist, Marie Louise de la Ramée attacked medical men at "their weakest point, their claim to social prestige"; she placed medical men "socially on the same grade with the merchant, the ship owner, the attorney, the manufacturer, the engineer, the banker" (Peterson 196). According to her, all of these professionals were distinguished by dishonesty and insincerity. Beyond the social ramification of being a doctor, medical men faced the furor of the humanistic movement against the more experimental wing of their practice. The anti-vivisectionist movement gained momentum and support as various authors spoke out against the practice of experimentation on animals.

These outspoken authors, however, tended to fuse all medical men together, thereby interfering with the attempts of honest physicians to rise up the social ladder. In June of 1875, Lewis Carroll wrote an article in *The Fortnightly Review* in which he argued against the practice of vivisection. Carroll emphasizes the demoralizing effect that such a practice has on physicians, and he claims that scientific experimentation thrills the scientist because "man had something of the wild beast in him" (qtd. in Farmer 345). He scoffs at the idea that the scientist is a noble philanthropist, and insists instead that the craving for knowledge overlaps with desire for novelty and excitement to form the impure purpose of even a well-meaning scientist. Carroll implies that men of science are torturing animals not so

much for pleasure as for the satisfying of their thirst for knowledge and their desire to be at the cutting edge of innovation and discovery.

Because of the prestige of scientific learning, antivivisectionists "had to appeal to intellect as well as to emotion, and a large body of Victorian vivisection literature was the consequence" (MacEachen 23). One fear of vivisection is rooted in fear that scientific experiments on animals "deadened the moral sensibilities and made the vivisector indifferent to pain and cruelty: it had a damaging effect on the character" (MacEachen 23). Intellectuals feared the rise of a force that may prove more powerful than antiquated notions of proper behaviour.

Cruelty in *Heart and Science*

The vivisection debate reached its pinnacle through fictional discourse. Victorians were not certain whether science and art should still be treated as binaries, and this dilemma is evidenced by the pervasiveness of literary referents within the vivisection controversy and debate. If scientific progress had been understood in concrete terms, then the controversy would revolve around interpretation of empirical truths. Fears, rather than facts, dictated the outrage over vivisection. Wilkie Collins uses fiction as his medium of expression and Lewis Carroll, when trying to persuade readers of the Fortnightly Review to resist medical advances, uses the literary example of *Frankenstein* to make his point. In order to demonstrate the perils of new techniques in surgery and experimentation, Carroll warns that "successive generations of students, trained from their earliest years to the repression of all human sympathies, shall have developed a new and

more hideous Frankenstein—a soulless being to whom science shall be all in all" (qtd. in MacEachen 23). He appeals to the imagination rather than to the scientific thinking of his readers; he denies the relative gentility of Victorian medical men, and resorts to literary monsters to rationalize the detestation of all things scientific. The monster of Shelley's scientist does indeed become loathsome, but the scientist retains his moral scruples. Dr. Frankenstein pursues the monster in order to kill it and reverse the error of his experiment. When mad scientist figures permeate literature in the late nineteenth century, they imply an absolute stance against science and progress.

Indeed, portions of an anti-vivisection novel like *Heart and Science* do come across as barely veiled propaganda. Frances Power Cobbe, founder of the Society for the Protection of Animals Liable to Vivisection in 1875, supplied Wilkie Collins with anti-vivisectionist material that he used as background to his novel. Collins responded to her gesture with appreciation, and a promise to demonstrate, through the character of Benjulia,

> the moral influence of those cruelties [vivisection] on the nature of the man who practices them [. . .] to show the efforts made by his better instincts to resist the inevitable hardening of the heart, the fatal stupefying of all the finer sensibilities, produced by the deliberately merciless occupations of his life. (qtd. in Farmer 370)

In this letter, Collins acknowledges the monitory role of Benjulia. At times, the narrative does lapse into sections of anti-vivisectionist propaganda, and in these scenes we see how Collins sets up the potentially static concepts of good versus

evil. Collins' narrator warns readers against the "lively modern parasites that infest Science" (286). He mocks "scientific inquiry, rushing into print to proclaim its own importance, and to declare any human being who dares to doubt or differ, a fanatic or a fool" (286).

While both Collins and Hardy portray their doctors as flawed scientists, Collins' fallen man threatens characters in the novel in an overt, even exaggerated way. Just as opium dens were Orientalized in works by Conan Doyle, Dickens, and Wilde, so too is the mad scientist Orientalized in the fiction of Collins, Stevenson, and Wells. Dr. Benjulia is Jewish—a nationality and a religion that were problematized in novels such as *Daniel Deronda*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Trilby*. While Jews fit into some of the highest echelons of both fictional and real Victorian society, they are most often represented in literature as the threatening other. Dickens and Collins both use Jewish characters—Fagin and Benjulia—to illustrate that the threat of the "other" overlaps with notions of Englishness. Benjulia is a threat because he is different, and "his complexion added to the startling effect which his personal appearance had on strangers. It was of true gipsy-brown" (Collins 95). Benjulia both mimics and mocks portraiture of Jewish stereotypes when he jokes to young Zoe that he should have been Herod, "a Royal Jew who killed little girls" (96). His foreignness threatens his social standing, and albeit in the form of a comical threat, Benjulia's description alludes to the underlying fear of violence and violation that British Victorians attached to foreigners in their literature. The heroine of *Heart and Science*, Carmina, is also portrayed as foreign in her appearance and manners (53), but, being Italian rather

than Jewish, she is exotic, and certainly not threatening. The murky area provided by science as fodder for *Heart and Science*, also proves fertile territory for examining the relationship between British masculinity and the perceived threat of foreign invasion. The Opium Wars were ignited by British exploitation of Easterners, and white English scientists were engaging in animal experimentation. Characters representing these vices in novels come across as fallen men—foreign and swarthy in their appearance yet British in their roots and indulgences. Benjulia's religion is barely mentioned in the novel, and it certainly does not define him, nor does his Jewish identity provoke fear in those around him. When Collins has Benjulia and Zoe share a laugh over a Jewish stereotype, he distinguishes Benjulia from the anti-Semitic stock figure.

Benjulia seems to be only in part the caricature of the unseemly Jew, common in Victorian fiction; he also poses a newer threat invoked by rapid progress in scientific research and treatment. Dr. Benjulia is often read as a villainous figure who promotes Collins' anti-vivisectionist ideals. In his overview of *Heart and Science* in its historical context, MacEachen claims that "the use of animals in science laboratories posed a brand-new threat, and humanitarians were understandably alarmed and angered. Scientific and humanitarian progress came into conflict" (MacEachen 23). While Collins does pit "heart" against "science" in his title, he also promotes scientific inquiry and the education of physicians by having Ovid Vere perform the roles of healer, hero, and scientist all at once. Benjulia does not represent the evils of science; instead, he demonstrates the proclivity of a man to fall from progress to disgrace by giving in to the darker side

of his nature.

MacEachen dismisses Benjulia as "merely a melodramatic monster, a kind of scientific bogeyman, the vivisector burned in effigy" (25). For most of its critical history, *Heart and Science* has been studied as a "propaganda novel" (MacEachen 24), meant to fuel the fire of the growing antivivisectionist movement. Within even the most dogmatic theoretical sections of the text, however, oppositional characters blur into one another, creating a grey area in which fallen men are found. Lemuel, Nathan Benjulia's brother, is "the one person who really knew how he was occupied in his laboratory" (184). A direct contrast is made between the brothers when Lemuel declares, "I'm a new man since I joined the Society for suppressing you" (186). This "new man" is a publishing clerk who crusades against animal experimentation, but he also keeps his brother's dirty secrets and cheats on his wife. When Collins has the altruistic Lemuel give in to "sensual instincts" (184), he implies that fallenness is inherent in the Jewish and gipsy Benjulia family blood. The brothers Benjulia also overlap as threatening figures. Lemuel has "inherited Benjulia's gipsy complexion, and he had Benjulia's eyes" (184). Lemuel warns his brother that if he were to bring his dog into Nathan's home, "he might try his teeth at vivisecting You" (185). As Lemuel goes on with his didactic commentary, he opens up a space for Benjulia to expose the motivation behind his choices. The bloody-handed doctor explains:

> I propose to drag the scientific English Savage from his shelter behind the medical interests of humanity, and to show him in his true character,—as plainly as a scientific Foreign Savage shows

> himself of his own accord. *He* doesn't shrink behind false pretences. *He* doesn't add cant to cruelty. *He* boldly proclaims the truth:—I do it, because I like it! (189)

Bold as he seems in this exclamation, Benjulia also demonstrates that integrity and scientific motivation are what propel him forward, rather than inherent evil. The surgeon boasts that he is about to unearth the "grandest medical discovery of the century" (189); he also sobs when he admits that his heart aches when he tortures monkeys. While Collins admits openly that he has created a mad scientist character for didactic purposes, he also imbeds this figure with humanistic, altruistic, and compassionate character traits.

In *Heart and Science*, Collins does not utterly condemn either the mad scientist or science as a whole. Ovid Vere and the un-named doctor in Canada are praised for furthering scientific innovation. While Benjulia repels readers with his violent experiments, he also mirrors their values with his Oxford education and his gentlemanly status. Collins uses Benjulia to show that the stage can be set for a gentleman to be a respectable doctor, yet this fallen man chooses to torture animals and detach himself from humanity in order to further his scientific goals. Science is a threat because its limits are boundless. Scientists are meant to maintain integrity amidst discovery; positive doctor figures establish moral parameters in order to improve the social status of medical men, while fallen doctors surpass the boundaries of accepted decency.

Read as a fallen man, Benjulia points to the threat that science posed to both religious and cultural norms in the 1880s. Tabitha Sparks finds that in *Heart*

and Science, "Collins identifies the esoteric expertise and professional opportunism that surgical medicine increasingly connoted through the morally suspicious character" of Dr. Benjulia (3). Benjulia is severed from notions of English medicine both by birth—he is Jewish— and by choice. As in Gothic novels, the villain is a foreigner, come to invade the sanctity of the English home. As Sparks goes on to claim, "Collins uses an unmarried female, poised on the brink of an impudent marriage or in danger of succumbing to sickness, as metonyms for the insecurity of English culture in an age of scientific innovation" (14). Benjulia reflects Victorians' ambiguous relationship with science by being both familiar and inhuman.

The dichotomy set up by Collins between Ovid Vere and Nathan Benjulia is blurred by their shared profession; they are surgeons, and therefore not among the social elite even of doctors. With the characters of Mr. Null and Mr. Morphew, Collins further discounts dichotomous notions of identity. On a humanistic scale, these surgeons figure somewhere midway between Benjulia and Vere as scientists who are not void of compassion, yet they are not purely positive figures either. These characters all pose a threat because they get their hands dirty, and because they have too much knowledge of human bodies. Never one to subscribe to absolute notions of villain and hero, Collins uses a varying moral spectrum of surgeons to complicate his portrayal of science. Through the character of Mrs. Gallilee, Collins offers a more inclusive perspective on science—a model that is less offensive because it is feminized. The female botanist is "as complete as mistress of the practice of domestic virtue as of the

theory of acoustics and fainting fits" (Collins 66). Mrs. Gallilee is not a threatening scientist; she studies and analyzes, but she does not get her hands dirty. Being a woman, she does not share the masculine egocentrism of Benjulia, and so she studies plants and other harmless species to flesh out her own knowledge base with no intention to further scientific knowledge or to reap fame from her inquiries. According to this novel, Mrs. Gallilee is a positive scientist figure, though she may be manipulating family members at home: "What a matchless example Mrs. Gallilee presented of the healthy influence of education directed to scientific pursuits!" (287). Collins complicates her impact when he allows this scientist to be female, manipulative and ultimately harmless. Since Mrs. Gallilee studies and analyzes but does not create anything, she is less of a threat. Still, she does not provide a model for the ideal scientist since she thrives onthe discoveries of earlier, more innovative scientists, thereby acknowledging without contributing to a pro-active approach to scientific research. By the end of the novel, Mrs. Gallilee is declared mad and sent away; knowledge of science does not save a female Victorian character from the familiar diagnosis of hysteria.

In *Heart and Science*, a character's fate does not necessarily tell the whole story of his character. While Ovid Vere is a sensitive scientist, he is not a perfect hero, just as Benjulia is not an absolute villain. According to Tamara Wagner, Ovid's "nervous exhaustion recalls the sickly heroes of the novel of sensibility while it engages late-nineteenth-century discourse on nervous diseases and psychological theories" (Wagner 494). When Ovid becomes ill, he is forced to do nothing, as a gentleman of leisure might, yet as the narrator tells us, "an active

man, devoted heart and soul to his profession, is not the man who can learn the happy knack of being idle at a moment's notice" (Collins 45). Even if scientists are high born, they perform manual labour and are thus unable to hold a key trait of gentlemanly behaviour: idleness. As Wagner goes on to point out, Ovid "cures his beloved Carmina, more with devoted attention than with a vague new deus ex machine cure" (494). Ovid is a mediocre scientist with a weak constitution. He plays the role of the hero when he saves Carmina, but he does not embody this role throughout the entire narrative. Ovid cannot be the gentleman hero because he works for a living.

Collins mocks the very notion of being a gentleman by virtue of lineage, when he attaches significance to the last will and testament of Carmina's father, the deceased remittance man. He ruins his reputation in England, only to get rich and marry respectably in Italy. Although Robert is a fallen man, his fortune is the major source of hope for the Gallilee clan. Robert leaves money only to Carmina's unborn children and to Ovid, the sole wage earner of the tale, so that he will be gentleman doctor who works by choice rather than need. No amount of wealth, however, can clean the hands of a working surgeon. By inheriting the money of a once disgraced man, Ovid becomes associated with deviant masculine types. Further dissuading us from categorizing Ovid as a hero, gender-bending characteristics are attributed to his character. The optimistic young surgeon is prone to fainting fits, and he blurs genders when he mirrors Carmina's sickliness and exhaustion. In the nineteenth century, women who demonstrated too much emotion were often labelled hysterical or mad. While neither Ovid nor Carmina

are given such diagnoses, both demonstrate traits of nervous disorders. According to Martin J. Wiener, the nineteenth century was a period for the "reconstruction of gender [. . .] Women were increasingly seen as both more moral and more vulnerable than hitherto, while men were being described as more dangerous" (Wiener 3). Ovid rarely gets angry, and he often comes across as naïve; he is more a love interest than a cutting-edge scientist. When talking to Benjulia, Ovid makes pleasant conversation and asks the fallen scientist respectful and complimentary questions: "when is the world to hear of your discoveries?" (101).The young, eager doctor proves weak and unassuming; Ovid is unable to let go of the language of gentility. Even after the cruel scientist has insulted Ovid, his fiancée, and her family, Ovid, in his hottest anger, calmly reminds Benjulia that his behaviour is unbecoming of a man who took his degree at Oxford (102).

In the scene between the two doctors, Collins sets up a dichotomy of masculine types, yet they have both chosen to be surgeons. While Collins attempts to dissociate Ovid from the horrors of experimentation, he does not give this character the prestige of being a physician of the highest standing. Instead, he limits Ovid's social potential by making him a surgeon who implicitly gets his hands dirty. Although Ovid's surgeries are never detailed, Benjulia's are. The dark Jewish doctor no longer cares for patients, but rather he has built a "discontinued medical practice and devoted himself to chemical experiments" (Collins 97). Not only has Benjulia isolated himself by moving to a desolate, unwelcoming home in a remote suburb of London, but he has also provoked suspicion by rejecting social norms and stooping so low as to do his own

housecleaning. The stigma surrounding surgeons for getting their hands dirty is reinforced by the image of Benjulia cleaning house. Though Ovid senses that Benjulia poses a threat, he also marvels at "the perplexing purity of his hands" (123). Benjulia, who has little interest in the trappings of gentility, does care about his reputation, since he wants to be trusted to tend to an innocent girl with degenerative brain disease. When Collins' fallen man successfully cleans his bloody hands, he demonstrates the flawed assumptions with regard to respectability. Benjulia appears to be a clean doctor, but in the comfort of his own home, his hands exhibit "horrid stains, silently telling their tale of torture" (185). To Ovid, the image of Benjulia's clean hands is not only perplexing; it is downright threatening, since both his birth and his body point to the gentlemanly status of this fallen scientist. The fallen menin other novels—Silas, Delamayn, and Grandcourt—attempt to maintain the appearance of wealth, even as they swim in debt. Benjulia is of a different breed of fallen men, perhaps a more provocative one. He has wealth by inheritance, yet he chooses to conduct himself as a fallen man.

Benjulia both visits and transcends traditional masculine roles, which complicates a reading of *Heart and Science* as a narrative of binaries. Because Ovid and Benjulia share a career and social designation, they do not provide a simple dichotomy of good science versus bad science. Benjulia adopts inhumane methods, but his knowledge is impressive. In fact, Benjulia takes on the role of medical healer when he helps Ovid to regain health after he has fainted. At the same time, Collins never allows us to read Benjulia's character in a positive light

for long, as we soon realize that he is helping Ovid to recover so that he can spend time with Carmina and observe, but not cure, her brain disease. While Benjulia might not be using his powers for good, he does have a warmer side that shows up mostly in his interaction with young Zoe. Barbara T. Gates finds that Benjulia is not purely evil. He is a figure to be pitied, and his character is even revered in his death. After Benjulia's suicide, according to Gates, "we, like his colleagues, are expected to see [Benjulia] more as the martyr than the persecutor" (253). When the vivisector is glorified at his funeral as a martyr, he is no longer a villain. While Collins claims to inspire antivivisection fervour among his readers, he cannot seem to help admiring Benjulia for his absolute pursuit of increased knowledge. Doctors in *Heart and Science* inhabit a realm of possibilities beyond the dichotomy that is implied in the title. Tamara Wagner claims that through the oppositional surgeons, Vere and Benjulia, we see that "the contrast between praiseworthy delicacy and heartlessness is an integral part of the novel's antivivisectionist mission and its criticism of amateur scientists in general" (496). The novel warns of the perils of scientific curiosity as an overall threat to Victorian culture, yet Collins does not seem to suggest that we can judge the actions of motivated scientists in an absolute way. Benjulia is similar, yet foreign; well born, but inhumane.

Benjulia is most dangerous as a chameleon of science. In his laboratory, he commits heinous acts, after which he cleans up and pays house calls to wealthy patients. His role as doctor allows him to gain entry to homes where he has access to young girls. He tortures animals in experiments and observes with

callous detachment as a young girl's brain tumour closes in on her. As a flawed, ruthless scientist, Benjulia reflects a surging fear of science and its limitless possibilities to harm and to heal. By the 1880s, fallen men evolved away from implied decorum: they deviated from social norms by choice. Unlike opium use or gambling, scientific experimentation is not a popular vice. Collins directs his attack at a small class of surgeons practising vivisection in England. A decade earlier, in *Man and Wife*, Collins has Sir Patrick describe the fallen man, Geoffrey Delamayn, as "the model young Briton of the present time" (68). The gambling fever of the 1870s was shared by the average Englishman, while scientific experimentation would be limited to the 8000 or so surgeons who were practising in England by the mid-to-late nineteenth-century (Peterson 8). As vice and excess became accepted proclivities, Victorians begin to worry about the threat of a man who seeks to know too much. Through Benjulia, Collins exhibits a gentleman driven to destruction by his lust for science.

By trying to understand his natural world through horrific means, Benjulia, like a fallen woman, is a scapegoat. This character carries on its back the burden of man's fear that science may replace religion as the guiding force behind his behaviour. Some critics might argue that by the 1880s, it already had. Collins, Stevenson, and Wells portray scientists as fallen men—characters who are doomed to destruction because they succumb to the dehumanizing effects of science. These figures, however, have autonomy, and they point to the beginning of the end of the fallen man's purpose in Victorian novels. In *Man and Wife*, Collins warns readers quite directly against falling prey to the ubiquitous

temptations of gambling fever. In *Heart and Science*, the fallen man threatens readers by embodying a subject they little understand. The fallen man becomes a marginal social figure even as he becomes the purveyor of his own destiny.

Although Benjulia is feared and loathed by almost every character, as a fallen man of the 1880s, Benjulia dictates his own circumstances. The swarthy surgeon possesses an "innate insensibility to what other people might think of him" (131). When asked why they hate Benjulia, characters fumble for answers. The docile, feminized Mr. Gallilee, who rarely expresses strong opinions, hates the reclusive scientist instinctively. When Ovid inquires further as to a reason for his hatred, "poor Mr. Gallilee answered like a child, 'Because I do'" (Collins 99). When Benjulia's animal keeper cowers before the doctor and his maimed animals, Benjulia asks, "Do you think I am the Devil?" (109). The underling does not answer, although "he looked like he would say 'Yes' if he dared" (109). For no apparent reason, Carmina exclaims, "that strange man! Even his name startles one" (123). Besides taking on the vilified role of vivisector, Benjulia poses an ominous, inexplicable threat to all those around him by means of his appearance. Throughout the narrative, Collins attaches negative characterization and devil imagery to Benjulia, suggesting that we read this character as the ultimate affront to Christian values. This fallen man is socially tolerated, but, unlike a rake, he cannot fool even the most naïve characters into thinking of him as their social equal.

When establishing masculine types in his works, Collins, like his contemporary, George Eliot, distinguishes between those figures who realize the

importance of human connections, and those who do not. In a traditional reading of *Middlemarch*, Mark Schorer notes, quite aptly, that Eliot's motif of characterization depends on a "single contrast: the quality and kind of social idealism as opposed to self-absorption; the minor characterization creates the stuff on which this idealism must operate, by means of which it must be tested and qualified" (Schorer 13). Fallen men imperil the lives and virtue of those around them. Benjulia does not foster social ties, and his perceived purpose turns out to be a fallacy. In Middlemarch, Eliot's Dr. Lydgate is not a fallen man because he tries innovative techniques to improve and prolong the lives of others. He embodies social idealism, and his ultimate mediocrity is a result of placing too much importance on making his wife happy. Lydgate exemplifies the virtue of science when his commitment to his practice proves to be the most admirable aspect of his flawed character. Tess Cosslett reads this doctor figure as an inverse parallel to Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein. For Lydgate, "the object of scientific research [. . .] is to bring men's thoughts into conformity with the natural order, rather than to disrupt or reconstruct that order in the image of men's thoughts" (Cosslett 78). According to Cosslett, Lydgate contrasts strongly with Frankenstein, since Shelley's doctor wants to break through the limits of the natural order. In *Frankenstein*, the doctor's "exclusive focus on science is destructive of healthy emotional life [. . .] Lydgate's choice is different—the wife he chooses, though apparently attractive, *is* the monster; his scientific pursuits, though apparently morbid, require a balance and discrimination" (Cosslett 79).

Eliot problematizes the doctor's balance between working on social ties

and succumbing to the isolated pursuit of scientific knowledge. In *Heart and Science,* Collins continues this debate by producing a doctor figure who, unlike Lydgate, has no social obligations. Benjulia, however, does not unearth the "grandest medical discovery of the century" (190), as he sets out to do. Eliot suggests, through her flawed doctor, that scientific inquiry and married life do not necessarily mesh well. At the same time, she emphasizes the importance of close interpersonal relations by condemning characters such as Casaubon, who embodies the single-minded trait of self-absorption. Read in historical context, *Middlemarch*—written in 1872, but set in 1830—expresses wariness towards scientific immersion, while *Heart and Science* represents science as a more ominous force that can destroy mankind and his environment.

Dr. Benjulia wreaks havoc on the natural world by torturing animals. He alternates between delighting in the experiments and sobbing remorsefully over hurting monkeys. He claims that he does it "all for knowledge" (191). Coupled with his tender friendship with Zoe, Benjulia's noble purpose renders him a figure with whom readers might empathize. At the same time, Collins positions this character as a warning against vivisection. Fallen men highlight the limitations of stock characters when they defy a single, masculine role. Benjulia is not the lone predatory male figure in the novel; Mr. Le Frank, the music teacher, is a swarthy, leering character whose name has been muddied with reports of sexual affairs with his underage pupils. All masculine types—whether self-sufficient, scientific, and esoteric like Benjulia or creepy, artistic, and meek like Mr. Le Frank—can fall prey to deviant cravings. When Collins demonstrates that both art and science

breed fallenness, he expands the monitory role of Benjulia. The doctor and the music teacher warn readers that all men are susceptible to abusing their powers. Since Wilkie Collins, like Benjulia or Le Frank, was a working man of questionable lifestyle choices, he demonstrates a certain sympathy for fallen men by creating a more inclusive model of fallenness whereby scientist and artist endanger their clientele as they further their professional and recreational goals.

Although two of the male characters in the novel who are gainfully employed prove to be vicious and predatory, they do not represent the danger of earning a living. Neither man is punished for indulging in professional pursuits. Both characters point to the instability wrought by semi-respectable (Mr. Le Frank) and well-born (Benjulia) figures who are permitted to override laws of propriety because of their professional status. Seemingly, the music man is driven by his desires, and he sacrifices his professional integrity in order to indulge them. There is no such clear relationship between Benjulia's desires and his profession. Mr. Le Frank works to live, while Benjulia lives to work. Both men commit errors of judgement which victimize young girls. The scientist proves to be a greater threat than the music teacher, however, because he is intelligent and powerful enough to manipulate Carmina to the point of destruction, while Mr. Le Frank does not succeed at harming any of his intended victims in an enduring way. As the novel draws towards its conclusion, Benjulia comes to represent the most potent threat because—unlike Mr. Le Frank—he has no fear for social repercussions. He does not need popular approval to continue with his experiments. In the end, the callousness of Benjulia condemns him to the role of

social outcast and intellectual failure. Until Benjulia's final scene of suicide and destruction, however, he maintains the respect of the Gallilees and the power to manipulate the lives of those around him.

When Carmina's disease degenerates, Benjulia examines her, and then commits her to the care of Mr. Null—the dim-witted though well-intentioned physician—so that he may observe from a strategic distance as her condition worsens. Like Mr. Le Frank, Benjulia maintains some regard for his reputation, but only insofar as it will allow him continued access to the human characters whom he regards as scientific specimens. When Benjulia is called upon to explain his removal of Carmina from her relatives' home, he insinuates that he was trying to spare the girl emotional strain resulting from cohabitating with her plotting aunt. This might seem like a doctor committed to his patients and his professional oaths. However, as the narrator tells us, Benjulia admits only a half truth:

> He might have added that his dread of the loss of Carmina's reason really meant his dread of a commonplace termination to an exceptionally interesting case. He might also have acknowledged that he was not yielding obedience to the rules of professional etiquette, in confiding the patient to her regular medical attendant, but following the selfish suggestions of his own critical judgement. His experience, brief as it had been, had satisfied him that stupid Mr. Null's course of action could be trusted to let the instructive progress of the malady proceed. (254-5)

Benjulia is capable of being a successful doctor, since he demonstrates his strong

mental capacity time and again. He understands the role that compassion plays in a physician's job, yet he only fakes this attribute in order to harm Carmina. He is intelligent enough to guess Mr. Null's actions and manipulate Carmina's treatment, yet he misuses his insight to destroy rather than to heal.

His role as a doctor allows him to hide the extent of his destructiveness, since those around him submit to his authority on subjects which they little understand. While Benjulia worsens the health of his patient, he also continues to garner some readerly sympathy by maintaining an innocent and playful relationship with ten-year old Zoe. Just when the mad scientist has been exposed to the reader for his deadly intention, he also asks Mr. Gallilee to tell Zoe to call him if she wants to be tickled. While Collins villainizes the calculating doctor increasingly, he never eliminates the thin but constant strand of sympathy for this ominous figure. When Carmina chastises Benjulia for being unable to love anybody, he asks her to define love. When she fails to do so, he shows his philosophical side by reacting to the seven dictionary definitions of love:

> 'Which of those meanings makes the pleasure of her life?' he wondered. 'Which of them might have made the pleasure of mine?' He closed the dictionary in contempt. 'The very man whose business is to explain it, tries seven different ways, and doesn't explain it after all. And yet, there is such a thing.' He reached that conclusion unwillingly and angrily. For the first time, a doubt about himself forced its way into his mind. Might he have looked higher than his torture-table and his knife? Had he gained from his

life all that his life might have given to him? (247)

Collins shows Benjulia in a sympathetic light when the doctor recognizes the human need for love. At the same time, Collins punctuates this scene with a lesson that must be learnt, thereby reverting to didacticism. Moments such as these destabilize the villainy of the fallen man and his role as a tool of propaganda. Perhaps the callous scientist really just wants to be loved.

Collins does not manage to distinguish fully Benjulia from his more upright figures, despite the author's efforts to emphasize stark contrasts. After learning of Benjulia's callous scheme to observe without treating Carmina, we are told that the simple-minded "Mr. Null was polite. Mr. Null was sympathetic" (260). Collins marks the distinction between Benjulia and his profession by describing Mr. Null in such unadorned terms. At the same time, a dichotomy between stupid and intelligent is set up, with the evil doctor displaying a wealth of knowledge and insight. The diametrical opposition between these two characters begs the question as to whether it is preferable to have an ineffective doctor who displays little intelligence or to have a deliberately ineffective doctor who is insightful and well-read? Collins seems to prefer the former. The narrator warns readers didactically about the "lively modern parasites that infest Science" (286), and does not seem too concerned about the well-meaning but ineffective man who make a living from feeble though earnest attempts to heal. The narrator utterly condemns Benjulia for his warped attempts at progress when he mocks "scientific inquiry, rushing into print to proclaim its own importance, and to declare any human being who dares to doubt or differ, a fanatic or a fool" (286). Fallen man

narratives embrace open-endedness; these works condemn the efforts of figures like Benjulia to unearth the greatest discovery of all time at the expense of human connectedness.

Scientists are only a threat if they continually put their work ahead of human values; Hyde and Benjulia both succumb to violent urges when they immerse themselves blindly in their experiments. Benjulia locks himself in his desolate home to conduct controversial research, and Jekyll cuts off his close social ties in order to hide his loathsome double. Collins' doctor horrifies his servants and threatens the life of genteel Carmina, while Jekyll murders, tramples, and possibly even rapes innocent victims. Despite their efforts as seclusion, Doctors Jekyll and Benjulia live amongst others in a city setting; they therefore endanger and damage others with their excessive experimentation. These two characters also threaten female characters on a broader level. Judith Walkowitz argues that in the 1880s, due to a surge in violent crimes against women—particularly the sensationalized case of Jack the Ripper, who murdered prostitutes for sport—British authors were obsessed with emphasizing the dangers lurking in London streets. She finds that "the literary construct of the metropolis as a dark powerful and seductive labyrinth held a powerful sway over the social imagination of educated readers" (Walkowitz 17). According to Walkowitz, in the 1880s, all male city dwellers were a threat because they participated in a tradition of "urban male spectatorship," whereas women could not roam the streets without accompaniment: "London in the late 1880s provided a fitting imaginative landscape for sensational narratives of sexual danger" (Walkowitz 10-11).

Benjulia, like Dr. Jekyll, is a London-based doctor who threatens the safety and virtue of those around him. Not only are these fallen men able to roam the city streets with impunity, but they also have access to knowledge and innovation from which women would be excluded.

Although *Heart and Science* has been appropriately criticized for its blatant attempts at dichotomous didacticism, this novel also leaves the role of science in Victorian England open to interpretation. On April 28, an anonymous reviewer in *The Athanaeum* stated that Wilkie Collins had "hampered himself by trying to write with a purpose" (qtd. in Farmer 330). The review goes on to suggest that readers skip the prefaces which outline the didactic purpose of the work. A month later in *The Spectator,* a reviewer criticized Collins for his lack of subtlety, "for if a novel have a distinct purpose apart from mere entertainment, it is, perhaps, better [. . .] that it should be left to reveal itself" (qtd. in Farmer 333).

As the fin-de-siècle approached, didactic art was criticized for leaving nothing to the imagination. In *Heart and Science*, Collins insists upon using his depiction of Benjulia as a form of propaganda. True to form, however, Collins pushes the boundaries of gender politics in the character of Mrs. Gallilee, one of few female scientists in nineteenth-century novels. She exhibits the softer side of science and lends indirect sympathy to Benjulia by sharing his passion in a harmless manner. In the final pages of the novel, Collins continues to alternate between admiring the scientific practices of well-meaning doctors and condemning the entire field of research as damning and dangerous to the ethical fibre of the social world. Upon returning from Canada, Ovid Vere publishes a

book which renders Benjulia's discoveries invalid. Consequently, the mad scientist can no longer justify his barbaric practices in the name of progress. Ovid uses the knowledge that he has gained by exhibiting humility. Dr. Vere does not need to engage in ghastly experimentation in order to save his beloved Carmina. Indeed, Collins sets up his ending so that Benjulia, after reading Ovid's book, admits defeat and defers to Ovid for his scientific superiority. The mad scientist admits that Ovid has taken something from him "which was dearer than life" (320).

Benjulia creates a palpable sense of dread among characters and readers alike, as the gritty details of his failed experiments are detailed. Benjulia offers notes of introduction and kind words to his servants before he takes a dose of opium and sets his laboratory on fire. Benjulia lives and dies as a fallen man, yet he is given a Christian burial which is widely attended by his "brethren of the torture table" (Collins 324). Because suicides were not given proper burials in the 1880s, Benjulia's death is inaccurately proclaimed an accident so that the man can be treated with some compassion. This choice is perplexing in a novel that opposes vivisection and other scientific practices so vehemently. Barbara T. Gates, analyzing this and other suicides in the works of Wilkie Collins, offers the following explanation: "Heart consistently loses to science in Benjulia's world until finally the doctor is anticipated in his discovery and violently sets both himself and his animals free from science's grasp" (Gates 252).

By the end of the novel, "we, like his colleagues, are expected to see [Benjulia] more as the martyr than the persecutor" (Gates 253). While Collins

does seem to soften the character of Benjulia drastically by the end, he does not give him the sympathy or admiration of anyone except for his vivisecting colleagues. The funeral attendees mourn the end of their relevance in scientific progress alongside the loss of their mad colleague. When Benjulia's fellow vivisectors "honoured the martyr who had fallen in their cause" (324), they distinguish themselves from more respectable characters who barely mention Benjulia again as the love plot wraps up. To Collins, Benjulia is a false martyr who dies for a misdirected cause. Benjulia is a fallen man who garners some sympathy for the wasted potential that he embodies and we, as readers, are left saddened more for the wasted lives of his four-legged victims than we are for the fiery death of the havoc-wreaking scientist.

Reversed Fortunes in *The Woodlanders*

Thomas Hardy's Dr. Fitzpiers contrasts with big city mad scientists, as a country doctor whose curiosity, promiscuity, and indiscretion produce only mild consequences. Thomas Hardy resists villainizing his handsome doctor as he turns to pastoral landscape as a backdrop for a tale of moral leeway and complex masculinity. A country practitioner would have enough distance between himself and his patients—Fitzpiers lives in a gated hilltop property—to avoid sullying his reputation with his wrongdoings. This medical man does have harmful effects on some of the women he seduces, but mainly he taints the lives of those living nearby. In the city, doctors pose a direct threat, since they conduct mysterious experiments in close proximity to innocent citizens. The monstrous doctor figures

in the late Victorian canon largely reflect the risk that city doctors run of endangering their fellow men when they pursue science in an unflinching and dogmatic manner. In the country setting of *The Woodlanders*, the doctor seduces women, prescribes ineffective cures, and dissects brains; he also marries the virtuous heroine and prospers in his career.

Dr. Edred Fitzpiers, like many of Hardy's unusual male characters, both attracts and repels readers. In fact, Hardy specializes in morally-complex men: the libertine, Alec Durberville, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*; the indecisive recidivist, Jocelyn Pierston in *The Well-Beloved*; Clym Yeobright in *Return of the Native*; the outsider, Jude, who lives with his cousin Sue in *Jude the Obscure*; Henchard, who sells his wife and child in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. In *The Woodlanders*, Hardy emphasizes natural selection; Fitzpiers emerges on top of the ladder, while the hard-working, kind-hearted, and meek Giles Winterborne dies while trying to maintain propriety. Despite his emphasis on the contrast between good and bad behaviour in the novel, Hardy refuses to confine his characters to straightforward roles. Winterborne, rife with masculine appeal, works in sync with nature, while Fitzpiers disrupts country life with his dubious urban values and philandering ways. With the character of Fitzpiers, Hardy marks the beginning of the end of the fallen man's role in Victorian novels. In the hands of novelists such as Collins and Stevenson, mad scientists threaten stability with their blind devotion to experimentation. In Hardy's hands, the scientist is not mad. Rather, Dr. Fitzpiers adds to country life despite his questionable ethics. Fallen men warn against abusing power, and Dr. Fitzpiers is no exception. Although Hardy plays with

notions of fallenness throughout this novel, he ultimately recognizes that man is destined to sin, and the indulgence of natural yearnings should not be met with swift narrative demise for the wrong-doers. Fitzpiers is a fallen man in all but his denouement. Instead of facing social obscurity or death, Fitzpiers remains married to the heroine, Grace, and he reaps success in his career. In *The Woodlanders*, Hardy recognizes the merits of science when he upholds Darwinian values and allows his immoral man of science to thrive.

Critics have been tempted to read Giles and Fitzpiers as diametrically opposed, particularly as representatives of country and city values. Hardy, in keeping with the times, brings danger and seduction to Little Hintock by way of the city slickers, Edred Fitzpiers and Felice Charmond. While city settings provide labyrinths wherein Collins and Stevenson weave their tales of fallen scientists, the urban aspect that is invoked through the character of Fitzpiers does not characterize him as a fearsome villain. In *The Woodlanders*, Hardy depicts Fitzpiers as well-intentioned in his professional life, and philandering in his love life. He introduces innovative scientific practices and liberal sexual ethics to country life, yet his influence is not necessarily a negative one. Hardy angers his critics when he rewards Fitzpiers with a pleasant narrative fate, thereby implying that the novelist forgives his virile doctor.

In 1887, when *The Woodlanders* was published, an anonymous reviewer in the *Athenaeum* condemned the novel for its oppositional figures of masculinity who meet surprising fates:

> That the general drift of the story is melancholy, and its ending

> unsatisfactory in any but an artistic point of view, is only another evidence of its belonging to Mr. Hardy's present method. The good man suffers; the bad man not only prospers, but what is worse, shows signs of amendment without having been adequately punished. (qtd. in Clarke 151-2)

In this critique of *The Woodlanders*, we see precisely why Hardy's novels were both so jarring and appealing to Victorian readers. Victorian readers recognize and expect the textual device of good and bad characters highlighting the virtues and flaws of one another. When the ending of a novel does not dole out appropriate and predictable fates, it may be deemed "unsatisfactory." Since the reviewer admits that the novel is an artistic success, he predicts that Hardy will receive accolades from later critics.

Modern day readers are still tempted to read *The Woodlanders* as a conflict between innocent country folk and urban villains. Shanta Dutta finds that "*The Woodlanders* is the quintessential Hardy story with its typical country-city conflict in the patterning of characters and their interrelationships" (73). As Dutta prepares to analyze the intricacies and overlaps of female characters in this work, she notes that "this traditional interpretation needs to be re-examined because the categorization is too neat to go unchallenged" (73). When she goes on to find bits of Felice, Marty, and Grace in one another, Dutta points to the inexactitude of gendered categories in Hardy's work. Robert Y. Drake Jr. reads *The Woodlanders* as traditional pastoral. He separates characters from *The Woodlanders* into categories:

> As true Arcadians we have Giles Winterborne and Marty South, both of whom are in every way children of the soil [. . .] The modernist attitude is embodied in Edred Fitzpiers, the young doctor who comes to 'practice on' (in more ways than one) the natives of Little Hintock, and Felice Charmond, the handsome young widow who is the mistress of Hintock House. (26-7)

When this critic describes Giles as an idealized country dweller, and Fitzpiers as an anti-pastoralist figure, he misrepresents Fitzpiers as being "interested only in the desultory pursuit of abstruse or even occult philosophical and scientific knowledge" (27). In fact, Fitzpiers quickly loses interest in these mad scientist ventures when he is faced with an opportunity for sexual or romantic success. When Grace comes to the doctor's house, demanding that he cancel the contract to dissect Grammer's brain, he agrees readily. Later in the novel, after he and Grace have separated, Grace considers resuming their marriage, if only Fitzpiers would focus on medical practice and abandon his "strange studies" (340). Fitzpiers is happy to comply, just as he has given up valuable time as a medical man in the past in order to pursue false visits with his mistresses. Fitzpiers was born in the city, but is not a single-minded scientist like Benjulia or Jekyll. Fitzpiers is a survivor in a Darwinian universe because he gives into his natural, sexual inclinations. He continually chooses to pursue romantic liaisons over scientific endeavours, thus demonstrating that he cannot be read as a unilateral portrait of a city dwelling interloper, detached from rural sensibilities.

In *Thomas Hardy and Rural England*, Merryn Williams concludes that

critics read Hardy's portrayals of rural living as idyllic pastoral. Those readings, however, limit the breadth of the grey area of human behaviour in which Hardy's most interesting characters are bred. Williams acknowledges and rejects a dichotomous reading of country and town in *The Woodlanders*:

> It is easy to use a novel like *The Woodlanders* to support stereotyped ideas of the relationship between country and town. The woods can be seen as a place of innocence, safety and natural fertility; the 'good' characters as simple country people and Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond as urban interlopers [. . .] yet this interpretation of the novel is much too simple. The woods are productive and fruitful in certain seasons and under certain aspects [. . .] during the storm which kills Giles, the woods assume a quality of terror. (157)

Moreover, as Williams points out, in "some aspects nature is not life-sustaining or even neutral but actively hostile to human beings, like the tree that kills John South" (158). Fitzpiers represents a new breed of fallen men, since the dashing doctor does not fit into an extreme point along the spectrum of masculinity. Just as nature cannot be proclaimed the ideal landscape for positive human behaviour, neither can the city be read as a breeding ground for solely immoral and destructive behaviour. While Fitzpiers initiates a sexual affair with Suke Damson, he does so in the natural setting of the woods, thus encouraging an interpretation of this encounter as natural. However, this affair begins under false pretences, as Fitzpiers pretends to be Suke's lover Tim (Hardy 150). Later, Fitzpiers visits Suke

under the auspice of medical attendant. Similarly, as Williams notes, Fitzpiers' affair with Felice Charmond is based on falsity, when she summons her erstwhile suitor to treat her for non-existent ailments. Towards the end of the novel, Williams finds, "Natural laws fail to assert themselves. Fitzpiers gets off scot-free while the pure in heart suffer or die" (168). Somehow, the ending is still hopeful: "Individuals are destroyed and yet the work which creates life continues; in the midst of death, there is life" (Williams 168). The conflict between city and country cannot be easily isolated or defined. Hardy does not value either locale as the ideal breeding ground for flawless figures of masculinity, but rather he has Fitzpiers alternate between country and city, good and bad, healer and destroyer.

In *The Woodlanders*, the conflict between city and country, wrought with ambiguity, is a central means used by Hardy to discuss both science and love. When Grace returns from boarding school, she is no longer completely in tune with the country folk with whom she grew up. Grace finds kinship with Fitzpiers, whom she describes as an intriguing outsider, much like herself:

> It was strange for her to come back from the world to Little Hintock and find in one of its nooks, like a tropical plant in a hedgerow, a nucleus of advanced ideas and practices which had nothing in common with the life around. Chemical experiments, anatomical projects, and metaphysical conceptions had found a strange home here. (50)

Grace closes her eyes and fantasizes about the "imagined pursuits of the man behind the light" (50). She alternates between fascination and trepidation towards

Fitzpiers throughout the novel. The narrator divulges Fitzpiers' plan to buy brains from poor servants and warns that cities breed degeneracy (52). As the novel progresses those characters who have been to the city are best equipped to adapt, survive, and triumph. Hardy therefore suggests that degeneracy does not impede progress; it may in fact help a figure like Fitzpiers to succeed despite his mediocre medical skills and snobbish behaviour. Dr. Fitzpiers has urban flare; his appearance was "more finished and up to date than is usually the case among rural practitioners" (100). The stylish doctor, however, is not as impressive in his medical practice as he is in his grooming. When Fitzpiers accidentally kills John South with an intended cure, he meets the criticism of his rival, the ineffectual but hardworking Giles Winterborne. Giles asks this urban doctor whether he ought to learn the ins and outs of country medicine, to which the snobbish Fitzpiers scoffs:

> Oh, no. The real truth is, Winterborne, that medical practice in places like this is a very rule of thumb matter; a bottle of bitter stuff for this and that old woman—the bitterer the better—compounded from a few simple stereotyped prescriptions; occasional attendance at births, where mere presence is almost sufficient, so healthy and strong are the people; and a lance for an abscess now and then. Investigation and experiment cannot be carried on without more appliances than one has here—though I have attempted a little. (115)

Fitzpiers simplifies the field of country medicine when he implies that his mere presence lends assistance to patients. While he denigrates the field of medicine, he

also minimizes the threat associated with mad scientist figures. He remarks casually that he has dabbled in experiments, but he does not view scientific innovation as the purpose of his existence, as do Jekyll and Benjulia. Instead of curing patients through reliable, scientific means, but rather he aims to placate them with band-aid cures and kind words. The love plot of the story is compromised by the doctor's surgical experiments. Like Collins before him, Hardy seems to suggest that the cruder areas of medicine render surgeons unsuitable for love and marriage. However, when Hardy's dashing doctor is asked by Grace to halt his experiments, he complies, thus diminishing the threat that he poses as a surgeon. When the doctor's sex drive leads him to take on the role of physician rather than surgeon, he increases his appeal as a lover and a marriage prospect. Distinct from earlier fallen men, Fitzpiers is almost lauded for his sexuality since it is the driving force behind his improved reputation. Hardy produces a fallen man who does not have to suffer for his fallenness. He uses his sex appeal to attract and please women rather than to destroy them.

Hardy structures the novel so that we might expect the doctor to be treated as fallen. However, Hardy ultimately chooses not to designate easily identifiable roles to his male characters. In so doing, he destabilizes gender and class structures. Hardy begins his introduction to Fitzpiers by having Cawtree, a Hintock native, comment that "Doctor-what's-his-name is a strange, deep, perusing gentleman; and there is good reason for supposing that he has sold his soul to the wicked one" (30). Though this countryside character depicts Fitzpiers as a Faustus figure, he does not represent Hardy's views. By having Cawtree

speak simultaneously of reason and selling one's soul to the devil, Hardy ridicules this character's naïveté. Moreover, by comparing Fitzpiers to Marlowe's Dr. Faustus in this tongue-and-cheek manner, Hardy sets up a narrative wherein dichotomies and absolute moral judgements may not be taken for granted. Cawtree goes on to tell Melbury that the young doctor "wanted certain books on some mysterious black art," and he therefore must be a heathen (30). Hardy quickly distinguishes the role of Fitzpiers from that of the doomed Faustus when he has Melbury, the wealthier and more prominent of the conversing men, defend Fitzpiers' right to peruse such readings. He tells the gossiping men that Fitzpiers is "only a gentleman fond of science, and philosophy, and poetry, and, in fact, every kind of knowledge; and being lonely here he passes his time in making such matters his hobby" (30). Science is upheld as a worthwhile pursuit by Melbury and, ultimately, by Hardy himself. By alluding to Fitzpiers as Faustus in the voice of a naïve woodlander, Hardy implies that Cawtree is horribly outdated in his refusal to accept scientific ideas as valid.

Hardy shocks readers by according status and prestige to the philandering doctor with a penchant for the "black arts." When Hardy has Melbury, a strong and virtuous figure, endorse Fitzpiers' scientific pursuits, he hints that this novel will not offer moral conclusions. Rather, Hardy encourages readers to advance their conception of acceptable behaviour. Hardy seems well aware of his readers' expectations with regard to sin and punishment as he sets up a plot that might accord just rewards to both saint and sinner. The opening chapters are rife with negative gossip-mongering about Little Hintock's newest citizen. According to

Grammer Oliver, though Fitzpiers "belongs to the oldest, ancientist family in the country, he's stooped to make hisself useful like any common genius" (48). Grammer goes on to tell her mistress Grace that the doctor told her that he's "near melancholy mad" from the lack of "society" in the country, and the only thing keeping him sane are his books and his lab (49). A moment later, Grammer reveals that she sold her brain to the doctor so that he may dissect it posthumously. Hardy plays with the stock figure of the mad scientist which increased in popularity as the century neared its close and science becomes a palpable threat to Victorian values. Refusing to submit to pre-scripted masculine roles, Hardy turns this stereotype around by demonstrating science and progress to be the salvation rather than the doom of this doctor figure. Grace eventually condemns Fitzpiers' experiments and demand that he agree not to dissect Grammer's brain. Fitzpiers proves to be more of a seducer than a scientist when he simultaneously defends his practice and begins to flirt with Grace, whom he has been admiring: "It is more strange than the fact of a surgeon arranging to obtain a subject for dissection than our acquaintance should be formed out of it" (131). The doctor goes on to tell Grace that he has been thinking about her and dreaming of her presence in the very room. As this scene continues, Fitzpiers mentions that he is dissecting the brain of John South—a patient who died when the doctor ordered that a tree outside the patient's window be chopped down, even though old Mr. South was consumed with the idea that when that tree would fall, his life would be over. Scenes such as these, wherein the doctor proves to be a flawed scientist and a flawless seducer, allude to the reasons why this scientist is

not treated as mad, nor completely fallen. Moreover, the country folk who spread negative gossip about the doctor embrace older values of insulation and tradition. Making oneself useful may not be stooping, Hardy implies. Being a doctor who knows when to draw the line between scientific advancement and personal relations, Fitzpiers redeems his tainted character.

While Hardy's narrative points to progressive thinking with regards to science, it also sets up a double plotline, whereby Fitzpiers will suffer miserably, whereas poor, hardworking, patient, virtuous Giles will get to marry the heroine, Grace Melbury. Soon after their courtship begins, Grace marries Fitzpiers, but this is no guarantee of eternal happiness. Fitzpiers has affairs with at least two women while he is courting and married to Grace. The doctor seems like a man who is about to fall. As he becomes increasingly weary of his duplicitous existence, he cannot control himself from having a sexual relationship with the wealthy fallen woman, Felice Charmond. Whenever questions are raised as to his whereabouts, Fitzpiers admits to being alone with his female patients, helping them to overcome a variety of fictitious ailments. Doctors, and especially surgeons, have unstable social positioning; they also have knowledge of both male and female bodies, which renders them more successful at survival. Still, the novel is set up in such a way that we readers see how easily and believably Hardy might have punished his fallen doctor with death or divorce, thereby setting the stage for virtuous Giles to step in and win Grace's hand the second time around. When embarking on the long, exhausting ride to visit Felice, Fitzpiers murmurs the following words from Shelley's poem *Epipsychidion*:

And towards the lodestar of my one desire

I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight

Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet night. (Hardy 205)

Through his taste in poetry, Fitzpiers reveals an important tenet of Hardy's complex vision of masculinity. Sexuality is not a choice to which Fitzpiers surrenders. Rather, the promiscuous doctor is helpless as a moth, dead as a fallen leaf. Fitzpiers disregards the financial and domestic strain that this affair puts on him as he flits without consciousness, propelled only by desire. Shelley's poem describes "a passionate search for the eternal image of beauty in the earthly form of women" (Ingham 401). Fitzpiers' affair is both natural and poetic.

Despite Hardy's apparent approval of Fitzpiers' sexuality, he alternates between condoning and condemning the doctor's overall character. On his way home from a sexual encounter with Felice Charmond, Fitzpiers literally falls off of his horse. Half-conscious and certainly delirious, he reveals unwittingly to his father-in-law that he has been "reckless" with Felice, and has no intention of ceasing this affair. When Mr. Melbury, unable to control his anger, pushes the already injured Fitzpiers off of his horse, appears as tough Hardy appropriates a fallen outcome to this ne'er do well character. In keeping with his complex notions of masculinity, Hardy nevertheless rewrites the fate of this seemingly doomed character. Fitzpiers survives his fall, only to run off with his mistress. Upon her death, he return to his wife and re-enters the respectable sphere of married life. In having Fitzpiers's literal fall, which is a direct result of his moral fall, lead to both the supposition that he is dead and his own feelings of shame at

re-entering Hintock, Hardy revisits and rejects the theme of the literary fall. Hardy portrays Fitzpiers' sexual drive as natural, but he also tantalizes his readers with traditional narrative closure. When Hardy chooses instead to shock readers with a happy ending for Fitzpiers, he implies that man's nature is a more valid and powerful force than social values and hierarchical arrangements.

As with Fitzpiers, Hardy acknowledges the possibility of a morally motivated ending for Giles, only to have him suffer an untimely death. After losing his home and his prospects of marriage to Grace, Giles goes on to lead a simple, upstanding existence by means of manual labor. The future temporarily looks brighter for Giles. Just as he is recovering from an illness, Melbury comes to tell him of the disintegration of Fitzpiers and Grace's marriage. Both men are hopeful that Grace will be able to divorce Fitzpiers, and Giles will finally be rewarded with a marriage to the woman whom he has always pined for. They soon learn that the divorce will not be possible. Rather than taking this as a sign that it is time to move on with his life, perhaps by marrying the faithful and virtuous Marty South, Giles hastens his own death by sleeping outside in the cold when Grace seeks refuge with him. After deciding that she "doesn't care what they say or what they think any more" (310), Grace tells Giles to come in from the cold. He responds that he is "all right," and proceeds to freeze practically to death. Grace, upon realizing just how sick he has become on account of this sleeping arrangement, laments, "Can it be that cruel propriety is killing the dearest heart that woman ever clasped to her own" (313). If Fitzpiers is rewarded for heeding his natural instincts, then Winterborne is punished for denying his basic

need for shelter and his desire for Grace.

Doctors are villainized in literature and social commentary throughout the nineteenth century. In Hardy's novel, the doctor is better able to survive because of his virility and prowess. His role as a doctor makes it less shocking when other characters discover his infidelities. Hardy offers a more complex doctor figure than those we have seen in Collins and Stevenson. In *Heart and Science*, Collins allows his doctor to garner some sympathy from readers through his playful interaction with young Zoe and his desire to be loved. Any reader who has glanced at the preface would know that Collins uses Benjulia to propagate his anti-vivisection views. The fallen doctor figure—in works by Stevenson and Collins—mimics and exaggerates the scientific curiosity of his fellow man. In the hands of Thomas Hardy, the fallen doctor takes on a less cautionary role as his novel comes to embrace knowledge, innovation, and even moral fallenness. Fin-de-siècle mad scientist figures pose a threat when their scientific ventures give way to murderous urges; Fitzpiers dissociates himself from such figures by means of his lustfulness. By allowing his virile doctor to run wild and get away with it, Hardy suggests that Victorians may need to rethink their apprehensions about curiosity and innovation. Unlike Stevenson or Collins, Hardy does not only emphasize the perils of curiosity, but rather demonstrates that new ideas can advance humankind from its moribund, conservative state.

Chapter Four

Decadent Desire: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Oscar Wilde, arguably the most famous intellectual and public figure of the British fin-de-siècle, popularized the dandy in his life and in his art. The term "dandy" was not new at the fin-de-siècle; its implications had evolved from the Regency period, when "silver fork novels" represented an esoteric upper class, often ridiculed in the press for their snobbery and shallow behaviour.[1] At the end of the nineteenth century, British Decadence embodied more than just a lifestyle. Adapting his view of masculinity from the French literary tradition,[2] Oscar Wilde, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, weaves a world of wonder, intrigue, and romance among three dandy figures with homoerotic bonds. By drawing on French influences, Wilde dispenses with British traditionalism and dares his English audience to be as avant-garde and open-minded as the French. Wilde does adhere to some British literary models when he engages in rhetoric of fallenness, yet he also distributes the fallen man's traits and consequences among Dorian, Lord Henry, and Basil. When the deviant figure is dispersed into three parts, the scapegoated

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[1] In his influential 1827 essay, "The Dandy School," William Hazlitt pokes fun at his contemporaries' preoccupation with superficial ideals and material possessions.

[2] Kirsten MacLeod defines French Decadence as an important precursor to the British fin-de-siècle interpretation of the movement. As early as the 1850s, French Decadents were characterized by their "insistence on the autonomy of art; a disgust with bourgeois philistinism and utilitarianism; an interest in complexity of form and elaborate and arcane language; a fascination with the perverse, the morbid, and the artificial; a desire for intense experience and a seeking after rare sensations in order to combat a feeling of *ennui* or world-weariness" (MacLeod 2).

fallen man loses his monitory significance. While earlier Victorian authors question the value of assigning dichotomous meaning to characters and behaviours, Oscar Wilde refuses to consider taking part in the literary habit of doling out fates to appease a staid public. In *Uncle Silas, Daniel Deronda, Man and Wife, Heart and Science,* and *The Woodlanders* the fallenness of well-born individuals disrupts expectations for privileged Victorian men. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry is an aristocrat who embraces vice, while Basil is the tortured voice of middle-class conscience. The highest echelons of the London society embrace Dorian despite his uncertain birth. All three men are fallen, yet their homoerotic bonds and hedonistic tendencies do not seem to affect their social stability or class status. Indeed, in Wilde's novel, the shared bond of aesthetic principles binds dandies into a uniform group; the adherence to aesthetics is a gesture away from Victorian class consciousness.

The publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* marked the popular recognition of decadence in Britain. Until this pivotal moment, British Decadent writing had been limited to essays and poems aimed at a specific audience of intellectuals and like-minded individuals (MacLeod 5). Previously, Victorian lending libraries had ruled the publishing scene. Since publishers catered to the libraries that would purchase their novels, a tradition of censorship by popular opinion and publishers' prerogatives evolved. Caught up in the enthusiasm of fin-de-siècle aestheticism, Lipincott's published Wilde's homoerotic novel in its serial form in 1890. In 1891, Bodley Head published the book as a single volume. This new publishing house priced books to sell to individual buyers, thereby avoiding

the censure of lending libraries.

Although Decadent artists and publishers were criticized for being "lurid, morbid, revolting, nonsensical, cynical, nasty, and self-promoting" (MacLeod 6), they were also wildly popular. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde broaches subjects that others dared not entertain. An anonymous reviewer for *The Athenaeum* slammed Wilde's novel, which he called "unmanly, sickening, vicious (although not exactly what is called improper), and tedious and stupid" (qtd. in Cohen 802). Although Oscar Wilde was a prominent dandy, he was not open about his homosexuality. He therefore had to be careful about establishing his role in London society. In his article entitled "Writing Gone Wilde: Homoerotic Desire in the Closet of Representation," Ed Cohen finds that, "Wilde consciously constructed and marketed himself as a liminal figure within British class relations, straddling the lines between nobility, aristocracy, middle class, and—in his sexual encounters—working class" (802). Like the musical ideal in "The Critic as Artist," Wilde's novel can speak the unspeakable across class lines and gender identity. Cohen goes on to find that Wilde's uncertain social, intellectual, and sexual status in the 1890s was one of the factors that led to the wide-held assumption that the notorious 1891 novel was about homosexuality. By ignoring conventional Victorian borders, Wilde creates an environment wherein fallenness is a given.

Before his groundbreaking fictional narrative even begins, Wilde promotes his anti-Victorian fin-de-siècle principles by refusing to submit to the public's expectations in terms of form or content. In its very structure, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* inaugurates the trend of rebellious British male authors who reshaped

the literary scene in the 1890s when they produced fiction that "protested against the three-volume form as an aesthetic straightjacket" (Showalter 16). The three-volume form that dominated the Victorian literary scene had predetermined format and structured narratives. Novelists, led by George Gissing, joined forces with lending libraries to stop the proliferation of such a unitary and unyielding form as the three volume novel. Elaine Showalter compares late-century writing to psychoanalytic studies since they are complex evaluations from more than one perspective: "When here were no longer three volumes to fill writers could abandon the temporal structures of beginning, middle, and end [. . .] Like Freud's accounts of hysterical patients, they are fragmented, out of chronological sequence, contradictory and incoherent" (*Anarchy* 18). When fin-de-siècle authors free themselves from the constrictive form of the traditional novel, they are not compelled to provide a moral lesson in their novels. In order to create social space for diversity and experimentation, Le Fanu, Collins, Eliot, and Hardy test their readers' limits when they punish fallen men and free tainted women, who are then eligible for marriage. By contrast, Oscar Wilde does not treat marriage as a goal, or even a concern for his fallen men. He punishes Dorian and Basil when they do not embrace the New Hedonism. Lord Henry revels in the decadent lifestyle and never feels guilty; this is the only dandy who does not suffer a violent death in Wilde's novel. Both Basil and Dorian share a fatal flaw: the inability to see the world though the rose-coloured glasses of a happy hedonist. For Oscar Wilde, a fallen man is one who can no longer find beauty in his sins.

Despite all of his daring behaviour, Oscar Wilde is not wholly unlike his

precursors. As Michael Patrick Gillespie remarks, we cannot ignore Wilde's "need for public approval and his apparent willingness to modify creative endeavors to ensure that approval" (9). Gillespie argues that the Decadent behaviours demonstrated in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are neither shocking nor morally reprehensible in the modernizing world of London high society: "The middle-class public in fact accepted Wilde's art as long as it was titillating but did not threaten their sensibilities" (Gillespie 10). With newly affordable novels infiltrating the British scene, Wilde caters to middle-class individuals rather than the lending libraries of previous decades. When given the option, everyday readers are not averse to reading uncensored tales of lust, crime, and beauty. The titillation factor of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is such that Wilde questions how far an author can go in his representations of sexuality, class, and indulgence. The three dandies beg the questions that drive British Decadent prose: Can readers enjoy a narrative that does not instruct? What value is added to a novel when no characters are demonized, when nobody takes absolute blame for vice and deviance? By refusing to moralize, Wilde implores the audience to read his book, not his intention. In the preface, Wilde spells out his theory for readers before they engage in the aesthetically pleasing text. He insists that "no artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style" (xxiii). Although the preface is a poetic treatise on what art and literature intend to do, it does not ensure that Wilde's readers will agree, just as Collins' didacticism does not ensure that readers would become sceptical about science upon reading *Heart and Science.* Despite Wilde's protests that art has no meaning, the homoeroticism

and homosexuality of his characters have been analyzed repeatedly since the publication of the novel. Wilde writes that "there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all" (xxiii). Thus, Wilde distinguishes himself from earlier Victorian novelists by eliminating traditional expectations of morally loaded closure. This treatise implies a new era of creative output, whereby novelists attempt to produce literature that appeals to the senses of readers. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde recognizes that the quest for meaning is what gives the reader pleasure, and, as an aesthete, Wilde strives to give pleasure in his writing.

The Queer Fallen Man: an Aesthetic Ideal

Gender roles reached new levels of instability in the last decade of the nineteenth century as homosexual love drew unprecedented attention in the media, fiction, and other forms of art. At the fin-de-siècle, British men disappointed patriarchal traditionalists when they disrupted notions of family and gender by forming close friendships with each other in lieu of courting or seducing women. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* signifies the start of a public discourse that aligns homosexual love with aesthetic principles, to create the impression that love between men, like the portrait that Basil paints of Dorian, is an aesthetic ideal. With references back to Greek traditions of same-sex love, fin-de-siècle aesthetes admire and represent the male form as aesthetically perfect and often un-narratable, the "love that dare not speak its name," as Lord Alfred Douglas calls it. Since sodomy was illegal in Wilde's time, and the author himself was eventually convicted of

gross indecency for admitting to his affair with Lord Douglas, the implications of Wilde representing such aesthetically perfect same-sex love is both bold and timely. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Wilde travelled extensively, speaking out on his beliefs with regards to creating and interpreting art. By melding the discourse of homosexual love into a fin-de-siècle narratology, Wilde tempts readers to admire his dandies and to relish their artful living.

Although law and popular fears may thwart homosexual men's public activities, these factors were not, arguably, as significant as the values of art and beauty at the fin-de-siècle. Wilde's "model of homosexuality is implicitly one of gender differentiation, the most perfected form of male aestheticism, a 'romance of art' rather than a romance of the flesh" (Showalter 176). In a novel where desire abounds without consummation, the reader's role may implicitly be to react to the eroticism that must, by its nature, remain unresolved. Fin-de-siècle novels nevertheless promote solitary pleasure. As Elaine Showalter notes, on a symbolic level, the new slim novels disrupted Victorian notions of family: "Unsuitable for family consumption, these [fin-de-siècle] books were more likely to be read alone and perhaps even under the covers. Sex and the single book became the order of the day" (Showalter 16). As Showalter's comments imply, the new slim volumes turn reading into a masturbatory experience. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* provides solitary readers with a solitary reading experience as they follow the lead of the inimitable Dorian Gray, who delights in art and is corrupted by its influence.

As Dorian Gray leaves his innocent role as artist's muse and experiments with drugs, ruins both men and women, and commits murder, he comes to regret

his sins. All the same, he feels compelled to "know more" (105). In his quest to learn the ways of the world, Dorian becomes enthralled in the "yellow book" (102). He reads over and over again a tale of "the wonderful young Parisian in whom the romantic and the scientific temperaments were so strangely blended, became to him a kind of prefiguring type of himself" (104). The hero of the book influences his life, an indication, perhaps, that Wilde foresaw the widespread influence that his own novel would have. Although the author of the yellow book may have separate and distinct intentions, Dorian reads the yellow book with his own agenda in mind. Isobel Murray notes that Wilde seems to have modelled the hero of his yellow book on Des Esseintes, the aesthete in Huysmans' *Against the Grain,* a French novel which inspired the British Decadents. Wilde does not follow through on this instance of intertextuality, but rather he uses this allusion to create a metafictional level in his own novel. If Dorian is influenced by the act of reading a novel, insofar as the act of reading teaches him something about himself, then surely readers might also learn something about themselves and their desires from Wilde's novel. The hero of the yellow book dreads mirrors since they reveal the signs of age. Dorian reads of the hero's tragic decline with "with an almost cruel joy" (104), as he presumably takes comfort in his own escape from the signs of age. Much as he obsessively hides the telltale portrait, Dorian also holds a monomaniacal fascination with the yellow book. From within his belief system—art should exist for art's sake—Wilde uses the yellow book to demonstrate the power of creative works—not only to predict the future, but also to formulate Dorian's identity through an aesthetic release from the trap of conscience.

For Dorian, the beauty of the book is just as important as its content: he has multiple copies individually bound and he reads these copies over and over again. Dorian is Wilde's ideal reader because his aesthetic experience of reading the book far outweighs his interest in the plot. In *Decadence and Catholicism*, Ellis Hanson finds that "both stylistically and thematically, decadence is an aesthetic in which failure and decay are regarded as seductive, mystical, or beautiful" (Hanson 3). Dorian's closeted portrait of decay, then, is an affirmation of Decadent principles. Kirsten MacLeod explains some of the outrage at the publication of Wilde's novel. With "the advent of a medical discourse that associated artistic genius with criminality and degeneracy, Decadent writers and artists were increasingly subject to *ad hominem* attacks in which their art was represented as a direct reflection of their own pathological condition" (MacLeod 6). Wilde's novel, arguably the most daring of his time, enjoyed wide popularity and numerous printings. The title character is associated with decay in the final scene. The artistic product—the painting—is restored and aesthetic principles, rather than a moral directive, are upheld.

Despite the limitations placed on Wilde as a married dandy who carried on passionate affairs with men, he was nonetheless writing at a time when the option to diverge from tradition was becoming increasingly feasible. In earlier Victorian novels, writers who wished to speak out against popular assumptions still had to submit to certain structural expectations in order to get their works published. Le Fanu undermines patriarchal tradition; Eliot and Collins reverse gendered expectations; Hardy lends credence to the "sane scientist." All these authors work

within the confines of the three-volume format. By including fallen men in their novels, these authors fit their progressive ideas into the expected structure; mid and late Victorian novelists implicitly accept certain creative limitations. The fallen man is a Victorian phenomenon whose presence and treatment reroutes expected plotlines and interrogates social codes. This narrative disturber, insinuating his way into the fabric of Le Fanu's, Eliot's, Collins' and Hardy's novels, loosens tidy conclusions. By comparison, Wilde's dandy aesthetes celebrate the fallen man's demise because they embrace excess, at least in theory.

When Wilde cloaks his dandy characters in ambiguity, he signifies the dawn of a new era of masculine possibilities, whereby devious, dashing men may exhibit their vices proudly. Writing about the Decadent era Murray Pittock invokes A. J .A. Symons' definition of the Decadent and aesthetic momentum at the fin-de-siècle:

> In the twilit end of the nineteenth century there seemed no answer to a brief materialism. Anthropology showed the moral code to be no more than a time-serving expedient; socialism emphasised the invincible inequalities of modern life; and physical science disproved divinity[. . .] In the wake of these new realisations, some sought solace in religion or social causes. A minority of people looked inward to the only verities that had not seemed to crumble while it watched: the cultivation of the self, the consolations of art. (qtd. in Pittock xvii)

Murray Pittock adds to Symons' definition by observing that "in the general literary imagination, this period is often seen as an age neither Victorian nor

Modern, neither straight-laced and disciplined in the values of patience and purity, nor one of new forms and exciting changes" (Pittock 2). According to Pittock, the Decadent era revamps ideas but also results in artistic stagnation. In my analysis of masculinity as it relates to the morality and plot structure of Victorian fiction, Wilde's novel is revolutionary in its form and its express content of indulgence, sensory pleasure, godlessness, and material excess. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Wilde discusses a changed sense of masculinity by writing an amoral novel, homoerotic fairytales, and suggestive plays. Wilde, like Basil, his fictional artist, produces art that is not simply a solace, but rather a gateway to change in public conceptions of class, gender, and sexuality.

Although Wilde is groundbreaking in his homoeroticism and narrative structure, he does have to borrow from previous definitions of manliness when creating his characters. Dandies, in different forms, had been part of the British and European social landscape since the early nineteenth-century. Dandies of the 1890s were as diverse as they were popular—in novels such as George Du Maurier's *Trilby* and Wilde's *Dorian Gray* as well as on the London social scene. In Wilde's novel, Lord Henry, Basil, and Dorian offer a spectrum of masculine types. While all three dandies display homosexual desire and an affinity for beautiful things, they are not rewarded or punished in the same way. Lord Henry is a happy hedonist who never seems to suffer. Basil is a principled, though tortured and obsessive artist, who is literally consumed by his desire for Dorian. Though Basil dies at the hands of his muse, he has already reached the pinnacle of aesthetic possibility: he has painted a flawless picture. If a painting that expresses homosexual desire is an

aesthetic masterpiece, then Wilde suggests that love between men is an aesthetic ideal, a perfect subject for art.

Basil is an artist who is passionate about his work, yet he also raises fears with regards to the revelatory possibilities of his portrait. He is in love with Dorian and simultaneously wants to reveal and conceal this powerful feeling. As Basil tries to catch a glimpse of his portrait amidst Dorian's protests, he offers up a theory on the ability of art to reveal man's true feelings. The goal of expressing emotion through art is to capture that which is innermost and render an outward manifestation of feelings, fears, and desires that are pleasing to the eye. With this in mind, we can read Basil's theory as a precursor to making homosexual love palpable in the future. As the tortured artist tells Dorian,

> One day, a fatal day I sometimes think, I determined to paint a wonderful portrait of you as you actually are, not in the costume of dead ages, but in your own dress and in your own time [. . .] As I worked at it, every flake and film of colour seemed to me to reveal my secret. I grew afraid that others would know of my idolatry. I felt, Dorian, that I had told too much, that I had put too much of myself into it. (94)

Good art, according to this narrative, may very well be the result of the artist putting "too much" of himself in the work. Basil calls this speech a "confession," yet he remains terrified of public exposure. Whereas fin-de-siècle Victorian writers allowed even their heroic characters to indulge in vices such as drugs, alcohol, and gambling, same-sex love was not an outwardly acceptable practice either within

fiction or in the courtrooms. With his erotically charged exchanges between Basil, Henry, and Dorian, Oscar Wilde delves into risqué territory. Cleverly, Wilde omits sex entirely from his novel, thereby leaving room for desire to circulate without being fulfilled. Although Basil reveals his frustration at his yearning for Dorian, he still keeps him at arm's length by telling Dorian that he was "made to be worshipped" (95).

The artistic abilities of dandies in Wilde's novel are largely dependent on the emotional state of the artist, and the effect of their art is therefore unstable. The portrait that Basil paints of Dorian stuns and impresses; it also vilifies and destroys. Basil paints a portrait of the handsome and innocent Dorian Gray that exemplifies the boy's beauty for all to see. However, his art, like his love for the boy, is shrouded in secrecy. When asked by Lord Henry to name the subject of his infatuation, Basil refuses initially to reveal Dorian's name because secrecy is "the one thing which can make modern life mysterious or marvellous to us" (3). When pressed to explain his refusal to exhibit the painting, Basil replies in earnest that "the reason I will not exhibit the picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul" (4). As the novel proceeds, Basil's infatuation with Dorian becomes increasingly evident. The passionate artist retreats from the London scene in order to avoid the pain that he feels at Dorian's fall from pedestal to opium den. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* implores readers to understand art from the vantage point of the artist who must succumb to his most degenerate impulses in order to produce interesting art.

Wilde uses fallen men to express the tragic dimension of queerness; Basil,

Dorian, and to an extent Lord Henry must conceal any "strange" feelings that they might have for other men. They are fallen insofar as the newly relaxed moral code still condemns homosexual activity. Although Dorian's sexuality is questionable, he is nonetheless placed within a literary legacy of heroes by Wilde's narrator:

> One had ancestors in literature, as well as in one's own race, nearer perhaps in type and temperament, many of them, and certainly with an influence of which one was more absolutely conscious [. . .] he felt that he had known them all, those strange, terrible figures that had passed across the stage of the world and made sin so marvellous, and evil so full of subtlety. (Wilde 118)

This novel is at its most self-conscious when Dorian gives credit to his devious literary ancestors. Wilde mimics Pater's use of the word "strange" to simplify sinister and imprecise meaning. Homosexual identity comes to be associated with "strangeness," a word that invokes both the discomfort and instability that same-sex male love provokes.

Basil alternates between regretting that he ever met Dorian and claiming that they were "destined to know each other" (Wilde 6). Basil refers to his relationship with Dorian as "reckless" and filled with regret, yet he never states directly that he desires the young man. Through the verbal gymnastics that Wilde employs, he takes us beyond Basil's struggle, to the artist's struggle, as he deliberates as to how far he can go with expressing same-sex desire and love. Ed Cohen finds that "even in the absence of explicit homosexual terminology or activity, a text can subvert the normative standards of same-sex behaviour" (803).

Basil's love for Dorian is concretized in his artistic rendition of the youthful, sensual Dorian. According to Cohen, "the picture's absent presence (which motivates the narrative development) interrupts the novel's overt representational limits by introducing a visual, extra verbal component of male same-sex desire" (Cohen 806). Both Wilde and Basil use their artistry to show without telling. We see desire between men in both Wilde's life and his fiction, yet it cannot be concretized in absolute verbal terms. Wilde fashions himself as one who does not fit in, yet his refusal to commit to any social circle allows him to maintain his status as an elusive, iconic, and intellectual figure. "Typically, literary critics have explained this over-determined positioning by situating Wilde among the nineteenth-century manifestation of decadence and dandyism, thereby emphasizing that his aesthetic paradoxically signified his dependence on the prevailing bourgeois culture and his detachment from it" (Cohen 802). Wilde detaches himself from bourgeois culture, but he nonetheless offers readers the chance to experience this elite social atmosphere through his novel.

Just as Wilde carried on with his double life of marriage and same-sex love affairs, so too does he fashion Dorian Gray as a liminal figure who struggles between high society and its fringes. This unstable atmosphere provides an opportune space wherein homosexual love can be discussed. Basil does not pinpoint the source of his desire for Dorian, but rather he sees Dorian as an irresistible abstraction. Basil tells Henry that Dorian is "all art to me now [. . .] his personality has suggested to me an entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style" (Wilde 8). Basil is a talented artist and a respectable socialite in his

own right, yet he idolizes Dorian as if the beautiful youth were his superior. Basil is a doomed artist figure who represents a pure form of same-sex desire. Unlike Henry, Basil does not choose to marry, and unlike Dorian, he does not have affairs with women. Dorian and Henry fall into varied states of degeneracy, while Basil is only fallen if we consider the nineteenth century perspective that homosexuality is a fallen state. Wilde grudgingly presents Basil as a fallen man, although his passionate artist figure is probably the most sympathetic of the dandy figures. Readers empathize with the hopelessness of reciprocity that Basil feels towards Dorian. He admits, "I flatter him dreadfully. I find a strange pleasure in saying things to him that I know I shall be sorry for having said" (Wilde 10). At times, Basil admits, Dorian "is horribly thoughtless and seems to take a real delight in giving me pain. I feel, Henry, that I have given away my whole soul to someone who treats it as if it were a flower to put in his coat." (10). Although Basil laments his inability to attract Dorian, he also sees himself as an outward symbol of beauty. Impermanent as a boutonniere might be, it is nonetheless a decorative symbol of the gentrified dandy that is worn with pride. Basil wishes to assert that the soul has more value than art, but his non-disclosure of desire betrays his other, more likely valuation that sexuality has more value than art. Dorian favours beauty over substance, and he treats his greatest admirer as disposable.

Dorian provides sensational intrigue for middle-class readers and simultaneously speaks for a circle of men who opt out of marriage and choose instead to appreciate art and one another. As long as Dorian maintains his aesthetic principles, he can override his misdeeds. In other words, so long as Dorian's beauty

is powerful enough to attract positive attention, then he can be a symbol for the New Hedonism. For the first half of the novel, Wilde is aligned with his sinning dandies, as he delights in their revelling and he invites the reader to do the same. The second half shifts to the theme of degeneration that permeates Decadent literature and art. Dorian becomes haunted by the portrait and his desperation overtakes him to the point that he no longer enjoys the fruits of New Hedonism and most certainly does not act as its visible symbol. Decadent artists dream of eternal beauty and youth while they appreciate art that is perfect and fleeting.

Dorian, Henry, and Basil do not simply fall into their Decadent lifestyle; they choose the extent to which they will get involved in dubious activities. Early in the novel, Dorian leaves the quiet of Basil's sitting room to explore London's high and sub cultures with Lord Henry. Basil, the voice of decorum in the trio, begs Henry to back away from Dorian: "Don't spoil him. Don't try to influence him [. . .]. Don't take away from me the one person who gives to my art whatever charm it possesses" (Wilde 12). As readers, we are left to choose whether we share Basil's definition of ruin, or whether we would like to see the world of Hedonistic pleasure that Henry offers up. Is Dorian better suited to be the silent and naïve object of Basil's desire, or should he explore London, experiment with drugs, and develop desires? Wilde plays with readers' expectations when he allows Dorian to fall decisively and willingly into the depths of temptation, pleasure, and sensation. If the dashing dandy holds our interest, then perhaps Henry is not alone in longing for "a new Hedonism" of which Dorian would be "its visible symbol" (18).

Dorian, Henry, and to an extent, Basil, occupy an important role in the

London social scene as they create excitement and produce art in its many forms. In his 1891 essay, "The Critic as Artist," Wilde opens up the question of art and its value. This treatise draws on the early Greek philosophical style of Aristotle and Plato as it works out philosophical conundrums by way of a conversation between two men, Gilbert and Ernest. In this essay, men seem to exist in their own, aesthetically pleasing universe, much as in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Like the dandies in Wilde's novel, Gilbert and Ernest are both interested in art and beauty. However, the characters in "The Critic as Artist" are able to reach depths of analysis to which the witty and shallow dandies of the novel do not even aspire. Lord Henry and Dorian are often flippant and Basil is monomaniacal in his fixation on Dorian. Ernest and Gilbert work through a philosophy of art that sheds light on *the Picture of Dorian Gray*. They determine that music is the perfect art form because it "creates for one a past of which one had been ignorant, fills one with a sense of sorrows that have been hidden from one's tears" (Wilde *Critic* 51). Good art does not make us happy, but rather it triggers our innermost recesses; art speaks the un-narratable.

Dorian is both an artist and a living image of art. Wilde's outspoken narrator tells us of Dorian's penniless father and rebellious mother right before noting that "talking to him [Dorian] was like playing an exquisite violin" (29). Dorian is such an attractive work of art, so "exquisite" that he is defined by the impression that he makes on others, rather than by traditional standards such as his lineage. If music, according to Wilde, is the perfect art form, then Dorian reaches his pinnacle of perfection, not as artist, but rather as canvas. Dorian's special art lies in his ability

to make one hear one's "own intellectual views echoed back to one with all the added music of passion and youth" (29). Wilde's fallen man attracts others by reflecting who they wish they were, much like the effect that "good" art will have on its audience. Dorian, sensual as a violin, is also malleable and subject to influence:

> To Dorian, life itself was the first, the greatest, of the arts, and for it all the other arts seemed to be but a preparation. Fashion, by which what is really fantastic becomes for a moment universal, and dandyism, which, in its own way, is an attempt to assert the absolute modernity of beauty, had, of course, their fascination for him. (106)

Unlike the headstrong fallen men who came before him, Dorian shifts easily from adopting one perspective to embracing another. The artistry of Dorian's life is multi-layered, since he is at once a muse for Basil, a canvas for Henry, and an artful seducer of Sybil and others. Dorian becomes passionate about absorbing some of the artistry and gaiety of Henry's life and he drops his lovesick admirer Basil, for the fun-loving, freewheeling Lord Henry.

Aphorisms and Fairytales

Decadent behaviour does not condemn Dorian and Henry to the fringes of society as one might expect. Their explorations and deviations are portrayed as light-hearted trysts, often with some simple, but lofty goal in mind, such as going to the park "to look at life" (36). Moreover Henry maintains his appeal to both readers and characters throughout the novel because of his witty—and often biting—social

commentary. When Dorian exclaims to Henry that "nobody talks as wonderfully as you do" (36), he expresses a sentiment that is shared by both readers and Wilde. Famous for his witty bon mots, Oscar Wilde uses Henry as a mouthpiece for scandalous statements and humorous retorts. These aphorisms work as a fin-de-siècle replacement for Victorian finales or summary endings. When Wilde uses the fairytale motif ironically, he plays with the relationship between fantasy and reality. In its original form *Cinderella*, the tale that Wilde invokes in *Dorian Gray*, dissolves class boundaries when the prince marries the impoverished and ill-used maiden. In Wilde's narrative world, Prince Charming is fickle and Cinderella commits suicide after he berates her. Class issues are either no longer significant or Wilde has accepted that they cannot be resolved with a mere twist of the pen. Class snobbery informs many of Henry's aphorisms, yet the humorous nature of his comments renders them open-ended. Aphorisms and fairytale imagery abound in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, as Wilde experiments with form so that he may broach sensitive subjects like homosexuality and social class without always being taken literally.

Wilde disturbs narrative expectations by having Lord Henry reveal his anti-morality in the form of aphorisms sprinkled liberally throughout the narrative. For instance, when Henry consoles Dorian for having lost Sybil, the actress who represents to Dorian an opportunity for reform, Henry retorts:

> Good resolutions are useless attempts to interfere with scientific laws. Their origin is pure vanity. Their result is absolutely nil. They give us, now and then, some of those luxurious sterile emotions that

> have a certain charm for the weak. That is all that can be said for them. They are simply cheques that men draw on a bank where they have no account. (82)

Henry refers to moral bankruptcy with nonchalance. He criticizes Dorian for attempting, however weakly, to reform. He does not mourn the death of morality. Fictional British men in *Man and Wife*, *Daniel Deronda*, and *The Woodlanders*, literally attempt to withdraw credit from empty bank accounts for decades. By recognizing that there is nothing in these accounts—either moral or financial—Henry steps outside of the constraints of expectations. By associating emotions with "the weak," Wilde, through Henry, implies that strength lies in irreverence. Henry's aphorisms present a path of possibility that Dorian and Basil do not take. Since he is the only one of the three dandies to survive the novel, Henry seems to have the greatest hold on what constitutes successful living for Wilde. If you abandon morality, you will be rewarded with a life free of regret. Of course, Lord Henry is of the highest class of the three men, so his irreverence and snobbery can alternately be seen as evidence of Wilde's preferential treatment for the titled dandy.

We can understand the truths behind Henry's words, or we can ignore them, but whatever our understanding, we cannot help going along with Dorian into Henry's hedonistic wonderland. He delivers sharp epigrams, such as "men represent the triumph of mind over morals," (38) or "Faithfulness is to the emotional life what consistency is to the life of the intellect—simply a confession of failure." (40). In this novel, where no moral lessons are sanctioned by the author,

Henry voices retorts which undermine didactic assumptions. For instance, when Henry tells Dorian not to marry, he adds that "men marry because they are tired; women because they are curious. Both are disappointed" (38). Although Henry devotes his leisure time to pursuing pleasure, he still adheres to social convention by marrying. Henry wishes to paint on Dorian an image of the life that he could never lead, one that is free from the bonds of holy matrimony. For a while, the character of Dorian comes to be absorbed by the purpose that he serves for Henry. In the company of his new friend, Dorian is filled "with a wild desire to know everything about life," (47) as he emulates his friend's joie de vivre and irreverence towards sentimentality. Since Dorian cannot be wholly blamed for his moral degeneracy, he cannot be a fallen man in the usual sense. Instead, this figure points towards a new social positioning for fallen men, whereby devious behaviour is an asset and not a liability. When Henry begs Dorian "never to marry" and to become instead the spokesman for a "new Hedonism," (31) he speaks on behalf of a generation of men who are caught between the roles that they are encouraged to occupy and the men they might be otherwise. When Henry offers up his flippant yet meaningful advice, he takes on an important narrative function of addressing the readers' expectations. It is impossible to pinpoint what that stance entails. Henry and Dorian share approximately the same values and both enjoy full social acceptance, but one man lives carefree while the other is doomed to destruction.

Wilde's self-conscious narrative techniques reach beyond his employment of the one-volume form and beyond his inverted narrator to his play on the fairytale motif. Wilde wrote fairytales throughout the fin-de-siècle and his stories often had a

lesson at the end. By engaging in this mode, Wilde recalls Hans Christian Anderson. Wilde and Anderson, both queer men, choose the fairytale format—worlds of make-believe allow for magical representations of same-sex love. Wilde can manipulate the fantasy world of fairytales to idealize love between men. In "The Happy Prince," an ornamented statue and a Swallow conspire to end poverty by having the bird pick away at the statue and donate precious stones to unsuspecting paupers. Before the bird and royal statue join forces, the Swallow attempts to court a female Reed. The swallow tires of this flirtation since "she had no conversation" (271) and he soon moves on to peck at the Happy Prince statue. When the two male characters meet, the statue is not happy and his tears leave the Swallow "quite drenched" (272). The suggestive homoerotic imagery is complemented by an open conversation that connects these two figures, much as conversation binds Lord Henry to Dorian Gray. The moral of this fairytale implies that man should not over-indulge in ornamentation when his countrymen are starving. This social generosity apparently contradicts some of the tenets of aestheticism. The love between men that this tale implies, however, explores one of the fundamental concerns of the dandy-aesthete who writes them. The loyal swallow commits to the project of dispersing pieces of this statue, even though he eventually freezes to death because he will not abandon the Happy Prince. The statue declares: "you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you" (276). The pure love between swallow—a word ripe with interpretive possibilities—and statue might not be offensive in the context of a fairytale. The two male characters are heroic. Wilde posits these fantastic figures as precursors to a future where homosexual love

between men can be discussed openly.

In Wilde's novel, where characters are men rather than birds or inanimate objects, he uses fairytale imagery to hint at what Dorian must repress. Dorian is nicknamed "Prince Charming" by Sybil Vane, the impoverished actress whom he seduces and discards. Initially, Wilde points towards a love plot for Dorian when he proposes marriage to Sybil. Although her hard-working mother and disgruntled brother warn her against her charming suitor, Sybil is described in fairytale terms, as a captive princess, "free in her prison of passion. Her prince, Prince Charming, was with her. She had called on memory to remake him. She had sent her soul to search for him, and it had brought him back. His kiss burned again upon her mouth. Her eyelids were warm with his breath" (55). While Sybil's feelings are in keeping with the romantic heroines that she plays on stage, she is sadly mistaken about Dorian's character. Dorian enjoys the performance of Sybil rather than the woman herself. Wilde, like the doomed actress, performs the fairytale but then undermines it by bringing the prince's character under the acute suspicion of James Vane. James admits to hating Dorian "through some curious race-instinct" (54). The hard-working James, who must go to Australia to earn a living, resents Dorian for his elevated class position and power. Yet he does not succeed in his revenge plot and James's fixation on class comes to seem irrelevant when Dorian travels freely and frequently between East and West End locales. According to Simon Joyce, Sybil's performance of Shakespeare "enables Dorian to maintain a slummer's fantasy of love between the classes; as soon as she stops acting, he loses interest" (Joyce 505). The short-lived romance between Dorian and Sybil ends with him calling the love-

struck Sybil "shallow and stupid" after her poor performance (71). Wilde invokes a fairytale, Cinderella, that revolves around class issues. Disinherited and impoverished, Cinderella needs to be rescued by a wealthy prince. Dorian's heroism is aggrandized at the expense of Sybil and her working-class family.

The 1890s in London were marked by a shift in notions of criminality and morality. According to Simon Joyce, "[s]peculations about the Ripper's identity—and his presumed resemblance to other literary figures—suggests a renewed interest in crime as not only imaginative and aesthetic, but as the province of the privileged classes" (502). Joyce argues that Oscar Wilde, who "literally became a criminal aesthete" (Joyce 503) after his trial in 1895, *does* have something to teach is readers about criminality and social status. According to Joyce, "Wilde reluctantly admitted that the novel had a moral, namely that 'all excess as well as all renunciation brings its own punishment" (510). Basil Hallward, Joyce notes, dies because of his excessive investment in beauty, Dorian tries to erase his sins through indulgence, while Henry finds it difficult to remain uninvolved (510). In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, no character is too haughty to be deviant. Dorian enjoys endless social approval and elevated status even though he has "ruined" both male and female ex-lovers, takes opium among foreigners, and callously blackmails and murders those who get in his way. By the end of the century, fallen men can no longer be defined by their deviation from social mores, since distinct notions of right and wrong, rich and poor are out of fashion. Simon Joyce finds that "[b]etween 1895 and 1918, the collapsing categories of deviance—homosexuality's supposedly 'natural' associations with criminal conduct, avant-gardist art, foreign influences, and

pacifism, socialism, or treason—proved once more hard to defend against or disentangle" (520). Homosexuality need not be labelled in order to be threatening, since the practice of same-sex love is menacing in its association with criminality. At a time when appearance is everything, Dorian Gray behaves like a criminal, though he never gets caught; Henry does not even believe him when he tries to confess to Basil's murder. Dorian is clearly distraught when he murders his friend, but he only displays his complete sense of failure and misery when he descends to the opium den to meet his enemy and his ruined once-friends.

Dorian is ugly in this pivotal opium-den scene. When Dorian is mocked by the driver, his appearance can no longer save him from shame. Safe from age and guilt so long as the art of his life retains its effectiveness, Dorian can no longer fool those around him. When condemnations outweigh compliments, Dorian makes the fatal mistake of trying to escape by immersing himself in the real: "Ugliness that had once been hateful to him because it made things real, became dear to him now for that very reason. Ugliness was the one reality" (152). As he enters the den, Dorian seeks solace in "the coarse brawl, the loathsome den, the crude violence of disordered life, the very vileness of thief and outcast, were more vivid, in their intense actuality of impression, than all the gracious shapes of art, the dreamy shadows of song. They were what he needed for forgetfulness" (152). Dorian diverges from aesthetic schools of thought when he chooses the real over the beautiful. In the den, he encounters Adam Singleton, another man whom he has ruined with his friendship. Dorian has diverged from the joie de vivre of the dandy, and has come to be associated with destruction and danger, despite his magical

ability for self-preservation. If Wilde's aestheticism is based on appreciating beauty, then it does not include Dorian's behaviour from the moment that he became cruel towards Sybil Vane. This novel does not encourage limitless indulgence without concern for other human beings. Part of Dorian's initial appeal is the artful simplicity and beauty of his way of living. While Wilde's novel implores readers to appreciate beauty, the term does not get determined before the novel ends. Ambiguity replaces meaning when all characters are fallen. Vice and promiscuity become social equalizers rather than determinants of social falls.

Dorian's trip to the opium den requires the finely coiffed dandy to venture into the East End, an area with which he is all too familiar. His trip is marked by loathsome, haunting figures who hate him because he has ruined them. Wilde takes away Dorian's artfulness when he shows him weak, scared, and without reprieve in a scene of crude reality. As Timothy L. Carens points out, Wilde's narrator "transforms the prosaic 'opium dens' into the more intriguing 'dens of horror'" (Carens 65). In Wilde's narrative, "the secret reality of the opium den can never be exposed, only made variously obscure by the imaginations that refashion it in narrative" (Carens 66). Even though Dorian may have lost his artfulness, Wilde has not. In rewriting the opium den scene, "Wilde incorporates the familiar stereotypes, remains 'indifferent to fact,' redirecting attention from an ability to capture reality to an ability to refashion it" (Carens 74).

Wilde, true to his aesthetic principles, accents the opium den scene with fairytale elements, thereby adding a layer of fancy to the scene of degeneracy and despair. The woman who oversees the opium den cackles and hisses at Dorian like

a witch from a fairytale. As Dorian is about to leave the den, "a hideous laugh broke from the painted lips of the woman who had taken his money. 'There goes the devil's bargain!' she hiccoughed, in a hoarse voice [. . .] 'Prince Charming is what you like to be called, ain't it?' she yelled after him" (155). Dorian hardly plays the part of the prince in this scene, although he does demonstrate uncharacteristic gallantry when he offers to help Adrian Singleton out of his decayed state. Dorian is not a traditional heroic figure, and the Prince Charming title rings ironic in these circumstances. In Wilde's writing, however, the distinction between irony, jest, and sincerity is rarely made clear. Dorian is charming enough to maintain the favour of London society even when he commits heinous acts. He also lives a "charmed" life because he is free to indulge his every desire without fear of being caught. Prince Charming sneaks around back alleys. Dorian's appearance is a sham and so is his princely nickname, yet Dorian continues to be treated like royalty.

Dorian's mood is presented in direct contrast to the fairytale allusions, as he leaves the den, unable to escape his conscience: "Callous, concentrated on evil, with stained mind, and soul hungry for rebellion, Dorian Gray hastened on [. . .]" (156). Wilde maintains an element of the fairytale motif when he uses coincidence, magic, and trickery as plot elements. James Vane, the ill-fated brother of Sybil lives an unseemly life as a sailor bound for Australia, home to criminal and outcasts. When Vane hears the opium den witch sneering at "Prince Charming," he seizes the opportunity to avenge his sister's death. Vane, like Dorian, frequents the opium den; this locale is a social equalizer that renders the sailor and the dandy worthy opponents. Prince Charming is supposed to rescue an impoverished and enslaved

Cinderella by showering her with wealth and love. Dorian is a social climber who toys with the idea of rescuing Sybil but instead ruins her and then bombards her with insults. In keeping with a general fairytale motif, however, the prince does have magical powers. Dorian convinces James that he is not the man who drove Sybil Vane to suicide thirteen years ago by showing off his flawless, youthful complexion which he maintains—as we readers know—because he sold his soul for the sake of vanity. By incorporating magical and mystical elements into his tale, Wilde, like earlier authors of fallen men narratives, confounds readers' expectations. Although the fanciful elements of such tales would work to delight the senses, this motif also implies a happy ending and lessons learnt. The aesthetic of the 1890s was anarchic, a reaction against the Realist style. In Wilde's novel, readers know the dark truth about Dorian Gray. The appeal of the fairytale is therefore not in anticipation of its conclusion. Instead, readers experience a temporary immersion in a tale that is sensational and thrilling to the senses.

The Question of Irreverence

Wilde fashions himself as one who does not fit in, yet he maintains his status as an iconic and intellectual figure: "Typically, literary critics have explained this over-determined positioning by situating Wilde among the nineteenth-century manifestation of decadence and dandyism, thereby emphasizing that his aesthetic paradoxically signified his dependence on the prevailing bourgeois culture and his detachment from it" (Cohen 802). The Irish-born son of a doctor, Wilde was certainly not a British aristocrat. He did not fall from a position of greatness to one

of sin. Rather, he incorporated vice and sexual promiscuity into the accepted dandy lifestyle. According to Kirsten MacLeod, Decadence acquired a series of myths, some of which are contradictory in terms of class status. MacLeod stresses the irony in the "myth of the tragic generation, the myth of Decadence as high art, and the myths of Decadents as bohemians and aristocratic dandies" (7). Decadents modelled themselves on the Bohemian and the dandy. Both of these types "aimed to shock the bourgeoisie," even though dandies adopted aristocratic behaviours while bohemians lived poorly (MacLeod 12).While "both identities situated themselves firmly outside middle-class culture" (MacLeod 13), most Decadents were actually of middle-class origin. The Decadents, according to MacLeod, exploited "the enhanced visibility of the artist, adopted personae that signalled their resistance to Victorian middle-class consumer culture" (12). Basil Hallward tries to influence Dorian and Lord Henry with his middle-class sense of moral obligation, to little avail. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde implies that the voice of middle-class conscience has no place in the Decadent circle in which dandies travel. MacLeod elaborates on the issue of class at the fin-de-siècle as she finds that the "combination of morally censorious attitude towards Bohemian artists among the middle-class readership and a salacious interest in their lives ensured that sensationalized negative representations of Decadence would have a powerful sway, taking hold of the popular imagination to become the dominant view" (79).

Oscar Wilde does not suggest moral lessons lightly, despite the nonchalance with which Lord Henry and Dorian do. Wilde addresses the problem of straightforward monitory figures when he rewrites the famous bargain scene from

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. When Dorian vows to exchange his soul for eternal youth and beauty, he sets up stakes that are simultaneously superficial and life-altering. Dorian does not sell his soul for the good of science nor does he have any interest in furthering mankind. Wilde builds on the Faustus allusions by having his hero risk eternal damnation for the sake of the shallow and seemingly harmless principle of earthly vanity. Scientists stumble into their fallen states mostly by chance. Although they do choose to pursue scientific research, figures like Benjulia and Fitzpiers become villainized when they cross the invisible boundary between progress and danger. Decadent fallen men are artists who necessarily begin from a fallen state. Dorian, like Delamayn and Silas, is not the first-born and therefore must live by the credence that "credit is the capital of a younger son" (Wilde 26). Unlike his precursors, Dorian is neither ruined nor shamed for his precarious finances. Rather, this fin-de-siècle fallen man is free to maintain full social standing and all earthly comforts, if only he could be irreverent.

Dorian attempts to separate his actions from his enjoyment when he tells Basil that "If one doesn't talk about a thing, it has never happened. It is simply expression, as Henry says, that gives reality to things" (88). Dorian, elevating art over life, lowers the importance of moral codes. Dorian the dandy elicits admiration and even worship from his peers, while Dorian the portrait signifies degeneration and provokes horrified responses. Dorian represents the Decadent movement in all of its complexity and contradiction. He is at once beautiful and morally bankrupt; irresistible and deadly. According to Ellis Hanson, "In a literary context, the word decadence is wonderfully suggestive of the fin-de-siècle fascination with cultural

degeneration, the persistent and highly influential myth that religion, sexuality, art, even language itself had fallen into an inevitable decay" (3). The decadent movement, particularly as it came to be interpreted in the 1890s, celebrates cultural decay because of the possibility that decay signifies. Dorian falls into a ruinous state when he denies his hedonistic instincts. He does not warn readers against the perils of curiosity, but rather implores them to heed desire and temptation so as not to degenerate into a wraith of secrecy and regret. Wilde solidifies his impression of the Decadent movement when he uses Dorian Gray as its visible symbol. Youth and beauty may be fleeting, but they usually overpower moral codes when Dorian forms an impression on another character. The painting had a corruption that would "breed horrors and yet would never die [...] the thing upon the canvas was growing old. It might escape the hideousness of sin, but the hideousness of age was in store for it" (Wilde 97-100). If Decadence is about maintaining youth and beauty, then Dorian's greatest fear is that he will fail at the decadent dream.

While Dorian ultimately lives outside of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, he nonetheless continues to be revered, admired and lusted after, right up to the moments preceding his eventual demise. Dorian attracts and intrigues Basil, Sybil, Henry and other Londoners because he is handsome and presents the possibility of eternal youth. Through his appearance, Dorian reels in his lovers and his victims. His handsome features, however, do not provide him with lasting contentment. He pushes the boundaries even of Decadence, when he develops and admits to murderous urges. Basil and Henry respond to Dorian's revelation of his true desires in markedly different ways, thereby emphasizing the spectrum of

fallenness that this novel presents. Basil is disgusted by the vilified image that he sees in the portrait. When he reacts to the horrific image, he becomes a victim of Dorian's murderous wrath. Basil tries to hold Dorian to some sort of moral standards, while Henry does not.

The refusal to see ugliness is a dandy's only hope for happiness, so long as the purveyors of cultural norms and British laws refuse to accept same-sex love as legitimate. In Wilde's novel, even murder is not too big a crime to be eliminated by an individual's perspective. Before he makes the fatal move of trying to murder his conscience in the form of a painting, Dorian tries to ease his feelings of guilt by confessing his crime to Henry in the form of a question: "What would you say, Henry, if I told you that I had murdered Basil?" In Henry's response we see the key recipe to Hedonistic bliss:

> "I would say, my dear fellow, that you were posing for a character that doesn't suit you. All crime is vulgar, just as all vulgarity is crime. It is not in you, Dorian, to commit a murder [. . .] Crime belongs exclusively to the lower orders. I don't blame them in the smallest degree. I should fancy that crime was to them what art is to us, simply a method of procuring extraordinary sensations" (175).

Crimes are justified when they are the only means by which the criminal can attain pleasure. The novel builds up this point by implying that low and high culture both offer forms of escape, neither of which is to be judged as more commendable or reprehensible than the other. Although Henry thinks Dorian is above criminality, readers know otherwise. Dorian overlaps with lower class values and habits much

like Oscar Wilde fraternized with an array of men from different classes. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, fallen men question notions of masculinity, race, and class when they both visit and transcend prototypical masculine types. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, dealt with these subjects with ambivalence. Dorian is orientalised in the opium den and, according to Henry, Dorian threatens his class status when he murders Basil. Nonetheless, these actions do not compromise his class status.

According to Lord Henry, all classes deserve to experience extraordinary sensations, and they should thus not be bound by rigorous expectations. Henry sanctions crime if it brings about aesthetic pleasure, but only if the criminal does not have finer sensibilities. He recognizes that deviation from expectations is inevitable across class lines; he celebrates this idea while he simultaneously asserts his class snobbery. Basil condemns the fallen Dorian for diminishing his beauty with his criminal activities, while Henry accepts Dorian so long as he offers aesthetic pleasure with his handsome, youthful appearance. These three figures signify the implausibility of a purely monitory fallen man in the fin-de-siècle novel, since those who wreak havoc also serve as perfect specimens.

The Decadent movement has at least one intentionally impossible tenet as its goal: all of its members must necessarily fail at their attempts to maintain youth. In Wilde's novel, we have the story of the man who is destroyed by the "hideousness of age," though he appears eternally youthful and unblemished. Youth alone cannot drive a movement, and this is not the lone goal of true Decadent figures. Artistry drives Decadent writers, as is *Dorian Gray* proves, both in form

and in content. Ellis Hanson finds that "Most notoriously, the Decadents cultivated a fascination with all that was commonly perceived as unnatural or degenerate with sexual perversity, nervous illness, crime, and disease, all presented in a highly aestheticized context calculated to subvert or, at any rate, to shock conventional morality" (Hanson 3). Decadent figures appreciate the beauty of youth as they explore the darker side of human nature and British culture. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Basil's portrait meets the goals of aesthetic and Decadent movements, though it frustrates both artist and muse to death.

In the second half of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde emphasizes Dorian's heroic traits while he foreshadows his impending doom. In all fallen men narratives, dual plotlines indicate the choice that both authors and readers have when writing and interpreting texts. Wilde could punish or reward his dandies, and he does both when he allows Henry to get away with his indiscretions. While both Dorian and Basil suffer untimely deaths, Dorian Gray is responsible for the ruin of countless young men and women. Strikingly handsome, he remains a positive symbol of the Decadent movement, wherein youth and beauty—two traits he retains—are elevated in value:

> Lord Henry had prophesied a new Hedonism that was to recreate life, and to save it from that harsh, uncomely Puritanism that is having, in our day, its curious revival. It was to have its service of the intellect, certainly; yet it was never to accept any theory or system that would involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience. Its aim, indeed, was to be experience itself, and not the

> fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they might be. (107)

This novel differs from earlier fallen man narratives because both its narrator and its author are admittedly fallen men. In particular, the narrator encourages readers to give into desires in order to avoid the "asceticism that deadens the senses" (107).

After Dorian ceases to desire Sybil Vane, he berates her and abandons her, presumably to avoid "deadening his senses" with her poor acting in an East End theatre. He is provided with the perfect opportunity for irreverence, when he returns home to find the portrait altered. Dorian notices "a touch of cruelty in the mouth" (74). He realizes that "For every sin that he committed a stain would fleck and wreck its fairness. But he would not sin. The picture, changed or unchanged, would be to him the visible emblem of conscience" (75). For a moment, the novel hints at a lesson to be learned, as Dorian vows to resist temptation and repent by marrying Sybil:

> She could still be his wife. His unreal and selfish love would yield to some higher influence, would be to him what holiness is to some, and conscience to others, and the fear of God to us all. There were opiates for remorse, drugs that could lull the moral sense to sleep. But here was a visible symbol of the degradation of sin. Here was an ever-present sign of the ruin men brought upon their souls. (78)

Throughout Dorian's passionate but fleeting vow to reform, he maintains a sense of acceptance with regard to sin. Dorian will inevitably sin, and his picture will certainly show his sins. If Dorian were to embrace the separation of conscience and body, then he could presumably follow the example of Henry and be a Hedonist.

Hiding, not sinning, leads to Dorian's downfall. When Dorian causes Sybil's death, he is hiding in the fantasy of an East End theatre; when he murders Basil, he does so in an attempt to hide the deformed canvas from his friend. Since the portrait registers sin, Dorian is all flesh and no conscience. Rather than sinning, his repeated appeals to his conscience render him a fallen man.

Punishment and Reward

Dorian symbolizes at once what is beautiful and awful about the new Hedonism. When Dorian hears that Sybil has killed herself, he maintains his aesthetic principles when he tells Henry that he feels as though he has

> murdered her as surely as if I had cut her little throat with a knife. Yet the roses are not less lovely for all that. The birds sing just as happily. And to-night I am to dine with you and then go to the Opera, and sup somewhere, I suppose, afterwards. How extraordinarily dramatic life is! If I had read this all in a book, Henry, I think I would have wept over it. Somehow now that it has happened actually, and to me, it seems far too wonderful for tears. (79)

Dorian's conscience does not make him feel bad. Rather, the aesthetic representation of sinning—be it in the artist's or author's hand—becomes meaningful and tragic. Dorian, like Wilde, elevates art over meaning as he appreciates beauty and pleasure over even the most tragic of human experiences.

The focus on sin and consequence might suggest that a fallen man figure

could serve the same purpose in Wilde's novel as he did in earlier Victorian works: to warn readers against destructive behaviours. In the 1890s, however, fallen men are the norm rather than the exception in fiction. Dorian never really learns his lesson and he makes his vow to reform in vain, since the injured actress has already committed suicide. Wilde insists that the novel does not deliver moral lessons and Dorian is most unhappy when he is trying not to sin, especially since sinning is difficult to define. Sin and punishment are not directly correlated in this novel, and there is no singular monitory figure. Pressed by interviewers to reveal the "truth" behind his narrative, Wilde responded that he saw himself as Basil, the world sees him as Henry, but he would like to be Dorian (qtd. in Gillespie 12). The flamboyant and well-known Wilde professes to resemble the introverted and softly judgemental artist, and so further complicates notions of characterization. Oscar Wilde identifies with his fallen men, declaring boldly that the public need not find him nor his dandies to be fallen figures in an absolute sense.

Since Oscar Wilde characterizes Dorian in contradictory terms, he implies that his ideal audience will be able to accept this character without being able to pigeonhole him. In this regard, fallen men highlight the insufficiency of gender roles by visiting and transcending masculine categories. At the fin-de-siècle, Dorian Gray is a fallen man who goes beyond challenging masculine types when he questions the very notions of hero and villain that so dominated the literary critiques of his day. Since Dorian looks innocent but behaves deviously, he invites readers to consider notions of character. The moral of this book is not "don't judge a book by its cover." On the contrary, Wilde suggests that the outer and inner

value—be it of a man or a work of art—cannot be placed on a hierarchical scale with the reader or critic as its ultimate judge. After Dorian has already demonstrated callous and deviant behaviours, our narrator tells us that the handsome dandy "had always the look of one who had kept himself unspotted from the world. Men who talked grossly became silent when Dorian Gray entered the room. There was something in the purity of his face that rebuked them" (104). Because Dorian appears to be unscathed, he does maintain a certain purity that is real and influential. Dorian's treatment is a twist on fallen motifs from the Victorian era. Just as the appearance of promiscuity has fatal consequences for female characters, such as Hardy's Tess, or Eliot's Maggie Tulliver, so too does innocence mark Dorian as pure. Both Maggie and Tess die as though they are fallen woman—even though Maggie is lost at sea and Tess is drugged and raped. Writing against the confines of realism, Wilde does not allow his readers to cling to a single definition of Dorian Gray for very long, as we are made aware of the un-narrated ruin that he has wrought: "Some of those who had been most intimate with him appeared, after a time, to shun him. Women who had wildly adored him, and for his sake had braved all social censure and set convention at defiance, were seen to grow pallid with shame or horror if Dorian Gray entered the room" (116). Dorian has the same effect on women as fallen men before him. Unlike fallen men in *Daniel Deronda* or *Man and Wife*, Dorian ruins as many men as he does women, poor and wealthy alike. At a time when "manners are of more importance than morals, and in its [society's] opinion, the highest respectability is of much less value than the possession of a good *chef*" (Wilde 116-17), the fallen man is not

such an absolute threat as were his literary precursors because society is no longer wholly consumed with notions of moral righteousness. Good manners and careful grooming assure social acceptance; a dandy with a handsome and youthful appearance can enjoy full social acceptance and utter entitlement.

He centers his novel on the intriguing homo-social triangle of relations between Basil, Dorian, and Henry and he dictates their respective fates based on their ability to accept their own desires and actions. Basil wants so desperately to retrieve the Dorian who was his muse that he forces the handsome libertine to examine the crimes that he has kept from the world. The portrait exhibits Dorian's fails to resist temptation when it becomes marred with signifiers of his sinning. Or, as Elaine Showalter argues, the degenerating painting may very well be an image of "sexual disease, the outward sign of Dorian's sexuality in a repressive culture" (*Anarchy* 177). Dorian initially tries to satisfy patriarchal culture by vowing to deny his whims and ignore his passions: "For every sin that he committed a stain would fleck and wreck its fairness. But he would not sin. The picture, changed or unchanged, would be to him the visible emblem of conscience. He would resist temptation" (Wilde 75). The artist's portrait is also a scale of justice, an agent of propriety that categorizes Dorian's actions. By succumbing to the values of the portrait, Dorian ceases to enjoy his Decadent lifestyle. Decadent fallen men inspire others with their trysts and so complicate notions of hero and villain. According to Ellis Hanson, the masculinity of "the typical Decadent hero" is "confounded by his tendency to androgyny, homosexuality, masochism, mysticism, or neuroses" (Hanson 3). Dorian is a Decadent fallen figure who enjoys escape in its many

forms—art, theatre, literature, drugs, sex, and drink; "He had mad hungers that grew more ravenous as he fed them" (Wilde 105). While Dorian is well known in London circles for his illicit escapades, he still provokes admiration and envy from those around him:

> Indeed, there were many, especially among the very young men, who saw, or fancied that they saw, in Dorian Gray, the true realization of a type of which they had often dreamed in Eton or Oxford days, a type that was to combine something of the real culture of the scholar with all the grace and distinction and perfect manner of a citizen of the world. (99)

While the narrative dooms Dorian, he is not treated as a wholly fallen figure at any other point in the narrative. In the author's prologue Wilde posits Dorian as a new kind of hero: one that is flawed but free, immoral but irresistible.

Although Wilde may have noticed an evolution as British people relaxed their notions of social censure, he also acknowledged that the fulfillment of certain desires could still cause ruin for fin-de-siècle dandies. On his birthday, Dorian is forced to reckon with his past actions and to determine whether he is a hedonist or a callous sinner. Dorian's birthday signifies a rebirth, but it also emphasizes that Dorian does get older. Since Basil decides to confront Dorian on this fateful day, he reminds Dorian that he is, in fact aging. His sins are indeed catching up with him despite the aesthetic perfection that he maintains in his appearance. In this confrontation between painter and muse, Basil displays the passion of a jilted lover, and so solidifies our sense that same-sex desire holds a prominent place in this

novel. Basil warns Dorian that "the most dreadful things are being said against you in London" (123), a charge that Dorian answers indifferently. Basil insists on relaying the gossip, since in his estimation, "every gentleman is interested in his good name. You don't want people to talk of you as something vile and degraded." (122). Dorian does not care to know what is being said about him, but the reader's interest is piqued when Basil asks the damning question: "Why is your friendship so fatal to young men?" (123).

In fin-de-siècle popular fiction such as *Against the Grain* or *Trilby*, the excesses of Hedonistic lifestyle play a central role, but only in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* does the author address the issue of homosexuality so boldly. Basil goes on to list the men that Dorian has ruined:

> There was that wretched boy in the Guards who committed suicide. You were his great friend. There was Sir Henry Ashton, who had to leave England with a tarnished name. You and he were inseparable. What about Adrian Singleton and his dreadful end? What about Lord Kent's only son and his career? I met his father yesterday in St. James's Street. He seemed broken with shame and sorrow. What about the young Duke of Perth? What sort of life has he got now? What gentleman would associate with him? (123)

Basil never indicates precisely how Dorian brought Adrian, Henry Ashton, the son of Kent, or the Duke to ruin, but he insinuates that Dorian had close relationships with men, whose dissolution led to their social falls. The absence of details with regards to the cause of ruin connotes secrecy and emphasizes the gravity of deeds

that cannot be named.

In Dorian's response to Basil's accusations, he insists that men are naturally inclined to sin, without detailing what constitutes a sin. Dorian is, in his own analysis, not responsible for the debauchery and ruin of the men and women who have been discarded along the way. He responds to Basil by decrying gossip rather than vice: "In this country it is enough for man to have distinction and brains for every common tongue to wag against him. And what sort of lives do these people, who pose as being moral, lead themselves? My dear fellow, you forget that we are in the native land of the hypocrite" (124). According to Basil, Dorian has filled his friends with "a madness for pleasure. They have gone down into the depths. You led them there" (124). In the exchange between Dorian and Basil, the two men shift blame between each other and the ruined men, so that nobody emerges as the clear villain. Dorian implicates Basil in his own debauchery when he exclaims: "You met me, flattered me and taught me to be vain of my good looks [. . .] In a mad moment, that, even now, I don't know whether I regret or not, I made a wish, perhaps you would call it a prayer" (128). Dorian looks to transfer some blame to Basil, and Wilde allows him to do so with some success. Beyond the love-struck artist, Dorian suggests that his desire to remain young and handsome may have been sanctioned by a Christian God. If his wish is indeed a prayer, then vain Dorian can be read as humbled before a greater power. Implicitly, homosexual desire would be sanctioned by a divine power. This extreme degree of ambiguity distinguishes fin-de-siècle literature from its precursors. While Basil yearns for decency, Dorian embraces and even takes pride in his sins. He enjoys enormous freedom as a man who will never

age, although he certainly would have had a less turbulent ride had his fate not been mystically altered. This conversation opens up the possibility of a new morality, whereby every man is understood to be a sinner, and men are only destroyed by the gossip and critical judgment of fellow dandies.

The scene between Basil and Dorian is a confrontation between a moderate dandy and an extreme indulger, yet the most focal aspect of this encounter is that it culminates in Dorian's murdering of Basil, sole witness to the manifestation of his fallen, painted visage. Upheld as a positive value, the basis for the aesthetic movement, art is also the catalyst for murder: "suddenly an uncontrollable feeling of hatred for Basil Hallward came over him, as though it had been suggested to him by the image on the canvas, whispered into his ear by those grinning lips" (129). When he stabs Basil repeatedly in the head, Dorian is like Dr. Jekyll, unable to keep himself wholly distinct from his sinning other. Indeed, Dorian decides that "the secret of the whole thing was not to realise the situation" (130-1). Like Dr. Jekyll, Dorian attempts to cover up his sins with the help of science. He calls in Dr. Alan Campbell to destroy the evidence. Dr. Campbell has been ruined in some way by Dorian. After eighteen months of intimacy, Campbell avoided Dorian and became

> strangely melancholy at times, appeared almost to dislike hearing music of any passionate character, and would never himself play, giving as his excuse, when he was called upon, that he was so absorbed in science that he had no time left in which to practise. And this was certainly true. Every day he seemed to become more interested in biology, and his name appeared once or twice in some

> of the scientific reviews, in connection with certain curious experiments. (122)

The suggestion in this novel is that when a dandy succumbs to temptation, he does not pose the same kind of threat as a fallen man, since dandies are interested in diverse areas and dabble in many vices. They do not degenerate because of their indulgences, but rather they continue to feel and act in a youthful manner. When Dr. Campbell gives up his aesthetic pursuits in order to devote himself to science, he becomes a madder, more reclusive scientist.

Dorian pleads with his erstwhile friend to use science to disintegrate Basil's body; when his pleadings fail, he turns to blackmail, threatening Alan with a note that he has written. Presumably, the note reveals something devastating from their shared past. As Campbell reads the note, "his face became ghastly pale and he fell back in his chair. A horrible sense of sickness came over him. He felt as if his heart was beating itself to death in some empty hollow" (140). When Dr. Campbell finally succumbs to Dorian's pressure tactics, he seems to do so only to hide an unspeakable aspect of his past. The play between secret and revelation draws attention to the ubiquitous though unmentioned homosexuality of the characters. At a time when drunkenness, debauchery, and even promiscuity were acceptable practices, homosexuality was one of the last taboos. Therefore, when Alan Campbell shifts from refusal to acceptance on the basis of Dorian's unspecified threat, he appears to be covering up an affair with Dorian, the man who had once been to him the "type of everything that is wonderful and fascinating in life" (136).

Dorian has tremendous power over those around him, and he is therefore

able to maintain social acceptance and incur admiration even at his darkest moment. Just hours after Alan gets rid of Basil's body,

> exquisitely dressed and wearing a large button-hole of Parma violets, Dorian Gray was ushered into Lady Narborough's drawing-room by bowing servants. His forehead was throbbing with maddened nerves, and he felt wildly excited, but his manner as he bent over his hostess' hand was as easy and graceful as ever. Perhaps one never seems so much at one's ease as when one has to play a part. (143)

Dorian's ease does not last for very long and he is soon stuttering and stumbling when asked commonplace questions as to what he has been doing. More than at the scene of the murder, Dorian plunges into a state from which neither art nor artifice will help him to emerge. Although Dorian attempts to use his acting skills to disguise his sins, he can only fool others. In order to achieve true release, Dorian needs to leave the excesses of high society. Art, literature, plays, and dinner parties cannot erase the crime from Dorian's mind, so he seeks the one thing that might do just that.

After committing murder, Dorian heads to the "opium dens where one could buy oblivion, dens of horror where the memory of old sins could be destroyed by the madness of sins that were new" (151). As he heads to the den, Dorian repeats Henry's phrase "To cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul" (151). He wants to justify his "slumming" with aesthetic ideology. The narrator of *Dorian Gray,* master of witticisms and lover of beauty, describing

Dorian in his most dissolute state, creates a clear distinction between dandy and deviant. As Dorian hires a cab to take him to the East End den, "[t]he hideous hunger for opium began to gnaw at him. His throat burned and his delicate hands twitched nervously together. He struck at the horse madly with his stick. The driver laughed and whipped up" (152). In Lady Narborough's drawing room, Dorian offers snooty remarks by which he labels the party as "tedious" and various dinner guests as "mediocre," "plain," and "dull" (144). Now in the cab, he is no longer the bored social critic; rather, he is subject to the scorn and judgement of his hired driver. In Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas*, the scheming fallen man sips laudanum calmly in his armchair, rarely experiencing withdrawal symptoms because he always has a doctor to provide him with his opiate. Class concerns are irradiated by Wilde's novel. Although many aphorisms address class, nobody seems to mind interclass mingling. Lords and criminals mingle in the opium den. At the same time, Dorian's descent to the opium den marks a strange crossroads in the narrative: the protagonist become self-effacing, scared, and shamed.

Readers who had pored over Victorian novels would certainly approach *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with the goal of uncovering meaning. According to Alexander Welsh,

> Pronounced endings of nineteenth-century novels conceal a deepening contradiction between the belief that history is endless and the desire to make an end: that is, the endings are emphatic because they are proclaimed against the narrative's own assumption of continuing development and change, during the quite sudden and

> enormous lengthening of the scale of history in this period. The best example in English literature is *The Mill on the Floss*, in which George Eliot assumes a developmental perspective in order to explore family, social, and economic history, together with her heroine's growth in consciousness —with many analogies to natural and sexual selection thrown in—only to overturn her entire complex history by means of the prophesized flood in the end. (18)

Eliot's popular early novel appeases readers who seek an overarching moral lesson to solidify the novel's meaning and, consequently, its worth. George Eliot's realism is a source of negative inspiration for Wilde. In Wilde's preface, he ends his treatise on aesthetic literature by stating that "all art is useless" (17). Eliot delivers biblical punishment to rebellious Maggie Tulliver, while Wilde divides punishments unequally among the three dandies.

According to Christine Ferguson, decadence has often been read as escape, since novels such as *Dorian Gray* and *Against the Grain* end with destruction or negation. According to Ferguson, decadence is "the fulfilment and logical conclusion of one of the most fundamental of all Victorian values, scientific positivism" (466). If art does not offer meaning, then it becomes a release from meaning, as this novel indicates. Rather than relying on superstition or morality for meaning, Victorians turned to science, although with a great degree of skepticism. Dandies rely on human experience for answers, even if their conclusions are vague and indeterminate. Ferguson explains her claim by simplifying the comparison between Decadents and scientists: "While the experimental clinician cures disease,

the Decadent artist simply studies it [. . .] hoping it might reveal beauty" (Ferguson 467). Scientists choose to be fallen, while artists are fallen by nature.

So long as Dorian can live artfully, he does not suffer any consequences. Even though he dies when he tries to stab the portrait, Dorian does not fall to his horrific fate because of an omniscient, authorial judgment. Henry triumphs in a narrative world wherein both Dorian and Basil fail because he enjoys the treasures and pleasures of privileged life without sacrificing his primal urges. He is not weighed down by his conscience, nor is he a slave to overwhelming desire. In one of his famously flippant moments, Lord Henry exclaims "I think that it is better to be beautiful than to be good. But on the other hand, no one is more ready than I am to acknowledge that it is better to be good than to be ugly" (160). This dandy embodies the aesthetic ideal both in word and in action. By contrast, Basil yearns for Dorian with the zeal of a lover, and Dorian emulates Henry like a smitten teenager. Henry saves himself from emotional and physical ruin by immersing himself wholeheartedly into the practice of pleasing himself and impressing others.

Dorian takes his place as one of the nineteenth century's last fallen men when he chooses to devote himself wholeheartedly to exploring the ugly depths of his conscience with hypothetical ramblings on crime and punishment:

> Oh! In what a wild hour of madness he had killed his friend! How ghastly the mere memory of the scene! He saw it all again. Each hideous detail came back to him with added horror. Out of the black cave of time, terrible and swathed in scarlet, rose the image of his sin. When Lord Henry came in at six o'clock, he found him crying as

> one whose heart will break. (165)

Dorian does not even attempt to find pleasure any longer, since he is too busy remembering his sins, particularly the murder. So long as dandies dedicate themselves to pursuing pleasure, they participate in a new, freer masculine culture, in which impulse and instinct replace stuffy conventions and monitory figures.

In one of the final scenes of the novel, Lord Henry, not knowing the severity of Dorian's self-berating, exclaims to his friend, "I am so glad that you have never done anything, never carved a statue, or painted a picture, or produced anything outside of yourself! Life has been your art. You have set yourself to music. Your days are your sonnets" (Wilde 178). If Dorian's days are poetry, then they are meant to live on and gain new life with interpretation. In "The Critic as Artist," Gilbert, who appears to be Wilde's mouthpiece, defines the highest arts as

> Life and Literature, life and the perfect expression of life. The principles of the former, as laid down by the Greeks, we may not realise in an age so marred by false ideals as our own [. . .] Even the work of Mr. Pater, who is, on the whole, the most perfect master of English prose now creating amongst us, is often far more like a piece of mosaic than a passage in music, and seems, here and there, to lack the true rhythmical life of words and the fine freedom and richness of effect that such rhythmical life produces. (56)

Dorian Gray is a perfect artist for a time, then, since his life brings about the kinetic reaction that Wilde emphasizes as significant. Wilde destabilizes his own stance by alternately describing music, life, and literature as supreme. He leaves room for

individual interpretation of Dorian's life by calling it art.

Trilby

At the fin-de-siècle, artistry was in vogue. Immorality, by extension, became an acceptable, sometimes enviable, character trait. In order to portray the depths of human nature, artists had to have life experience, some of which implicitly rendered them fallen. The fallen men in fin-de-siècle literature do not stand out as seductive villains, but rather they represent the normative male figure of their day. In George Du Maurier's 1894 novel, *Trilby*, the trait of fallenness is attributed to most characters, including the three self-indulgent dandies, an ill-fated model, and a Jewish mesmerist. By using the anti-triple-decker novel to discuss inevitable yet tricky topics, Wilde sets an example which inspired other Decadent writers, such as George Du Maurier, a novelist who infuses his work with homophobia *and* aesthetic principles. Even novelists who abhorred and feared the excesses of Decadent lifestyle, partook of the aesthetic movement by "dealing with episodes instead of writing biographies." (qtd in Showalter 16). George Du Maurier promotes patriarchal British values even as he disavows their structures. In *Trilby*, Du Maurier's dandies are almost childlike in their nicknames. He draws cartoonish likenesses of Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee, thereby accentuating their innocence. Du Maurier responds to Wilde's dandies with his similarly modeled homosocial love triangle. Little Billee, a middle-class artist hopelessly in love with a fallen woman, seems to be modelled on Basil: neither artist consummates his passionate desires. Both die young, leaving behind only artistic manifestations of

the objects of their lust. Billee fixates on Trilby's foot, and immortalizes it in art, just as Basil puts "too much" of himself into the portrait of Dorian.

Dennis Denisoff notes that in Du Maurier's later works, including *Trilby*, Du Maurier appears to be "not especially fond of the male dandy-aesthetes to which he refers" (147). Rather than discriminate outright against his dandies, Du Maurier splits the dandy-aesthete, embodying certain idealized artistic traits within the sensitive English gentlemen, while imposing less desirable components onto a Jewish genius (Denisoff 153). Du Maurier's novel upholds artistic principles and aesthetic living even as it clings onto Victorian double standards. Dennis Denisoff does not read Du Maurier's masculine types as Victorian clichés, but rather he finds that Du Maurier creates ambiguity that characterized much art of the 1890s:

> Reinforcing heterosexual/homosexual and masculine/feminine binary paradigms, *Trilby* has each central male character display diverse traits based on sexuality, gender performance, ethnicity, genius, and artistic genre, each of which carries a different, fluctuating weight within the character's identity. (Denisoff 147)

Du Maurier does fabricate overlaps between his upright and fallen characters. *Trilby* explores fallenness as a broader question, even though ultimately Du Maurier succumbs mostly to simplistic notions of morality and punishment by scapegoating the fallen woman and the Jewish mesmerist.

Du Maurier's dandies, however, are separated in time and place from their author. Their boyish escapades happen far away in the Quartier Latin in mid-century. As Elaine Showalter notes, "It has become standard to describe *Trilby* as a

'*roman-a-clef*,' or a dependable autobiographical memoir of Paris in the 1850s" She goes on to add that "Du Maurier's bohemian Paris is as much an invention as a reality, and as much a projection of the 1890s as a recollection of the 1850s" (Showalter, "Introduction" xii). While Oscar Wilde has his hero fall into the trap of his own conscience, Du Maurier is more conservative in his stated principles than Wilde. Du Maurier distinguishes clearly between the forgivable debauchery of his dandy figures and the stained character of the fallen woman. Nonetheless, Du Maurier delights repeatedly in describing male friendship as deep, emotional bonds and in so doing, Du Maurier takes part in the gender upheaval that characterized the 1890s. Taffy and the Laird go on to father families, while the effeminate Little Billee dies unmarried and, presumably, celibate.

In his single-volume novel, Du Maurier affirms his positioning as a fin-de siècle author when he explores the overlapping subjects of art and male friendship amongst Taffy, the Laird, Little Billee, Trilby and Svengali. Denisoff finds that art disguises male homosociality, and such overlaps lessen the divide between class and race in the novel: "Contrary to the usual critical interpretation of Little Billee as a prude and Svengali as a demon, Du Maurier actually conjoins the two men by positioning them at different points on a spectrum of genius" (Denisoff 154). Gendered categories break down most pointedly when Du Maurier exposes the intimate nature of the relationship between dandies in the Quartier Latin. The narrator, a nostalgic and witty presence, departs from the story to offer up an ode to the male friendships which have come to resemble marriages:

> Oh, ye impecunious, unpinnacled young inseparables of eighteen,

> nineteen, twenty, even twenty-five, who share each other's thoughts and purses, and wear each other's clothes, and swear each other's oaths, and smoke each other's pipes, and respect each other's lights o' love, and keep each other's secrets, and tell each other's jokes, and pawn each other's watches and merrymake together on the proceeds, and sit all night by each other's bedsides in sickness, and comfort each other in sorrow and disappointment with silent, manly sympathy —'wait till you get to forty year!' (95)

The narrator alternates between admiring manly friendships and mocking them. He renders the depiction of prancing dandies repeatedly throughout the narrative, only to warn the young men that they will not experience such freedom once they are older or married.

Du Maurier occasionally opens up questions of homo-social bonds and inter-faith marriages. At other times, he makes snap character judgements and expects his readers to do the same. Misogynistically, he warns readers that Trilby "had all the virtues but one; but the virtue she lacked was of such a kind that I find it quite impossible to tell her history as to make it quite fit and proper reading" (35). Trilby's sexuality poses a threat to the social order. Trilby, a femme fatale and artist's model with mannish features, mesmerizes men with her body and her voice. The dandies prance around gaily, but they do not stir up controversy as do Wilde's. The three artists showcase the inevitability of evolved gender roles, whereby men can be feminized and women can be both vilified and attractive. Du Maurier ultimately adheres to conservative principles when he has Trilby die the death of a

fallen woman praying for salvation, while Wilde hints boldly at same-sex love.

Women are mostly absent from the Decadent literary scene, and females rarely even appeared as substantial characters in late century writing. Elaine Showalter notes this conspicuous absence and she finds that "women reappear as objects of value in Decadent writing only when they are desexualized through maternity or thoroughly aestheticized, stylized, and turned into icons or fetishes" (Showalter *Anarchy* 170). Wilde and Dorian both use Sybil Vane until her aesthetic value decreases, while morally indignant socialites praise Trilby, the fallen woman, for her grace, beauty, and talent. Nina Auerbach writes about Trilby's powerful persona: "The put-upon heroine of George Du Maurier's *Trilby* is not fragile [. . .] but a virtual giantess" (284). Auerbach adds, "Trilby's metamorphic power enervates her master [. . .] but takes possession of the novel [. . .] As simultaneous siren and angel, she haunts Little Billee as an image of infinite change" (286). Trilby's size, power of mutability and sexuality are all aspects of her character that makes her a threat to men. Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee all worship and admire this artist's model, as do readers who took part in "Trilby mania" by wearing Trilby hats and clothing, emulating the fallen woman. The alluring femme fatale intrigues but she also threatens. She goes from being unable to carry a tune to being able to sing in a voice "immense in its softness, richness, freshness" (Du Maurier 203). When Svengali is not conducting her, Trilby (renamed *La Svengali*) reverts to her old self when trying to sing to an expectant audience: she can neither sing nor understand why they want her to (237-8). The power that Trilby has over men before her metamorphosis is replaced by a different sort of hold that she has over

her audiences as La Svengali.

Although both men kill off their ill-fated women of the stage, Wilde follows through on his cultural exploration while Du Maurier retreats to stereotypes and banalities when his dandies embrace their own masculinity and the "undesirables" fade away. Furthermore, Wilde explores possibilities for female characters with Lady Bracknell in his well-known 1895 play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde presents the Sybil Vane incident as just that—an incident. In his play, Wilde finds a role for female aesthetes, when he presents Lady Bracknell as a mouthpiece for aesthetic values: "Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone" (1.1.696). Wilde brings issues of homosexuality to the forefront. Jack and Algernon go "bunburrying" to escape the boredom—and presumably repression—of city life. This act, a barely veiled reference to sodomy, does not deter men from fitting into the London social scene. Lady Bracknell never raises points of conscience when asked for approval on marital issues, but she does insist upon class snobbery as a means of assuring that Jack is a suitable companion for Gwendolen. She forbids her nephew Algernon from getting baptized. "I will not hear of such excesses" (3.1.717), she declares, in a clear condemnation of religious practice. She turns a blind eye to bunburrying and allows her daughter to marry a man of questionable origins. She will not, however, allow for the church, a symbol of overarching morality, to orchestrate her relative's development. Lady Bracknell resembles Lord Henry in her witty one-liners and class snobbery. She presents an image of a woman who can control action and entertain audiences. By allowing female characters to embody aesthetic philosophy,

Wilde takes his gender-bending principles beyond the limitations of the male-centered decadent movement.

Wilde's bold take on femininity emphasizes, by contrast, the stasis of Du Maurier's gender ideology. Du Maurier keeps women removed from the aesthetic movement, except as muses or fetishes. Although Trilby creates art when she sings, she can only perform under the spell of Svengali. A pawn, she is unable to control even her own actions. His male characters are also relatively conservative, since they are English enough to maintain respectability despite their dubious activities, such as spending time with nude models, over-indulging in drink, and displaying excessive affection for one another. Du Maurier insists on maintaining a strong sense of class and cultural hierarchy, even when it gets in the way of true love. Although Billee and Trilby are in love, Mrs. Bagot comes from London to inform the artist's model that she is not good enough for her son. She prompts a series of events that will restore manliness and Englishness to her "young and tender" (Du Maurier 20) son. Trilby leaves Paris at Mrs. Bagot's request, which causes Billee to have an outpouring of emotion. In this outburst, Billee tries to defy the Victorian virtue of social position that his mother has imposed upon Trilby: "Damn social position! [. . .] An artist's life should be *away* from the world—above all that meanness and paltriness… all in his work. Social position, indeed! Over and over again we've said what fetid bestial rot it all was [. . .] Love comes before all—love levels all—love and art" (130). Billee fears that he will never create art again, but ultimately he becomes an acclaimed painter, celebrated in the highest circles of London society. Billee can enjoy his life as a freedom-loving dandy only insofar as

he remains in the Quartier Latin. To experience success, however, Billee must toughen up. He does just that when Trilby leaves him and he weeps, falls into a deep sleep, and then awakens to discover that "his power of loving [. . .] was gone for ever and ever [. . .] where all that had once been was a void" (Du Maurier 132). With Mrs. Bagot's visit, Du Maurier implies that the dandy life of free love and homoerotic relationships can only be satisfying within the confines of their chosen locale. Although Du Maurier creates intricate male characters with powers to attract women, earn a living, create art, show emotion, and love their male friends, this author distinguishes himself from his dandies by skewing the plot to favour English decency over the more interesting values that are upheld in the Quartier Latin in the 1850s. While readers insisted that Wilde's novel was based on his own life, Du Maurier distances himself from all representations of bohemianism and experimentation.

Basil only escapes his overwhelming desire in death, while Dorian, like Little Billee, is unable to love again after his icon has been sacrificed. Dorian admits that self-loathing defeats him, whereas Du Maurier's Little Billee creates beautiful art once he has seen the ugly side of love. The contrast between Dorian Gray and Little Billee highlights how controversial and daring Oscar Wilde was as both a writer and a social thinker. Dorian Gray falls from his position as hedonist when he allows his conscience to dictate his actions; Little Billee is saved from effeminacy and ruin when he listens to the voice of British conscience in the form of Mrs. Bagot. Du Maurier allows Billee to express his belief that love and art should come before all else, but the author ultimately tames Billee's desires as he

Anglicizes him and renders him more masculine and more successful. In *The Picture of Dorian* Gray, Wilde, unlike Du Maurier, does not distance himself from his characters by time and place. *Dorian Gray* takes place in Wilde's current milieu. Both novelists acknowledge that categories of gender, class, and race are evolving. Du Maurier, by representing male camaraderie that resembles romantic love, destabilizes race and class boundaries. Moreover, Trilby marries the Jewish mesmerist and becomes *La Svengali* under his spell, captivating European audiences with her incredible voice and alluring persona.

Influence of the Risen Man

Wilde's topsy-turvy play and novel inspired both popular fashion and sexual politics: "Wilde was [. . .] one of the leading theorists of decadence and his novel was the English bible of decadence as well as a kind of bible for male homosexuals, inspiring a particular cult of behaviour, dress, and speech" (Showalter, *Anarchy* 176). Wilde's novel was both shocking and popular: a delightful book of witticisms and a binding symbol for a group of homosexual men who longed to proclaim tastes and proclivities. Michael Patrick Gillespie finds that, "like the Impressionist paintings contemporaneous with Basil's work, the portrait serves as a gauge of developing sensibilities rather than as a manifestation of passive reception" (Gillespie 20). Dorian is most unhappy when he is trying not to sin, especially since sin is difficult to define amongst his cohort. The Decadent thinker would be wary of dichotomous notions of right and wrong, sinner and saint, and such a reader would see the portrait, not Dorian, as the villain of the novel.

Gillespie finds that Dorian rejects creativity and "directs most of his energy to hoarding sensations and experiences. He continually contravenes the most creative aspect of his nature—his capacity to live outside the bounds imposed by society—by seeking to suppress all physical evidence of his accomplishments" (21). Dorian dies because he cannot live artfully so long as his indiscretions are deemed to be sins.

By trying to live up to the expectations of the painting and the aesthetic philosophy of Lord Henry, Dorian, like fallen figures before him, is doomed from the start. Unique to the late-century fallen man, however, he retains his inconclusiveness. When Dorian is asked by the Duchess whether Henry's philosophy makes him happy, his response and the ensuing exchange provoke more questions:

> "I have never searched for happiness. Who wants happiness? I have searched for pleasure."
>
> "And found it, Mr. Gray?"
>
> "Often. Too often." (162)

Dorian may feel as though his indulgences have been excessive, but Wilde does not appear to agree with his character. Dorian distinguishes between pleasure and happiness, suggesting that the vices to which he succumbs are pastimes to distract him from the hollowness of unfulfilled desire. Homosexual love is both perfect in its aesthetic from, and the source of pain and torment for lovesick Basil. Dorian and Henry enjoy a homosocial bond, though they both have relationships with women as well. Basil is steadfast and resolute in his desire for Dorian and he must be

killed off in order for the remaining dandies to maintain a sham of heterosexuality. Basil threatens to reveal the truth about same-sex desire: that it is a permanent condition and not just a phase that adolescents go through.

In a novel where flippant remarks overlap with deep-seated cultural issues, the impact of plot guides the moral impact of this work. After James Vane is tricked into believing that Dorian is not himself, a hunter accidentally kills Sybil's vengeful brother. Wilde makes us aware of the choice he has made here—Dorian could have died at the hands of James Vane, but instead he gets himself killed when sneaking around and spying on Dorian. Distinguishing himself from authors of fallen man narratives such as Collins, Le Fanu, and Eliot, Wilde does not kill Dorian as a means of distinct punishment. To the very end, Dorian attracts the reader more than he repels. He wants, after all, to find happiness. Unlike fallen men before him, he recognizes and regrets his sins. According to Jeff Nunokawa, Henry's influence on Dorian Gray combines irreverence with style: "Extending beyond both sanctioned and scandalous species of sexual passion, the desires that Lord Henry encourages include as well the upmarket varieties of consumer demand" (160). No longer a threat to his family's economic status, the fin-de-siècle fallen man raises his stature by participating in genteel consumerism. Dorian desires objets d'art alongside Sybil and Henry, yet fulfilling his desire for material goods is the only desire that gets narrated in the novel. When Dorian does not attain satisfaction from his lovely collectibles, he insinuates that he has other needs that cannot be comfortably or openly fulfilled. Jeff Nunokawa claims that

> There is still a secret to be told about *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a

> secret no less open, only less sensational than the scandalous passions all but named in the novel that all but exposed the secret of its author's own. Let's face it, the book is boring [. . .] If the engrossing rumour of covert desires attached to *Dorian Gray* distracts us for a while from our boredom with the novel, it is finally no more to be denied than the more pressing urges that everyone knows nothing can stop. (151)

Nunokawa does not find *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to be boring per se. He argues that boredom is the breeding ground for desire. The three dandies in Wilde's novel indulge their whims to different extremes, yet they are all in a perpetual state of desire, destined never to be fulfilled. Eventually, according to Nunokawa, "unremarkable as the need for sleep, the bodily exhaustion that underwrites desire's decline in *Dorian Gray*, is also as unmentionable as the dread of death" (Nunokawa 155). If perpetual youth and aesthetic pleasure are two of the goals of Decadent dandy culture, then both boredom and death represent the end of desire and, in an instance of artistic symbiosis, these possible outcomes signal the end of narrative. When the desire to indulge in sex, drink, and drugs—even murder—give way to boredom for Dorian, his narrative purpose ceases and Wilde sacrifices him to an idea of aesthetic perfection.

Dorian evolves from a happy, though naïve, boy to a thoughtful, tortured man. In the scene before his death, Dorian is at a party with Henry to whom he laments, "I wish I could love [. . .] But I seem to have lost the passion and forgotten the desire. I am too much concentrated on myself. My own personality has become

a burden to me. I want to escape, to go away, to forget" (168). Dorian may be dissatisfied with Hedonistic pleasures, but he can indulge in them freely. He hints that there is a part of him that can never be free so long as he lives under the microscope of social censure.

Basil is a prisoner to his desire for Dorian just as Giles Winterborne suffers for denying his sexual impulses. Hardy's fallen doctor celebrates his sexuality much like Dorian's dandified mentor, Lord Henry celebrates his vice-ridden lifestyle. When Henry insists that "the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it" (15), he questions the very notion of vice. Fin-de-siècle dandies differ from the fallen men who precede them, because they embrace deviance and they don't apologize for it nor do they warn against it. Moreover, fallen men such as Silas, Grandcourt, Delamayn, and Benjulia repel other characters with their deviousness. In Wilde's novel, dandies are well-received social figures who delight others with their witticisms and shocking opinions. In the 1890s, dandies of mainstream fiction prove to be humorous, attractive figures. In the novels where dandies are portrayed deliberately and directly, the men have intricate relationships, charged with desire, but they maintain marriages and the appearance of heterosexuality. Oscar Wilde exposes this hypocrisy through his anti-nuptial married dandy figure, Lord Henry. Dandies are often melodramatic passionate lovers with impressive talents and extensive knowledge. They make puns and historical references; they also seduce women with little effort.

Writing on the brink of the twentieth century, Oscar Wilde displays bold hope for the future with regards to gender identity and sexual freedom. The only

character to avoid suffering and scandal in the novel is the irreverent, harmless Lord Henry. If this character represents an ideal, then it is one whereby truth and constancy are not values to be upheld. Anarchy characterizes the closing sentiment of the novel when Henry, as a successful hedonist, proclaims contradictory statements unapologetically. "Art had a soul, man had not" (177), he declares just pages before he assures Dorian that he could not possibly have been poisoned by a book. Henry concludes that art "has no influence upon action. It annihilates the desire to act. It is superbly sterile [. . .] The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its own shame. That is all. But we won't discuss literature" (179). Taking aesthetic principles to extreme lengths, Lord Henry does not want to acknowledge the kinetic force that art becomes once it is released for public consumption. As in the preface, Wilde uses Henry to express simultaneously how ineffectual and omniscient art is. Henry refuses to discuss literature and Dorian's downfall is propelled by a book. Wilde ends his novel by undermining the literary value of his and other novels. He concludes that no act of interpretation is final or meaningful. Dorian is neither vilified nor glorified; he is neither fallen nor risen in an absolute sense. Dorian Gray, unlike any other fallen man, symbolizes hope for a future where sexual difference is celebrated rather than prosecuted.

Conclusion

Fallen Men and their Afterlife

> "Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new habits, to have little new hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future. We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen." (Lawrence 1)

The fallen man exposes an important truth about Victorian values that will have resonance in twentieth-century texts: moral codes are only as strong as the masses who believe in them. By proving that the fallen man is a recurring figure in the Victorian novel, this dissertation demonstrates that categories of masculinity and femininity are tenuous and penetrable. Fallen men infuriate and empower women; they are the daring response to a cultural overload of restrictive gender and narrative expectations. When authors investigate and define the terms of male fallenness, they imply that femininity and masculinity are formed along a continuum rather than within a dichotomy. When fallen men disturb clear-cut destinies, they urge readers to stop placing their faith in abstract ideals. Readers of fallen men narratives are encouraged to adapt their expectations to suit the more interesting and complex moral climate which real Victorians inhabit. Investigating the recurrence of fallen man narratives, I have found that they are marked by supernatural or sensational elements. Le Fanu, Eliot, Hardy, and Wilde do not claim to reflect life as it really is; through their fallen man narratives, they contemplate

whether they can claim to know the "truth" about how people should or do behave. With their focus on vice and cruelty, authors of fallen man narratives set the stage for a reconfiguration of narrative that will take place in the twentieth century. The fallen man is always on the cusp of change; I have argued that he provokes cultural restructuring by exposing the flaws of a class of men who were previously irreproachable. Devious, dashing men disturb narratives by dispelling myths about gender and by failing to facilitate closure with their untimely deaths.

Novels that punish bad characters and reward good ones cater to a morally censorious public that wants to see Christian values rewarded. Religious beliefs are tied up in ideology about death. Death is very important to Victorians as evidenced by their elaborate mourning rituals; ceremonial gestures and styles of dress are attached to spirituality and mortality. Fallen men question but do not cause such beliefs to be discarded when their deaths provoke uncertainty. Silas, Grandcourt, Delamayn, and Benjulia exist in fatalist universes, while Fitzpiers, Dorian, Henry, and Basil do not. W. J. McCormack has noted that Le Fanu's Silas is described "in a multitude of visual details," while other characters are described vaguely, if at all (161). Silas' appearance, concludes McCormack, "decidedly odd as it is in many descriptions, is not only distinctive in itself, but marks him off from other characters who lack any comparable detail. The effect is to suggest virtually an added dimension to his existence" (161). McCormack claims that Silas is an image of death, as a symbol for life. Silas sometimes seems dead to Maud when he stumbles around, dazed, stupefied, and clothed in his ghost-like apparel. The death imagery inherent in this figure points to his doomed fate. Eliot's Grandcourt is described as "immovable," with "dead features," long before his drowning gives freedom

to his mistress and his wife. Angus Wilson remarks on how pervasively Eliot emphasizes death imagery with Grandcourt; "there is something over and above the evil that we can explain psychologically or socially in Grandcourt; that there is a quality of death about him which transcends the man himself" (Wilson 9). Like Silas, Grandcourt's appearance brands him as fallen and fated to die.

Although fallen men's deaths are catalysts for female empowerment, such endings nonetheless reinforce beliefs in heaven and hell by punishing villainous men. Attributing fallenness to male characters is a bold move on the part of Le Fanu, Collins, Eliot, Hardy, and Wilde. A fear of the afterlife pervaded Victorian fiction and culture. Only the latter two novelists, however, go so far as to suggest that heaven and hell might not matter. Fallenness is inherently linked to sexuality, death, and afterlife. Regina Barreca argues that for the Victorians, "Balancing mortality with sexuality sets up a dialectic for the interplay between fear and desire as the perpetual human condition [. . .]. Sex and death both indicated the limits of human control and were therefore to be feared" (1). When a Victorian character does not fear sex, he opts out of a Victorian code of values. Alexander Welsh claims that Victorian authors succumb to the general phenomenon of intensifying "the sense of an ending in order to account for the disruption of the narrative and to satisfy contradictory desires" (Welsh 9). Authors of fallen man narratives give way to contradictory desires and narrative disruptions in favour of orchestrated closure. In *Uncle Silas*, *Daniel Deronda*, and *Man and Wife*, the fallen man is deemed unlikable by all respectable characters when he dies. Such novels leave unanswered questions, unresolved grudges, and unfulfilled desires. Hardy has Fitzpiers, the sexually active doctor, survive in a Darwinian landscape wherein virility is an asset.

Heart and Science has been criticized for its didacticism and, implicitly, its lack of moral ambiguity. Nonetheless, Collins punishes Benjulia but rewards Ovid Vere even though both are surgeons. Collins resists absolute dichotomies when he exhibits traces of compassion for Benjulia. Like Benjulia, Dorian is not categorically a villain and his death is not a catalyst for closure. When Dorian's decayed body is discovered alongside the perfect portrait, he leaves witnesses intrigued and confused. His impact exceeds the space of the novel as this character and his unstable values seep into the very fabric of British society.

In Le Fanu's Gothic Victorian novel, Maud never determines whether Silas dies by accident or suicide. In *Man and Wife*, Geoffrey has a fatal seizure, precisely at the moment when Hester is attempting to kill him. In *Daniel Deronda*, Grandcourt drowns, but we never find out whether Gwendolen consciously contributes to her husband's death. Benjulia kills himself, but his death is classified as an accident so that he can be buried with respect. Fitzpiers lives, signifying a changing purpose for sexually promiscuous men who are prone to vice. In Wilde's three-way split, two fallen men die and one continues to thrive. Like earlier fallen man narratives, Basil's and Dorian's deaths are ambiguous. We know how Basil dies, but his loss is never really felt in the narrative. As Dorian posits, "If one doesn't talk about a thing, it has never happened" (88). Moreover, when Dorian stabs the telltale portrait, he might be trying to kill his conscience, or he might be committing suicide. If fallen men choose to die, then they are empowered to the last. Their deaths bring about closure and raise questions. Wilde has homosexual desire act as an impetus for Basil's death, while conscience kills Dorian. Meaning is turned inside out when same-sex desire and conscience are equally punished

with violent stabbing.

Definitions of narrative shift drastically from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Oscar Wilde is a critical figure in this shift as he alternates between celebrating aesthetic values and homosexual desire in *Dorian Gray* to bemoaning fate in "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." Persecuted for being a homosexual, Wilde develops a cynical approach after two years in prison. His dark poem also decries the horrors of death penalty. In a fallen world, writers take their experiences and write about the misery they have seen and imagined. After 1895, Wilde is a broken man; a humiliated former public figure. He can no longer play the role of snob or light-hearted critic when he no longer feels that he is socially superior. Although it decries injustice, "The Ballad of Reading Gaol," like *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, still addresses and incorporates Victorian religious values. Andrew Smith has noted that in this poem, the murderer "comes to be associated, implicitly with Christ. The language of blood and wine [. . .] suggests the Eucharist. The murderer becomes the victim and is generalised into an everyman who reflects all of society's injustice" (Smith 164). Wilde appreciates Christian symbolism even as he reinvents it. He represents disillusionment with a system, but faith in beauty. Instead of warning readers about vice, Wilde tells the story of indulgence in *Dorian Gray* and injustice in *Reading Gaol*. In Wilde's fiction and poetry, conclusions are suggested but not drawn in an absolute sense. The poem centers on an execution of a man who has murdered his wife, but Wilde does not condemn the criminal. Through this poem, Wilde defies morality by claiming that everyone is guilty of equivalent or worse crimes:

> Yet each man kills the thing he loves
>
> By each let this be heard,

Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!
Some kill their love when they are young,
And some when they are old;
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,
Some with the hands of Gold:
The kindest use a knife, because
The dead so soon grow cold.

Scandalously, Wilde suggests that murder is an act of bravery in comparison to the less visceral but more painful and enduring "murders" of heart and soul. Ordinary men betray their lovers because they are driven by lust and greed. Dead people can soon be forgotten while the heartbroken must continue to suffer. Wilde's morally ambiguous work is a pre-cursor to modernist writing wherein linearity is discarded in favor of cryptic meaning.

Fallen men are a dying breed in both a social and a narratological sense. The Victorian novel is an ideal breeding ground for fallen figures; twentieth-century texts, in contrast, are disjointed in structure and explicit in theme. Thomas Hardy is an author who straddles the border between centuries and styles. He became famous for his novels in the Victorian period and for his poetry in the twentieth century. In many regards, Thomas Hardy inaugurates the movement away from fallenness with his last novel, *Jude the Obscure*. Jude tries to make a name for himself but is held back by marriage. Jude is born into a working-class home, but dreams of studying at university. Jude wants to rise above

his circumstances but he is circumvented twice: first he is tricked into marrying Arabella and later he falls helplessly in love with his cousin, Sue Bridehead. Legitimate marriage and adulterous coupling are both treated as impediments. According to the collapsed hierarchy of Hardy's novel, neither morality nor birth affects standing. Unfortunate twists of fate lead Jude and his family to misery and destruction, but he does not succumb to vice or degeneracy; he simply is a victim of circumstance.

Hardy does not wholly submit to gender limitations in his novels, and even less so in his poetry. He wrote poems throughout his career, but he only began publishing them collectively once he stopped writing novels. In fact, Hardy was unable to get his unconventional and suggestive poems published as an unknown author in the 1850s and 60s. In *The Woodlanders*, Hardy expands upon gendered possibilities, but he also submits to some conventions of fallen woman narratives when he has Felice Charmond die at the hands of a spurned lover. In "The Ruined Maid," Hardy offers a more progressive commentary on female sexuality. Written in 1866, but published in 1901, this poem makes an important distinction between ruin and fallenness. As Phillip Mallett finds, the well-dressed ruined maid "seems proud of, but irreversibly numbed by her new comforts and position, and what she did to get to them" (284). The last line of each stanza offers a twist on definitions of ruin. In the first stanza, the maid casually asks, "O didn't you know I was ruined?" (4). By the final stanza, the virtuous and unornamented speaker expresses her material desire, propelled by the dainty appearance of her friend: "I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown / And a delicate face, and could strut about Town" (21-2). Rather than judging or pitying the woman who sells her body, the implicitly frumpy speaker envies her. The maid's final line reinforces the reason for jealousy, when

she exclaims, '"My dear—a raw country girl, such as you be, / Cannot quite expect that. You ain't ruined,' said she" (23-4). Ruin refers only to sex while fallenness connotes moral repercussions. Although the polished maid's innocence has been ruined, her confidence has not. Her perspective alters the parameters of respectability when she treats her status as superior. Hardy debunks myths about Victorian morality in "The Ruined Maid," when sexual knowledge is enviable and ruin does not lead to a fall.

Norman Page observes the distinction between Hardy's two modes of expression: "The coherence of poetic forms seems itself called into question, as the poetics of loss undermine the traditional claims for the transcendence of literature. Jude lived in a universe where 'Events did not rhyme'. Hardy's 'Hap' proclaims a vision of chance and universal incoherence in a sonnet form traditionally associated with design" (Page 327). Refusing to confine himself to limitations imposed by form, Thomas Hardy breaks ground in his novels and his poems. As F. B. Pinion aptly notes about Hardy's philosophy in "Hap," "The cause of things [. . .] is neither moral nor immoral, but unmoral" (Pinion 5). Morality can no longer be determined by the time Hardy publishes his poetry in the twentieth century. He writes his poems over the course of four decades and he binds them together, without paying attention to linear time. Hardy expresses unease and fragmentation. In "Neutral Tones," for instance, Hardy offers "a more real realism, a sceptical voice steeped in fragmentation and contingency" (Mallett 261). He does not proclaim to control meaning, but rather he examines the very idea of truth. Phillip Mallett finds that Hardy "does not assume that a poem about consciousness can produce a changed consciousness in the reader" (261). In this poem about an unfulfilling relationship, Hardy does not aim for closure. Just as Hardy combines sensation and

realism in his novels, so too does he use the cohesive tool of rhyme to express his ideas about the incompleteness of meaning. In fact, Hardy uses the word "Hap" to connote an evolved concept of fate. Fallen men disturb orderly novels, while Hardy's poems point to the chaos and loss of meaning that emerges in modernist writing.

Disjointed narratives redefine evil and reposition Victorian morality when they express anxiety in both content and form. Angus Wilson finds that the "citadel" of Victorian values that he recognizes in Trollope, Dickens, Eliot, and others, "finally broke down under the impetus of events abroad [. . .]. In Forster and Virginia Woolf one suddenly gets the sense of real evil—of violence coming in from outside which they simply cannot guard against" (Wilson 12). Declaring his age to be fallen in 1928, D. H. Lawrence signals a starting point for literary characters. Major twentieth-century authors such as Lawrence and James Joyce revolve their narratives about ordinary men who try to rise through artistic aspiration or self-exertion. The spate of bilundgsroman in the early twentieth century testify to the determination of the self through narratives of striving and overcoming. Notwithstanding censorship, sexual mores are less constraining for twentieth-century British subjects than they were for nineteenth-century people and fictional characters. The fallen man can no longer be a monitory figure in an age when sexuality is embraced and morality is a bore. Like *Jude the Obscure*, *Lady Chatterly's Lover* separates sexuality from class privilege. Lawrence's Sir Chatterly is a paralyzed, impotent cuckold who accepts his wife's promiscuity, albeit angrily. Unlike fallen man narratives, Lawrence's novel offers candid discourse on sexuality. In this post-Victorian narrative world, the maimed aristocrat is no longer relevant. Sir Chatterly and his wife "belong to another species altogether" (Lawrence 9); they are social outcasts because of

produce a changed consciousness in the reader" (261). In this poem about an unfulfilling relationship, Hardy does not aim for closure. Just as Hardy combines sensation and realism in his novels, so too does he use the cohesive tool of rhyme to express his ideas about the incompleteness of meaning. In fact, Hardy uses the word "Hap" to connote an evolved concept of fate. Fallen men disturb orderly novels, while Hardy's poems point to the chaos and loss of meaning that emerges in modernist writing.

Disjointed narratives redefine evil and reposition Victorian morality when they express anxiety in both content and form. Angus Wilson finds that the "citadel" of Victorian values that he recognizes in Trollope, Dickens, Eliot, and others, "finally broke down under the impetus of events abroad [. . .]. In Forster and Virginia Woolf one suddenly gets the sense of real evil—of violence coming in from outside which they simply cannot guard against" (Wilson 12). Declaring his age to be fallen in 1928, D. H. Lawrence signals a starting point for literary characters. Major twentieth-century authors such as Lawrence and James Joyce revolve their narratives about ordinary men who try to rise through artistic aspiration or self-exertion. The spate of bilundgsroman in the early twentieth century testify to the determination of the self through narratives of striving and overcoming. Notwithstanding censorship, sexual mores are less constraining for twentieth-century British subjects than they were for nineteenth-century people and fictional characters. The fallen man can no longer be a monitory figure in an age when sexuality is embraced and morality is a bore. Like *Jude the Obscure*, *Lady Chatterly's Lover* separates sexuality from class privilege. Lawrence's Sir Chatterly is a paralyzed, impotent cuckold who accepts his wife's promiscuity, albeit angrily. Unlike fallen man narratives, Lawrence's novel offers candid discourse on sexuality. In this post-Victorian

narrative world, the maimed aristocrat is no longer relevant. Sir Chatterly and his wife "belong to another species altogether" (Lawrence 9); they are social outcasts because of their titled position.

The belief system of Victorians is insulated; modernists by comparison do not claim to subscribe to a unified sense of right and wrong. Instead, they seem to agree upon the value of recognizing and exposing uncertainty. Harry E. Shaw claims that early in the twentieth century "modernist writers and their supporters felt the need to attack the sprawling social novels of the century that preceded and dwarfed them" (Shaw 8). James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus dramatizes the shift in values from Victorian to Modernist literature. Published in 1916, *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* follows the semi-autobiographical Dedalus as he ceases to take comfort in the trappings of morality and class. Like Wilde's Dorian Gray, Stephen feels guilty for his sins, most notably after his sexual encounters with prostitutes. Whereas Wilde's and Du Maurier's dandies travel in polite social circles, Joyce's artist does not. Stephen Dedalus considers priesthood when his fear of hell threatens to quash his artistic and sensual instincts. Dedalus rises above stale Victorian and Catholic morality when, in a moment of epiphany, he realizes that sexual desire is natural. He seeks artistic recognition and physical satisfaction, but not class status, thereby distinguishing him further from fallen men.

By tracing the fallen man's evolution from the 1860s to the 1890s, I have emphasized the shift in British trends and anxieties about masculinity. Fallen men succumb to popular vice, but they are not always a social threat to the same extent. Le Fanu's Silas is an outsider who lives at Bartram-Haugh, away from the watchful eyes of society. Even though he is well-born, he does not appear to be genteel. He presents a

threat that is both real and benign. Silas threatens to murder his niece, but we do not fear for her death because she refers periodically to her current maturity as she narrates the tale. Truth and responsibility are unclear in *Uncle Silas* because opium abuse is linked to criminal behaviour. By associating addiction and murder with aristocratic lineage, Le Fanu showcases the internal threat that Britain faces. In *Daniel Deronda* and *Man and Wife*, both Eliot and Collins take off from Le Fanu's suggestions when they question the very goals to which Victorian characters strive. Initially, marriage to a man from a good family does not provide immediate closure for either Gwendolen Harleth or Ann Silvester. Only when their respective husbands—the fallen men—suffer untimely deaths, do possibilities arise for female characters; marriage is a wager rather than a prize. By centering their narratives on gambling motifs, Eliot and Collins expand upon the theme of instability and debunk myths about marriage as an ultimate goal. Definitions of masculinity must be reconsidered, they suggest, since aristocratic lineage no longer determines good breeding. In *The Woodlanders* and *Heart and Science*, fallen doctors accentuate the rise of the middle-class. They also point to the possibility that scientific absolutes might offer an alternative to the increasingly destabilized British value system. Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* signifies the end of the fallen man's role in Victorian novels when Wilde implies that sinner and saint are impossible binaries that will never be rebuilt. Victorian lending libraries and literary critics want fiction to reflect an ideal moral universe. Authors of fallen men narratives refuse to participate in such a charade. Instead, they link curiosity, experimentation, and ruin to male descendants of aristocrats.

In Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry, Dorian, Basil embrace new

Hedonism to varying extents; they win or lose accordingly. Fragmentation provides a new space for fallen men, in which their "deviant" behaviours render them part of the aesthetic movement rather than resulting in their being outcasts from social scenes. Fitzpiers and Lord Henry, the survivors in both Hardy's and Wilde's novels, give way to natural urges. Victorian notions of right and wrong are often determined from a hierarchical vantage point. Wealthy Victorians took laudanum for their "ailments," but they condemned the abuse of opiates among the working classes. Gambling fever affected poor and wealthy Victorians alike, although Victorian gentlemen would see speculation as morally superior to gambling. Gentlemen and middle-class men risked their fortunes and endangered the economy with their railway and stock market gambles, as exhibited by the fallen Mr. Melmotte in *The Way We Live Now*. Fitzpiers exhibits class snobbery even though he must work for a living. Dorian, Basil, and Lord Henry need to circulate with London's social elite in order to maximize their aesthetic experiences. Nonetheless, Wilde, advocate of the working class, illustrates in detail how his dandies enjoy indulging their desires in less glamorous parts of town as well. The impact of the fallen man is such that it loosens threads of class, gender, and morality, allowing for relaxed social norms instead.

Twenty years before publishing *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot wrote to John Blackwood that, "conclusions are the weak point of most authors, but some of the fault lies in the very nature of a conclusion, which is at best a negation" (qtd. in Allott 250). In fallen man narratives, conclusions are only negations insofar as they refute the assumption that fallen women alone should suffer for their vices. Although authors such as Collins and Eliot free fallen women by punishing their seducers, they do not offer clear

indications of what these endings signify. Accidents, murders, and suicides mark the end of villainy and open doors for other characters. Conclusions in *Uncle Silas*, *Daniel Deronda*, *Man and Wife*, *The Woodlanders*, *Heart and Science*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* point to possibilities and uncharted waters when fallen women are no longer scapegoated for heeding their sexual urges. In their place, fallen men, through their array of vices, point to the multitude of urges that will be further exposed by twentieth-century authors. Fallen men reconfigure Victorian gender identity and narrative form; they pave way for a new generation of uninhibited, non-monitory masculine ideals.

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